





SERMONS

FOR

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN KEBLE,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN YEAR."

SOLD BY

JAMES PARKER AND CO. OXFORD,
AND 377, STRAND, LONDON.

1876.

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THE HISTORY OF

THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES

THE SECOND

BY

JOHN BURNET

ESQ.

OF

SCOTLAND

IN

SEVEN VOLUMES

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SERMON I.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.

EASTER DAY.

1 COR. V. 7, 8.

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

THE careful readers and hearers of the Prayer-book must have observed, that on this one great Day the Holy Church begins praising God with a different hymn from that which she commonly uses. Every other morning in the year, when we rise from our knees after the Lord's Prayer, the appointed Psalm is that which begins, “O come, let us sing unto the Lord.” But on the morning of Easter Day, we are directed, as you know, to repeat an anthem out of those parts of S. Paul's Epistles, where he most expressly praises God for the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now these anthems, when we examine them, will be found to convey the same sort of instruction, in regard of this day's solemn service, as the Psalm, “O come, let us sing unto the Lord,” supplies us with in regard to the service of ordinary days. The pur-

pose of the Church in fixing on that Psalm, was to warn Christians of the great danger we all lie under of hardening our hearts, becoming worse instead of better, if we come to worship God without really purposing to obey Him. Her purpose in choosing the anthem you heard this morning, is to warn you in like manner how to keep Easter without bringing a judgement upon yourselves.

For, indeed, whether we think of it or no, these solemn times and yearly memorials of the great things God has done for us, are very trying times to us all; times in which He, as it were, comes nearer to us than usual; times which never can pass away as though they had never been; but of which the remembrance will rise up with us at the Great Day, either to our praise or our condemnation. Nobody, not the most ignorant person in this or in any other congregation, can well help knowing so much as this: that Easter is a very great day, a time in which people are called on to very serious thoughts of the world to come. Knowing this, if they know no more, they will be self-condemned bye and bye, if they suffer these precious hours to pass unimproved away.

As to the best way of considering our Lord's Resurrection, now on His own glorious Day, the Church in this anthem seems to take the following order: she represents to us the great things which happened to Him as at this time, His Sufferings, Death, Burial, and Resurrection. These things the Church represents as the great event, to which God has respect in all His dealings with sinful men, whether past, present, or to come. For the first of the three anthems which she has selected looks back to the past

time, to the feast of the Passover, the Jewish Easter. "Christ our Passover, is sacrificed for us."

The second describes the present condition of Christian men, as such; the condition, into which we are brought by the Resurrection of our Lord. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him:" so we are to "reckon ourselves as dead unto sin," that is, freed from its power and dominion; "and alive unto God," that is, enabled by His Spirit to serve Him.

The third part of the Divine hymn shows us how the Resurrection of our Saviour is meant to help us in looking forward to the future; how it is a pledge and token, quite sure to be fulfilled in its time, of our rising again to judgement. "Christ is risen from the dead, and is become the first-fruits of them that slept."

Now, whichever of these three anthems we take,—whether we look on our Easter Feast as being to us what the Passover was to the Jews in times past; or as the pledge of God's present grace and help offered to us as baptized Christians; or as the sure earnest of the Resurrection of the dead, and of eternal life or death;—any way we cannot but hear the voice of God teaching us to lead a new life by the very return of this Day.

Let us first look back on the Old Testament, and consider what Christians may learn by comparing their Easter, when it returns, with times long since passed away. The great event in the history of former days, to which the Resurrection of our Lord answered, was the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. For the whole Jewish nation, to

which God's promises had been handed down from Abraham, was so far a type or figure of His Blessed Son, with and through Whom all His promises and covenants are made. The affliction of the Jews under Pharaoh was like what our Lord endured, when, as our Surety, He remained three days in bondage under the power of death. The redemption of the people of God from Egypt, like our redemption by our Saviour Christ Jesus, depended on two things; first, the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, and then the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. Our Saviour's death answered to the first of these, and the overthrow of Satan's power by His Resurrection to the second.

As to the first, that Christ is indeed our Passover, the very Paschal Lamb offered for the sins of the world, by the sprinkling of Whose precious Blood God is moved to spare sinners, the objects of nothing but wrath and damnation; this we are most expressly taught, not only by S. Paul here in the text, but also by S. John in the history of our Lord's Crucifixion. For he says, that God's providence ordered things so, that when the two malefactors' legs were broken, the same was not done to our Saviour; whereby, he adds, the Scripture was fulfilled, which ordained concerning the Paschal Lamb, "a bone of Him shall not be broken." Indeed, as often as He is called the Lamb of God, the same great truth appears to be taught; we are instructed to depend on Him only, and on the sprinkling of His Blood for deliverance from the wrath and destroying Angels of God. And for the same reason He shewed Himself to S. John in the Revelations under the figure of the Lamb that

had been slain. Now as God's acceptance of this Paschal sacrifice was made known by His delivering the Israelites, and bringing the Red Sea upon Pharaoh; so His acceptance of our Saviour's sacrifice, offered once for all upon the Cross, was made known by His rising the third day from the dead. This seems to be what S. Paul means, when he says concerning Christ, that "having spoiled Principalities and Powers" (*i. e.* the evil spirits of darkness), having deprived them of us, their prey, "He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by His Cross." His returning, as He did, victorious from the grave, was the surest proof before men and Angels of the devil's power being humbled, and the sting of death overcome. You see, then, that both in His suffering and His victory, our Divine Master fulfilled the image, which God had caused to be drawn, as it were, of Him, so many hundred years before.

But the text was clearly intended to remind us of another most remarkable instance of typical agreement, and one in which we are ourselves most nearly concerned. It was intended to point out to all Christians, not only the power of our Lord's death to redeem them, but also the manner in which they must apply that healing power and virtue, each one to himself. It shews how Christ is to be made a Passover, or Paschal Lamb, to each of us sinners in particular. For it is plain from Holy Scripture, that it is not enough, His being offered once for all to bear the sins of the whole world. Still something or other must be done by or for each one in particular, before he can be a partaker in that benefit. What that something is, the mysterious institution of the

Passover shews plainly enough, to those who will compare it with what they find in the Gospel. The Paschal Lamb was like other peace-offerings. The way to communicate in the benefit of it, was to partake of it in the Paschal feast. Whoever neglected so to do, forfeited the blessing intended him thereby; that soul was to be cut off from God's people, as having broken His covenant. And before, when the destroying Angel came to slay the first-born of the Egyptians, it was not enough for the lamb to be sacrificed, but it was also necessary that the blood should be sprinkled on the door of each house of the chosen people. A clear sign how necessary it would be, when the Great Sacrifice of all was offered, to have some way for each person to take it to himself and make it his own. In a word, when we read of these things, we are taught by our Saviour Himself what to think of. "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." We must in some awful and mysterious way be made one with our Blessed Redeemer by eating His Flesh, and drinking His Blood; else that Blood, all-sufficient as it is, will not avail to our salvation. The Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man is as necessary to our spiritual life, as visible meat and drink to our bodily life. And in this sense, especially, He is our Paschal Lamb, in that He is not only sacrificed for us, but we are to keep the Feast by partaking of Him; at the peril, if we do not, of being cut off from God's people, and accounted to have broken His covenant.

Now, can this awful and blessed communion with Christ, which is indeed eating His Flesh and drink-

ing His Blood, can it be had any other way than by partaking of the Blessed Sacrament? Certainly, I know of nothing in the whole Scripture, which gives us any encouragement to think so. "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood," saith our Lord to the Jews of His time, "ye have no life in you." And a very few months after, He gave the Blessed Bread and Wine to His disciples with these very words: "This is My Body which is given for you: this is My Blood of the New Testament, shed for you and for many." Is it not as if He had said, "This is that Flesh and Blood of Mine, of which I told you some while since?" Could they who received it possibly help understanding, that now they were to receive that very Flesh and Blood, which had been promised them as the only means of spiritual life?

I do not see how any faithful Christian, seriously considering what is told us of our Lord's will, can reckon himself to be a partaker of His blessed Body and Blood, as long as he refuses this Divine and comfortable Sacrament. And if he have no good reason to account himself a receiver of Christ's Body and Blood, how can he have any comfort or tranquillity of mind, seeing that the words are so express, that without such eating and drinking he can have no life in him? If you really believe the Bible, you must believe this to be exactly true. And believing it, can you help wishing, at least, to be a worthy partaker of this holy Sacrament?

If you really wish this, will you not seriously attend to what S. Paul next teaches, of the manner in which Easter is to be kept, and the holy Body and

Blood of Christ to be received? This, I say, he teaches, as he had what went before, by a reference to the Jews' Passover. "Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The appointed preparation for the Jews, on the point of keeping their Passover, was putting away leaven out of their houses. For seven whole days they were to eat only unleavened bread. In the first instance, this was meant to remind them of the haste, with which God brought them out of Egypt, when they took their dough before it was leavened. But it had also this other meaning: that in preparation to receive Jesus Christ, sacrificed for the sins of the world, men should labour, and strive, and pray, to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. For that is the old leaven, of which the Apostle here makes mention; the corrupt nature and bad habits of men, filling them full of malice and wickedness. This, by the grace of Almighty God, must be in a way to be amended and removed; they must be sincerely endeavouring to obtain a new heart and a right spirit, and then they will be fit to keep the feast of Easter; then God, in His infinite mercy, will account them, however imperfect, worthy to receive the Bread of Life.

I fear that there are not many of us, who are used to go at all deeply into this thought of our own corruption. We all own it readily enough; we say, "of course we are wicked, as other people are:" and then we go on, well satisfied with ourselves, as if we had no great work to do, no pressing danger to avoid. But how would it be, if instead of this old leaven of

sin, it were some painful or loathsome distemper; the plague, or the leprosy, or some malignant fever; of which we found the seeds in our constitution, and knew that, if neglected, it would break out bye and bye, but if taken in time, might be thoroughly and effectually cured? Should we then say, "Of course we are infected, but so are a great many more; we will not take any trouble to cure ourselves?" No; we should most of us be anxious and busy in seeking out the best remedies. At least, when we began to feel the pain, we should look out for help in earnest, however negligent we might have been before. Well indeed is it for those who begin to be uneasy about themselves; who are no longer able to quiet their consciences by the saying, that sin is a matter of course, and "every child of Adam is corrupt." Well is it for you, when, on reading or hearing of a world gone astray from God, you feel the thought come home to yourself, that "you are one of that evil world, and what have you done that you should be delivered from its curse?" Well is it for you, when your heart is touched, to compare what you read or hear with the particulars of your own thoughts, words, and actions, and to acknowledge and ascertain how frightfully and how far they are all leavened with habitual sin. As soon as you are seriously aware of this—I do not say as soon as you *feel* it, as soon as you are able to *talk* about it—but as soon as you are calmly, deeply, thoughtfully, aware of your own great sinfulness and danger, you will naturally strive in earnest to amend; you will not bear the thought of what you must be in the sight of the God of all purity; you will begin to pray heartily, not

only for pardon through the Blood of our Redeemer, but also for the grace of His Holy Spirit, to obey Him better in time to come. According to S. Paul's way of speaking in the text, when you have found, on examination of your own thoughts words and actions, how very few of them, if any, are such as God is likely to approve, when you have found in them all, without exception, the bitter taste of the old leaven, then you will begin by His help to purge it out. But as long as you are contented with a mere general acknowledgement, or with talking bitterly about your sinfulness, and about poor fallen human nature, you will but be just where you are, or worse.

Now among the particulars in thought, word, and action, which most betray the old fatal leaven, S. Paul mentions here malice and wickedness; which word "wickedness" in this place seems to mean properly "fraud and cunning." What if you try yourself, seriously and fairly, with respect to these two?

First as to malice. It is the commonest thing in the world to hear people say, they do not bear malice, they owe no man any ill-will. It seems to be the first thing that comes into their minds, when any thing happens to remind them of their last account. And they comfort themselves, I fear, a little sooner than they ought, with the notion of their being free from malice.

For consider, under what circumstances such professions are commonly made. Something or other has happened to alarm a person, and make him rather more serious than usual; some sickness or other affliction is on him; and God's minister, or some good

friend, warns him of what is to come hereafter. At such a time, whatever uncharitable dispositions he may have, are little likely to be present to his mind; then, if ever, he will feel softened; and if he think at all of those whom he has ever disliked, will seem to himself as if he thoroughly forgave them. But this is but feeling, and may be but fancy. When the man recovers from the sickness, when the sorrow passes away, then comes the real practical trial; then it is known by deeds, not words only, whether the malice be gone or no. That is the kind of proof you must look to, and not be satisfied with your feeling at the moment, as if you had no uncharitable thought.

Malice, that is, ill-nature, envy, grudging, is, as S. Paul here hints, like leaven: it is a subtle thing, mingling itself with many parts of men's conduct, where they little suspect it themselves. For example: you hear a neighbour praised for something, on which you are apt to value yourself. Ask your own conscience fairly: do you feel no sort of pang, no jealousy or envy, at this? Is it not too plain, that we are most of us inclined to repine at our neighbour's getting things, which we think we might as well have had ourselves? Now, whatever you may judge of it, this is the leaven of malice, and must be purged out; it must be seriously repented of, and prayed against, if you would come worthily to the holy Table.

So in respect of that other kind of wickedness, of which the great Apostle warns us, fraud, falsehood, cunning, insincerity. It is what people generally can least endure to be charged with: to call a man a liar is the bitterest of all affronts: and those who would confess many faults will search far and wide,

and invent all sorts of excuses, rather than plead guilty to this. And many seem to think, that if they affirm no direct falsehood, they are sufficiently purged from this sin. But surely they judge too hastily. There is a leaven of cunning as well as of malice, which is apt to mingle with all our conduct, and poison and infect it and make it unworthy of God, to a degree far beyond what we can imagine, till we have really watched and tried ourselves. We get into mean, pitiful habits, of setting traps for our own praise; of contriving to take the best of every thing for ourselves; of getting off in all business with less than our share of expense, or trouble, or ill-will. This is the leaven of selfish cunning, so worked into the daily behaviour of most men, that they are not themselves at all aware of it: they never, of course, dream of repenting of it.

By these two examples of malice and of cunning, we see how vain it is for people to talk and think highly of their own innocence, in any part of their conduct whatever. They could not do so, if they had any thing like a right understanding either of the Bible or of their own hearts and lives. The more diligently they compare the Word of God with their own daily conduct, the more faults they are sure to find. When, therefore, in examining yourself before the Holy Communion, you find your conscience, as you think, clear on this or that point, the safest way, perhaps, is to follow the example of S. Paul, who in such a case says of himself, "I know nothing against myself, but He that judgeth me is the Lord: therefore I judge not mine own self." The safest way is, to be quite sure, that if we were better men

than we are, more humble and watchful, more experienced in true self-denial, we should perceive many faults in ourselves where now all seems to us right; and being sure of this, to humble ourselves accordingly, and cry with David earnestly and sincerely, "O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults!"

On the other hand, how many and how grievous soever the transgressions and bad tendencies we find in our past conduct, it ought not to discourage nor keep us from the Holy Communion, provided we have sincerely entered on the task of purging out that evil leaven. The bread which we are required to have in our houses, in order to partake of the Paschal Lamb worthily, is the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The sincere endeavour to please our Saviour in future He will accept, so great is His mercy, instead of unsinning obedience in times past. Let this then be the great object of your prayers to God's Almighty Spirit, that He would, for Jesus Christ's sake, make you true and sincere in serving Him. Pray to Him to make you sincere in your prayers; and watch withal, that your actions do not give the lie to your words, and prayers, and professions, and even your feelings. When you find, that by the blessing of God you are actually getting into a way of doing right things that are unpleasant to you, and refraining from pleasant sins, and all for Jesus Christ's sake, then come humbly yet cheerfully to His altar for grace to help you in that good way. Surely, if persevered in, it will prove the way of everlasting life.

SERMON II.

THE SIGHT OF GOD INCARNATE.

EASTER DAY.

JOB xix. 26, 27.

“In my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”

WHEN a thoughtful person has been able to have strongly in his mind the feelings and imaginations proper to the Three Great Days, of which this is the last, I should not wonder if he had on the whole some such impression as this; that Friday was a day of earthquake, of darkness, and desolation, the day, so to speak, of a great storm: Saturday, a calm and clouded day, a day of pensive rest and regret, yet mingled with quiet hope: but that this Sunday morning is all brightness and sunshine; sin forgiven, death overcome, the cares of earth forgotten and its miseries healed, Heaven opened, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the children of men.

What now is it, which makes all the difference? The answer cannot be all spoken in words; but it would come home to our hearts, if we could go and ask the faithful friends and followers of our Lord, the Apostles, and the holy women, who waited on

His death and burial; if we could watch them, how changed they are to-day, in look, and voice, and manner, and everything, from what they were yesterday. Yesterday they sat alone and kept silence; to-day they are running to and fro, eager to meet one another, and each looking as one charged with good tidings. Yesterday their eyes were cast down to the earth, like men who had met in common with some great disappointment, and were almost ashamed to look one another in the face, neither being able to help the other's perplexity: to-day they exchange cheerful looks and words of congratulation, as though a great weight were taken off their spirits, and all were now, as people say, going on right. In short, the difference between to-day and yesterday was, to the faithful friends of our Lord, almost like the difference between Heaven and earth.

For what is it which causes Heaven to be what it is? Why is there the fulness of joy, and rivers of pleasures for evermore? Surely, because they see God's Face, as a man seeth the countenance of his friend. "a He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." "b The glory of God did lighten" the city, "and the Lamb is the light thereof." "c The Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face." "d They need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light." And our Lord's own account of the bliss of the other world is, that He will receive His disciples to Himself, that where He is, there they may be also.

^a Rev. xxi. 3.

^b Ib. 23.

^c Ib. xxii. 3, 4.

^d Ib. 5.

The happiness of Heaven, then, is the seeing God; and because our Lord and Saviour is God Incarnate, God the Son made Man, by taking to Himself a soul and body such as ours, therefore to see Christ was, to faithful men, a kind of Heaven upon earth; and losing sight of Him, as they did at His Passion, was like being banished from Heaven. Of course then His coming in their sight again was the greatest happiness they could have; it was like opening Heaven's gate once more when it seemed to be shut against them; it was a joy with which nothing else can be compared, save that unspeakable joy which their own resurrection will bring with it, when they will not only see our Lord, but meet Him in the air, and be taken up to dwell with Him for ever.

I do not say, that those holy and happy persons, S. John, S. Mary Magdalene, and the rest, were all of them at the time fully aware, that He Whom they had seen die, and Whom they now saw risen again, was the Very and Eternal God. They, very likely, came by slow degrees, some at one time, some at another, to the full knowledge of that astonishing truth. But thus much they knew for certain, that they could not be happy without seeing Him, that there was no other to whom they could go, that in the Light of His Countenance was joy and peace, and that when He hid His face, they were troubled. Many persons have this feeling at many times towards one or other of their fellow-creatures, but then it is a dangerous feeling; so to depend on any of the things which God has made, comes near to idolatry, and setting that thing in the place of God Himself. But in regard of our Lord Jesus Christ

there was no such fear : they could not be wrong in setting their hearts upon Him ; for He is God Himself. And in Him, though as yet they might not themselves quite understand it, they felt that they had that blessing, which the holy men of old, kings and priests, patriarchs and prophets, had from the beginning longed for.

The sight of God was the very blessing which Adam forfeited in Paradise, and which poor fallen human nature, so far as it was not utterly corrupt, has ever been feeling after and longing for. Adam, oppressed and alienated in his mind by sin, hid himself from the Presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden, and he was cast out from the nearer vision of God ; but both he and his posterity retained still a blind consciousness of what they had lost, and a blind hope of recovering it. Which of us has not felt this at times ? Who has not yearned, now and then, after some better happiness than he has yet known ? That better happiness is the Presence and enjoyment of God. Holy Job spoke darkly of it, when he spake the well-known words, which our Church comforts and warns us with at every funeral. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Moses had the same longing, when, in answer to God's assurance of favour, "Thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name," he prayed and said, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory."

° Ex. xxxiii. 17.

David, in the Psalms, over and over, declares the sight of God to be his only happiness. “^f Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” “^g Thou shalt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.” “^h I will behold Thy presence in righteousness, and when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.”

All these, all the holy men before the time of our Lord's first coming in the flesh, looked on, by faith, to the happiness of seeing God. But the Apostles, and those who were about Him when He came, actually had that happiness. They enjoyed in their lifetime that privilege, which Job had to wait for, till he came to the other world. In their flesh they saw God. Their very own eyes, and not another's for them, beheld Him. Some of them even touched God, and handled Him with their hands. One, highly favoured above all, bare Him in her womb, fed Him from her bosom, nursed Him on her lap, was His mother, and He her child.

This was the happiness of those who knew Christ after the flesh, but as yet it was a dim happiness; they did not thoroughly know it themselves. Only when by His death and burial it departed from them for a short time, they were sensible that it was indeed their happiness; that He being gone, there was none else to whom they could go. When they knew He was risen, it was their life and joy, the light of

^f Ps. lxxiii. 24, 25.

^g Ib. xvi. 12.

^h Ib. xvii. 16.

their eyes, and their souls' delight, their comfort, their hope, and their all, come back again, after seeming to be lost.

This is why Easter was so bright a day to them. It was not merely a dear friend returning from the grave; it was not even their having a sure pledge of their justification before God, and the forgiveness of their sins; but it was their actual happiness, that which alone could make them blessed in time or in eternity, returning, when it had seemed to be forfeited.

And now He graciously permitted them to know more of it than in the first days of His humiliation, before He suffered. He seems to have withdrawn the veil gradually, and to have allowed them to find out, as S. Thomas did, that He with Whom they had been so long time, was no other than their Lord and their God, made Man. In this way He shewed Himself to them, from time to time, forty days together, and then withdrew Himself out of their sight; yet promising to send His Holy Spirit, which should make Him really, though invisibly, nearer to them than He had been as yet.

And upon the faith of this promise we and all Christians even now live, and, if we have not forfeited our baptismal blessings, are happy. We are happy, did we but know and thoroughly believe it, as members of Jesus Christ; but our happiness is so far dim and imperfect, in that we do not as yet see Christ. His Apostles and disciples, who saw Him in the flesh, they were happy to be permitted so pure and glorious a sight; but their joy too was in one respect imperfect, and no less imperfect than ours.

is; though they saw and touched Christ outwardly, they were not as yet made members of Him. Thus, as the Apostles, so we, with all ordinary Christians, have somewhat as yet wanting to our joy. I will repeat it again, that it may be quite plain. The Apostles saw Christ, but were not yet members of His Body: we are members of His Body, but do not yet see Him. These two things, which are now separated, are to be united in the other world; and, being united, they will make us happy for ever.

But what are really our thoughts about this happiness? Is it happiness at all, according to the ways of thought and behaviour which we are got into? Suppose, for example, there were any person here who is living in known uncleanness, either in heart or in deed, "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;" what sort of happiness am I telling him of, when I say to him, "Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, He Who hates all impurity, He Who has laid down for a law, that one had better cut off a right hand or eye, than suffer it to lead us into sin; He is risen from the dead, and you will see Him with your eyes; for you too will rise with your body at the last day?" What kind of joy, again, can it prove to the covetous grudging heart, when we tell him, "You may certainly look forward to the time, when He Who praised the widow for the gift of her two mites, He Who said, it was more blessed to give than to receive, He will come again, and you shall certainly set eyes on Him?" Of course, to such sort of persons, continuing such, the Resurrection of Christ, as a pledge of their seeing Him again, can be no real joy, but quite the contrary; they, in their secret

hearts, would much rather the words of the profane wicked soldiers could be made out true; they had rather, if they could, believe that His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while the guard slept. Such persons, all persons who are going on in deadly sin, must be, indeed, greatly changed, before the news of our Lord's rising again shall really be felt by them as good news, coming home to their own hearts.

And even to good and thoughtful Christians, who go on trying and trying, however imperfectly, to walk blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; even to such, the notion of seeing God in flesh like our own, will oftentimes seem almost too awful to bear. It will bring a natural dread upon their spirits. It will cause them to cry out, with him who had seen the Angel, in whom He was, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." They will think again and again, "Who can stand before this Holy Lord God? certainly not I, with my many sins, negligences, and ignorances." Should such thoughts overpower you at any time, and tempt you either to be reckless or desponding, do not give way to them; you may know for certain from whom they come; resist them accordingly, and they will quickly flee from you. Your Judge is most unwilling that your heart should sink, and you feel as if you could not be accepted, as if repentance even and contrition came too late for *you*.

Therefore, behold, He has mixed up the account of His Resurrection, so awful to sinners, with the most affecting tokens of His mercy. From the moment of His Rising to the hour of His Ascension, He

ⁱ Jud. xiii. 22.

is never weary of giving them signs, by which they might know Him, however glorified, to be the same mild and merciful Jesus, the same Son of Man, Whom they had known so well on earth.

Was He, before He died, full of tender care for S. Peter? In His first message after His Resurrection, His Angel made loving mention of Peter by name; Go "^k tell His disciples, and *Peter*," that He is risen from the dead. Yea, and He Himself calls them brethren; "¹ Go tell *My brethren* that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." Why? Because they had all lately forsaken Him.

Had our Lord, in His humiliation, the feeling of an intimate friend towards S. John particularly? To S. John, above others, He shewed Himself in His glorified state; as you may read in the Book of Revelations.

Then see in how gracious and condescending a way He ordered all His appearances to them; eating with them, and blessing their food, as He had been used to do; repeating over again the miracle of the extraordinary draught of fishes, at nearly the same place, and with nearly the same company, as if on purpose to prove Himself unchanged in affection. These and many more gracious signs He performed, that neither His Apostles nor we might ever doubt His being the same merciful Son of Mary, the same true Brother to us, now He is so highly exalted, as He was in His manger and on His Cross.

Think not that our Master's condescending grace in all these things was confined to those disciples only. Oh! surely it reaches to us, and to as many as

^k S. Mark xvi. 7.

¹ S. Matt. xxviii. 10.

believe on Him through the Apostles' word. Though He be at the right hand of God, His human Body and Soul are there with Him, and all His brotherly love and pity for the lost children of men, and tender fellow-feeling towards those who stand afar off, and smite upon their breasts.

All these blessings of our Lord's Presence are sealed and made sure to us with the promise of the Holy Ghost, which makes us members of Him, in His Baptism first, and afterwards in the Holy Communion. There, if not outwardly in our own flesh, yet under the shadow and veil which He Himself ordained, we may see God, as often as we draw near in faith and repentance. Then and there He grants unto us to be partakers of the same blessing as those first communicants were, when after His Resurrection, as on this day, more than eighteen hundred years ago, He made Himself known to them in breaking of bread. For it is not one Saviour, one Eucharist to them, and another to us; but to them, and us, and all from the beginning, it is the same Saviour, the same Baptism, the same Communion, the same merciful God; and upon Him, one and the same Jesus for ever, we shall all look, when with one and the same voice He shall have raised us at the last Day.

Try and labour, my brethren, for love and for fear's sake; for love of Him and for fear of hell. Try and labour to have this thought steadily present and without all question in your minds: that as surely as He rose again this morning from the dead with a true Body, which He shewed to His disciples and took up with Him into heaven, so surely shall we all behold Him with these very eyes of ours.

Hitherto we have seen Him as it were with other men's eyes ; with the eyes of His holy Apostles and Martyrs, who have told us how He appeared to them, either in heaven or in earth. But the hour is coming, and now is, when we shall see Him for ourselves ; our eyes shall behold Him, and not another's. Upon one and the same Jesus, one and the same God, we shall all look, but He will appear to each one of us with a different countenance, according as we have behaved to Him here. As we see Him then, in wrath or in mercy, such He will be to us for ever and ever ; and His countenance will be according to our works.

SERMON III.

OPENED DOORS.

EASTER DAY.

REV. iii. 8.

“Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.”

As if it should be said, Yesterday your Lord was in prison in the dreary lonely silent prison of the grave : as He Himself complains in the last of the Good Friday Psalms : “^aI am so fast in prison : that I cannot get forth.” And it was the more like a prison, because it was the consequence of sin, not indeed His own sin, but of that sin which He had taken upon Himself : Adam’s sin, my brethren, and the sin of the whole race of Adam : your sin and my sin : “^bthe iniquity of us all :” as it is written again in the same Psalm, “^cThine indignation lieth hard upon me,” and, “^dThy wrathful displeasure goeth over me.” God’s indignation ! God’s wrathful displeasure ! How could they be stirred up, except for sin ? and yet, in some mysterious way, they came upon Him Who had no sin, and caused Him to cry out, “^eWhy hast Thou forsaken Me ?”

^a Ps. lxxxviii. 8.

^b Isa. liii. 6.

^c Ps. lxxxviii. 6.

^d Ib. 16.

^e Ib. xxii. 1.

Brethren, children of Adam, fellow-sinners, let us never forget this. Although Good Friday is over, let this one Good Friday thought at least abide with us, that our God willed not only to suffer but to suffer as a sinner for us. His grave was a prison, a malefactor's prison, a "condemned cell," fit only for criminals to lie in. Yet there He vouchsafed to lie; making His grave with the wicked, with the wicked and condemned family of Adam. The place which He chose for His death and burial was itself a special token of His willing to be numbered with the transgressors; for it was a place appointed for the execution of the worst of criminals, whose bones probably were lying about there: and so it was called Golgotha or Calvary, the place of a skull. And for some reason or other the Jews and early Christians had a tradition that our father Adam himself, the first of men and sinners, was buried in that very place.

Yesterday, then, and the beginning of this day also, your Lord was in prison, in a malefactor's prison; and those who wished it never so much could by no means approach Him. They might draw near, they might look and long to see His Face, to wait upon Him, to honour Him, as best they might: but it might not be: there was a great stone rolled and fastened to the grave's mouth, which they could by no means move. Not to mention the watch, the heathen soldiers, of whose presence the holy women do not seem to have been aware, but who were likely enough to have interrupted them, if they had found help to roll away the stone.

Throughout Holy Saturday He vouchsafed to be a prisoner, and for a certain portion, perhaps six hours,

and more, of to-day. But very early in the morning, while it was yet dark, behold the prison-doors are opened, the stone is rolled away, and the friends of Christ are invited to come in and see the place where He lay. A message was sent to them from their Lord, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

But not to them only; nor was it He alone Who rose and came out of His prison, the grave, this holy and blessed day. The whole sinful race of Adam, you and I and every one, born as we are in sin and children of wrath, are naturally in prison as truly as He was yesterday; in a dark and dreary prison, loaded with chains: tied and bound with the chains of our sins. So another Psalm describes our condition. We were sitting "in darkness and in the shadow of death, being fast bound in misery and iron; because they rebelled against the words of the Lord: and lightly regarded the counsel of the Most Highest." Was it not darkness, and the shadow of death? a chilling place on the very edge of death, in which we abide, so long as we must say of ourselves, "I am carnal, sold under sin. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. I see a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Such a state is indeed a prison, a grave with a stone lying upon it, a great stone, sealed; and a watch set to keep all sure, our own iniquities as a great stone, a sore burden, too heavy for us to bear: chained and fixed by evil habits, and sealed

^f Ps. cvii. 10, 11.

^g Rom. vii. 14, 19, 23.

by wicked resolutions and consenting with others in sin. And as the women could not come near, by reason of the stone, to do honour to our Lord's Body, so neither could the Angels in heaven, greatly as they wish to do us good, come near to help us, so long as we were thus dead and buried in sin.

But behold, before we could know it ourselves, the chain was broken, and we were delivered. The door of our prison was thrown open, and we were free to walk abroad in God's clear light and sunshine. How was that? Because, when the gate was locked upon us, there came One Who hath the key of David: He that is holy, He that is true, He that openeth: He came, He took us up in His arms, He poured water upon us in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and behold the prison door was open. He had unlocked it with the key of the house of David: that key, whereby, as Job had declared, "^h He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening:" and Isaiah, "ⁱ He shall be a Father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah:" and "^k the key of the House of David will I lay upon His shoulder: so He shall open, and none shall shut, and He shall shut, and none shall open."

This is the great miracle of Holy Baptism. And if it seem strange that a work so slight and so easy in outward seeming should bring about such strange effects, we have learned of God's own mouth to say, "^l Is anything too hard for the Lord?" As He shook the earth at His Passion (for it quaked, and the rocks were rent;) and at His Resurrection^m (for "there

^h Job xii. 14.

ⁱ Is. xxii. 21.

^k Ib. 22.

^l Gen. xviii. 14.

^m S. Matt. xxviii. 2.

was a great earthquake; for the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it,") so He will (as the saying is) move heaven and earth, sooner than His elect, His chosen people, should continue in prison, and under the power of the Evil one. By "His elect" I mean all Christian people, all whom His Spirit came down to sanctify; whether they are sanctified at this present time or no. All who were baptized into Christ, were then and there set free. And if they be now in chains again, it can be nobody's fault but their own.

How great was this your deliverance, my brethren, and how guilty, how miserable, those who wilfully forfeit it; who rush back to their prison, and pull and lock the door after them, and fasten themselves down again in their chains of darkness! What madness, to throw away all your blessings at once! I say, *your* deliverance, *your* blessings; because *you*, brethren, you baptized ones and members of Christ, are the very persons for whom such great things have been done; the very persons whom especially the devil wants to tempt to their ruin. If you listen to him (but I hope you will not) there are other doors that Christ opened by rising on this day, besides the door of His own sepulchre; and you will be shutting every one of them against you. I say, there were other doors opened this morning besides the door of our Lord's grave, and I will mention some of them. First, a door was opened in the unseen world, the door of the place where rested the souls of Abraham Isaac and Jacob and other great saints of the Old Testament, among the

rest, no doubt, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon; S. Joseph, S. John the Baptist, all of whom we know had seen Christ after the flesh. All these the prophet appears to call “ⁿprisoners of hope:” and we may not doubt that they saw the Lord’s Day and rejoiced; some great comfort shone in upon them that first Easter Day, though *what*, and how, we have never been exactly told.

The door too of the kingdom of Heaven, of Christ’s Holy Church both in earth and Paradise, was in a manner opened to-day by the power of His Resurrection; as we begin again, after long silence, to sing this morning, “When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.” It was not enough for Him (so deep was His love for us sinners), it was not enough for Him to draw the sting of death, to deliver us from sin and from the curse of sin, by the Sacrifice of Himself on the blessed Cross: but He would also rise again, take again His sacred Body and join it to His spotless Soul, and with the same Soul and Body ascend up where He was before, and send down His Holy Spirit to set up the Kingdom of Heaven, the Church on earth: the Church which should remain even unto the end with open doors, giving free welcome to all who would believe and obey Him. That was the door of faith, which is also the door of Baptism, standing wide open to all men, Gentiles as well as Jews; even as the sepulchre of Christ remained open, when the stone had been rolled away this Easter morning. And do not think, this is nothing to you. Nay, my brethren, it is every

thing to us all, and to each one of us: for are we not ourselves Gentiles? And where should we now be, where most likely should we be for ever, if the door of Christ's kingdom had been shut against us?

But there is yet a greater thing than this. The door of Heaven itself, dear brethren, and not only the door of the Church, which is to prepare us for Heaven, was opened for us by Christ's Death and Resurrection. This is the great mercy which we acknowledge in the collect for this day. Almighty God by His Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life. The door of Heaven had not yet been open, the way into "the holiest of all" had not yet been made manifest, until our Lord died on the Cross for us. But now it is open, by the rending of the veil, i. e., His Flesh. It is open, and will be found open at last, by all who shall be found at last, knowing Christ "and the power of His Resurrection." What is the power of His Resurrection? It is when, as "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him," so those who are spiritually raised by Him, sin no more, but die and rise again true and living members of Him. These are they, of whom it is written, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." By virtue of their Lord's Resurrection they shall find the entrance into Heaven open and clear; the gates and everlasting doors shall lift up their heads, as they did for Christ risen and ascending the first time, and they shall enter with Him into His joy.

That is the great promise of all: but, in preparation

° Phil. iii. 10.

p 1 Thess. iv. 16.

for it, Almighty God is continually opening for you new doors, fresh helps at every stage along the way to Heaven, which is always up-hill; and for every one of these helps you are indebted to our Lord's glorious Resurrection. Confirmation e. g., is a great door and effectual, a mighty and most comfortable aid to all who will so use it for climbing up nearer to Christ, entering more thoroughly into His mind, receiving from His fatherly Hand, reached out to you, more strength to do His work. I trust there are some here who can testify this from their own happy experience. And if the touch of Christ's Hand in Confirmation be so blessed, how much more the receiving Him inwardly and spiritually into your souls and bodies; not in your first Communion only, but in each following one, more and more! For you may depend upon it, that every time a Christian man communicates worthily, he takes a step higher in Christ's kingdom; a new door is opened to him, leading to a new treasure of grace. And if unhappily he fall back, and lose some of the ground which he had gained, yet is there the door of penitence open to him; a door of hope, that on true contrition and amendment he may recover his sad loss, and go on his way, keeping Lent and Easter together, mourning over himself, yet rejoicing in his good Saviour.

All these doors, great doors and effectual, were opened to each one of you, when you were baptized into the Death of our Lord. No man, no devil can shut them; none, but He Who opened them.

But He can and will shut them, if you force Him. For, observe, there is another door, which He leaves

partly in your own power; that is, the door of your own heart. “^aBehold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” You cannot open it yourself, but you may keep it shut, if you choose. Understand that (as the collect teaches) if there are any good desires in your heart, they are not of yourselves, but of His special grace preventing you. You could no more have them of yourselves, than Lazarus could roll away the stone from his own grave. It is the Father, drawing you! How great your burden if you refuse. “^rNo man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” It is the Son, so lovingly intreating to be admitted. “^sI sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled.” Can you find it in your heart to refuse Him? It is the Holy Ghost with His godly motions; dare you grieve, vex, quench Him? I hope better things: I hope you will let Christ in now, that you may not in your turn bye and bye have to knock at His Door in vain. I hope this Easter will not quite pass away from you, as in a dream, but that you will at least remember this one thing, which the Church is teaching you to-day; that when good thoughts and good desires come into your mind, and you turn away from them, you are shutting the door of your heart against Christ, and the door of hope and of Heaven against yourself.

^a Rev. iii. 20.^r S. John vi. 44.^s Cant. v. 2.

SERMON IV.

VICTORY.

EASTER DAY.

Ex. xv. 6.

*“Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power:
Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the
enemy.”*

THE last words of the Lord's Prayer suit as well with Easter Day, as the former words all along with Holy Week. I mean, when it ends, as you know it does sometimes, with acknowledging, “Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.” Those words of glory, do you not see how naturally they come in, when, having prayed for pardon and deliverance, we are just receiving assurance of both by the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour?

Christ rising from the dead is indeed the manifestation of God's Kingdom, Power and Glory in very many ways. His glory beamed out to the very eye, as our Lord moved about with His glorious and spiritual Body. His power He proved to be Almighty, when He raised Himself from the dead. And thereupon immediately followed His kingdom, which He took to Himself in heaven, when He sat down on the Right Hand of the Throne of God: and

which also He set up on earth, when He sent down the Holy Ghost on the Apostles. A great deal might be said of these three subjects; the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory of the Most High; how Christ's Resurrection magnifies and proclaims them all: but I shall consider that Resurrection now in one way only, viz. as it was a victory: a great victory and triumph of our blessed Master over a set of very powerful and dangerous enemies.

First, Christ's Resurrection was a victory, even in a visible and outward sense: a victory over the profane Jews and Romans. They thought to imprison Him, but He brake His prison-bars. They sealed the stone; His Angel rolled it away. They set a watch of soldiers: they did but see the robe and countenance of Christ's servant the Angel, and they shook for fear, and fell down as dead men. It was a great victory, in that once for all He put all His adversaries to shame: as Daniel, taken up out of the den alive, confounded and overcame those who had conspired against him.

Thus was Easter Day, even outwardly in the sight of men, a day of victory to Jesus Christ and His friends. But what we are still more to think of is the inward and invisible victory, that triumph over all inward and invisible enemies, which in that moment He won for Himself and us. In that one moment He overcame death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. He seemed to be Himself cast down; but on a sudden He sprang up, and gave His insulting enemy a deadly wound, at the same time delivering Himself for ever.

To help us in imagining this, let us now consider

that which Scripture sets before us as a type and shadow of His glorious Rising. Let us look back to what happened when the Israelites came out of Egypt. Every year, in one part of her service for Easter Day, the Church takes us back, in thought and in spirit, to the shore of the Red Sea, and shews us Moses and the children of Israel celebrating their wonderful deliverance from Pharaoh and Egypt. They stand and look back, with joy and astonishment, on the waves which half an hour ago stood up like a wall on the right hand and the left, but have now returned, and roll as before, having the whole army of God's enemies, king and people, chariots and horsemen, buried for ever underneath them. They behold the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore, and they lift up their voice, Moses leading them, in a psalm of triumph; that song of Moses, which in the New Testament is called also the Song of the Lamb; for indeed it requires very little change to turn it into a complete Easter Hymn.

Observe now the verse of this Hymn which I just now gave out to you for a text. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power. Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." Moses and the children of Israel said it concerning the double work of wonder which they had just seen: when, upon the first stretching out of Moses' rod, the waters of the Red Sea divided, and left a clear passage for them to escape the Egyptians; and, on its being stretched out a second time, the waters returned and overwhelmed the same Egyptians, who had ventured to follow after them into the sea. Now we know from very many places of Holy Scripture,

that all these things happened unto them for ensamples, types, shadows, of that which God had decreed to bring to pass, for the salvation of us Christians in the latter days. And we may plainly see how one thing answers to another. Israel was in Egypt, as God's people in the wicked world, in their natural condition, slaves to sin and death. Pharaoh, the cruel king of Egypt, is the devil, the prince of this world, holding them in bondage. Moses with his rod is like our Blessed Lord with His Cross, opening to us the way of deliverance. Now we read, that when Pharaoh overtook the Israelites, he thought he had gained a great advantage over them, the sea before, and he with his army behind. Now, he thought, surely they cannot escape. But this very thing led to his following them into the sea, and being drowned with his whole army. In like manner, when the devil put it into Judas' heart to betray our Blessed Lord, he thought that he too had gained a great advantage. It was his hour and the power of darkness, and he pressed on his evil work accordingly, till he had got them to complete their great crime. Little did he think that, by so doing, he was but helping to destroy himself; hastening his own defeat and disgrace: bruising the heel of that Man promised in the beginning, Who should thereupon immediately bruise his head. Satan knew nothing of all this: and so he urged on our Saviour's death, and by that death received his own death-wound.

Now then, we may see the deep meaning of the verse, "Thy right-hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." Our Saviour, God made Man,

is the Lord's right Hand : by His rising from the dead He is become glorious in power : the enemy, whom He hath beaten down and dashed to pieces, is the devil.

For whereas the work of the devil was to bring sin into the world, and death, the wages of sin, our Lord by His death overcame sin, and by His Resurrection He overcame death. On the Cross He offered that Sacrifice, which should deliver penitent man for ever from the guilt of sin : rising from the dead, He did away with both the power and the punishment of sin. Thenceforward Satan is in a manner bound, and has no such power to hurt men, as he had before.

Not that the struggle and the warfare is over : we know too surely that it is far otherwise. In one sense, our Lord's victory did but begin at His Resurrection. It will not be complete until the last soul is finally rescued from Satan in the last Day, and the whole glorified Body of Christ, which is His Church, taken up to that heaven, whither He, the Head, is gone before. Until then it is war in earth and in air between our Saviour and our destroyer. Michael and his Angels are fighting against the dragon, and the dragon is fighting with his angels, though in the end we know, and he knows, he shall not prevail. There is warfare, night and day, on every side of us : the powers of good and of evil never cease contending with each other : we see them not, though we often may see their tokens : but if our eyes could be for once opened, how awful, how terrible would the scene be ! Evil spirits on the one hand, putting snares in our way, watching eagerly for every token we give of something amiss in our

frail corrupt hearts: watching our looks, our steps, our movements, if haply they may find out our weak places, and learn to tempt us more effectually: and on the other hand, God's good Angels earnestly observing us, and longing to do us good; the Holy Spirit of God contending and wrestling with the devil, even in our very hearts. It is continual warfare; and there are two points in it, which may well make us tremble when we think of them: one is, that we ourselves, you and I, these very souls and bodies of ours, are the objects, the prizes, for whom all this struggling takes place. Heaven and Hell are disputing with all their might, which of the two we shall belong to: two mighty champions, Christ and Satan, are laying hold of us at the same moment, and violently drawing us opposite ways, and we do not yet know, no one perhaps but God knows for certain, which of the two will prevail. Is not this an awful and alarming condition? And yet it is our own condition, as surely as the Bible is true. How can we endure it without continual prayer, continual endeavour to hold fast by Him Who alone can bring us safely through it?

The other thought, which, as I said, seems to me so very awful, regarding this warfare of ours, is this; that we cannot be neutral in it; we cannot stand by, and take neither one side nor the other. "a He that is not with Me," said our Lord, "is against Me;" and again, "b He that is not against us is on our part." If you saw two people quarrelling in the street, there would be no occasion to take part with either: nay, even if there were what is called a civil

^a S. Matt. xii. 30.

^b S. Mark ix. 40.

war in the country, most private persons might manage, if they would, to stand aloof from both parties. Not so in the war between Christ and Satan: every one at all times, whether he knows it himself or no, is serving in one or the other of those two armies; is earning wages either of God, or the devil; is preparing himself a place either in Hell, or in Heaven. And further: if you have not distinctly chosen, and made up your minds to be on Christ's side, you have great reason to fear that, without knowing it, you are on the devil's side. Without knowing it, you are sinking and sinking, lower and lower, towards the bottomless pit. Alas, that so many of us should have gone on so long, lightly and without care or concern, like children on the edge of a precipice, just so far aware of our condition and our danger, as to leave us without excuse! But whether we will mind it, or no, this warfare assuredly is all around us: for our souls the contest takes place, and we must ourselves, however unwillingly, take our station in one, or other of the two armies.

Indeed, by God's good providence we all, I suppose, have had our station assigned long ago. We were enlisted in Christ's army, when we were infants, in our Baptism: we had His mark put upon us, the sign of His saving Cross made in our foreheads. He ordered it so of His distinguishing mercy, as knowing that if He did not so occupy the ground of our hearts, it would by no means be left unoccupied; the enemy finding it vacant, would enter in, and dwell there. All along then, we have been Christ's soldiers, and wherein soever we have gone against

Him, we have not only been enemies, but deserters; not only disrespectful, but treacherous. I wish we thought of this more than we do. What if we made a rule with ourselves to remember it every morning at our devotions? to prepare ourselves for our day's warfare by some such thought as this, "I have this day to stand in Christ's army, wearing the mark of His Cross, in His sight, and in the sight of His Saints and Angels, and in the sight of the evil spirits His enemies. By His grace I will fight a good fight. I will try to be a credit to His mark, and not a disgrace." Soldiers, we know, look earnestly forward to being thanked by their commanding officer for their good service when the war is over. Much more should the soldiers of Christ be often looking on to the great Day when the war between Him and Satan will be over: and imagining what it must be to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Soldiers repair and brighten their arms when they expect to find the enemy at hand: so should Christians brighten up the Cross in their foreheads when they perceive temptation coming. Sometimes it comes quite suddenly, but oftener, perhaps, a thoughtful mind may be more or less able to foresee it: and when it is so, men should prepare themselves by deeper penitence and more earnest prayer: brightening, as I said, and clearing up the token of their Lord which is upon them, so far as it has been dimmed and fouled by any kind of sin.

There are times in life when we are called on to take our Lord's part against His enemy more openly and distinctly than usual: to bear witness to Him, and not be ashamed of Him, before men and Angels,

good and bad. Such a time is that of our Confirmation: and another is that of our first Communion. God tries us then, whether we will have Him for our God and Saviour in our young years, not minding the ridicule of foolish or wicked companions. Such a trial as this will before long, I suppose, be offered to many here present. They will be invited to Confirmation, and to Holy Communion afterwards: may God give them grace not to be ashamed of Christ then!

Another time when there is special need to look to our Cross, and hold fast our profession, is after we have received any special grace of God: as our Lord, immediately after His Baptism, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. If then it comes into your mind at any time, that you have been doing particularly well; that you are much improved of late; understand that this thought is either an actual temptation, or at least a call to prepare for the enemy. Granting that it is as you suppose, that you have really been doing well; to such an one it is said, "Be not high-minded, but fear." The devil in all likelihood is so much the nearer to you: arm yourself well with humble self-denying thoughts, that you may be ready for his assault.

Finally, may the Father and God of our whole life mercifully grant to every one of us to think much of our Christian soldiership when the hour of death draws on. Then you may expect Satan will redouble his assaults: he will try, so far as he is permitted, every kind of anguish and agony, and

^c Rom. xi. 20.

also every kind of deceitful comfort, whereby if possible he may withdraw you from saving repentance. Make ready for this beforehand: dwell often, and deeply, in your inward meditations, on the words of the Litany, "In the hour of death, and in the day of Judgement, Good Lord deliver us." With a strong hand put down all presumptuous self-trusting thoughts; yet on the other side be not faint-hearted. It is not for nothing that you are permitted to help in keeping Easter every year of your life, and in keeping the Sunday every week. These times of holy joy were meant to train us to Christian courage and cheerfulness. Now, and at the hour of death, may we find grace earnestly to remember Christ's victory; may we so trust in Jesus Risen, as not to fear the power of any of our spiritual adversaries: not to count beforehand that any temptation is irresistible!

SERMON V.

OUR LORD'S ABSOLUTE DOMINION OVER HIS REDEEMED.

EASTER DAY.

ROM. xiv. 7-9.

“None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.”

Go out into those places and countries where the Name of Christ is not yet known, and ask the people whom they belong to: to whose service they are bound, both body and soul. Some, too many even in this Christian land, will proudly answer; “They belong to themselves: they are free and independent, and ‘never were in bondage to any man.’” They will be affronted at the question: as the Jews were affronted when our Lord spoke to them as being in bondage, and offered to make them free. And though we should not many of us make this answer in words, yet a good number, I fear, go about with something more or less like it in their hearts. A good number listen more than they ought, to the whispers of the

sullen, unruly, irreligious spirit; and say to those who are in God's place, if they dare not say to God Himself, as the unbelievers said in the Psalms, "a With our tongues will we prevail; we are they that ought to speak, who is Lord over us?"

Others, the great body of those whom we call heathen and unbelievers, if they were asked to whom they belong, who has the mastery of them to make them happy or miserable, would name, I suppose, each one the idol or false god, in whose worship he had himself been bred: Baal or Moloch, or whatever his name might be. But in reality such an one would be acknowledging the devil as his master; for the false gods of the heathen and unbelievers are no better: as it is written in the Song of Moses, "b They sacrificed unto devils, not to God:" and in the Psalms, "c They offered their sons and their daughters unto devils."

And as people speak and think of themselves who are living, so they speak and think of their departed kinsmen and friends. The unbelievers among us, who scorn the thought of belonging to any one, think of course, very little how it is with those whom death has taken out of our sight. Their hearts for the most part are grown rather cold and hard, and they do not long recollect the departed with anything like serious regret: and when they do think of them, they easily satisfy themselves, as they used to do on earth, that somehow they will be taken care of. They do not gravely and truly reflect, what a thing it is for them to be gone to appear before a God to Whom they are accountable.

a Ps. xii. 4.

b Deut. xxxii. 17.

c Ps. cvi. 36.

As for the heathen, there is no end of the wild and strange notions which they have, some here, some there, concerning the state of their dead: but all come nearly to the same thing: as they worshipped false and evil spirits in life, so they have no other expectation but that they shall still belong to them, for pain, or for pleasure, after death.

But what says the thoughtful Christian, when you ask him, to whom he and his friends belong? He will tell you at once; it is the truth by which he lives and acts; it is never away from his mind while he is awake, that he neither belongs to himself, nor to any created being; that he, and all his, living and dead, belong wholly and only to the Most High God, not only as being made by Him, but as being redeemed by the Blood of His Son Jesus Christ, and made members of Him by His Holy Spirit. The Apostle has taught us all, what to say when we are asked Whose we are. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die we are the Lord's;" i. e. living or dead, here or in the unseen world, we are the special property of our Lord Jesus Christ. As when we meet little children whom we do not quite know, and ask them whom they belong to, they answer of course in the name of their father or mother, so when there is question of whom a Christian belongs to, he must in every way profess that he has one Master, even Christ; that he is His for life and death, for time and eternity.

How do Christians know this? And how did it

come about? By the Death and Resurrection of our Saviour: the great and wonderful doings of these three days. For so the Apostle goes on: "Whether we live, or die we are the Lord's. *For to this end* Christ both died and rose and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."

As Christians, we know that the dead belong to Christ, that He is Lord of the dead, because we have in a manner stood with the whole Church, year after year, by His Cross and grave. Year after year, at this blessed season we have had Him lifted up among us: have been invited on Good Friday, to behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow; on Easter Eve, if there be any rest like unto His rest in the grave; on Easter Day, if there be any glory like unto the glory of His Resurrection. We know that the spirits of the dead belong to Him; for after He was put to death in the flesh, He descended into Hell, and in some mysterious way shewed Himself Lord and Owner of all the spirits in that unseen world, and Deliverer of those who had not forfeited His Redemption. We know that the bodies of the dead belong to Him, to be called one day out of their graves: for therefore did He raise His own Body, and unite it again to His Divine Soul early this morning, that He might be the first-begotten, the first-fruits from the dead: He, on the first Easter Day; we, when it pleases Him, on what may be called the last great Easter of this whole world, when at the call of the Archangel not one sepulchre only, but all these millions of graves will fly open, and their stones be rolled away: then, if not before, the most stubborn knee shall bow, and the most froward and

unwilling tongue confess to Him. The living, all who are now or are yet to be on their trial on earth, they also belong to Him; He is their Lord and Owner as well. For in the glorious Body which rose again this morning, He will after forty days go up to heaven in sight of His Apostles, there to sit on the Right Hand of the Father, all power being given unto Him in heaven and in earth.

Christ's then we are, my brethren, whether we live or whether we die, as surely as the blessed Apostles and the holy women were His, who this day came to His grave so early: as surely as Abraham Isaac and Jacob, and the other old fathers were His, whom in His descent into Hell He is believed to have visited with a blessing. His we are, both our souls and our bodies; His entirely and altogether, by virtue of the unspeakable Sacrifice which He offered for us on the Cross, as it were two days ago, and which He continually presents for us to His Father in heaven. His we are, with all that is ours: seeing that He kept back nothing from us of all that was His, but made Himself an entire Sacrifice, a whole burnt-offering.

O that we would, each one of us, set our minds and our hearts towards our Saviour, as being indeed the Master and Owner of us all, both in life, and in death. It is a very plain simple truth, to say that we so belong to Him. Not one of us could ever think of denying it. Yet if we could but truly and really receive it, and fasten our thoughts upon it, all the discomfort and dreariness of life would at once be done away. There would be no such thing, then, as an unhappy and discontented Christian. It would

be as if some poor wandering person, such as we now see too many of, having been long without home or employment, should suddenly meet with the kindest of masters, and be taken at once into his service, with a certainty of never wanting, never being in distress again, so long as he tried to do his duty to that master. Who, that knows anything of distress and need, would not think himself too happy in falling in with such a friend? Who would not make haste to close with him, and hire himself in good earnest to be his servant all his life long? And having done so, he would feel safe; all care about his earthly maintenance would be taken off him.

So it was, and much more, with the blessed Apostles and friends of Jesus Christ, on this holy and happy Day, when their first trembling doubts were over, and they were quite assured of His Resurrection. Ever after their feeling was, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." When any of their number died, they knew that he was still in Christ's Hand: they waited beside his grave, not only in patience, but in cheerfulness; remembering how they had been repaid for those few hours of waiting around their Saviour's sepulchre. As they had seen their Lord again, so they knew that, in His good time, they should see each one of His saints. Death could not really separate them one from another, because it had no power against the Master, Whose will it was to have His faithful servants always with Him in the House. This was their hope in death, their sure hope: "To depart and to be with Christ." If they

died, they died to the Lord: nevertheless, they were content to live and abide in the flesh, so long as it pleased Him, because they knew that if they lived, they lived to the Lord. As long as they remained on earth, they knew they should have His work to do, they should have His members to wait on, which He would graciously account to be waiting on Himself. One only care they would have, while they remained here on their trial; to please Him, to do Him service, to give themselves up to Him, doing and suffering. That was their aim, and they were sure He would not disappoint them. S. Mary Magdalene, for example, as she came early this morning to the grave, had in her heart but one wish, to wait lovingly on her Lord: and when she saw Him risen, and heard Him name her name, saying "Mary," she knew that her wish was granted for ever and ever. So did S. Peter, when Christ appeared to him, and when He bade him feed His lambs: so did S. John, when he heard that perhaps he might tarry till his Lord came: so did the two disciples at Emmaus, when their heart burned within them: so did all the Twelve, when He promised to be with them, even to the end of the world. Then, if ever, was there true happiness on earth. They had their Lord, and they knew they should lose Him no more: for His ascending out of their sight in the flesh, they knew, would but bring Him nearer them in the Spirit. Then, if ever, was true happiness on earth.

And now I will ask a plain question; Why should not each one of us be as happy as they were? We too have waited on Christ during the Sacrifice of His bloody Death, and He has brought us safe to

this Easter morning, and we know for certain that He is risen, to be Lord of us both in our life and in our death. If we have sinned, yet He gives us not doubtfully to understand, that He is ready, on our repentance, to pardon and save us to the uttermost. Why should not we be as happy in our measure as S. Peter or S. Mary Magdalene? Alas! too generally one thing is wanting, and that is the chief thing. We have not the heart to devote ourselves, as S. Peter and S. Mary Magdalene did, to be Christ's own in all things. That good self-denyng heart has as yet been wanting to us: but why, my brethren, should it be wanting any more? Why not begin this very Easter, to live upon the simple faith, that we are Christ's own, that we must not think of living and dying to ourselves?

Some of you, a good many I trust, are prepared at this time to draw near Christ's holy Altar, and partake of His Most Blessed Body and Blood. Endeavour to do it with this mind, that you are pledging yourselves thereby to Christ, to be His for the future altogether, body and soul: try to feel as if you were hiring yourself to Him as a servant for all eternity, or taking such an oath to Him as soldiers do when they enlist. Consider that, as you were long ago in Baptism sealed once for all to be our Lord's soldier and servant, so each time you communicate you bind yourself anew by that engagement: you renew His seal, His mark both in soul and body: you become more than ever His: manifold more, in proportion to the number of your Communion, i. e., you become happier, and happier still, as you go on communicating worthily. What better thing can your best

friends wish, and desire for you, let their thoughts be as fond as they may?

But now I must speak a word to the other part of this congregation: to the many who, having been confirmed and having heard much and often of Holy Communion, are nevertheless intending, for one reason or another, to retire without Communion, this Easter as in other Easters. I say to all such, you *may* be right, there *may* be good reasons why you should go on excommunicating yourself; yet think seriously what a position it is for you to be in. Here is our Lord newly risen, inviting you to come, and be His, in life and in death, and you draw back: you say, you are not fit to come. For this time, you are declining to *live* unto Christ: how then can you *die* to Him? What if your hour should come suddenly? How can you bear to go on thus?

Consider moreover, this other fearful thought. If you are not living to Christ, to whom are you living? If Christ at this moment is not your Lord and Owner, who is your master? For a master you surely must have: it is vain to think of a man's either living or dying to himself: you cannot be really independent, whatever you may dream. If then you are not Christ's, and by your slothful disrespectful way towards the Eucharist, I much fear you are not Christ's; again let me ask you, *Whose* are you? To whom do you belong, at least for the present? And how would you like to be found in the service of your present master, when you come to die?

This is not said to hurry you unprepared to Communion, but to make you afraid of continuing longer unprepared. There is cause to fear that you may be

in a worse way than you think. Consider: would it not have been very shocking, on the first Easter Day, to find one's self among the evil spirits and enemies of Christ, shrinking and drawing back from the good and happy news, rather than among the Apostles who rejoiced at it, and the Angels who were to make it known? Yet which of the two are you more like, so long as you lightly turn away from Holy Communion?

SERMON VI.

THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST'S BODY, AND OUR OWN.

EASTER DAY.

S. JOHN ii. 19, 21.

“ Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But He spake of the temple of His Body.”

WE think, I daresay, all of us, that every one naturally cares enough for his own body ; that, whatever else we may neglect, we are sure to see to the comfort and enjoyment of *that*. But the truth is, that we do not in reality care nearly enough for our own bodies : and one of the purposes of Almighty God in giving us this great and good Day is to make us care for them more. I say, one of the great lessons for Christians to learn from our Lord's Resurrection is the rightly honouring of their own and other men's bodies, and providing for their real good in a way which no heathen or unbeliever ever could think of. And it is a lesson of such unspeakable, such infinite consequence, and so immediately connected with the mystery of the Day, that we cannot be wrong in taking it for a subject of special prayer and thought now, on this Easter morning, and the communicants will do well to bear it in mind, while they are preparing to come

up to the Holy Altar, and after they have received, and are preparing to leave the Church.

You will see very plainly how great a subject it is, if you consider attentively what our Lord said, the very first time, as far as the Evangelists tell us, that He ever mentioned His Resurrection to His disciples.

It was in the first year of His ministry. He had just been taking to Himself a part of His great power ; as Lord and Owner of the Temple, He had been scourging and casting out the buyers and sellers, who were profaning its outer courts. The Jews asked, what warrant He had from God to perform such an act of discipline. "What sign shewest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?" Now our Lord had a way of so dealing with unbelievers, as to speak a word in season to believers who were within hearing. Accordingly He replied to the Jews in the hearing of His disciples, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They naturally took Him to be speaking of the Temple itself, the holy building in which they were, and over which He had just been exercising the rights of a Master and Owner ; and they answered Him accordingly, and bore it in mind against Him, to be laid to His charge long after, as a blasphemous saying, on His trial before the High Priest, and He did not on either occasion explain Himself to them. But there were some standing by, for whose sake especially our Lord seems to have spoken that word ; His own disciples ; particularly, perhaps, S. John, His own beloved disciple. They at the first understood not what He said, any more than the Jews did ; but, with a very different mind from the

Jews, they laid it up in their hearts, and bye and bye, when He was risen from the dead, they remembered that He had said this unto them ; and it struck them, as the truth was, that He had been speaking of the Temple of His Body. Especially, as it may seem, did this thought occur to S. John himself, when with S. Peter, as you heard in the Gospel just now, he visited our Lord's sepulchre early this morning. When he went in, and saw the winding-sheet, and the napkin, and the place where our Lord had lain, he was satisfied that He was really risen from the dead. He saw and believed ; and from thenceforth, he could understand the word hitherto so perplexing ; " Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He " believed the Scriptures, and the word which Jesus had said." And we may be sure that from that day forward S. John and the other Apostles, when they remembered our Lord's Resurrection, remembered also this great thing, that His Body, both before and after It arose, was and is a true Temple ; a true habitation of the One Eternal God.

Now let us very reverently consider, what might be our Saviour's purpose, in thus drawing the attention of all, His enemies as well as His friends, to the circumstance of His Body being a Temple. Why did He make it an Easter thought, a matter inseparable from this day's gracious work, in the minds and hearts of all believers ?

Perhaps one of His intentions might be, to distinguish between His own Resurrection, and the resurrection of all others, before or since. For several, from time to time, have been awakened unto life again ; some before, some after they were laid in their graves ;

some before, some after Christ's taking upon Him our flesh. Elijah and Elisha were enabled, each of them, to raise one who was the only son of his mother; a dead corpse stood up on its feet on touching the bones of Elisha. These were done before the Incarnation. When He Who is the Life came, Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus, arose at the touch of His blessed Hand, at the sound of His life-giving Voice. And after His Ascension the holy Apostles, filled with His Spirit, followed their Lord in this, as in other mighty works. But in none of these instances did the dead person raise himself. The Prophets called upon God by prayer. The Apostles did the same, and were careful besides to use the Name of Christ in all their miracles. S. Peter knelt down and prayed, before he said, Tabitha, arise: S. Paul, at the time of raising Eutychus, was just celebrating the Holy Communion. But Jesus Christ raised those whom He raised, in His own Name and by His own authority: as He Himself had said before: "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." All then who ever yet arose from the dead were raised by the Son of God, either immediately, or through His ministers: and so will every one of the thousands of millions, who, as surely as they are yet in their graves, so surely shall they be raised again. The voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God, the call of Jesus Christ, will quicken them. Not one of them will raise himself. But Jesus Christ did raise Himself. As He was conceived when He chose to be so, as He was born at His own appointed time, as He gave up the Ghost

when He willed, so also when He willed, He raised Himself from the dead, and took unto Him His own Body again. “^a I lay down My life,” He said, “that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”

What a word is that, my brethren, when we come to consider it! Do you suppose there was ever another among the children of men, who had power over his own life, to part with it and resume it, as seemed good to him? Assuredly not. Our Lord, and none other could do it; and that for this very reason, that our Lord's Body is a Temple, a true Temple of the Most High God. Every one of our bodies is the habitation, we know, of a living soul; and so is the Body of our Lord and Saviour. In that He is True Man, He hath joined to His blessed Body a true Soul like unto our souls, only perfect, and without spot of sin: as we sang just now in the Creed of S. Athanasius; “As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ.” But this is not the reason why His Body is a temple. A temple, I need not tell you, means a place or home, where God especially dwells. Such a place or home is the Body of Jesus Christ, because He is True God, the Second Person in the Holy and ever Blessed Trinity; and continuing such, hath taken into Himself the true and full nature of man, body no less than soul; as it is written, “^b A Body hast Thou prepared Me:” and again, “^c In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:” and “^d It pleased the

^a S. John x. 17, 18.

^c Col. ii. 9.

^b Heb. x. 5.

^d Ib. i. 19.

Father, that in Him should all fulness dwell," i. e., all the Fulness of the Godhead. His Body then is a true Temple, and His rising out of the grave is the raising up of a Temple: and as He is the God of the Temple, He raises Himself by His own power. Earth and Hell, bad men and bad spirits, have done their worst to destroy that holiest Temple, to pierce, to bruise, to disfigure, to mangle that most sacred and majestic Body. It hath even become like Job's body: from the sole of the foot, even to the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, which have not been closed nor bound up: many are astonished at Him, His visage is so marred, more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men! Such was the Body, which Joseph and Nicodemus with all reverence were laying in the grave, as on Friday evening last: but there was the Godhead abiding in it, therefore it could not see corruption: therefore, when He willed, it arose, never to die any more; to live, and to convey life, for ever.

One reason then of our Lord's Resurrection being prophesied of as the raising of a Temple was to declare His glorious Godhead: another, we may well believe, was to teach us all how to think of His Blessed Body, how to honour, revere and trust as the very Body of Him Who is over all, God blessed for ever. For the Body of Jesus Christ is part of Him: taken, as the Creed saith, into His Divine Person. We cannot think of it too religiously, we cannot speak of it with too much awe, we cannot behave towards it too reverentially. It is that, of which the burning Bush, shewn to Moses in the Mount, was in some sort a type and figure. As the bush

burned with fire, yet the bush was not consumed, so the Human Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therein His blessed Body, hath the True Godhead ever abiding in it, and wonderfully imparting to it of all its Fulness; yet doth it not therefore cease to be a true and real human Body, of the same nature, though without the same frailties and imperfections, as these our bodies, in which we live and move on earth. Remember then, what was said to Moses when he drew near to gaze on the burning bush. "e Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And remember also how Moses behaved; he "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." How much more ought we sinners to hide our faces, and evermore practise the very deepest reverence, when we draw near to our Lord's Body, the living Temple of His Godhead, in the Holy Eucharist; when we think of that Sacrament, when we speak or read of it, when we do but hear it named, but more especially when we are preparing ourselves, and *most* especially of all, when we are approaching to touch, to taste, to eat and to drink It. That which we there receive is a Temple: and the Lord is in His Holy Temple: let all the earth keep silence, hold its breath, as it were, before Him, out of reverence and godly fear. It is a holy Fire; the Fire of the Lord. And as it is the nature of fire to take up and change into itself all that it lays hold of, so our Lord's gracious purpose is to change us by this Sacrament, as it were, into part of Himself. But if we sin against His Body in the Sacrament, then it will be as Fire break-

e Ex. iii. 5.

ing out from Him to consume us. Thus our Lord's calling His Body a Temple would teach us how to honour it in the Blessed Sacrament.

But besides that which is called His Natural Body, the Body which belongs to Him personally as part of His true Human Nature, our Lord Jesus Christ hath also what is called His mystical Body, i. e., the whole company or society of His Church on earth, making up one spiritual Being, the True Vine made up of many branches, the True Loaf made up of many corns of wheat; the True Israel made up of many children of Abraham; the True House builded of many living stones: and this also He teacheth us to call His Temple. Christ's Church on earth, in Paradise, and in Heaven, is a Temple, because therein God dwells by His Spirit, ever since the day of Pentecost. The enemies of the Church, the world and the devil, may think to destroy it: they may appear from time to time to be having their own way with it: but so the Jews thought they had destroyed our Lord's Body the day before yesterday. To the best of their power they had destroyed it, but in three days He raised it up. And so the faithful know well, that He will before long raise up His mystical Body the Church, however low it may seem to be brought by the sins and divisions of Christians. He will raise it up by virtue of the Spirit abiding in it, as He raised His Body from the grave by His own indwelling Godhead. In the mean time, little as we are apt to think of it, very serious indeed is the sin of those who deal rudely or carelessly with the Church, who count it all one, whether they keep its holy rules or no: who make no scruple of separa-

ting from it, and just pleasing themselves in matters of religion and worship. What if they should one day find that they have been making themselves guilty of the Body of Christ, and so drawing upon their own heads a curse, like that threatened to unworthy receivers of His Sacrament!

But once more : Scripture plainly teaches that the Holy Comforter abideth not only in the Church taken as one, but also in each living member of it separately : just as the life of the body abides in each one of its sound members ; and therefore the Apostle says to every individual Christian, “^f Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you ?” “Why so ?” might some ask ; “I am but a poor simple hard-working man ; I have no learning nor scholarship ; what is there in *my* body to make it a temple of the Holy Ghost ?” “I will tell you,” answers the Apostle, “but without my telling you, “^g know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ?”” Christ, the Life of the whole Body, is then in each one of you as in a living member. Not the whole Church only, but each single Christian also, hath Christ dwelling in him by the Spirit, and is in his measure a Temple wherein Christ resides. Now see what follows from this. When one Christian is kindly waiting on another, even in the way of bodily help, such as food, clothing, nursing, relieving him in work, or the like : that Christian is really and truly waiting on Christ, honouring Him in his neighbour's body. And when any one is exact and dutiful, by the mercy of God, in keeping himself pure, in avoiding all fleshly lusts, that Christian is really

^f 1 Cor. vi. 19.

^g Ib. 15.

and truly honouring Christ in his own body. So S. Paul argues, "Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!" "your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost:" "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's." But, "^h If any man defile the Temple of God," i. e., his own body, or the body of another Christian, "him shall God destroy." How great then is the danger and the guilt of those who either follow or are led by the sinful lusts of the flesh, and think it all natural and pardonable, and that such an one is "nobody's enemy but his own." Alas! It is too plain here, that our Lord esteems such an one *His* enemy, the destroyer of His Body which is God's Temple: and what will his end be?

We know not yet, my brethren what exactly will be the end of the wicked and unchaste Christian; the polluter of his Lord's Body and Members. But *this* fearful thing (among others) we *do* know: that he will not be partaker of our Lord's own Resurrection. The good word is not spoken of him, "ⁱ Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." He will rise indeed, but it will not be the quickening Spirit, Christ by the Holy Ghost abiding in him, which will raise that man out of his grave: it will simply be the power of the Judge, without him, compelling him to come forth, when he would wish to be buried a thousand times deeper, if he might but avoid some little of the horror of meeting his Lord. O Good Saviour, keep us all, keep all Thy people in this place from so great a misery: and grant us such purity of

^h 1 Cor. iii. 17.

ⁱ S. John vi. 54.

heart, that when Thou comest, Thou mayest find us yet true Temples of the Holy Ghost. And then, O joy ! we shall worship Thy Blessed Body, the true, the everlasting Temple, face to face : and Thou wilt open to us the doors of that happy city of which it is written, “^k I saw no temple therein,” i. e. no such temple as we are used to on earth ; “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it.”

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

^k Rev. xxi. 22.

SERMON VII.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, OUR STAY AGAINST SATAN'S DISCOURAGINGS.

EASTER DAY.

ROM. viii. 31.

“What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

THUS exclaims the great Apostle, after earnest meditation on that course of miraculous mercies, which the Holy Church has been rehearsing to us during all the time from Christmas, or rather from the day of Christ's Incarnation, until now. “God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all;” gave Him up, first of all, to be Incarnate, made Man in the womb of a poor simple virgin; next to be born into the lowest condition of life, to be born in a stable, lodged in a manger, bred up in an ordinary trade, lowly and despised for thirty years; then to go about doing good and suffering evil, bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, without a home, in reproach and danger, for three years more; then to be betrayed by His own disciple to His cruel enemies; to be scourged, spit upon, buffeted, crucified, killed, and laid in the grave. Thus God spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for our sake, who were His enemies; and now He hath raised Him from the

dead, in token that with Him He will freely give us all things. What shall we say to these things, to these wonders of unspeakable mercy? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Who can harm us, if we be indeed followers and disciples of Him that is good ^a? The Lord is on my side, I will not be afraid what man, nor yet what evil spirits, can do unto me ^b.

So cries out holy S. Paul, and with him S. Peter and the prophet David, meditating on these Easter wonders. And, indeed, when those blessed women came to the grave early this morning, and found Him not there, they indeed thought only, as true love would cause them to think, of seeing their Divine Master again, alive and in joy, after His unspeakable pangs; but in truth, it was that great declaration which the whole world had been for so many ages waiting and longing for, that God is on the side of goodness and against sin. It was the seal of the Almighty set for ever to such old prophetic sayings as the following: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him!" Hitherto, more or less, good men had been grieved at seeing the ungodly in prosperity; had felt as if they had cleansed their heart in vain, and washed their hands in innocence; had been perplexed at finding themselves chastened, while the wicked were not in trouble as other men: but now the sanctuary of God was opened,

^a 1 S. Pet. iii. 13.

^b Ps. cxviii. 6.

^c Isa. iii. 10, 11.

and the end both of those men, and of the children of God on the other hand, was understood by all who would look that way. Now, the meaning of the first Psalm, and of all the Psalms, was made plain to the whole Church. Now for ever "blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, whose delight is in the law of the Lord." There is no doubt about his lot now, whatever there may have been in times past; to the end he shall be like "the green tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever fruit he beareth shall prosper." While the ungodly, on the other hand, know their portion to be like the chaff which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth. Now, the righteous look on with confidence to that final congregation of all, where they shall stand, but the ungodly shall perish for ever. In short, the whole world is now made aware, that if we are with Christ, God is for us; "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" If it please Him to send His angel and roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, what avail the sealing of the stone by the chief Priests, and the setting of Pilate's soldiers to watch? If Christ, Whose members we are, be risen, what shall hinder our arising with Him? If the grave cannot hold Him Who is our Surety, how should it hold us? If He, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, what dominion can sin have any more over us? If He have bruised the serpent's head, whose fault must it be, if we any more permit that evil power to do us a mischief?

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" It

is true, that Wicked one is still against us, as active, as malicious, as crafty as ever. And though he have received his death-wound, yet is he permitted to go about the fold, seeking whom he may devour of Christ's flock. He is still against us, but here is our refuge and salvation, that since Christ is risen, we know God is for us, and nothing that the enemy may say or suggest need do us any harm.

For example, when we read or hear of high and bright examples and rules of holiness, when we think of the Sermon on the Mount, the thought will sometimes come into our minds, "Who then can be saved? or at least, How can *I* ever be saved, I, whose nature is so corrupt, and who have been guilty of so many grievous sins?" and we are tempted to give up the matter in a kind of despair, and quite leave off watching ourselves. Such thoughts are direct temptations of the devil; but faith can put them down at once, faith in the Cross and Grave of Jesus Christ. Faith can say to the Evil one, "Get thee behind me; I know I was born in sin, but my Saviour died to wash me from it, and He rose again to send down His Spirit, and make me partaker of that washing in Holy Baptism;" and again, "I know too well that I have marred my baptismal holiness more or less with inexcusable actual sins, but my Saviour died to wash me from this also, and rose again to send down His Spirit, and make me partaker of that washing by true and deep penitency. Thus by virtue of Christ's Death and Resurrection, I trust to be forgiven both the sin of my birth and that which I have so miserably brought on myself; and therefore, though I am ashamed and sorry, yet I am very far from despair."

Thus let our faith speak, and the Evil one will not be able to gainsay it.

If he whisper to our hearts, "It is all very well for you to go on flattering yourself, but depend upon it you are but like many others; you may seem now to repent indeed, but you are sure to fall again; temptation some day will prove too strong for you; why should you think to be so much better than others? you had best enjoy yourself while you can." Should Satan talk thus to our heart, again I bid you point to Christ, to Christ risen and ascended into heaven, and offering to send His Holy Spirit more and more into your heart. Say to the tempter, "Why should I fall wilfully away, either now, or bye and bye? Is God's hand waxed short? Is the treasure of His grace exhausted? Is His mercy clean gone for ever, His promise come utterly to an end for evermore? Did He not rise from the grave to day, and hath He not made me a member of Himself, and so given me a part of the power of His Resurrection, that I should sin wilfully no more? that sin should no more get the dominion over me? And why should not this saving power, this good Spirit, be as strong in me next year, or any other year, as now? I will not so affront Christ, I will not believe that His grace is insufficient to keep me upright; I will not sin, knowing that I am counted His, and that He who forgave my old sins, can and will preserve me from new ones, if I try in earnest to keep myself pure."

And whereas the enemy varies his temptations according to our time of life, Christ in like manner varies His graces and the way of bestowing them, and is beforehand with Satan in every point. To

some, for example, the thought comes, and we well know from whom, "You are too young yet to serve God: as for baptismal innocence, it is but a dream; men are all sinners, but you, like others, will live to repent." Here is a thought but too familiar with many of us; how shall we silence it, and put it away? Go back in heart to Christmas. Remind yourself of Christ made a little Child, and passing for our sake through youth, that time so dangerous to all; and say in heart, "Why did Christ rise again, and join me to Himself? Was it not that I might be kept from sin, by the life and grace flowing from Him, not only in infancy and old age, but also in the years between? I will not listen to any, neither to bad men nor tempting spirits, who would persuade me that I must of course sin and neglect Christ any time of my life; rather I will remember my Creator in the days of my youth; I will offer to Him Who died for me the flower of my age, and not wait till it costs me in comparison nothing, till I have but the dregs of life to give."

To another sort the accuser will say, just on the contrary, "You are too old, too far gone; it is no use, now, your trying to be a saint; your chance is lost; you may as well indulge yourself for the present." Well may you meet that wicked thought, and silence it for ever, with the remembrance of the mysteries of Lent, that favoured and sacred season, ordained for this especial purpose, that penitents might know how to become saints, how to make sure their salvation. Say to the devil, "Christ is risen and gone into heaven, and has sent His Spirit to join us to Himself. By virtue of that Spirit given in

Baptism, God, I trust, is still my Father, and if I turn to Him in true compunction of heart, as a man mourneth for his only son, He will receive me with tenderly fatherly love, as that returning prodigal was received: I am sure of it, therefore I will not despair; away from me, all ye that vex my soul."

Moreover, both in this case of saintly penitence in old age, and that other before mentioned, of youthful perseverance, we have the encouraging example of holy men and women, in all ages of the Church, keeping innocency, or repenting heartily. Why should it be accounted a thing impossible with us, to do that which our brethren have done before? If God be for us, to keep us pure, who shall be against us, to say that we never can be high in His favour? Of course, we never can be *so* high, as if we had never slipped back at all; never *so* bright, as if we had shone on without intermission more and more unto the perfect day. Still no one can tell positively, how high and bright we may be; no one can set a limit to God's loving-kindness and our increase, if we are but careful to answer His calls. Therefore, let no penitent, however deeply he may have erred in times past, suffer the tempter to deprive him of his Easter joy; but, having earnestly bewailed our transgressions in the grave yesterday with Jesus Christ, let us to-day rise with Him to a new life of stricter holiness; and let us do Him this honour, that we rise with Him in joy and gladness. Let the bitterness of past sin remain for a little while quiet in the heart; let us not recall it, except when needed to resist temptation and vain confidence; let the glory and sweetness of our Lord's return be

now the prevailing thought in our hearts. Observe His message to His erring disciples, "Go tell My brethren and Peter, that they will soon see Me." O Lord, if we be penitent, Thou still callest us brethren, though we have shamefully forsaken Thee. How then can we choose but rejoice? how can our very compunction fail to be mingled with a kind of sweetness, when we think on Thy forgiving countenance? We will rejoice for the past, in all the Father's good gifts; we will rejoice for the present, in the unspeakable hope that the Son, the forgiving and gracious Jesus, is still with us to be our Saviour; we will rejoice for the future, soberly trusting that the Eternal Spirit of Him Who raised up Christ from the dead, will dwell in us more and more, to quicken our dead bodies to all good works, and resolving, by His grace, to keep the vows which we now renew. For now we are going to receive at Christ's hands, the sure and awful pledge of all these blessings, and of more, infinitely more than these, such as eternity alone can measure; we are going to receive His own Body and Blood. If God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be for us, and with us, in that unspeakable mystery, who can be against us to do us harm? If Christ crucified and risen again be our "meat indeed" and our "drink indeed," what shall hinder our portion in eternal life?

But be not disheartened; for I must speak one word more to those especially who have tried in simplicity and obedience to prepare themselves for those Holy Mysteries, and, it may be, are downcast at hearing so much more said than they seem to feel or understand or enter into. I say to such, Be not

disheartened. The holy women by our Lord's grave knew not at first the full meaning, the full blessing, of their finding it empty ; so you, though you try to keep Easter, and to communicate, in true faith and repentance, yet cannot quite go along with the great things you hear set forth of His Resurrection and His Holy Communion. Well, be of good cheer ; it is not your understanding which Jesus requires, so much as your true good will. Go on humbly doing right, keeping the commandments, bearing crosses, for the love of your good Saviour ; and, in the humble hope of pleasing Him, come with that mind to His holy Altar. He will secretly bless you now, and in His good time will teach you all that remains for you to know, that you, with His saints, may have the fulness of His Blessing.

SERMON VIII.

EASTER-LIGHT ON THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

EASTER DAY.

Ps. xvi. 10.

“Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”

WHEN our Lord's chosen witnesses first began, after His departure, to make known His Name to the world, the Holy Ghost directed them to this Psalm in particular, as containing a hidden treasure of prophecy, long ago laid up for their use, relating to His glorious Resurrection. Thus S. Peter, in the very first sermon ever preached in a Christian Church, on the Day of Pentecost itself^a; “Him God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face: for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope. Because Thou wilt not My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life, Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance.” And then he goes on to

^a Acts ii. 24-28.

argue, that David could not mean himself, because his body had been laid in the tomb of his fathers, and had seen corruption, i. e., had wasted away, just like the bodies of other men. Therefore he must, as in other places, have been speaking of the great Deliverer, Christ, Whom God had promised, with an oath, to raise up to him out of his family, to sit on his throne. Consequently it was no new thing altogether which the Apostles taught, when they preached Christ crucified and risen again, but it was the very thing which they had heard long ago foretold by their king and father David. S. Peter repeated the prophecy at large, dwelling particularly on the mention made there of never-failing joy and trust in God's Presence; the Presence, I say, of God Almighty, as the stay of faith in this world, and the fountain of actual bliss in the world to come. All this S. Peter dwelt on, with the view, as it should seem, of forcibly impressing his hearers with the thought of the bliss to be attained by repenting, and believing in Jesus Christ.

S. Paul, in like manner, appealing to the Jewish history and to the testimony borne to our Saviour by the old prophets, brought forward the same text; but not so as to dwell on it in the same earnest way as S. Peter did. “^b As concerning that God raised Christ from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He saith on this wise; I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore He saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. For David,” adds the Apostle, “after he had served his own generation, by the will

^b Acts xiii. 34-38.

of God, fell on sleep, and was gathered unto his fathers, and saw corruption. But He Whom God raised up saw no corruption." S. Paul recites the text more shortly than S. Peter, his object at the time being, as appears, more to refute gainsayers than to win souls. But so it is that both of them go to the same text, and thereby recommend it to Christians of all times as one especially worthy to be studied, when we are contemplating our Lord's rising again from the dead.

It is much to be observed on what particular circumstance in Christ's Resurrection the chief stress appears to be laid, both in the Psalm and by the Apostles who mention it. It is this: that His blessed Body saw no corruption. It lay not long enough in the grave for that change to have taken place in it, which we know to be the lot of all human bodies, when they have been any while dead. For it was about the ninth hour, i. e., three in the afternoon of Friday, when our Lord poured out His soul unto death on the Cross. And very early on Sunday morning, before Mary Magdalene had come to the sepulchre (and she came while it was yet dark), our Lord had burst the bands of death, and was risen in His glorious incorruptible Body. On the whole, then, we cannot suppose that He had been dead more than thirty-six hours; so that there would be no manner of doubt, even if God had not told us, that His Body had the privilege of returning to life free from all change and decay. In this respect, a difference was made between it and the body of Lazarus, which had been in the grave four days, and was therefore supposed by his friends to have seen corruption.

There seems, indeed, even to our ignorant thought, an especial propriety in its being ordered, that the only Body which was never stained by sin, should also be the only one exempt, though not from the pains, yet from the loathsomeness of death. It was a way of giving the whole world, angels and men, clearly to understand, that, although God had laid on Him the punishment due to sinful men, yet He never ceased for a moment to be the Only-Beloved of His Father. He bore the curse on Adam, as far as the separation of soul and body went; but His Soul was not imprisoned for any length of time in the state of separation, neither did His Body literally return to the dust. His Soul was not left in hell; neither did His Flesh see corruption.

According to the marvellous fulness of Scripture, it will be found that this one short verse, applied, as it is, by the Apostles to Jesus Christ, contains in it many great truths, most necessary for our comfort as Christians, and most impossible to be known, had not God mercifully revealed them from heaven.

First, it proves most expressly the truth of our Saviour's Human Soul and Body: proves, that as He took on Himself, really and truly, the substance of our nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and lived and died, in all respects, a Man, sin only and sinful infirmity excepted; so also, in His unseen state, he continued to be a Man among men; His Divine Soul went where other souls go; His precious Body lay for a while in the grave, like other bodies.

By the care taken to reveal this, we have a token and earnest given us, that our merciful God sympathizes (if I may say so) with our natural care and

anxiety as to what shall become both of our friends and ourselves, during that awful interval which is to come between death and resurrection. We know now, for certain, what is enough to make up for our blindness and uncertainty about every thing else, that souls departed, and bodies in the grave, be they where they may, are within the merciful care of Him Who is both God and Man. He cannot fail to provide for them ; for He has Himself gone through their condition, and can be touched with a feeling of what they require, as of all the other infirmities and imperfections of such a frail being as man. This, when it is well considered, is surely every thing in the way of comfort, whether we are fearing the state of separation for ourselves, or mourning it for others, perhaps very dear to us. Provided only we may have reasonable hope that the covenant of our Christian hope is not forfeited, it is surely every thing in the way of comfort, to know that departing is in some sense being with Christ ; that it brings the souls of the faithful somehow into nearer communion with Him, and seals up their bodies, as it were, under His special protection.

But our comfort, on further consideration, will, perhaps, be found still more distinctly expressed. Observe the difference between the language of the Old Testament, even the most evangelical portions of it, when they speak of the state of the dead, and the language of the blessed Gospel itself, relating to the same subject. David's expectation is, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," i. e. in the dark unseen state. It is dark and unseen ; that is all he says of it. But when our Lord Himself spoke of it,

His word was not "hell," but "Paradise." His promise to the penitent thief on the Cross was, "° Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Here is a happy and consoling difference between the way of speaking in Jewish, and in Christian times. The considerate among God's ancient people knew that the souls of the righteous must be in the hands of God, and that no torment could touch them^d. But whether they were in an actual state of enjoyment; whether they knew their own happiness, or rather lived in a quiet sleep; this might be matter of doubt, until our gracious Lord made known for certain, that Abraham's bosom is prepared for such as Lazarus, Paradise for such as that penitent believing malefactor.

Now what the actual blessings of Paradise are, Holy Scripture nowhere explains: but thus much it gives us to understand, that, the holy souls there, are with Christ, in some sense, so near and so blessed, that S. Paul most earnestly desired to depart thither. It was better, more for his immediate happiness, to be with his Master in Paradise, than to have such communion with Him, as even he, S. Paul, enjoyed on earth. He knew well what he wrote; for, besides the especial teaching of the Holy Ghost, he had himself been caught up into Paradise; and found it, not a mere place for taking of rest in quiet sleep, but a place where heavenly thought can be exercised, and heavenly words spoken in such perfection as is unutterable on earth. He there "° heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

Such being the condition of those holy souls, who

° S. Luke xxii. 43.

^d Wisd. iii. 1.

° 2 Cor. xii. 4.

are under God's keeping in Paradise, it is not to be imagined that such a marvellous event, as the Divine Spirit of our blessed Redeemer coming into that sacred abode, could take place without some great joy and happiness in all that sacred company, who by faith had looked forward to some great and wonderful redemption, but could not perhaps ever imagine any thing so high as was now revealed to them; a world saved, and the power of the devil destroyed, by the death of Him Who was both God and Man. In whatever sense our Saviour had said before, "† Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad;" we must needs suppose, that the heavenly sight of gladness was renewed, and made more perfect, when the victorious Spirit of our Saviour entered into the resting-place of the faithful, with the glad tidings of salvation, wrought by His Blood.

And thus, we understand, that in all our holy duties, our remembrances of Christ crucified and risen again, we do in fact hold communion with all the saints of God: not only with the saints now living, but also with those which have gone before, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, holy bishops, confessors, virgins; whosoever and wheresoever Christ has been glorified in them, living and dying, they are all one people in Paradise, and one people too with the Church on earth, rejoicing together to see Christ's day, and to welcome Him "‡ that liveth and was dead, and behold," He is "alive for evermore."

For in the third place, the words of the text intimate, that, how happy and comfortable soever the Paradise of the dead may be, it is not a place of final

† S. John viii. 56.

‡ Rev i. 18.

perfection, but a place of waiting for something better; a region, not full of enjoyment, but of assured peace and hope. For so much is hinted, in that God is thanked and glorified, for not leaving our Saviour's Soul in that place. It was an act of His mighty power, to Whom all things bow and obey, to open for the Soul of Jesus Christ the doors of that happy, though as yet imperfect, abode, and to make a way for His final and unspeakable exaltation, by again uniting that Soul to His blessed Body.

Now here is something very apt to raise in us high and noble thoughts of that, which, in one way or another, we are shamefully used to undervalue, I mean the mortal body of man. Even the Son of God, it appears, could not, as Man, be made perfect, without the union of His Soul and Body by resurrection, after the two had been separated from each other by death. And such, we know, is God's purpose, with regard to all who shall be glorified through Christ; their bodies, as well as their spirits, are to partake of the eternal reward.

In order, too, to prepare them for it, the very Body of our Saviour Jesus Christ is appointed to be received, by faith, in the Lord's Supper, that it may be, even to our mortal bodies, a kind of seed of an immortal and glorious being. “^h The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.” Out of His very Body goes virtue, to heal and revive the bodies, as well as the souls, of those whom He accounts worthy to touch Him.

Whoever will reflect on this seriously, will surely have earnest thoughts arise in him of his own guilt

^h 1 Cor. xv. 45.

hitherto many ways, in regard both of his own and other men's bodies. Surely it is no light thing, in any way to defile or dishonour that, which the Holy Ghost has sealed in Baptism to be the vessel of a regenerate soul; nay more, that in which He Himself, God's own Holy Spirit, vouchsafes to dwell; and which our Lord would have nourished to a pure and heavenly life, by mysterious union with His own sacrificed Body. Surely we cannot be too pure, grave, or charitable, too much on our guard in our dealings with that which is to rise again, which Christ has taken for part of His peculiar treasure, which He intends one day to present to His Father in Heaven, united to a purified soul, to live for ever. Speaking as the Scriptures speak, that is, after the manner of men, it depends on ourselves, on our own use of our bodies, to confirm or make void this His merciful and heavenly purpose. May His gracious Spirit help men to think on these things in time; for undoubtedly the load of guilt is extreme, far greater than any of us imagine, which they daily heap on themselves by their irreverent usage of the temples of the Holy Ghost, contradicting, as it were, and working against the especial purpose of Christ's most holy Sacrament.

So much for what the prophet here teaches, concerning the dealings of Almighty God with the Human Soul of our Redeemer in its separate state. Now observe what the same Scripture tells us of His Body: wherein you will find more and more reasons for that scrupulous purity and charity, of which I have been speaking. "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." These words, of course, re-

late to our Saviour's Body only, as the former words had related to His Soul. And see what a title is given to that crucified Body ; it is called, in a peculiar sense, God's Holy One : even as the Angel had said to the Blessed Virgin, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Our Saviour's Person was thus holy, because of His most high Godhead, not only dwelling in His Soul and Body, but really and for ever united thereto, so as to make one Christ, one Person, Very God and Very Man. Now here the same name, Holy One, is ascribed to His sacred Body as it laid in the grave, three days and three nights, separate from His Soul. It was still Holy, still united in a mysterious but real manner to the Eternal Word. When Joseph of Arimathea, when Nicodemus, when the pious women gathered round it, and shewed it all affectionate honour, bringing sweet spices, wrapping it in fine linen, reverentially laying it in a new tomb, hewn out of the rock ; do not imagine that they were only paying the last honours to a dead saint. Whether they were fully aware of it or no, they were religiously worshipping God towards that most holy Temple, in which He still dwelt, the Body of the Only-Begotten Son. When the chief priests and Pharisees, in their spite and scorn, put a guard on that Body, sealing the stone and setting a watch ; and when the soldiers, as it should seem in insolence, with a spear pierced His Side ; they were not only dealing disrespectfully with the innocent dead, but they were profaning that Flesh and Blood, which was

united for ever to the Eternal Word of God. Their sin was like the sin of those who behave to the Holy Communion rudely or scornfully; as the pious care of the others is an encouragement to all who come with adoring hearts, however imperfect their knowledge, to that heavenly feast. For Christ's Body is there mystically present, as it was present visibly and outwardly in the grave and on the Cross: that Body, which is called the Holy One, being not only most Holy in Itself, but also the channel and conveyance of holiness to the souls and bodies of all who communicate worthily. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, not discerning the Lord's Body; not making a due difference between other bread and wine, and This which is verily and indeed the conveyance of Christ's Body and Blood: he is guilty therefore not merely of disparaging a holy part of God's worship, but also of slighting the Body and Blood of the Lord.

Lastly, seeing that even in the grave the Godhead of the Lord Christ still abode with His blessed Body; seeing that Body was still God's Holy One, it could not be suffered to see corruption, according to the exposition of S. Peter before mentioned: "God raised Him up, having loosed the pains of death, *because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.*" Why not possible? Because He was the very Son of God. And to whomsoever He has given power to become adopted sons of God, regenerating them by water and the Spirit, and nourishing them with His own Body and Blood: although, because of the infection of sin remaining in them, which never was in Him, they must still expect to see corruption, their bodies

will decay like those of other men, as a corn of wheat dies when cast into the earth, yet there is in them a something glorious and immortal, a seed of a heavenly life which can never decay. Living or dying, nothing shall separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; nothing, that is, but their own wilful unworthiness. A most comfortable thought, that God has done, and is doing, so much for us; a most grave and awful thought, that all rests now (if one may say so) with ourselves.

Doubtless, many of us would rather choose to be quite certain, positively assured, that we never can fall away; but God, Who knows what is best for us, speaks not after that manner in Holy Scripture. He every where addresses all, even the most perfect among Christians, as being yet on their trial, as though it were yet but too possible for the best of them to fall away. As men indeed, their bodies must rise again, and as baptized Christians, they have in them the seed and leaven, as it were, of a glorious resurrection; but they may stifle that good seed, they may behave so as to force God to raise them, not to everlasting life, but to shame and everlasting contempt. We may fall from God, and we surely shall, if we be not careful to lay our foundation where the holy Psalmist lays it in the beginning of this his Easter Hymn. "I have set God always before me, for He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall." As long as we set God before us, as long as we devoutly remember the Presence of the Holy blessed and glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and meekly endeavour to walk as in that Presence; so long we are safe, and no longer.

And who is sufficient for these things? who can walk by so holy a rule without God's special grace? and who dare hope for His grace, without earnestly seeking Him in prayers, in Sacraments, and in all the discipline of His Church? That is the only safe way; for that is the way which God Himself has promised to bless. That is the very path of life, leading to Him, in Whose Presence is the fulness of joy, and at Whose right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

SERMON IX.

THE SLEEP OF SOULS IN SIN.

EASTER DAY.

EPHESIANS V. 14.

*“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead:
and Christ shall give thee light.”*

It seems not unlikely that these words are part of a Hymn used by the Christians of S. Paul's time in the Church service. For he introduces them as if they were part of a quotation from some well-known book. “Wherefore,” he saith, or it saith, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” And yet the words are not to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. It seems natural then to imagine that they may have been in what may be called the Prayer Book of those Christians to whom S. Paul was writing. And if they were part of a Hymn, what so likely as that it was an Easter Hymn? “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” They are Easter thoughts altogether: thoughts of light, and thoughts of resurrection: thoughts of waking out of sleep, thoughts of arising from the dead; and all in virtue of the True Light which is Christ. They answer to those glorious

words of the prophet David's Easter hymn, which we shall all join in to-day, "^a God is the Lord, Who hath shewed us light." They answer to the prophet Isaiah's Christmas hymn: "^b The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

Light is of course especially connected with waking, even as darkness is with sleeping. Light, we know, was the first thing created in this lower world of ours. All was without form and void, as long as it was darkness on the face of the deep: but when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," presently things began to know each one his place, and move into it; and there was life, and order, and purpose, and more and more of it, in the rude, dead, shapeless world. Then, as we know, "^c the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God," the Angels, "shouted for joy:" and well may we imagine their hymn to have been such as this: "Awake, thou that sleepest, thou void waste empty deep, and arise from thy death-sleep; for Christ the Word, by Whom all things are made, He is even now giving thee light."

"And the evening and the morning were the first day." And ever since that day, every morning, the light from heaven has shone out with the same kindly power, and has been the token and signal of life, motion, gladness, to well-nigh all creatures upon the face of the earth: and the Creation-Hymn is in a manner become the morning hymn of them

^a Ps. cxviii. 27.

^b Is. ix. 2.

^c Job xxxviii. 7.

all: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from thy slumber, (which while it lasts is a kind of death to thee) for Christ is here, making His sun to rise upon thee, to give thee light."

How is it that men wake in the morning? What is it that arouses them? Surely it is light, the light of day arisen or soon about to rise, which recalls them to life, and motion, and consciousness. They cannot awaken themselves, no not one of them. However some may boast, not one of them all can make sure of waking up just when they will; it is God that awakens them by His light shining in upon them, or by His providence in some way or other putting them in mind. If we would but put our minds to it, our very awaking in the morning, day after day, is a mystery, a kind of resurrection to us all.

And so in the case of every little child that is born into the world. We know not indeed, not one of us can tell, though every one without exception has had experience, what the feelings and thoughts may be of an infant newly born, any more than we do of one dying, or of one just risen from the dead. All these are entire secrets to us. And yet we have gone through the one, birth; and we know for certain that we shall have to go through the other two, death and resurrection. But how it is with the children of Adam at those times, *that* our Father keeps to Himself as one of His own secrets: that we may learn to fear before Him, and commit ourselves entirely to Him, Who knoweth our end from our beginning, and in His Love careth for both; to Whom our birth, death, and resurrection, are as present as anything that we are at this moment about. I say, we know not what

passes in the mind of a babe newly born. But as far as we can judge by appearances, we are led to imagine that nothing strikes the eye of such an infant sooner than the light; nothing attracts it more (if it be not too dazzling) than the clear open heaven when it wakes in the morning: and in this sense again it might be sung to each one of us, as a welcome into the world, "Awake, thou that hast been sleeping unborn, and arise into the light of day, and thy Lord, Who hath gone through all Himself, He will give thee light from heaven."

And so in all great deliverances—from prison, from slavery, from exile, from desolation, from waste and weary sickness of body or mind, from doubt and despondency about holy things, or still worse, from utter rebellion and recklessness, still the word of Holy Scripture is, "They are in darkness and the shadow of death: and their deliverance must be, to come to the Light and their Deliverer, Christ, Who is the Light."

But what is any of these awakenings, what are all of them put together, but a very faint imperfect shadow of the great awakening of this Day, the awakening of our Lord from His sepulchre on Mount Calvary, and the awakening, by and through Him, of a world sleeping in the sepulchre of sin.

"Awake, thou that sleepest." It is the Church's cry, the cry of all Apostles and preachers ever since the great Day of Pentecost. But who is he that sleepeth and must be awakened? Nay, who is not asleep? If not in his whole life and conversation, yet in some material part of it? Who is free from dangerous droppings into slumber, from occasional, perhaps

very frequent, fits of forgetfulness, during which, for aught he can tell, the enemy may come very near him, and rob him of something very precious? You know what I mean. The more earnest a man is, the better he will know this, how liable we are to fall away from our good beginnings, to swerve by little and little from good rules which we have set ourselves, and to shrink from the trouble and self-denial of keeping them, in itself perhaps very little, just because we choose to give way to our spiritual weariness. An Apostle, a chief Apostle, once knew it too well. “^d Watch ye and pray,” was said to him: “the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.” Christ Himself, in His Agony, was the Preacher, but the sermon failed to awaken S. Peter: his eyes were heavy, and he knew not what to answer our Lord. We know what ensued; his denial, and his bitter repentance.

But in truth, dear brethren, we all know very well that the spiritual slumbers of most of us are far unlike those of S. Peter. Which of us has not too much gone back to the condition in which we were born, the condition of nearly the whole world, quite down to the Resurrection of Christ and the Descent of the Holy Ghost? Who are they that sleep bodily? What are the tokens of such sleep? That men have eyes and ears and other senses, but make no use of them; that they forget where they are, who is with them; in short, they forget themselves; they take no care of what most concerns them; they are perfectly helpless, at the mercy of any who come near them; so far as they have any

^d S. Mark xiv. 38.

consciousness, they are commonly taken up with vain dreams, most unreal, most foolish, most unlike to the truth. Is not this, on the whole, a true account of our state when we are asleep; the state of those even who are wisest and best among us? And of course there is no fault in this; we cannot help it; it is the infirmity of our nature. But spiritual slumber is a very different thing: different I mean, in respect of its guilt before God: for in respect of its symptoms it is fearfully like bodily sleep. The prophet describes the unbelief of the Jews and their hardness of heart and dislike of heavenly things, in this way: “^eThe Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes.” And our Lord Himself tells the Pharisees who thought themselves the wisest of them all, “^fIf ye were blind,” naturally blind, so dull in matters of faith, that ye could not help it, “ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” All men are naturally, in this way, as unable to see God’s light, or to hear His voice, as if their eyes and ears were sealed with a deep sleep. And instead of the true and real things, which faith would shew them if they would believe, they are taken up with a set of empty dreams: as Isaiah saith again, “^gIt shall be even as when an hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite.” All pleasures, honours, profits of this world, even those which are most innocent and

^e Is. xxix. 10. ^f S. John ix. 41. ^g Is. xxix. 8.

seem to make one most useful; so far as they are *only* of this world, so far as they are not sanctified, and offered to our Lord in faith and hope of a better world, what are they? Mere dreams, which will vanish away when one awaketh. And even as persons fast asleep are at the mercy of those who are around them, and can neither protect their persons nor their property, so those who are asleep in sin and earthly desire are at the mercy of the evil spirits. The roaring lion, who is ever walking round and round Christ's fold, finds them sleeping either without it, or if within, still they have wilfully left open the gate by which he may get at them: and it is a miracle of God's mercy, if he do not seize, and devour them in this their sleep.

Take notice, my brethren, that Holy Scripture is not here speaking of murderers only, adulterers, false swearers, or others living in what all men would own to be deadly and notorious sin: but it is speaking of those who are simply irreligious, not seriously caring for their souls; and it tells them plainly that they are asleep, and the enemy close upon them, and if they do not wake in time they are lost.

Why do not people then wake in time? Because in many of them (so Scripture goes on to tell us) it is so deep and dangerous a sleep, that it is more properly called death. "Awake, thou that sleepest and arise from the dead." They are actually "dead in trespasses and sins," so far have they wandered back towards the heathen state from which their Baptism had delivered them: they are again dead in sin, or nearly so; and so their conversion, their wakening up, must be a kind of resurrection.

These worldly-minded, lukewarm, indifferent people, do not feel their condition, of course: it is the very nature of their case; so far as they feel it, they are not quite dead: but whether they feel it all, or but imperfectly, there is but one Power that can effectually awaken them out of this sleep, and raise them out of this death of sin. The only Voice that is piercing enough to rouse up an irreligious Christian, the only Hand to lay hold of him and lift him out of the grave into which he has cast himself, is the voice and hand of Him Who lifted up Jairus' daughter, and called Lazarus out of his grave, when he had been four days dead. His Voice is His word, and His hand is His Holy Spirit, as His great Apostle teaches: "hIf the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." If you have not utterly and finally driven the Holy Ghost away, (and if you had, you would not seek Him at all), there is hope for you, for He is Almighty. He can as easily raise you from the death of sin, as He can raise you up any morning from your sleep.

And as it is the light of broad day, which commonly wakes a healthy and not overworked person out of his sleep, so it is the spiritual light which must wake and raise them who are in the deadly sleep of sin, yea, in the grave of evil custom, or on their way to it: yea, when by long continuance they have become utterly corrupt and foul, as a corpse in a hot country that has been four days in the grave. Yet there is a Light which can awaken and revive them:

^h Rom. viii. 11.

and that Light is Christ, "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" as our text concludes: "Christ shall give thee light."

But in order to be thus the Light and Life of sinners, it was ordained that our Lord shall first raise Himself from that sleep of bodily death, into which for a short time He allowed Himself to be cast, that He might be our Redeemer. And thus His Resurrection is a sign and pledge and mean, not only of the forgiveness of sins by virtue of His one Sacrifice of Himself; not only of the resurrection of our bodies at the last Day; but also of His Holy Spirit entering into our dead and decaying souls, and raising us from the death of sin by the new birth unto righteousness; by Baptism first, afterwards by repentance. That great thing, which took place this morning, was intended to become to every one of us a new birth and a new life, illumination and conversion: that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. By virtue of our secret mysterious union with Him, His whole mystical Body, the Church, yea and each individual therein, is spiritually and sacramentally risen with Him its Head. So S. Paul teachesⁱ, "Being dead in your sins," God hath quickened you "together with Christ."

So great are our privileges. What then have we to do? Why, consider a moment, my brethren, what we expect of persons thoroughly awake, as compared with those who are asleep, or half asleep. We expect that they should use the light which they see;

ⁱ Eph. ii. 5. Col. ii. 13.

we have little pity on them, if they go wrong and fall down dangerous places, because in full daylight they wilfully shut their eyes. We expect that, if they have a great task, which will demand all their daylight, they should rise up early in the morning, as our Lord this Easter-morning, while it was yet but twilight. We expect persons going about in the daylight, to remember that as they see others, so others see them; the same light falls upon both. So Christ, Who shineth on us and on our brethren, expects that we should consider them, and not tempt nor provoke nor encourage them to sin in any way: that we may all walk as children of light, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: not doing things which we are ashamed to speak of, or to be charged with. Lastly, Christ expects every one to make much of the light which He gives, not to waste any of it; to go on working for Him in whatever way He appoints, as long as we can see. And so, “^j when Christ, Who is our Light, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.” For you know it is a property of light, that most things which it falls upon, reflect it, and shine by it. So Christ, the true Sun, is reflected by all that He shines upon, unless they wilfully turn away. His will is, that we shall all be transfigured with Him: ^k changed into His Image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. This is His merciful purpose. Alas! that so many should disappoint Him, and choose rather to be changed after the image of the devil.

^j Col. iii. 4.

^k 2 Cor. iii. 18.

SERMON X.

OUR SLEEP AND WAKING, HALLOWED BY THE
DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE LORD.

EASTER DAY.

Ps. cxxxix. 1.

*“O Lord, Thou hast searched me out, and known me;
Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine uprising.”*

WHAT a wonderful time this is, my brethren, this season of Holy Week and Easter! this course of sacred days and hours, in which the Church instructs us how to watch by the Cross and Grave of our Saviour! How does it bring before us one mystery after another, one after another of God's secrets, one after another of the doings and Sufferings of Him Who is both God and Man! What is the mystery of Good Friday, the miracle and wonder of Divine mercy which we had to celebrate two days ago? It was no less than this, God Almighty dying, the Eternal, Everlasting, Unchangeable God, dying and giving up the ghost, and that for the salvation of traitors and enemies, that they might be forgiven and live for ever. What again is the miracle and mystery of this Day, Easter Day? You know, all of you: it is a Dead Man raising Himself from the grave and restoring Himself to life, yea life everlasting, because

indeed that Dead Man was the Eternal Word of God. And then comes the additional wonder, that each of these great miracles, which the Angels desire to look into, should belong in a manner to you and to me, and to the weakest and most insignificant of all the children of men, yes, and to the worst and most unbelieving: that they should be wrought on our behalf, yours and mine: and not only so, but that by God's special ordinance they should be rehearsed as it were and enacted over again in our own daily doings, the most ordinary actions of our life. Yes, my brethren, it is so indeed: every night and morning of our lives we do in a manner perform and rehearse the miracles of Good Friday and of Easter Day. Consider a moment, and you will see that it is so. What was it that our Saviour did, to make an end of His Holy Passion at the appointed time, three o'clock, on Friday evening? He bowed His Head and gave up the ghost. As it is written of His first martyr S. Stephen, so we may say of Him the King of martyrs, He fell asleep. What is it which happens to every one of us, in ordinary health, by the good providence of God, every night of our lives? We too fall asleep, we become helpless, our active bodily powers fail, we are in a manner for the time removed out of the world. That is, we do in an image and parable act over our Lord's Death; and if we are thoughtful Christians, we make it still more expressly an image of that holy Death, by commending ourselves, as He did, into the Hands of our Father in heaven: according to that simple hymn which so many of you learned in your childhood, "I go to my bed &c." Thus every evening we do in a certain way, in the way

of type and parable, represent and enact the mystery of Good Friday, and no less plainly, every morning, we enact the mystery of this blessed Day. The good providence of God wakes us, as at night He had cast a sleep over us, and we rise from our bed, as He rose from His grave, refreshed in our bodies, and ready for our day's work, as He rose with a Body changed and now no more capable of suffering, to do what, according to His everlasting counsel, remained to be done for us men and for our salvation. You see plainly that our daily sleep and waking are a sort of true token and parable from Almighty God to remind us continually of the Death and Resurrection of His Son. So He speaks of it Himself in the third Psalm, (for you know that the whole Book of Psalms is His from beginning to end) "^aI laid Me down and slept and rose up again:" as if He should say, "I laid Me down on the Cross to die for sinners; I slept the sleep of death; and being dead, I laid Myself down again in the grave, and I awaked; for the Lord, the Everlasting God, I Myself, the Word Which is united for ever so as to be One Person with this Soul and Body of Mine, sustained Me, kept up the wonderful Union even in the pangs of death and the helplessness of burial: Behold Me then Risen: "^bI am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore.'" This I take to be the true intent of the saying, "I laid me down and slept and rose up again," when it is spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ; and yet you see the same words suit equally well for us to speak, every one of us, each morning that God spares our lives.

^a Ps. iii. 5.

^b Rev. i. 18.

Deep indeed and mysterious, far beyond what we can understand, is our own ordinary sleeping and waking: we know not how it is, that the soothing quietness, which we call sleep, steals over the soul and body, nor how the two wake together and begin to act as before: we can neither understand how that takes place, nor can we bring it about at our own will: we cannot go to sleep or not just as we please, neither can we wake ourselves when we please: our sleeping and our waking are beyond our own knowledge and our own power: God keeps both in His own Hand. And if our ordinary taking of rest in sleep and rousing up to our work again, if these are so strange and mysterious, how much more the Death and Resurrection of our Lord, His slumber on the Cross and His wakening out of the grave! The very Angels in heaven, my brethren, know not of these things entirely and perfectly: for they pertain unto Him Who hath said unto us concerning Himself, “^cNo man knoweth the Son but the Father.” The Son of God is Co-eternal and Co-equal with the Father, and the things concerning Him can no more be comprehended, thoroughly comprehended, by any created being, than the things concerning the Eternal Father Himself. He therefore cries out and says unto the Father, as you heard just now in the text, “O Lord, Thou hast searched Me out, and known Me;” “Thou, O Father, and Thou only, hast searched out and known Me Thy Son, God made Man,” and the fearful and wonderful manner in which He was made Man. And again, “Thou knowest My down-sitting and Mine up-rising.” i. e., “Thou, Father Eternal, with Thy Holy

and Co-eternal Spirit, Thou only knowest the full truth concernig the Death and Resurrection of Me Thy Son." For His "down-sitting," or repose, means His Death, His falling asleep on the Cross and lying in His grave: and His uprising means His living again, and coming alive out of the grave, as early this morning, when His time of appointed rest was over. God only knoweth it *all*: but He maketh it known to us so far as is best for us to know.

And this is true concerning the death and resurrection of our friends also and of all men whatsoever. We may know the outside (so to call it) of a person's death, when we are told of it, or are present at it: we may know that he died of such a complaint, at such a time, with such and such symptoms, or that he spoke such and such words: but we do not, we cannot really know for certain, what is passing between God and that man's soul. So again, we know for certain, that that man will rise again; but we do not, we cannot know for certain what sort of a resurrection it will be. We may hope or fear with more or less confidence or anxiety, but we could not search out the man, and see into his heart; we cannot therefore say positively on which side he will be, when he stands before the Judge: whether his resurrection will be to everlasting life, or to shame and everlasting contempt. We cannot say; but God Almighty can. To Him, with charitable prayer and good wishes, we must humbly leave our departed or departing brethren.

We know not concerning other men's death and resurrection: and what is still more awful to each one of us, and comes nearer home to our hearts, we

know not, every one for himself, what manner of death and resurrection our own will be. More or less hope we may have, more or less fear: but positively we cannot say how it will be with us, except so far as this, that a man who is conscious to himself that he is living in the practice of any one deliberate wilful sin, may be quite sure that, if he die as he now is, he cannot be saved. In all other cases, as I said, we may hope or fear, but we cannot be certain. Our own death and our own resurrection must ever be a secret and a mystery to us, as well as the death and resurrection of our brethren: as well as the Death and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Himself.

We know not, but God knoweth all. *He* knoweth all, Who, before the world began, loved us so dearly, with such an everlasting Love, that He grudged not to empty Himself of His Glory, to take on Him the form of a servant, to be found in fashion as a man, to humble Himself, and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. He knoweth what is to become of us, both in this world and in the world to come. Let us trust Him without asking questions, as little children trust their parents: let us trust Him; for surely He loves us, else why did He die for us? And surely He has power to order all for our good; else how could He raise Himself again and in His Human Soul and Body ascend into Heaven, and there sit down at the right Hand of the Father, all power being given unto Him in Heaven and in earth? Can you not trust such a Saviour, my brethren? can you not believe that He never will, never can fail you, let temptation be never so strong, let

death be never so terrible. You know not when your hour will come, nor what kind of an hour it will be; fearful, racking, agonizing, like His three hours upon the Cross; or quiet and calm, as some infant's may have been, whom you may have seen breathing his last in his mother's bosom; and so gently came and went that last breath, that the nearest watcher could hardly discern whether the child was not only fallen asleep. We cannot tell, how it will be with us or with any one whom we dearly love: but He knows, He can provide, and He, we know for certain, will be there, to uphold His own in that final trial, and help them through the pains of death.

“Yes,” you will perhaps say to yourself, “I know very well that *He* cannot fail *me*, but what if I should fail Him? What if this poor frail heart of mine should forget all its good purposes, and betray me again into wilful sin, and He leave me as He justly might, to die in that condition—what then? O, this, this is what troubles me: the doubt whether I shall persevere in repentance or no; O that it would please Him Who knows what mine end will be, to grant me some assurance that it will be well with me, in that hour, that my lying down and rising up will be blessed! then I should be happy, then I could go on in peace; that would be encouragement indeed to serve God, happen what might in this world.” My brother, if this be your frame of mind, if your great care really be to be assured of salvation, I can tell you at once how to find comfort and help: I will read it to you out of one of the best of good books^d:

^d à Kempis 1. 25. 2. p. 65. ed. Ox.

“When one that was in anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once, being oppressed with grief, humbly prostrate himself in a Church before the altar in prayer, and said within himself, O, if I knew that I should yet persevere ! he presently heard within him an answer from God, which said, What if thou didst know it, what wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldest do then, and thou shalt be secure. And being herewith comforted and strengthened, he committed himself wholly to the will of God, and that noisome anxiety ceased : neither had he any mind to search curiously any farther, to know what should befall him ; but rather laboured to understand, what was the perfect and acceptable will of God for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work.” Did you understand it, my brethren? It just comes to this : that in regard of your own perseverance, as well as in regard of every thing else, you are to trust your good Saviour, Who knows and loves you far better than you do yourself : you are to behave, as they who know that they cannot fail except by their own fault : and then, my brethren, you will not fail. As long as you go on humbly endeavouring to obey, humbly repenting for past disobedience, you are safe : as sure as God is true. If your conscience give you a reasonable hope that such is your present course, go on, serve God and be cheerful : and in no case draw back from any duty for fear of not persevering in it.

I will give you an instance of what I mean. He Who, on the first Easter morning, raised Himself from the dead, He has been with us *this* Easter morning, to raise us every one *from our sleep* : bye and

bye, in some day and hour known to Him, but unknown to the Angels in heaven, He will be with us to raise us every one *from our graves*. He will be with us, and we shall be with Him; we shall be aware of His adorable Presence: as our Lord again speaks in this Psalm, "When I wake up, I am present with Thee." I say, in the Resurrection we shall all of us acknowledge His Presence: but did we all acknowledge it this morning, when He awoke us out of our sleep? Have we accustomed ourselves to think of God, as our first thought every morning, as our Saviour in the Psalm instructs us to do? "When I wake up, I am present with Thee." Are you present with Him when you wake up? If not, lose no time; begin at once and endeavour to keep that good rule of the saints; to let God have your first morning thoughts, the first fruits, as it were, and prime of every day. And as the best way to this, ask Him earnestly to teach you to love Him; exercise yourself in His love, and that love, when once it has hold of your heart, will of course make Him first and foremost in your thoughts. Whom do you suppose S. Mary Magdalene first thought of, when she awoke very early, while it was yet dark, this morning? if indeed her love had not kept her waking all night. Do you at least *try* to love: set yourself this rule and *try* to keep it: the devil perhaps will say to you, "It is no use; you may perhaps do such a thing once or twice, to-day and to-morrow, but you will never be able to keep on with it, and what is the use of beginning and leaving off?" Thus he will try to discourage you: but never do you mind him: never shrink from doing right to day, for fear you should neglect to do it to-

morrow. He Who was present to-day, to receive your first thoughts on awaking, will be present also to-morrow. Trust Him. He will help you to persevere in good if you ask Him: He knows all your difficulties, and He rose from the dead and has sent His Spirit from heaven, that you might have strength and grace to overcome them.

Trust Him also, my brethren, *with your bodies*. That is another great Easter lesson especially taught by this Psalm. He knows your uprising: i. e., there is a certain time, fore-ordained in His eternal Counsel when He will raise these bodies of ours from the dead: and in the mean time He will keep them safe in the grave, as He kept them, yet unborn, in the womb: for so we give thanks to Him, each one of us, and say, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My bones are not hid from Thee: though I be made secretly and fashioned beneath in the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect: and in Thy book were all my members written, which day by day were fashioned: when as yet there was none of them." He who watched so lovingly over our mysterious beginning, how will He not fulfil His own promise to raise us all with our own bodies, how inconceivable soever the thing may seem to us? He will do so, as surely as He by the Holy Ghost formed at first the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and afterwards raised that sacred Body from the dead. He will raise us, by virtue of that very same Blessed Body, which is in each one of His true members, by Holy Communion, as a kind of Seed of eternal life, to quicken

them, and change them into the likeness of itself. For so He distinctly promised: “^e Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day;” i. e., I being spiritually within him, to be his meat indeed and drink indeed, he will rise and live again in that other world by a special life, which others will not partake of: a life communicated entirely by My Flesh, so abiding in his body; a life which shall change ‘his vile body to be like unto Christ’s glorious Body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. This is our Lord’s covenant, His covenant sealed by the Sacrament of Holy Communion, in favour of these bodies of ours, for which we all care so much. He also cares for those bodies so abundantly, that in a wonderful way He offers His own Flesh to be received into them, to cleanse them from sin, and quicken them to eternal life. But then, we *must trust Him with them*. How do we trust Christ with our bodies? By employing them in His service, by keeping them pure from fleshly defilement for His sake. This do, and come to His Altar, i. e., to the Cross, the Tree of Life, and put forth your hand and take of it and live for ever. God give you this grace, through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ!

^e S. John vi. 54.

^f Phil. iii. 21.

SERMON XI.

SYMPATHY WITH THE SORROW OF OUR LORD, THE
CONDITION OF ENTERING INTO HIS JOY.

EASTER DAY.

S. MATT. XXV. 21.

“Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

OUR Saviour has been, all this Holy Week, asking for our sympathy in His deep affliction. Now He invites us to sympathize with Him in His joy. Yesterday the Church sate on the ground a widow and desolate, and in deep mourning, because the Bridegroom was taken from her: she was by the sepulchre without, weeping, like Mary Magdalene before she knew of the Resurrection. To-day she wears her best apparel, and pours forth her choicest hymns, for gladness. Yesterday the Table of the Lord, which is also His Altar, was entirely stripped, in token of His deep humiliation. To-day it is clothed in white, because this is a kind of Baptism-day; it is in a sense the day of all our Baptisms in one. For on this day God Almighty wrought that great miracle, from which virtue flows out to renew the whole world of sinners, after His image, by water and the Holy Ghost. Our Lord rose again for our Justifica-

tion; that we, receiving new life from Him in Holy Baptism, might be made righteous, as we had been made sinners in receiving our first life from Adam at our natural birth. Therefore Easter Day, as I said, is in some sense the Christening-day of the whole Church, and of each one of us: and well is it ordered, that the Church should wear her best white robe on her holy Baptismal Day.

And as the Church is in white, so ought our hearts to be: full of a holy thankful joy, yet very serious, and reverent: bright and joyful in the sight of the Angels, because they are (if we may venture to say so) clean: but very grave, very full of fear and trembling, because what cleanness we have is none of our own; it is a free gift, vouchsafed at first by God's mercy in our Baptism, and now renewed by the same mercy on our true repentance and amendment.

Our Lord then invites us to rejoice at Easter, but observe, it is to rejoice with trembling. "a Serve the Lord in fear: and rejoice unto Him with reverence." That is His word in the first of the Easter psalms; and it is of the very greatest consequence to our souls, that we accept His gracious invitation even as He gives it. For such as our minds and hearts are, at this and the like holy seasons, such they will most likely be when we hear His Voice at the last Day. If we really rejoice unto Him now, there is good hope that we shall rejoice then. These great, and happy feasts of the Church are a sort of rehearsals, in which the soul may practise herself in heavenly tempers; she may try her voice, and feel after

^a Ps. ii. 11. P. B.

the right notes, wherewith to join (if so be) in the songs of the Blessed.

It being then of so great importance to us, to partake in our Lord's Easter joy, let us in the first place be well aware, that, before His joy, we must have partaken of His sorrow. The gracious words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," will not be spoken to any one, who has not been, in some sense, a fellow-sufferer with Him here upon earth. It is a law of His kingdom which cannot be altered; a faithful saying, so the Apostle calls it; "^bIf we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." "If we suffer:" not, "if we enjoy ourselves." And another Apostle, S. Peter, encourages his flock to rejoice, on this ground, that they are partakers of Christ's Sufferings, in order that, when His Glory shall appear, they may be glad also with exceeding joy^c. And our Lord's promise to His own favoured ones is, "^dYe shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." "Ye now have sorrow, but your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

Yes, brethren, it is even a law of God's kingdom; there is no entering into Christ's joy without first bearing some little of His Cross. Do not think it hard. If you consider, you will find that it could hardly be otherwise. Who were they that rejoiced this day in Jerusalem, on hearing first from the Angels that our Lord was alive, and then on meeting Him, and being permitted to see His Sacred Wounds, and even to hold Him by the Feet, and worship Him? Not His enemies surely, nor indifferent persons, but His friends; those who had before mourned about

^b 2 Tim. ii. 12. ^c 1 S. Pet. iv. 13. ^d S. John xvi. 20, 22.

His Cross and His grave. His enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, they could not bear to think of His rising; they did all they could to hinder it (as they thought): it was no joy at all to them. The great body of persons at Jerusalem, though they might have heard more or less of Him, though they might have occasionally seen Him, cared in fact very little about Him; and these of course had no particular satisfaction in being told that He was risen. Only His friends spake one to another, and were eager each one to tell his companion of the tokens and encouragements to hope, which from time to time they received: that is to say, such as Mary Magdalene, who had been so broken-hearted at losing Him out of her sight; such as S. John, who had helped to lay Him in the grave; and S. Peter, who had gone on weeping bitterly for his sad denials of Him; such again as the two on their way to Emmaus, who, as they walked, were so sad in talking to each other of their having lost Him, that a stranger going by, such as our Lord seemed to be, could scarcely help noticing it. These, who went about bewailing and lamenting Him all Friday night and the whole of Saturday; these were the first and chiefest persons to welcome Him on Sunday with exceeding joy.

So it was then, and so it must be always. If we would enjoy our Easter Day religiously and truly, we must first have kept our Lent and our Holy Week, as real, humble, earnest penitents. And I have heard it said, by a very thoughtful person, that one chief reason why our Sundays are less happy days than they might be, even among good and well-meaning persons, is our not making much of

our Fridays. If we denied ourselves a little then, if we did but keep silence awhile, to meditate on Christ's Passion and our many sins, the Sundays would surely come to us with a brighter gleam, our hearts would cling to them and welcome them, more than they do. You know, my brethren, how that, even in worldly things, our enjoyment of a blessing is very greatly quickened by any fear or distress which has gone before. At this very time, you know, there is a heavy sickness in one part of our parish: it causes great anxiety for the time; but we hope that, by God's mercy, it will abate before long: and when it has abated, when in answer to the prayers of His Church and of the afflicted and poor people themselves, it shall have pleased Him to grant recovery, whose do you think will be the greatest joy? Who will feel happiest in thanking and praising Him? Of course, the very same who are now most alarmed at the sickness: the sufferers themselves, their nearest kindred and friends, and those whom the providence of God has called to wait on them. If you will reflect on it for a moment, this will help you to understand how the right use of Lent is necessary for the fulness of Easter joy. And do you not also perceive by it something yet more serious? viz. that the joy, of which Easter is but a shadow, the joy of heaven, the joy of the Lord, cannot be had but by those who have been taught to enter into the mind of the Lord? The Joy of the Lord! Consider, my brethren, what a wonderful saying that is! The Joy, with which the great Almighty God is happy in the highest Heaven: the happiness which flows out directly from Him Who is the Fountain of all Life,

and Light and Glory: the Joy which the Ever-Blessed Son of Mary takes for evermore in the Presence of the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit. This is the Joy into which you, I, all, are invited to enter: the poorest, and most ignorant child, the most destitute beggar, if he will serve God in truth with his one talent: nay, the foulest and most shocking sinner, truly, timely, thoroughly repenting: it is offered to all, but none may come to it unprepared. And what is the preparation? Not surely, the being just free from gross and scandalous sin. The ordinary persons up and down the streets of Jerusalem, who had had nothing to do with the outrageous treatment of our Saviour, were not therefore prepared to share in the triumph and glory of His Resurrection. For why? It was nothing to them; they were altogether unconcerned in it. And so, brethren, should any one of us go on to the end in the usual unhappy carelessness about the great truths of Christ and the graces of His Church, it will be utterly impossible for him to rejoice with Christ and His Church in the day of their joy. What though we have not been thieves, adulterers or murderers? It will not follow that we are such lovers of Christ, as that our seeing Him again and His seeing us, should cause our hearts to rejoice for ever with a joy which no man can take from us. Such joy cannot be ours, except we are *quite* on Christ's side: except we have some touch of that earnest kindling love of Him, which made the disciples glad when they saw the Lord: glad, simply because they saw Him: happy to have Him in their sight, because they loved Him. But we know that such love as this, will make people

mindful of the Beloved in every part of their conduct: they will not merely abstain from a few gross offences, to which, it may be, they have little or no temptation: they will rejoice to remember the Beloved in every thing; it will be a satisfaction to them to go out of their way, to deny themselves for the sake of pleasing Him. Jacob, we read, loved Rachel, and the token of his love was this: ^ehe hired himself to her father Laban for seven years, on condition that she should be given him to wife: and it seemed to him but a few days, for the love he bare her. When we are of that mind as concerning Jesus Christ, when we are truly and really uneasy at not doing our best for Him, and when all we do seems to us but a very very little for Him, then will our hearts be in a way of preparation to enter into His joy: as Mary Magdalene was prepared to welcome Him with adoring love, because she had truly mourned for Him, and waited on His remains, the whole time while He was out of sight. Well then, you will first be zealous in your warfare against *all* your own sins. As a mother watches and busies herself to remove the least thing that hurts her beloved child, so you will be very particular in weeding out of your heart and life whatever will annoy and offend your Saviour. Next, as we shall not spare any of our own sins, so, if we are quite in earnest, we shall be zealous in winning and keeping other souls to our Master's service. For we know that He died and rose again for those others as truly as for us. Therefore in all ways discreet and humble, yet with all fervour and zeal, we will labour and pray

^e Gen. xxix. 20.

to help them in the way to Heaven; or, at least not to hinder them.

And since the Holy Catholic Church is our Saviour's own appointed way of helping men in the way to Heaven, we shall always be anxious to be on the Church's side: knowing that it is in fact Christ's side: he that hears the Church, hears Christ, and he that despises the Church, despises Christ. Now, many people do this ignorantly, and only for want of knowing better; and about them I say nothing; but if the same be done, if the Church be despised at all wilfully, and the man die in his sin, I do not see how we can hope that such an one can enter into his Master's joy. And this is a sad thought: for in most parishes, and even among ourselves, there are too many who despise the Church in this way: they make no rule of coming to her Sunday services, nor of receiving the Holy Sacrament even so much as three times a year, though they know the Church in the Prayer Book expressly ordains it. Bye and bye these persons will die; and if they die with this sin on their heads, what chance have they of entering into His Joy? Alas! I fear it will go very hard with them. They cannot say, it is a hard question, they do not understand all the Church commands, and therefore, how should they keep it? Nay, surely in these two points, coming to Church and receiving the Holy Communion, the Church speaks so plainly, that every child, who is not a mere babe, can understand it. There may be some here on this great Day who do not ordinarily come on Sundays: there may be many who wilfully and knowingly go on without Communion. I would say to them with all

seriousness, How *can* you be contented to go on in this way? You are hiding your one talent in a napkin: how should you ever be bidden, such as you now are, to enter into the joy of your Lord?

In this, and in other duties hitherto neglected, it may be that setting yourselves right would needs bring with it more or less of inconvenience, sometimes of actual suffering. But what of that? "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." "§ Ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." You, by His grace, will not mind the suffering, my brethren, nor the inconvenience, nor the loss, nor the whisperings of foolish people, if only all may be right in that Day. And when your gracious Teacher, by His fatherly Hand, has guided you on a little further, and caused you to draw near Him, with your brethren, in Church and in Communion, you will not even mind disappointment, present disappointment, I mean, in those heavenly duties. You will not too much mind dulness and dryness in your prayers to God, nor in the very Sacrament of Communion. You did not begin praying, or receiving Holy Communion, for your immediate comfort, but for your final improvement and safety. As comfort was not your object, but something far better, so you will not leave off for the lack of comfort. For you do not come to Him for the loaves, but for the miracles. Your desire is to be like Him, and to be like Him you must sometimes be in agony. Wherefore, brethren, be of good cheer: think much of the Cross; fight steadily against your own sin: and may

† Ps. cxxvi. 6.

§ S. John xvi. 22.

He Who has spared us to see another Easter, in spite of so many provocations and backslidings; may He so direct and rule our hearts, that His joy and grief, such as we hear of in the Gospels, may be our joy and grief also! Then will this life be a school to train us for His Eternal Joy: and every Easter Day an image of the bright never-ending day of Heaven.

SERMON XII.^a

THE JOYS OF CHRIST.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. MATT. 25. 21.

“Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

OUR Lord, as we all know, is most commonly described in Scripture, as a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The Cross, not the crown, is His chosen mark, the sign by which He is known far and near, His ensign lifted up to the people. To suffer with Him, to be crucified with Him, to bear the Cross with Him and after Him, this is declared, again and again, to be the whole of a Christian's duty. Were it not so, there would be little or no trial in religion. We should come to God's service naturally, and as a matter of course, like young persons learning an art or trade which they delight in. But we know that it is far otherwise: what with our inward corruption, and what with cares and pains from without, I suppose there is not one really thoughtful person of us all, who does not own and feel in his heart, that the good way is a narrow and painful way, that it requires us truly and really to suffer with our Blessed Lord.

But yet not so, as to shut us out from rejoicing

^a Preached as a sequel to Sermon xi.

with Him, when the time comes to do so. For as I pointed out to you last Sunday, the very meaning of Easter coming after Lent is, that it should prepare us for sympathizing with the joy of our triumphant Lord, as the meaning of Lent is to practise us in sympathizing with our suffering Lord. Lent is to teach us how to die; and Easter, if I may so speak, is to teach us how to be happy after death. Now as we learn to bear our own sufferings, and make them help, by God's mercy, to the healing of our sins, by devout study of our Lord's Sufferings, so may we learn to prepare ourselves for heavenly joy, by religious thought of what is told us, of our Lord rejoicing when He was among us in the flesh. Seldom indeed does the Holy Scripture make any mention of His taking comfort or pleasure in any thing: the whole way from the manger to the grave, He bore His Cross, if not outwardly on His shoulders, yet inwardly in His heart and mind. Still there are moments when He vouchsafed to receive consolation, and even joy, as one of the children of Adam. The bodily and mental infirmities and sufferings, which He endured for us, did not always press on Him alike: and as often as they were removed, it was relief to Him, as it is to us. E. g., when after His forty days' fast the Angels came and ministered unto Him: as well as, when in His unspeakable agony there appeared unto Him an Angel from Heaven strengthening Him: it was a real consolation, and so far a real joy, to our Lord: and if we would go along with Him in His joy, we should do well, not simply to be glad of such relief when it comes, but to be thankfully glad of it, to accept it as sent from our Father by the ministry of our fellow-

servants the holy Angels: whereby what would otherwise be mere outward or passing comfort will be turned into an exercise of highest communion with the good spirits in Heaven. Again, see our Lord's gracious way of speaking, when He had to speak of being in company with His chosen disciples, His friends, and brethren, for by all those names He graciously calls them: it is plainly the same kind of natural delight as friendly hearts take in the society of any one dear to them. " ^a With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: " and, " ^b I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: " and, " ^c Go tell My brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." Surely, dear brethren, when we think on those words, we may well lift up our hearts to Him, Who thus graciously permits and encourages us to hope that our joy is a part of His joy; as often as with loving, and Christian minds, we speak to one another or think of one another, as Christian friends, in His faith and fear.

And then there was in our Lord's Divine Soul, ever present in the midst of His deepest afflictions (if we except, perhaps, one or two mysterious moments,) I say there was always in His Soul that which He told His disciples of, when they approached Him with earthly refreshment, and He told them, " ^d My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." He prepared Himself for the joy that was set before Him, by continually going on with the Father's work on earth. If we would enter into His Joy, we must prepare ourselves in like man-

^a S. Luke xxii. 15. ^b S. John xvi. 22. ^c S. Matt. xxviii. 10.

^d S. John iv. 34.

ner; and in so doing He will give us a comfortable hope, that we are pleasing Him, doing something, however little, on His side: it will be to us one drop of that infinite calmness, that unspeakable peace and joy in God, which was in our Lord and Saviour, as a well of water springing up unto everlasting refreshment, in the hottest and saddest trials of His ordinary life.

Further, besides these habitual and abiding comforts, we read now and then in the Gospels of His rejoicing, rejoicing in spirit and being glad. Though all the blessedness of Heaven was His for ever, yet He vouchsafed, like one of us, His imperfect creatures, to be visited now and then with gleams of unusual joy. And if we observe well the occasions in which this is related of Him, and compare them with those on which we also rejoice in spirit, we shall be the better able perhaps to judge of the state of our own hearts. Our Lord then rejoiced in spirit, we are most expressly told^e, when He gave thanks to His Father, for hiding the secrets of His Gospel from the wise and prudent, and revealing them unto babes. And we may well understand that it is a joy approved by Him, a joy like His own joy (how far soever beneath it), when Christian men from their hearts delight in the humble and lowly ways of Christ's Gospel; and most of all in the Incarnation of God the Son. As the Angels, on that Christmas night, did not break out into their hymn of praise, until they heard of His being wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, so still it is the most humbling and lowly things, which heavenly and

^e S. Luke x. 21.

angelic souls delight in ; it is a real satisfaction and comfort to them to see Christ's favour shewn to His little ones ; they love to be present when Holy Baptism is administered, and to mark the ways of little children fresh from that holy Sacrament ; they love to remember how God's Word speaks of the poor, how it says that for them especially is the kingdom of God intended. The Cross is dear to them, because it is so humble, and so are all the self-denying ways of the saints : and with a deep, and awful satisfaction they contemplate His providential doings, resisting the proud and giving grace to the humble, putting down the mighty from their seat and exalting the humble and meek, in private and in public, in Scripture and out of Scripture, from the days of Cain even until now. And indeed, my brethren, now in our own time, I cannot but think that it must be a deep joy to the Angels, and to such angel-like men as I have now described, as often as they look upon some plain simple Christian, who walks faithfully in the old ways, in which by God's mercy the Church had brought him up, and will not be turned aside to the right hand or to the left. There is, I thank God, such a holy stubbornness in some : may God increase their number, and the number of those who wish to be like them !

There is yet another joy, and that most truly the joy of the Saviour ; I mean, that joy of His, whereby in the presence of the Angels of God He rejoiceth over one sinner that repenteth. That joy, in the presence of the Angels, in Heaven, whose can it be but the joy of our Lord Himself, wherewith He represents Himself as delighting to welcome one peni-

tent sinner; one true, one earnest penitent; more than ninety and nine who, being in comparison just, thought they needed no repentance^f? This delight, this special satisfaction in beholding true repentance, our Lord invites men to partake of, when He says, "Enter into My joy." It is just contrary to the envious, malicious, covetous temper, to the temper of Cain, Balaam, and the Pharisees; for they could not endure to see a person coming humbly to God, and receiving more favour than themselves. Think of this, brethren, as God shall put it in your power to help or hinder the penitency of your fellow Christians. Rejoice over them, if they persevere: be glad, if you can any how go out of your way and put yourself to inconvenience to help them: think of them, wish them well, pray for them, deal gently with them. Sometimes, it may be, we are tempted (I fear it is not so very uncommon) to be vexed rather than pleased with our brethren's repentance. We do not like the trouble and self-denial of doing likewise, and yet in our hearts we are ashamed to hang back; and so we become ungentle and angry, and silently, at least, discourage them in their improving ways. The Psalmist points it out in the instance of bodily self-denial^g; "I wept and chastened myself, and that was turned to my reproof. I put on sackcloth also, and they jested upon me." Sometimes we see it in the instance of those who are remarkably gentle and patient under ill-usage. Persons of keener dispositions cannot well bear it; they even scorn and dislike them for their want of spirit: but alas! how unlike is all this to the mind of Him Who hid not His Face

^f S. Luke xv. 7, 10.

^g Ps. lxxix. 10, 11.

from shame and spitting^h: and how like to the mind of the Pharisees, who said, “ⁱThou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy,” and “^jIf Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.”

There is yet one other instance in the Gospel-history of our Holy Saviour’s rejoicing; it is where He Himself says He is glad. He says it on a remarkable occasion, the death of one whom He dearly loved. Lazarus had been sick, and died, when our Lord was far away from him: and our Lord telling His disciples, says, “I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there.” Jesus is glad: and why is He glad? At that which in an ordinary way would make a loving heart very sorry. He is glad that He was not at hand, when a dear friend sickened and died. How should that be? “For your sakes,” He says, “I am glad:” for if He had been there and wrought the common miracle of healing, Lazarus would not have given occasion, by his death, to the greater miracle of raising him again. Therefore He says, “^kI am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe.” Christ is glad, because here will soon be an opportunity of His doing a great work for the increase of their faith. And moreover this raising of Lazarus, besides being in itself so great a miracle, led the way immediately to the counsel of the priests against Him: and thus our Lord’s gladness in doing what He knew would so provoke them, was but the same feeling which He elsewhere expressed, saying, “^lI have a Baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened, till it be

^h Is. l. 6.ⁱ S. Matt. v. 43.^j Ib. xxvii. 40.^k S. John xi. 15.^l S. Luke xii. 50.

accomplished?" He could not be easy, till He had laid down His life for us; and everything that carried on this great purpose, for which He came, was a real joy to Him.

If we then desire to have our joy at all like the joy of our Lord here, and so to prepare ourselves for entering into His final and eternal Joy, it seems that there are three sorts of occasions, on which we shall use ourselves especially to rejoice. First, when God gives tokens of His mercy to humble, lowly, child-like ways: secondly, when sinners repent; thirdly, when He calls us plainly to any work of suffering or self-denial, for His sake. In these things Christ rejoiced, and therefore in these things we may rejoice. Only in all, be sure, He intends you to look on, as our Lord looked on, to the joy that is before us. Christ Himself took comfort in these things, on the Cross, and amidst all His bitter afflictions. "^mFor the joy that was set before Him," says S. Paul, He "endured the Cross, despising the shame." "The joy that was set before Him." What is that? Besides all its other deep and mysterious import, far beyond all words and thoughts of ours, one thing we are sure of, that part of it was the gladness which His Divine Heart would feel, as He should see His redeemed, His beloved ones, those whom the Father had given Him out of the world, entering on their eternal rest; coming finally to be with Him where He is. For so He speaks to them Himself: "ⁿThese things have I spoken unto you, that My joy," the delight which I now take, "might remain," I might continue to take it in you, and that your joy, the

^m Heb. xii. 2.

ⁿ S. John xv. 11.

delight you take in Me, may be in its time made full and perfect. So also He pleads with His Father, "°These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves," that, as He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His brethren of mankind, and on their behalf, and as He, from being a Man of sorrows, should, in His Human Nature, be exalted to be filled with joy from His Father's Countenance, so His faithful servants too might in their measure partake of the joy, as they should partake of the anointing.

Behold then, my brethren, our gracious, adorable Saviour, how in His joy as well as in His sorrow He bowed Himself down and humbled Himself to be one of us; to be comforted by looking on to a joy which was not yet His, and in the meantime to relieve Himself by watching the repentance of sinners, the faith of childlike persons, the silent progress of the work which He came to do. Behold, and learn, by His grace, so to rejoice as He rejoiced. This is a day most suitable to lessons of joy, this Sunday next after Easter. It used to be called, the "Sunday in white robes," because on this day those who had been baptized at Easter (which was a very special time for Baptism) came solemnly to Church in the white robes which had been put on them for the first time at the Font; even as one would wish all who communicated on Easter Day to come again to Church to-day to renew their vows; still wearing by God's gracious favour the white robe of Absolution which was then given, inwardly and spiritually, to every one of them, if they came in the true faith and fear of God.

Those white robes, if you really come here wearing them Sunday after Sunday, Communion after Communion, if you guard them courageously and humbly, and presently cleanse them from every stain by true confession and repentance, O, who can say what robes of joy they will prove to you, how gloriously they will shine hereafter, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them, when He shall change them to be like His own glorious robes, when He was transfigured, and when He rose again. This is not a dream; it is a Divine vision, which will prove a reality, if we drive it not from us by sin. O then let us watch; especially let us watch our joys, lest they prove such as to unfit us for our Master's joy. "P Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments."

P Rev. xvi. 15.

SERMON XIII.

JOY IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

EASTER MONDAY.

Ps. xvi. 10.

“Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”

WITHOUT all question, this prophecy belongs in an especial sense to our Lord and Saviour. He it was, Whose pure and Divine Soul could not stay long in the place of hope and imperfection; Whose Body could not possibly be holden of death long enough to see change and corruption. Yet so it is, that almost all the Psalms which relate in this manner to the King and Head of the Church, do also relate, in a merciful and mysterious way, to the Church itself and to every member of it. We may, therefore, without presumption, go on to consider these heavenly promises as spoken to ourselves and to all who are in covenant with God through Jesus Christ.

We are particularly warranted in taking this Psalm to ourselves, inasmuch as the first verses of it plainly belong to David as well as to Christ. It is David,

who so earnestly pledges himself never to run after another god. "Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, neither make mention of their names within my lips." It is David, who thanks God so earnestly, for having given him a portion among His own people, and in His Church. "The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground, yea, I have a goodly heritage." It will be found on examination that every part of the Psalm may be applied to David in some sense, except that one clause, in which, as both S. Peter and S. Paul have told us, our Lord only can be meant. "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." The rest belongs to the king of Israel; and to all who, like him, faithfully serve or have served God in His Church, whether before or after the coming of our Lord.

Here then, we may see, first of all, what consolation devout persons had, even under the Old Testament; how they did, as it were, keep a kind of Easter beforehand. We see what happiness it was to holy David, to know for certain that he was on God's side, and not on the side of the idols and false gods. "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God; . . . but they that run after another god shall have great trouble. Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, neither make mention of their names within my lips." So far, he declares he will have nothing to do with idols; he will not join in their abominable sacrifices, nor will he own them to be gods by swearing in their names. Then he rejoices in his own happiness, in having so good and bountiful a God, and being one of His peculiar people. "The Lord Himself is the portion of mine inheri-

tance, and of my cup: Thou shalt maintain my lot. The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Why was the holy Psalmist so contented, so thankful for his condition? Not because he was altogether what this world calls prosperous: on the other hand, the next verse shews that he had serious affliction to try him. "I will thank the Lord," he says, "for giving me warning; my reins also chasten me in the night-season:" that is, "I have bodily pain, which keeps me awake: I am thankful for it; it is a warning from God for my good."

Observe, next, what use the man after God's own heart made of his nightly pain and sickness. As he lay awake, he practised himself in heavenly contemplation. "I have set God," he says, "always before me, for He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall. Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced: my flesh also, shall rest in hope . . . Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in Thy Presence is the fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore." To be sure, David here spoke by the spirit of prophecy, and very likely was far from knowing himself the full meaning of all that he said. Still he could not mean less than this: that he had a fair and reasonable hope of being somehow delivered from the power of death, and made partaker of heavenly joys in the more immediate Presence of God.

Such was the hope of holy David and of the other old fathers of the Jewish nation, whether they were patriarchs, prophets, or kings. It supported them in affliction, sometimes in martyrdom: it made their

heart glad, and their glory, that is, their tongue, the best member that they had, ready and earnest in praising God: it caused them, even dying, to rest in hope. And yet they, even the greatest of them, only saw through a glass darkly the things which Christians see face to face. How will they rise up in judgement against us, and condemn us for our exceeding inexcusable carelessness about those infinite blessings, which they so earnestly desired to see, whereas we who have lived among them from our birth act as if we had never seen them!

On the other hand, such as desire and endeavour to offer to God thanksgivings worthy of His Gospel, will find it no small help, to know that their unworthy thanksgivings are very far from being single and alone. It is a comfort to know that God's servants of all times, David and Abraham, the saints before Christ, as well as they who have believed since His coming, partake of our devout joy and hope of immortality. It makes us the bolder to abide to the end by the only good cause, when we know that no age has passed, in which there were not some who looked up to God in like manner.

These, among other good and consoling thoughts, we naturally have, on merely considering what this our Psalm teaches of the eternal hope of the pious Jews of old. When we go on to repeat the same Psalm more expressly in our own persons, then, indeed, there is no end to the instruction and comfort we may gain from it.

First, we see what kind of persons may reasonably hope to persevere in well-doing and in God's favour: namely, those who make it a rule to live always as

in God's especial Presence. "I have set God always before me, for He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall." If you want to have a cheerful and rational dependence on your own continuance in well-doing, this one thing you must do; you must set God always before you. You must never act as if you were alone in the world, as if you were out of His sight, by Whom only you are in the world at all.

Especially, being as you are a baptized Christian, you must never act as if you were far away from that blessed and Holy Spirit, Whom God gives to every child in the Sacrament of his new birth. The Holy Spirit is dwelling in you; surely it is no hard thing, to call on you for some serious regard to such a noble august Presence. Practise this regard: let the memory of it restrain you from sin: let it encourage you, for Christ's sake, in prayer and in every good work. By degrees God will make it the settled habit of your mind and heart; and then you will be, so far, drawing nearer the nature of Angels, whose happiness it is to be guarded from sin of every kind by the clear sight they enjoy of the Holy One.

This is the only "assurance" of salvation that can reasonably be depended on by any man in his own case: viz. the sober yet cheerful hope which arises from a pure conscience, from long continued habits of real piety and goodness. All assurance besides this is more or less fanciful and dangerous. It too often leads men to praise or value themselves overmuch; to be negligent of many duties, such as preparing for the Communion; to grow tired of quiet orderly

improvement, as though it could give them no more than they have already.

But if a man were really endeavouring to keep on that safe ground of assurance, which was just now pointed out,—reasonable hope, grounded on habitual obedience,—then he might without presumption look for the other comforts mentioned in the Psalm. He might indulge in a calm and reverential joy of heart: such as David's, when he sang, "Wherefore my heart was glad:" such as that of the holy women, when on Easter morning they saw the Angels, and "departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy."

And although such true joy, gladness arising from a tranquil and reasonable hope of God's favour now and for ever, is any thing but talkative, boastful, and familiar, yet it will and must make a great difference in the conversation also of a man, and in the words which he speaks. It is not to be supposed, that the faithful disciples of our Saviour, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, had the same looks, tones, and ways of speaking, during the melancholy hours of His departure, while they were in much doubt and perplexity, as they had after they were assured of His Resurrection. In the first case, we know, they "walked and were sad," so sad, that a considerate stranger passing by naturally took notice of it: in the other case, whether He were in sight or out of sight, they "worshipped Him with great joy;" they "did eat their daily meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people." Now this is what David

^a Acts ii. 46, 47.

expresses in the Psalm when he says, "Not only my heart was glad, but also my glory rejoiced."

For what is here called "my glory" means "my tongue" as we learn by the Apostle's explanation of it: "Therefore my heart did rejoice, and *my tongue* was glad." The tongue is called "the *glory*" of a man, because it is in one sense the best member that we have; being that, with which we do most immediately and directly praise God. The thought, then, of our Lord's glorious Resurrection, and of the interest which He by His mercy has given us, as Christians, in His glory and happiness: this thought, when it has hold of the mind, will naturally move the tongue also, in Church and in all solemn offices, openly and aloud to confess His unspeakable goodness; out of Church, and every where, to speak evenly and cheerfully of all things; not rashly to discourse of God, where such discourse will only cause His Name to be profaned, yet gladly to watch for good opportunities of meditating, as it were aloud, on His gracious providences, in company with those who are likely to do us good, or to receive good from us. As it is expressed by one of the prophets, "bThey that feared the Lord spake often one to another;" and he intimates that such conversation among *them* was especially approved by the All-seeing Judge. "The Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that called on His Name."

Next, the Psalmist notices, as another, the greatest of all fruits of holy trust in the Almighty, that

^b Mal. iii. 16.

it causes our very "flesh," that is, our mortal body, to "rest in hope:" it makes sleep quiet and secure, and it takes out the sting of death. What can be more utterly helpless than a sleeping body (except, indeed, it be a dead body,) considered in itself? What more entirely safe, more thoroughly in a condition of hope and tranquil confidence, than the same body, considered as under the protection of Him, Who cannot slumber nor sleep?

But undoubtedly, the chiefest of all privileges is to have hope in the grave; hope that through Him, to Whom alone these sacred promises belong of right, our souls shall not be left in hell, in that dark unknown condition, to which, before the coming of Christ, the name of hell was usually given. Through Him, I say, through His only merit, we hope that, when we lie down in the grave, our souls will be safely kept in Paradise with the souls of all the faithful departed: and though our bodies must see corruption, sinful as they are and condemned to return to the dust, yet if they have in them the seed of Christ's glorious Body, they cannot perish, though they decay; their parting with the soul will be only in order to a happy meeting.

There needs not now to be any thing forlorn or desolate in our meditations on our departed friends, or on the condition to which we are ourselves approaching. The unseen region, where the soul is to lodge, is the place where once the Spirit of our Saviour abode, and is therefore under His especial protection, even more than any Church, or place that is most sacred on earth. The graves where Christians lie are also so many sacred abodes, where

those who have received worthily the Holy Communion of His Body and Blood seem to take their quiet rest; the virtue of that blessed Communion sealing them for a yet more blessed resurrection. Thus we know how to think of the graves of our friends, and of those which are to be our own. We need not waste ourselves in ignorant and childish bewailings, but calmly and firmly trust them to His care, Whose they are, and Whom they faithfully served.

Of course I do not speak of inconsiderate, irreligious persons. Living and dying, the thought of such must be full of pain and doubt. But where Christ's Faith has been considerately embraced, Christ's law seriously kept, and His Sacraments humbly sought and received, the graves of such persons are surely resting-places, not only for their own wearied bodies, but also for our wearied and restless thoughts, over-busy and over-anxious with the cares and amusements of this present world.

Thus the view of the grave and of Paradise will come tempered and sweetened to those, who by faith set God in Christ always before them: and what is more, they will look beyond Paradise and the grave to the very highest Heaven itself. Their faith by degrees, will be steadied, to look upwards into the depth of those things, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into man's heart" to conceive. God's Holy Spirit will be with them, to help them in the firm and deliberate contemplation of eternal bliss. They will see more and more of the path of life, will long more and more for the fulness of joy, will practise themselves more and

more in learning to love those pleasures, which are for evermore at the right hand of God.

But all depends on two things : our setting God always before us, and our carefully abiding by His friends, and avoiding His enemies : according to what is written in the beginning of this Psalm ; "All my delight is upon the saints that are in the earth, and upon such as excel in virtue. But they that run after another god shall have great trouble."

SERMON XIV.

CHRIST OUR RESURRECTION FROM SIN.

EASTER MONDAY.

Rom. vi. 10, 11.

“In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

THE second part of the Church's Easter Anthem, (the beginning of which I tried to explain yesterday,) relates to the time present. It is S. Paul's account of what our Saviour now is, and what we ought to be. Our Saviour is once for all delivered from death, immortal and glorious in Heaven with His Father. We, therefore, are to consider ourselves as once for all freed from the bonds and dominion of sin; enabled, by God's grace, to serve Him faithfully. “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

So much of this Divine sentence as relates to our Lord and Saviour, we are ready enough to receive and acknowledge. That He rose from the dead, and

is gone up into Heaven, never to die any more, but to reign in bliss with His Father for ever and ever, this the Scripture tells us plainly, and we find no difficulty in believing it. But the lesson, the instruction, which the holy Apostle draws from this truth, is by no means so easy to be received. Because Christ is glorified in Heaven, we are to reckon ourselves dead unto sin. Because He never can die any more, God and His Church expect of us, that we should not pollute ourselves by wilful habitual sin. How is that? If it were not in the Scripture, I make no doubt it would seem to many at first sight like a kind of pleasant dream, a mere imagination of well-disposed persons, knowing nothing at all of the world. Dead to sin! and alive to God only! How does such language agree with the ordinary course of things around us, with the conduct and temper of the Christian world?

No doubt, things go on better than they would if the Gospel had never been known. The world is a much more comfortable world to live in, than it would be if our Saviour had never appeared in it. But still, looking at the ordinary sort of Christians, and considering the temptations they are placed in, is it not throwing words away to talk of such complete repentance, such thorough change of heart, as must be meant by a death unto sin? Would it not be better to take a lower tone, and ask people for something more likely to be obtained from them? Is it not throwing them into despair, when the state and condition of a Christian is described as something so very much more perfect than any thing we really see or experience?

Such is the way in which many persons would speak, if they dared, of the high language of Scripture; such is the censure which they really do pass on those who try to bring Scripture home to them, and speak to them in earnest of Christian perfection. They turn a deaf ear to such instructions, saying, It is more than human nature will bear. It is plain that they say one thing, and the Bible and the Church say just the contrary. These persons say, It is in vain to demand great things of mortal men, pent up in a frail body, and encompassed with the wants and cares of the world. The Bible and the Church say, (and they do but repeat the words of our Saviour and of His Holy Spirit,) “^aBe ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect:” “You are dead to sin; how should you live any longer therein?”

Now, every Christian can judge for himself, whether it must not be much safer to take God at His own word, however contrary it may seem to the way of the world, than to bend and lower and pervert the Scriptures in accommodation to that world, acknowledged as it is to be corrupt and in enmity with God. You must see, that if the Bible says, a Christian, as such, is dead to sin, so it must be, in spite of objections and difficulties; and you ought, in spite of temptations and misgivings, to try and behave as if it were so.

What I mean will be better understood, if I try to shew the exact meaning of this expression, “dead to sin.” And it is the more desirable to do so, as the expression is found in the Church Catechism. The spiritual grace of Baptism is there said to be “a

^a S. Matt. v. 48.

death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." What is this death unto sin?

According to S. Paul's manner of speaking, a man is said to be dead to a thing, when he is quite cut off and separated from it, so that it is a matter not to be thought of, for him any longer to act or behave as if he had any concern with that thing. Thus he says, in one place, he was dead to the law of Moses; meaning that it was out of the question, his being any longer under the Jews' religion. And here, "Christ died once for all, to sin;" meaning, that at that awful moment of our Lord's expiring on the Cross, sin, that is, our sin laid upon Him, ceased for ever to have dominion over Him. Of the stain and guilt of sin He never knew any thing, for He was a Lamb without blemish and without spot; and from that moment He knew no more of the punishment due to sin, which He had endured in such bitterness for our sake. In a word, when He died, He died to sin.

And we, when we are baptized, are said also to die to sin: because we enter then into a condition, by which God intends to separate us from sin, and gradually to improve our nature, so that it shall be as much out of the question for us to sin wilfully, as for a dead body to do the actions of a living one. That by which God graciously purposes so to improve our fallen nature, is the gift of His Holy Spirit: of which we know by His Son's own words that the water of Baptism is a lively and effectual sign. "For except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Therefore Baptism is a death unto sin, because it

seals to us the aid of that Holy Spirit, sin's deadly and prevailing enemy, and puts men in a way, by His grace, to destroy and abolish the whole body of sin.

But if this be so, it is very plain that a baptized Christian is put into a state, which makes it utterly absurd for him ever to use the plea of natural infirmity, by way of excuse for bad habits or wilful sin. A Jew or a heathen might say, "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." A Christian, as a Christian, cannot, dare not, say so. When S. Paul used those words, he was shewing how a Jew or a heathen might speak: and in the very next sentence, he acknowledges God's mercy in having delivered him from that body of death. Let no baptized Christian imagine that he may go on meaning well and doing ill, and yet be as good as S. Paul was.

It is true indeed, a baptized Christian, after continually grieving God's blessed Spirit, and inviting bad habits and evil spirits to make their abode in his heart, may feel as wretched and helpless as any heathen: but he must not plead his wretchedness and helplessness as any kind of excuse for his sin, nor must he give way to the feeling of it, so as to slacken his endeavours to amend. As long as God gives him life and continues him in His Church, so long, depend on it, there is hope, let his feelings be never so wretched: only let him persevere night and day in real endeavours to amend his ways, real application to God for His grace. Let him not go by his feelings, but when he seems to himself coldest and most desolate, still let him cling, like a drowning man, to

the promise made him in that Sacrament, and let him, with deep shame and humiliation, seek pardon through the Cross of our Redeemer. The blessed Spirit, however grieved, will not be deaf to such prayers. He will return by little and little, and help such a penitent to amend his ways, and really and practically, in some good measure, to live like one dead unto sin.

But, I repeat it, if he continue hardened, or if he wilfully permit himself to relapse, let him not flatter himself that he is but where he would be, if he were a mere heathen, ignorant of our Saviour. Christ has Himself settled that point. “^bIt shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of Judgement,” than for those who knew Him and repented not. A bad Christian is not a heathen, but something a great deal worse, and more miserable. And if all Christians were bad together, this would not at all contradict the saying, that Christianity as such is dying to sin: it would not at all lessen our danger, the danger, I mean, of each one of us in particular, brought on us by our choosing to continue in wilful disobedience and scorn of God’s heavenly assistance.

It is sad to think, how very nearly the actual state of Christ’s kingdom on earth is, as far as we are able to discern it, come to this last supposition; that all Christians together are greatly fallen away. Very, very few, in comparison, seem to live in any measure answerably to their glorious privileges. Hence a whole world of error and mischief besetting the Church on every side; divisions, scandals, false doctrines without end; and all, or nearly all, plainly to

^b S. Matt. xi. 24.

be traced to the bad lives of those who know better, and are offered grace to do better. I will just mention now two sorts of errors in particular, into one or other of which, without true Christian watchfulness, you and all men are sure to fall, on comparing the Christian Scriptures with the lives and conversation of the generality of Christians.

The first and most obvious of these errors, and that which I fear the greater part of mankind give into, is turning away lightly from the whole subject, with some such thoughts as the following. "I see, after all, the Bible cannot mean what it says; it seems indeed to be very strict; but the conduct of the whole Christian world shews that they do not so understand it. I cannot suppose they are all going wrong; and, at all events, I shall not think of setting up to be wiser or better than they." Such are people's thoughts, or rather their impressions, on beholding the fallen state of the Church; they eagerly avail themselves of it to excuse their own bad passions, their own covetousness, sloth, or irreligion. Thus they hurry along the stream, and help in their turn to carry away others; and so the sad prophecy of the Apostle is accomplished, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Nor is the matter much mended on the whole, though, doubtless, of the persons concerned we may and ought to judge more favourably, when we take into consideration the other set of errors, to which, as I was saying, corrupt Christians give occasion. Persons not light-minded, like those just mentioned, nor wholly swallowed up in worldly affairs, when

they read, as in the text, of Christians being dead to sin, and compare it with what they see in the world, easily fall into the notion that the Christians, of whom such great things are spoken, the elect, the children of God, dead to sin and new born unto righteousness, cannot be the whole body of baptized persons, many of whom they see going on so ill. Those expressions, they soon come to think, must denote a favoured few, on whom God, for whatever reason, looks more kindly than on the rest. When men have once got this notion, especially if they are of a fanciful and restless turn, liking to hear and read strong words, and to have their fears and hopes eagerly excited; or, again, if they are naturally proud, and like to set themselves up above others; they are apt to dwell a good deal on the thought, who they are whom God thus highly favours; how they may be known from others; whether they are themselves of the number; with other imaginations of the same kind. The plain ordinary duties of common life are too apt to be forgotten or negligently performed, while they are wholly taken up with imaginations of this kind regarding themselves or others. The Holy Church, the blessed Sacraments, the commissioned Ministers of our Divine Master, are slighted, as though He had not given His word to be with them. Every man invents for himself, or takes from others who have invented for themselves, certain marks or tokens of God's peculiar favour, instead of abiding by the plain ordinances of Scripture, as interpreted by the Holy Universal Church. The end is strife, perplexity, confusion; one might almost say, every evil work. But the particular purpose for which I mentioned this sort

of error at this time, was to shew you how naturally it arises out of the bad conduct of those whom the Scriptures affirm to be dead unto sin. When baptized persons generally are careless of religion, how can it be expected that men will think worthily of Baptism? They will judge by the event, however unreasonably; and God's most Holy Sacrament will be dishonoured, because we do not use the grace which He most surely conferred on us there.

However, amidst all these dangers, we have, God be thanked, a safe way open before us. We have but to abide simply and seriously by the rules which our conscience tells us we might have kept from our youth up, the plain rules of Christ and His Holy Church. His grace, duly sought in His own ordinances, will be sufficient for us; only let us not wander after novelties, nor ever deal lightly with sacred things.

SERMON XV.

CHRIST OUR RESURRECTION FROM DEATH.

EASTER TUESDAY.

1 COR. XV. 20.

“Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.”

THIS is the third part of our Easter anthem; in which Holy Scripture teaches how we may learn of our Lord's Resurrection to look forward to times future.

As He is our Passover, sacrificed for us, we know the meaning of the old Jewish law: we see how, in times past, God prepared the way for our great deliverance by the Gospel.

As He, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, we understand our own present condition, that we, being raised in Baptism from the death of sin, are henceforth enabled and expected to lead a new life after Christ's pattern.

And now, lastly, as Jesus Christ was the first Who rose from the dead, no more to return to corruption, we know for certain that we too shall rise again. He is the first-fruits of them that sleep; which expression may be thus understood: According to the Jewish law, on the Sunday of the week of the Passover, a sheaf of corn was to be solemnly offered up before God Almighty in His Tabernacle, as an ac-

knowledge of all His mercy, and a token of faith in Him for ever. That sheaf was called the first-fruits, because it was the first sheaf of the harvest; the corn of the Jews being always ripe just about the time of the Passover. Now as this wave-sheaf was a kind of sample of the coming harvest, so the Body of our crucified Redeemer, raised from the dead, and taken up into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us; this is a sure pledge and token of what is to happen to the faithful, when He comes again to judge the world. It is a truth which ought to be well known to every one who has ever stood by and heard the Burial service. “^a He will change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious Body, according to the mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself.” And “^b if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.”

Observe, it is said, “them which sleep in Jesus;” just as S. Paul in the text affirms, that our Lord rising from the dead was made the First-fruits of them that slept. It is the common word for death, at least, for the death of the righteous, in the New Testament. Such death is no more, even with respect to our bodies, than a long and sound sleep. We are sure to be waked from it; much more sure, than we are of waking in this world when we go to sleep in our beds. For many have died in that slumber; but they who lie down in the grave, whether bad or good, must rise again, all, without exception, in that dreadful unknown hour, when our

^a Phil. iii. 21.

^b 1 Thess. iv. 14.

Lord will appear to judge the world. They are not dead, but sleeping for awhile, just as He might be called not dead, but asleep, during the hours of that day which passed between His expiring and rising again; the last day of Holy week.

This is true, even with regard to men's bodies, which do lie senseless for a while, and decay: even they are, properly speaking, only asleep. But as to the soul, the undying spirit, breathed into them at first by Almighty God Himself, we have reason from the Holy Scripture to believe, that it is not even asleep, during the time that it is parted from the body. We have reason to believe that good men's souls depart immediately and are with Christ; as He promised the repenting thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise:" and that the spirits of the impenitent have their own place too, where they lift up their eyes, being in torments. Surely it is an awful thought, that whilst we are busy about the grave, the spirit of the dead is awake in some unknown place, and already knows its eternal doom.

Now of these truths, whether awful or comfortable, our Saviour's Resurrection is the appointed seal and token. He is the Firstfruits of them that slept; the beginning, the First-born from the dead. Not that He is the only man, nor the first, whose soul, once departed, has been united again to the body by the mighty power of God: for this is true of those children whom Elijah and Elisha raised from the dead: it is true of the widow's son at Nain, and of Jairus' daughter, and especially of Lazarus, and of others since, who have been restored to life by the Eternal Spirit answering the prayers of His faithful

Apostles and martyrs. Christ is not, then, called the First-fruits, because He was the first or the only person raised from the dead, but because He was the first and only one so raised, who returned no more to corruption. Lazarus, the widow's son, Jairus' daughter, and the rest, have all been long ago gathered to their fathers. They have died the common death of all men: their bodies have decayed, as those of other persons. But He Whom God raised again, our Saviour Christ, saw no corruption. He left His grave within a very few hours, before decay could have begun there in the natural course of things; and He never did nor can return to the grave again. He first, by such a Resurrection as admitted of no death afterwards, was to give light to the people and to the Gentiles; to those who knew God, and to those who knew Him not.

Now, most likely, all who listen to such discourses as this, think, without any hesitation, that they believe all this already. They think they believe in the Resurrection of our Lord, and in the resurrection of their own bodies. And so, no doubt, they do believe, as far as mere words go. That is, when they say these words; "The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;" and again, "I believe in the resurrection of the body;" when people say, they believe these things, they really do believe that something or other, which those words mean, is true. But it is not a steady considerate belief: they do not seriously put their minds to it. They believe, as did Martha, the sister of Lazarus, when she stood by her brother's grave, and heard our Saviour saying to her, "Thy brother shall rise again." "I know," said

Martha, “^c that he shall rise again in the Resurrection at the last day.” She seemed to herself as if she had a sound faith in this great article of the Resurrection. But what was the fact? When it came to the point, that something was actually to be done with a view to Lazarus’s own resurrection, she seems to have been perplexed, and hesitates like an unbeliever. I mean, when they came to the grave, and our Saviour commanded the stone to be taken away, which closed up the grave’s mouth. Martha, not having collected and steady thoughts as to Who our Lord was, and how distinctly He had promised a resurrection, answered, as she might have done to any other friend who might have wished to see her brother in his tomb, “Lord, by this time he stinketh.” It sounds as if she doubted for the moment, whether even God could do any thing, corruption having once begun.

Now, what reason have we to think that our faith in the Resurrection, is more perfect than the faith of Martha, the sister of Lazarus? Is it not plainly all but impossible for any man to believe, seriously and thoughtfully, that his body shall rise again and he be judged according to his works, without such belief making a great difference in his conduct? If no such difference appear, is it not plain that the belief in the mind, however sincere at first, has become very weak: too weak to do him any real good; too weak to control unruly passions, and brace the mind to hard and irksome duties?

We may try our faith in the resurrection, either by our pains or by our pleasures.

^c S. John xi. 24.

Whenever we feel or fear bodily pain, this is God's warning to us, that we may not forget the pains that shall never end, the torments of those who for their obstinacy will be cast into hell-fire; not mere figures of speech, but real bodily torments: so Scripture gives us to understand. It will be well for those who, as far as they can, (they cannot always, for great pain and languor,) make their sufferings an occasion of religious fear. It is well if they begin to say seriously to themselves, "Here am I, unable to endure a raging tooth or a throbbing head; what if the vials of God's wrath were to be poured out on me? what if I were cast into the lake of fire?" In short, the arrows of Almighty God, whether they pierce the soul or body, or both, shew Him to be indeed Almighty over us; shew how exactly He knows our weak points. When we feel them, we naturally fall down and humble ourselves before His Throne, Who has at His command the stores of eternal wrath.

This, I say, would be natural simple and reasonable, for a plain man to do in his hours of bodily anguish, if he were really used to think much of his own part in our Lord's Resurrection. But how do the generality take bodily pain? When they are sick, and in much suffering, are they not almost sure to say, "I wish and pray that God would take me?" Now, what does this wish and prayer mean? Too often one can only understand by it, that the person so praying has never seriously thought what it is to appear before God. Else, even for their bodies' sake, whose pains cause them to speak so, they would hardly dare wish themselves dead. For, except you

have a reasonable hope of dying in God's favour through Jesus Christ, to wish yourself dead, is wishing yourself in intolerable anguish of mind, waiting for the coming of the offended Judge to consign you for ever to intolerable torment of body. It is safer, therefore, and wiser, and more Christian in every way, instead of praying for a short time, because your bodily trials are severe, or other wants and inconveniences pressing; it is safer, I say, a great deal, to let God choose for you; only praying Him not to take you until He sees that you are really fit to go.

There is another very awful thought, which may reasonably occur in many cases, to those who suffer great bodily pain from disease. Too often such pains may be actually accounted for by some wicked habit or other; drunkenness, or surfeiting, or pining discontent, or this or that irregular passion. The disease, even in this world, follows the sin, and every body says it was natural and might have been expected. Now what if it should be found in the next world, that these same sinful indulgences prepared men's very bodies for the torments of hell, as undoubtedly as they prepare them in this world for the miseries of sickness? What if those first pains and loathings, caused by surfeiting, for example, or drunkenness, be a kind of specimen or pattern of the intemperate man's portion in the world that is to come? only that, of course, this latter, when it does come, will be infinitely worse than the former? Still it is what one may conceive, that the one is a kind of token or earnest of the other. At any rate, the sufferings you bring on yourself by wickedness, be

they light or heavy, yet so far as they are real, are a pledge of God's anger against you for that wickedness, of that anger which none can resist. I repeat it; pain and languor, caused by intemperance, is as sure a mark of your Judge's displeasure, as if He called to you from Heaven, in the world's hearing and yours, "Drunkenness, revellings, and such like, are works of the flesh: they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God ^d."

Thus far I have considered one great religious use of bodily pain: its putting reasonable men often in mind of God's anger against sin, and of the very element in which sinners, as such, must expect to dwell for ever; pain and torment without relief. Now, on the other hand, let something be said of bodily pleasures, in the same way of thinking; how they appear to a considerate Christian, having his mind full of the resurrection of the body.

First, then, innocent and moderate pleasures, even those of the body itself, are, without question, to be thankfully received by Christ's servants, not only as gifts from God in themselves, but also as pledges of His love, and so far, tokens of good things to come." "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." So S. Paul teaches, speaking of diverse kinds of meats, which, being sanctified by the word of God, that is, having God's blessing upon them, are, so far, signs and tokens of His love: something for the mind to rest on, when tempted to mistrust or wear-

^d Gal. v. 19, 21.

^e 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

ness; something to make you ashamed, if you are growing discontented and unthankful.

Take, for example, the enjoyment most men naturally have, at some time or other of their lives, in beholding the glorious works of God: the sun rising or setting, the moon walking in brightness; flowers, trees, herbs, growing or decaying; animals at play; the fresh air; the sports of children; music; and a thousand other things, which, however common they may be, and however mixed up, some of them, with bodily sensations, are undoubtedly to be taken as gifts from Him, Whose least gift is infinitely precious; and are, so considered, as little drops or crumbs, fallen as it were under the heavenly table. Many such occasions there are, on which it would be wrong to say much, but it cannot be wrong to feel deeply and thankfully that the very slightest enjoyment we have, a pleasant gleam of sunshine, or a quarter of an hour's quiet sleep, is far more than a sinner can deserve; is indeed one of the ten thousand reasons, of which the world is every where full, for thanking God, our merciful Redeemer, and taking courage to do all our duty.

On the other hand, it is certain, by sad experience, that if people take no care thus to mingle the thought of God with their pleasures; those pleasures, however innocent in themselves, will prove to them guilty and mischievous; for they will drive out holy and serious thoughts, and make men less and less willing to serve their Redeemer with a pure heart. Gross, sensual, bodily enjoyments, are part of our frail nature and imperfect condition here in this world of trial; there will be an end of them when we go out

of the world ; and, therefore, those who depend much on them are sure to find themselves unprepared for Heaven. For instance, while we have these “bodies of vileness” (so S. Paul calls them), we cannot help being hungry and thirsty ; we, of course, have pleasure in meat and drink ; but there is no reason at all to think that such infirmities, or such pleasures, will find any place in the world to come. Again, hear our Blessed Saviour : “ ‘The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage : but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage : neither can they die any more : for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the Resurrection.’ ” Is it not plain that for such a state they will be found little provided, who have given their whole hearts and minds to such cares and pleasures as most easily engage and win the natural man ; who go on eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the very day when the Son of Man is revealed ; or (which is the same thing to them) until the day that God calls them out of the world ? Depend upon it, bodily pleasures, the best of them, are dangerous and deceiving, and ought to be sparingly and fearfully indulged in. David is a sad instance of this. If he had been more on his guard, more severe and watchful over his own heart, in those enjoyments which were not sinful, he would not, it is likely, have fallen so shamefully, when sinful desire and opportunity came.

Even with regard to those pleasures which are not

† S. Luke xx. 34—36.

so properly to be called sensual ; for example, with regard to good health, which is in fact a continual course of moderate and gentle bodily enjoyment : though men cannot be too thankful for them, yet it is well for them to be aware, that neither can they well be too watchful. They have reason to fear, lest their flow of spirits, and even way of enjoying themselves, day after day, and week after week, tempt them gradually away from their Saviour, and make them feel as if they had need of nothing. I say, to those who have good health and keen spirits, are more especially addressed those texts of Scripture, which call on men to deny and mortify themselves. God has not as yet begun to warn them, by pain or weakness, how frail they are. So much the more need have they to provide themselves warnings from time to time, by fasting and other acts of secret self-denial, by waiting on sick beds, and on persons in pain, by much and deep remembrance of the sufferings and martyrdom of the saints ; and, above all, by representing to themselves our Blessed Saviour tormented on the Cross. These thoughts are good for the afflicted in order to make them ashamed of repining ; and surely they are not less, but if possible more necessary, for the healthy and strong ; not only that they may have compassion on their brethren, but also that they may learn to fear God's wrath, and those dreadful pains which await sinful bodies hereafter.

I am well aware how strange it seems, to young persons especially, to be called away from their enjoyments, how simple and innocent soever, and bidden to deny themselves, to wait on those who are in pain

and want, to fix their imaginations on the torments of martyrs, and on the Cross of our Lord and Saviour. But let them seriously consider one thing. They kneel down every day of their lives (else they are not Christians at all) to recommend themselves to Almighty God by prayer in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to ask His pardon and the gift of His Holy Spirit. Now which do they find suits best with their prayers: the diversions of which they are so fond, or these thoughts of pain, and sickness, and the Cross, which it seems to them strange to be reminded of? Again, which of the two do they think are most like the thoughts and meditations of our Blessed Saviour? We never read of His joining in any diversion; but we know that He spent His life in self-denial, and in waiting on those who were in pain and sickness. You cannot seriously doubt that His rule of life was the best. If so, you will, in earnest, fear to lead a life of bodily pleasure, a life of mere ease and indulgence. When God sends sickness or want upon you, or upon any of your friends, and so makes a life of mere indulgence impossible, you will reconcile yourself to the severe trial, by looking forward to that world, for which, as we shall one day understand, sickness and want are often the best preparation.

Finally, since "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the Firstfruits of them that slept," a Christian heart will feel reconciled, not only to sickness and want, but to death itself, the last enemy. For even the body of a faithful Christian cannot properly be said to die. It is only laid with our Lord in the grave, for a short time, sure soon to awake, and then never

more to return to corruption. “In our flesh we shall see God^s.” What manner of persons then ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! how reverently ought we to preserve our bodies from sin, how scrupulously to respect the bodies of our brethren! since Christ will one day call both them and us from the grave, and earnestly desires, if our sins prevent Him not, to carry us all with Him into Heaven.

§ Job xix. 26.

SERMON XVI^a.

THE CHURCH ONE.

1 S. JOHN v. 8.

“There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the Blood; and these three agree in one.”

OUR Saviour Himself has in some sort appointed for us a subject, on which we should meditate during this holy season; this joyful season, between Easter and Whitsuntide. He Himself prepared His disciples for the Descent of the Holy Ghost by speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Our Lord was that noble Person of Whom He Himself had spoken a little before in parable^b, Who was departing to receive to Himself a kingdom and return. And His discoursing with His Apostles on the things of His kingdom, what was it, but that same nobleman calling unto Him His servants, and delivering unto them His goods, and bidding them, “Occupy till I come?”

But what is this kingdom of God, which we are to think so much of at all times, and especially now? In a word, it is the Church of Christ, that society, company, or brotherhood, into which it is His purpose to gather us all, that we may be happy with Him for

^a *Marked* Catech. on the Church 1.

^b S. Luke xix. 11-13.

ever. It is called His kingdom, just as we say the kingdom of France or of England; just as the twelve tribes of Israel were called the kingdom of David. The kingdom of Christ means all the persons who are subject to Jesus Christ: who are bound to obey Him, not only as He is God over all, blessed for ever, but also as He is in particular their own proper King and Head. The kingdom of Christ, I say, means *all* who are thus subject to Christ, at all times: both those who are now on their training in this imperfect world, and those who now or hereafter shall be taken up and made perfect in Paradise and in Heaven. Just as the little child in his weakness is nevertheless the same person as the full-grown man in his strength, so the Church militant on earth, with its sins and imperfections, is nevertheless the same kingdom with the Church made perfect and triumphant in Heaven.

Our Lord, during the whole time of His abode among us in the flesh, was preparing for this kingdom; preparing and training up His Apostles to be governors in it, and all around Him to acknowledge and obey it, when it should be set up in their sight. But it was not set up, until He was gone up to His Father's Right Hand. On Ascension Day He, as our King, sate down on His Throne on high: and ten days afterwards He sent His Spirit, as you know, on Whitsunday, to declare and establish His holy kingdom, by winning and gathering into it, one by one, the souls of His redeemed. So that we are able to point out exactly the day and hour when the kingdom of heaven began: not only the very day, but the very hour. The day, I need not tell you, was the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after our Lord's Resur-

rection. It was the first Whitsunday, fifty days after the first Easter Day. And the hour was the Third hour, i. e. nine o'clock in the morning: so S. Peter tells us, in his sermon which he made just after the Holy Ghost had come down. On their all speaking with tongues, some of the profane multitudes said, it was only that they were full of new wine. But the Apostle replies, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day," not later than nine in the morning. So exactly has the Holy Spirit informed us of the very time of His descent; we know, to an hour, how long it is since our Lord's kingdom was set up. And we can trace it all along in history, even from that time to this. The grain of mustard-seed then sown has grown into a great tree; the leaven has spread through the whole three measures of meal; the vine brought out of Egypt has had room made for it, it hath waxen great, and filled the earth.

But the great point for each one of us to consider and lay to heart is, that we ourselves are members of this body, sheep of this fold, branches of this tree, citizens of this kingdom. Our hope of eternal life depends upon this. For as we are born in sin, so in sin we must die, unless we have been new-born in Christ, made members of His Body. And if by any fault of ours we cut ourselves off from the Church, we cut ourselves off from Christ. Therefore we have been taught from the beginning to think very much of the Holy Catholic Church: we pray in the Lord's prayer that it may come more and more perfectly; in the Creed we profess to believe it: every year we

keep the holy Feast of Whitsuntide; we keep it with especial devotion, because it is the Birthday of the Church.

And the same Creeds which teach us that there *is* a Church, instruct us also in certain things, pertaining to the Church, which it highly concerns us to know. For if we are not in the Church, we are not in the kingdom of God, nor in the way to heaven: even as no one was in the way to be saved from perishing by the waters of the flood, save those who were in the ark. Therefore it is well for us to know what marks and tokens it has pleased God to set upon the true Church; that we may be the more thankful for our own happiness in having been made members of it, and the more careful, never to wander from it, either by unbelief or wilful separation, or by any other sin.

Now the first thing plainly taught us in the Creeds concerning the Church is this—that it is One. There is but one true Church; there cannot be more. We speak indeed of many Churches, the Church of England, the Church of France, the Church of Russia, the Church of Canada, and so on; just as S. Paul speaks of the several Churches of Galatia: but still these are but parts or members of the one Holy Church throughout the world: much in the same way as England and Scotland and Ireland are parts and members of one United kingdom. This, both our Creeds declare. The Nicene Creed, which we use at every Communion, uses the very word One: “I believe ONE Catholic and Apostolic Church:” one only, and no more. The Apostles’ Creed, our baptismal Creed, the Creed which I trust we are accustomed

to say daily with our prayers, does not indeed expressly call the Church *one*; but it plainly signifies that the Church is but one, in that it instructs us to say, "I believe in *the* Holy Catholic Church." When people speak in that way, it always means that the thing so spoken of is single; that there is no other besides it: as when a child says, I must honour and obey *the* Queen, one knows that it means our own Queen and no other; and when Scripture mentions "*the* holy city," we understand it to mean Jerusalem, and no other place: so to believe in *the* Church must mean believing that there is one society, one company, one brotherhood, one kingdom of heaven, to which all who are to be saved must belong.

And what the Creeds thus teach in short, Holy Scripture affirms and teaches at large, in a great many ways, and by a great variety of parables: and, (but chiefly and above all,) we may understand that the Church must be one and one only, by considering that it is the Body of Christ. Christ is One, and His Body is One, and the Church is His Body, therefore the Church must needs be One. As surely as there is but one Christ, so surely is there but one Church. S. Paul puts it in as plain words as possible, "^d As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." So it is: the meanest beggar, who has been baptized into Christ, is as truly a member of Christ as the greatest king: and what is still more awful and astonishing, the

^d 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.

mere ordinary Christian, until his sins have become so bad as to cut him off from the body, is as truly and really in Christ (though much more unworthily), as S. Paul or S. Peter was. It is a strange and fearful thought, but so it is.

For as the whole race of mankind are naturally one, by their common head and root, Adam, so the whole race of Christians, the holy seed, the Lord's nation and family, are one, in a way beyond nature, by their adoption or engrafting into one spiritual Root and Head, Jesus Christ. In Him, we all of us are by grace, as we are in the first Adam by our first conception and birth. The whole Church is in a manner formed and taken out of Him, as Eve, the first woman, was formed and taken out of Adam. Eve, being naturally the mother of us all, is the type and figure of the Church, our spiritual mother. The creation of Eve answers in a wonderful manner to the building up of the Church. For thus it stands in Holy Scripture. First, the Lord, having determined to make an help-meet for Adam, caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and he slept. So when the Father would form and build up that Church which was ordained from all eternity to be the Mystical Body of His Son, He caused the deep sleep of death, even the death of the Cross, to fall upon Him, Who is our second Adam. He sleeps, the Son of God sleeps in death, hanging on the Cross; and while He is asleep, the Lord permits His Side to be pierced. Adam's side, as you know, was pierced by the Hand of the Almighty Himself: but This Man's Side by one of the heathen soldiers, who, finding Him dead when he did not expect to do so, ran his spear into His

Side (His Right Side, so it is commonly believed) and forthwith came there out blood and water.

Well, so far is plain enough, that there is a sort of likeness between the way in which our Lord's Side was pierced, after He was dead on the Cross, and the way in which Adam's side had been pierced, so many ages before, in his deep and death-like slumber. But that which ensued when our Lord's Side was pierced—what, one may ask, has it to do with the formation and building up, either of the Church, or of Eve who is the type of the Church? How does the one at all answer to the other? Very well indeed, my brethren, if you will consider the matter with earnestness and reverence. Imagine, first, the Lord God, how having opened Adam's side He took out one of the ribs, and the rib which He had taken out of the man He builded up, formed by degrees, into a woman. Then consider what it was that flowed out of our Lord's Side when it had been pierced as He hung on the Cross. It was water and blood: and that there was in it some very deep and mysterious meaning, we are sure by S. John's way of speaking of it; both in his Gospel and in his Epistle. In his Gospel, after relating it, as if it were a very remarkable thing indeed, he adds, “^eAnd he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.” In his epistle, “^fThis is He that came by Water and Blood, even Jesus Christ; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth:” and a little after, “For there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood, and

^e S. John xix. 35.

^f 1 S. John v. 6.

these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which He hath testified of His Son." As if he should say, Do you not know what the Lord's tokens are, by which we are assured of the Presence of His Son among us according to His promise, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?" Yes, surely: we all know that His abiding tokens are His Sacraments. Pardon and grace, both in Baptism and in Holy Communion, the pardon bought and figured by Blood, the grace represented and conveyed by water: and as the two, pardon and grace, go together in Christ's Sacraments, which have all their virtue from His death, so the two, Blood and Water, issued out of His pierced Side, but not until after that He had given up the ghost. And now comes the point which answers to the formation of the first woman: as she was gradually builded up out of that which was taken from Adam's side, so is the Church builded up out of that which came from our Lord's Side. For what is the building up of the Church, but the gradual addition to it of fresh members, living stones, as it were, by the Sacrament of Baptism, and the gradual growth and advancement of those, who are already members, by the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist? And the Church is thus builded up to be our Lord's Spouse: as Eve, when God had finished building her up, was brought unto Adam, and became his wife; and he acknowledged her to be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, in words which were afterwards taken up by the Holy Spirit to declare Christ's union with His Mystical Body the Church and with every living

member of it. “^gThe Lord loveth and cherisheth the Church: for we are members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones: for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: I mean, as to Christ and the Church.” The Church then is builded up to be a Spouse; not many spouses, but one: the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, she of whom it had been written, “^h My Dove, my undefiled, is one.” And as at the beginning there was no divorce, nor any multiplying of wives, so was it never heard or read of, that Christ should have more than one Spouse, the true, ancient, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

And as the Church is in itself the One mystical Body of Christ, so the manner of its building up is such as to shew very remarkably how earnestly our Lord’s heart longs to behold us all *One*. Each living stone, each new member in the Body, is added on gradually by the Spirit blessing the Water and the Blood, i. e., by the pardon conveyed and grace bestowed through the Spirit in the Sacraments. It seems to the eye as if there were many priests, many baptizers, going on continually with this work. But faith knows and remembers that as there is but one Baptism and one Holy Eucharist, so there is among us but one Priest, properly so called; and one Baptizer, viz. the Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. As it is one Body, the Body of Christ; one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ; so is it one Lord and King, one Faith and form of sound words, one Baptism and one Eucharist. Outwardly

^g Eph. v. 29-32.

^h Cant. vi. 9.

indeed there appear to be very many, and men are apt to fancy that the blessing depends more or less on the minister : but it is not so, for the true Minister always and in every place is Christ.

You see then in part, brethren, the Unity of the Church, what it is. The whole Church is our Lord's *one* Body; the Spirit of Christ blessing His Sacraments is the *one* mean of union with that Body; Christ Himself is the *one* true Priest and baptizer. So entirely is the Catholic and Apostolical Church *one* : and that by virtue of our Lord's Intercession: "I pray, not for My disciples only, but for those whom Thou hast given Me by their word: that they may all be One."

Christ calls us to be one in Him: for this He prayed, for this He shed out of His most precious Side both water and blood. He would have His Church all one: one outwardly by loving communion in holy services, especially in His Sacraments; as it cannot but be one inwardly by the spiritual union of each of its members to Him. See then, what sin a person commits, who wilfully damages this unity. He contradicts his Lord's dying prayer: he makes void, so far, the purpose for which He poured out His Blood on the Cross. Little do they think of this, who go so freely to all sorts of places to worship; a thing too common in our times; not caring whether it is the Church, in communion with which they so worship, or some of the many dissenters from the Church. They mean, sometimes, not amiss; they go to hear that which is good: but indeed they know not what they do. We on the other hand, who have learned

ⁱ S. John xvii. 20, 21.

from the Scripture that there is but one Church, but one Body of Christ; we, if we separate from that Body or do any thing that tends towards separation, can hardly say that we know not what we do. We must bear our burden as wilful disturbers of Christ's Peace; wilfully breaking ourselves off from the true Vine; and how then can we any more bear good fruit?

And remember, my brethren, that it is separating one's self, not only when people go to some other sort of worship, but when they allow themselves to go no where at all. It is schism, i. e. division, to stay away from the Holy Communion, as well as to seek for it in places apart from Christ's Church. Remember these things now, that you may not be tempted to break the bonds of unity, by going another way, for diversion's sake or company's sake, when you ought to be going to Church. And again, remember these things bye and bye; for you may be tried in other ways: you may change your abode, or go to service, and be thrown among people who know not what the Church is, and who imagine that it does not much signify where one worships. Then say in your heart, "my dying Saviour prayed that His Church might be One; He poured out blood and water from His Heart for a token of those Sacraments which were to make and keep it one. God forbid that we, should separate ourselves from it, or do any thing at all to divide it!" God give us grace to make more and more of His Sacraments: which alone, worthily received, by virtue of the Spirit which is in them will make and keep us one in Him.

SERMON XVII^a.

THE CHURCH—CATHOLIC.

1 TIM. ii. 4.

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth.”

As the Church or Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God, is One, and One only, so also it is *Catholic*: and this is the second point which we learn in the Creed concerning it: “I believe One Catholic and Apostolic Church;” or as it stands in the Apostles’ Creed, “I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.” How it is One, even a child may perceive, by such parables and sayings of Christ and the Apostles, as I put you in mind of last Sunday. To-day you have heard something about what is meant when we call the Church, *Catholic*: and it is a point which it nearly concerns us all, especially in these days, to consider and recollect.

Now Catholic, as many of you know, is just a Greek word signifying Universal. The holy Catholic Church, in the Apostles’ Creed, is just the same with that in the Litany, for which we pray by the name of God’s holy Church Universal. And the Church, according to God’s gracious will and purpose, was to be Universal, to gather into itself all people

^a *Marked*, “Catech. on the Church. 2.”

of all nations and in all generations, unto the end of the world." It was also to be Universal, by teaching to all its members all necessary and saving truth. The Church is Catholic, because God will have all men to be saved; and the Faith is Catholic, because it is the whole of that Truth, by the knowledge whereof He would have all men to be saved.

At the first indeed, when our Lord was Himself in sight among men, He said, He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and when He sent His disciples on their rounds, He said unto them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." So it was, until after His Death and Resurrection: it was one of the privileges of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, that they only should be eye-witnesses of the Presence of the Son of God in the flesh. But He had also said (as you heard in the Gospel just now), "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice, and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd;" i. e. Christ had also among the Gentiles those who would believe on Him, when His providence gave them the opportunity to do so. And before long He meant to give them their invitation: the king's servants were to be told to go into the highways and hedges; and from the East and from the West, and from the North and from the South, men were to come and be gathered into the kingdom of God. So He had given notice in very many of His parables; and after His Resurrection, He spake

^b S. Matt. x. 5, 6.

^c S. John x. 16.

out His meaning more plainly. He met His disciples on the mountain in Galilee, and told them to go and make Christians of all nations. He bade them go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. So it was before our Saviour departed out of this world. He had declared openly that, at some time or other, the other nations who were not of the seed of Abraham would be admitted into the kingdom of Heaven: but He had not as yet actually sent the message to them. Bye and bye came the great Day of Pentecost; the heavenly kingdom was actually set up, and although the first gathering into it consisted of Israelites only (for it was at Jerusalem among those who had come to keep the feast according to the Law), yet the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of S. Peter, very plainly signified, that it was His Will to give Himself to the other nations also: “^dfor the promise,” He saith, “is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off.” That is, the Holy Church, of which you now see the beginning, is meant by Almighty God to be a Catholic or Universal Church. For what is “the promise,” of which the Apostle was speaking? The Holy Ghost, Which had been promised to be sent by the Father upon all who should believe and be baptized, to make them members of Christ. That promise, S. Peter says, is unto you; to this present generation of Jews; and not to you only, but to your children; to all generations that shall come after you. That is, the Church was to be universal in point of time; the same body, or family, or kingdom, which began that day at Jerusalem, was to continue until

^d Acts ii. 39.

the end of the world, and not even then to come to an end, but to be taken up into heaven, and there made perfect with its Lord for ever. And not only was it for all generations, but for all nations also: as S. Peter goes on and says, "For all that are afar off;" for those who have hitherto been without the covenant; the Gentiles with the Jews, the uncircumcised with the circumcised. This was S. Peter's declaration on the Day of Pentecost: and it began to be fulfilled when the same S. Peter came to Cornelius' house, and the Holy Ghost, after his preaching, came upon Cornelius and the other Gentiles there assembled. Then the promise began to take place on those who were afar off, and it has gone on ever since, and goes on every time that any one is made a member of Christ by Holy Baptism.

So far then is plain, that the Holy Church is Catholic, as being intended for all ages and all nations of men. God meant it to exist every where, and at all times. He meant it also for each individual among men, would they receive it. For the Holy Spirit, speaking by S. Paul in the text, says, God our Saviour would have all men to be saved. His redemption is universal: if any lose the benefit of it, the fault lies some where else, not in any want of merciful intention on His part. His will and mind is, to be received as a Saviour every where, always, and by all. He would have all men every where and always "to come to the knowledge of the Truth." They are to be saved, not any how, but in coming to the knowledge of the Truth: i. e., to the knowledge of Jesus Christ: for He is "the Way,

^e S. John xiv. 6.

the Truth and the Life :” “^fand this is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.” We are to know and receive Christ *entirely*, not in part, but wholly, as He Is; Perfect God and Perfect Man. In this sense again the Holy Church is Catholic, because it receives and teaches the whole of Christ’s truth. Heretics, and those who are out of the Church, may teach, some one portion of it, some another, but the Catholic Church alone teaches the whole Truth, the whole saving doctrine of Christ. Therefore the Spirit Who is the life of the Church is called especially “the Spirit of Truth,” and our Lord promises, when He shall come, “^gHe will guide you into all the Truth.” “^hHe shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” The Catholic or Universal Church, may be known by its teaching the whole Creed, the whole saving truth of Scripture, to all without distinction of time or place: in England or New Zealand as in Judea; now, as in the days of the Apostles.

Now since it is every Christian’s duty, and we have all promised in our Baptism, to believe the articles of the Christian Faith, i. e. the Creed as the Church teaches it out of the Bible, it should seem that in order to know what we are to believe, we have only one thing to do; viz. to take on the Church’s authority what the whole Church has always taught as an article of the Christian Faith. We must make out this, according to the best means which God has given us *for* making it out: and having found it, we must receive it at once, whether we

^f Ib. xvii. 3.^g Ib. xvi. 13.^h Ib. xiv. 26.

can understand it, and account for it, or no. E. g., here in England, suppose any one of the simpler sort, any plain unlearned person, wanting to know what is God's Truth, to the knowledge of which he must come in order to be saved. Take any one of ourselves: here we are, in a branch, a portion of Christ's Church: we are not left to find our way each one by himself. By God's special mercy we are in the Church of England, whose rule is, to go by the Scriptures, as they were interpreted always in the Holy Church Universal, before there were in it such breaks and divisions, as now, alas! are too plainly seen. The Church, I say, puts, as it were, the Bible into the hands of each one of us, and says, "This is the Book of God:" it teaches us also the catechism, especially the Creed, and says, "This is the meaning of God's Book, for thus it was understood in the Holy ancient Church, when all Christians were evidently one Body." What can a plain unlearned Christian do better than submit himself to such teaching as that, when God's providence has put him in the way of it? He is not learned himself, to make out the full meaning of God's Word; but here he has a guide on which he can depend, for it walks by the very rule which the Lord ordained; it believes Him speaking plainly in His written Word, and where His Word is not plain, it takes that meaning of it, which has been received by the first Christians and their children, and by all that were afar off, even as many as the Lord our God hath called. For to them, taken altogether, not to any particular sort of them, nor yet to each generation apart, was the promise given, "I will guide you into all Truth."

This our Church of England, I say, is especially Catholic in her accounts of the meaning of Scripture, especially to be trusted by her children, because her rule is always to abide by what the whole Church in all times has taught out of Scripture. She holds by S. Paul's sayings; "ⁱBrethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught:" and again, "^kThough we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." But the other Christian bodies around us, who would tempt us away from the Church of England, do not hold by these sayings of S. Paul. The one sort says, "Care not for past times, nor Creeds, nor ordained teachers: read or hear your Bible for yourself, and whatsoever you honestly think you find there, that is the Gospel for you." Go where you will, you will meet, I fear, with too many of this way of thinking: and you will sometimes perhaps meet with another sort, with those, I mean, of the Church of Rome, who will likewise say to you, "Trouble not yourself about times past: do not enquire whether what you are taught is the word which was heard in the Church from the beginning: the only thing you need ask is, whether it is taught by the Bishop of Rome, whom men call the Pope, now." Both ways, you see, the rule is different from that which is laid down in the Bible. For whether a man goes by his own understanding only, or by the judgement of the Bishop of Rome only, either way he gives up the notion of holding by the old traditions, the Gospel which S. Paul preached, the word which was heard from

ⁱ 2 Thess. ii. 15.^k Gal. i. 8.

the beginning, the doctrine received "every where, always, and by all." Either way he declines submitting himself to the whole Church, which yet is said in Scripture to be the "pillar and ground of the truth." But the Church of England teaches us to submit ourselves to the whole Church, as the witness and keeper of the Scriptures, and judge of the Faith.

I do not often speak to you, at least I try to avoid speaking to you, of such things as these: but there are many tempters abroad, who think they do God service by unsettling our minds, and making us discontented with our Church; and I thought it might be well, for once and away, to try and explain to you one plain rule, by which even an unlearned man may see that ours is the safest way: seeing that we depend, not each man on himself, nor all on one single Bishop, but each and all upon that Body, with which Christ has promised to be even unto the end of the world. Plainly, then, an unlearned person is safe in communion with our Church, if only he abide in that communion worthily. For he receives the whole Bible according to the Creeds, according to the interpretation which the Church has put on it from the beginning. He keeps that old commandment concerning which S. John has said, that if it remain in us, we abide in the Son and in the Father. This is a great and awful privilege. O let us see to it, my brethren, that we forfeit it not. What will it avail us to hold the Catholic Faith, to believe rightly of the Trinity and the Incarnation, if in our lives we give no glory but rather dishonour to the Holy Trinity, if by our sins we cut ourselves off from Him Who was made Man to graft us into Himself? But

then, how great a blessing, my brethren, to be freed from the necessity of doubting and arguing on our Faith ! to have accepted once for all the testimony of the whole Church as contained in the Prayer Book, and so to be free to give all one's attention to the keeping of Christ's commandments, and thereby abiding in His Love ! Surely, notwithstanding the perplexities and distresses of the time, we Churchmen in England are too happy, if we knew but our own good. Surely the lot has fallen unto us in a fair ground, yea, we have a goodly heritage : only may it please Him to keep us from forfeiting it by sin and unthankfulness !

But while we thus adore and bless our good God and Father for the portion which He has assigned to us, and watch jealously lest we lose any of it, let us beware of rashly judging others, calling them heretics, and saying they are out of the Church. They are heretics, whom the Church has declared to be so : not all, who may seem to us to deserve the name. A man can hardly, I suppose, be a heretic, who receives the Creeds, and desires to submit himself to the Church. He may mistake what the Church says ; he may be an erring brother : but he can hardly be a heretic.

Be very gentle, then, in your judgement of those who differ : but be very jealous, I say it again, be very jealous for the ancient Truth ; do not either depart from it yourself, or willingly let others forsake it, who depend on you. The Creeds, the Catechism, the Sacramental Offices of the Church, are a precious treasure ; they are, as it were, ten talents, which God hath entrusted to the care of every one of us : how

dreadful to scorn and cause them to be blasphemed by any evil living of ours ! How dangerous to hide them in a napkin or to bury them ! Tenfold more so than in him who had but one talent !

And one thing more. If we considered as we ought what the word Catholic means, it would make our hearts burn within us with something, a little, a very little like the zeal of a faithful missionary. Our Saviour Who died for us, He Who is our God and our All, He hath in every way declared His will that His kingdom should be universal, that His promise should be both for Jews and Gentiles : and we too, brethren, if we at all have the mind of Christ, how can we help longing for the day, when the kingdoms of this world shall all of them become His kingdoms, when His way shall be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations ? And if we long for it, how can we help thinking often, and praying often, for that happy day ? And if we think of it and pray for it, how can we be other than glad and thankful, when our Lord gives us a chance to do some little good in that way, by giving of our substance for missionary work, though it be but a farthing, and we can but ill spare it ? O my brethren, it is a great thing, a rare privilege, a precious blessing, to be a fellow-worker with God in saving souls : do not you throw it away. As you remember the kingdom of heaven every time you say your prayers, for you always say, "Thy kingdom come," so never allow yourselves to forget it in the ordering of your daily life. Give what you can towards it ; set it up more and more in your own heart and in your own house : if you have any depending on you, as children

or servants, do your very best to make and keep them true subjects of that kingdom: pray and strive to have a Catholic spirit towards all men, a spirit of universal love; bear with their infirmities; make the most of their good intentions and beginnings: hope the best: despair of no one, for at least you can always go on praying for him. And when you are tempted to give any one up; think with yourself, What would have become of me, if Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, had given me up?

Thus will you be true Catholic Christians here, and by the grâçe of God, happy spirits in heaven.

SERMON XVIII^a.

THE CHURCH—APOSTOLIC.

DEUT. v. 31.

*“Stand thou here by Me, and I will speak unto thee
all the commandments.”*

THIS verse is a figure of what should be God's way of dealing with us in the Christian Church. He was to be the One Teacher and Governor in it, yet He was to teach and govern by certain whom He would choose. Accordingly we find, that as the first word in the Creed concerning the Church is One; the second, Catholic; so the third word is Apostolic. It is one, because our Saviour is One: Catholic, because He is the Saviour of all men. Why, and in what respects, is it Apostolic? The meaning of the word is, as you know, somewhat belonging to the Apostles. And who are the Apostles? Messengers of Christ: persons sent by Him with a special commission to say and do certain things in His Name. And the things they were appointed to do are the very things by which we are, one by one, united to Christ, and kept in union and communion with Him. So that if one would be reasonably sure of belonging to Christ, and being in a way to be saved by Him, he must have a reasonable hope that he is in that company and brotherhood which began in the holy Apostles

^a *Marked*, “Catech. on the Church 3.”

on the Day of Pentecost: that he continues as did those first Christians, in the Apostles' fellowship.

And of this, by God's special mercy, we may be reasonably sure, each one for himself. We are not to doubt, but earnestly to believe it. For, first of all, we know quite for certain who the Apostles were, how and when appointed, and with what message, on what errand, Christ sent them. That there might be no doubt, their names are set down in three out of the four Gospels, and in the Acts of the Apostles. They were ordained by our Lord Himself, under the title of Apostles, after a night spent in prayer, and had a solemn charge given to them. They were in such constant attendance on Him, that there could be no mistaking them, who they were; all that had knowledge of Jesus Himself might take knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. They were twelve in number, to answer to the twelve tribes of Israel: whereby we may understand that in them was gathered up, as it were, the whole people of God, His new Israel, to be entrusted with His new law. They were to be a sort of twelve Patriarchs, like the twelve sons of Jacob, through whom the special blessings of God were to be conveyed to His spiritual children through all ages and in all lands. Nothing could be plainer than that they are God's messengers; nothing greater or more solemn than their message. It was, in a word, to be as Christ in the world. So it was delivered to them, the very first time they saw our Lord after His Resurrection. "b As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." His Father had sent Him to be Prophet, Priest, and King

^b S. John xx. 21.

over His people: and now He sends His Apostles in like manner. They too were in their measure to do the work of prophets, priests, and kings in the Church. They were to be prophets, because the Holy Ghost should come and guide them into all truth. They were to be Priests, because He said to them, “^c Do this in remembrance of Me:” i. e., “Make the bread and wine Christ’s Body and Blood, as I have now done; and offer it to the Father in union with the perpetual Memorial of My Death, which I shall be offering to Him in Heaven.” They were to be kings lawgivers and judges in the Church, because He said, “^d I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me;” and, “^e When the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His Glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;” and, “^f I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven:” and, “^g Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” And once for all He gave the word to S. Peter, and through him to all the rest, “^h Feed My sheep;” and, “Feed My Lambs.” Thus you see the whole Church, and all matters relating to it, were entrusted to the Apostles; and that all the rest might obey them, it was said, “ⁱ He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me:” or as S. John said long afterwards, “^j We are

^c S. Luke xxii. 19.

^d Ib. 29.

^e S. Matt. xix. 28.

^f Ib. xvi. 19.

^g S. John xx. 23.

^h Ib. xxi. 15-17.

ⁱ S. Luke x. 16.

^j 1 S. John iv. 6.

of God : he that knoweth God heareth us ; he that is not of God heareth not us." The Apostles therefore were kings to rule the Church, as well as priests to offer up its spiritual sacrifices, and prophets to teach its doctrines.

It is true that in a certain sense all Christians are kings and priests, and all the Lord's people are prophets : as S. Peter says, He hath made us "k a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ;" and S. John, He hath "l loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ;" and Isaiah, "m All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." Yes, brethren, we are all kings and priests, because we are all members of Him, Who is the true King and Priest : we are kings, to rule over our own wild passions and fancies : we are priests to offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, a living sacrifice to God, and to join in offering the Church's perpetual Sacrifice, which is her Lord's Body and Blood : but this hinders not but that there should be among us an especial order of men, whose business it is to govern the Church in His Name, and to offer up to His Father His appointed memorials ; to bless us, and to intercede for us. The Jewish people were called by the Lord on Mount Sinai, "n a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," yet they had special kings, as David, and priests, as Aaron, on whose office no one else might intrude. As S. Paul, speaking of the priest's office, says to the Hebrews, "o No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was

^k 1 S. Pet. ii. 9.

^l Rev. i. 5.

^m Is. liv. 13.

ⁿ Ex. xix. 6.

^o Heb. v. 4.

Aaron." And we know what fearful things happened to Korah and his company, who set themselves up as if they might be priests as well as Aaron. The fire came out from the Lord, and consumed them; and as for those who took part with them, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up. Yet the word which they spoke was in itself true: "All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." But they would not receive what God had so plainly taught them, that His Will nevertheless was to have certain special priests among them, Aaron and his family, who only might offer incense. The whole Church, both Jewish and Christian, were to be priests, yet the outward work of priests was always to be done by persons especially ordained for it. Much in the same way as the whole of a man sees and hears things, but he sees them only with his eyes, and hears things, but only with his ears; so the whole Church sacrifices, and blesses, but it is only through her priests; the whole Church confirms and ordains, but it is only through her Bishops.

I say, through her Bishops: for this is the way in which the present Church may be truly called Apostolic; this is how it has fellowship with the Apostles, though the last of them has now been dead more than seventeen hundred and fifty years. The Bishops stand in their place. E. g. before S. Paul died, he laid his hands on Timothy, to make him Bishop of Ephesus; and on Titus, to make him Bishop of Crete: and so in other places, he and other Apostles did the like: and these persons, so made Bishops, stood in

the place of the Apostles, and had power to do what they did : to confirm, ordain priests, consecrate other Bishops, govern the Churches, be judges in all Church matters. And they, before they died, laid hands upon others to be Bishops when they should be gone : and they upon others ; quite down to our time : and so the providence of God has kept up a constant chain or succession of Bishops, i. e., of persons coming in the place of the Apostles, ever since S. Peter's time and S. Paul's : just as the same Providence has kept up the succession of the plants and animals after their kind, from the day in which they were first created ; just as it kept up the chain or succession of Jewish priests in the family of Aaron. Only that succession was kept up in the way of natural birth ; this, by laying on of hands. No man might be a priest among the Jews, except he could make out his descent from Aaron : no man may be a priest or Bishop among Christians, except he can shew that he was ordained by one, who, by laying on of hands, had inherited from the Holy Apostles authority to ordain. Thus each new generation of Bishops may be called in some sense the *spiritual* parents of the next generation : as Aaron was the *natural* parent of all the Jewish priests. Where such Bishops are, maintaining entire Christ's holy Creed, there is Christ's Church, and there is Christ Himself : and well is it for those who, by God's great and distinguishing mercy, are members, perhaps hardly knowing it themselves, of such a body as this. They must not doubt but earnestly believe, that theirs is a portion of the One Holy Church Universal : and if they do not put themselves out by their sins, assuredly they are " very members

ingrafted into the mystical Body of Christ, which is the blessed company of God's faithful people; and are also heirs through hope of His everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious Death and Passion of His dear Son."

Now this, my brethren, is the privilege of each one of us. For the Church of England, that portion of the Church, to which we, by God's mercy, belong, is as surely as any in the world tied to the Apostles by the Bishops. We, e. g. in this village, have our Bishop, the Bishop of Winchester: and we can trace up each link in the chain of his succession quite back to the time of the Apostles, just as certainly as we can trace the natural descent of our Queen Victoria from the old kings and queens of England. We have a Bishop, and in many ways the good providence of God is from time to time shewing us how we are tied to him, and through him to the Apostles and to Christ Himself. Most of you may remember his coming here, when this Church was newly built and fitted up, to bless and consecrate it in the name of Jesus Christ. Why? Because it was always held right in the Church, that places as well as persons, Churches as well as Clergymen, should not be set apart to God's special service, without a solemn dedication and blessing from one of those who are as God's high priests among men. The Bishop's blessing on that day was the sign and token of Jesus Christ coming to dwell in His Temple. Again, we remember more than once the Bishop coming here to confirm: we remember, the greater part of us, each one his own Confirmation. Now, what a recollection is *that*, would we but in earnest apply our minds to it, and

think of it as it really was ! We saw indeed but the venerable presence of an earthly father and high priest ; we felt but his hand overshadowing us when we were on our knees before him : but faith, my brethren, true Christian faith, if it was then living and working in our hearts, caused us to see with our mind's eye something far greater and more blessed : Jesus Christ invisibly present ; (for to our Bishop as well as to all other Bishops His promise was given, " ^a I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.") He was present therefore with the Bishop confirming us, as He had been with the Priest or Deacon taking us up in his arms at our Christening. With the eye of faith (if we were not faithless, but believing) we then saw approaching to us, as we knelt, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. His own Divine, Blessed, Loving Right Hand, we felt it laid upon our head : and it was strength and comfort and effectual help to us, and has been ever since, in our hard fight against the world, the flesh and the devil. Thus, I am sure, it has been, in a greater or less degree, with all among us who came to be confirmed, in faith. They were aware of their Saviour drawing very near them : and whether we knew it or no, my brethren, be sure of it, there He was : for it is His promise to His One Catholic and Apostolic Church, to be with His Apostles and their successors when they bless in His Name. And this very year we may expect him. In a few months time, please God, the Bishop will be here, and his and our unseen Master will be with him, to the blessing, strengthening and refreshing, of those who shall

^a S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

kneel before him with devout and dutiful hearts : and to the shame, condemnation, and great loss, of the careless, irreverent and unbelieving. And surely our hearts, the hearts I mean of those who have been already confirmed, must be very hard and cold, if we are not moved by the thought of Jesus Christ so coming among us, to serious consideration how it was with us when we knelt before Him to be blessed, and how it has been with us ever since.

But we need not wait for such rare occasions as a Church-consecration, or a Confirmation, to be put in mind how great a thing it is for us, that this our Holy Church is Apostolic. For in truth we are (if we would consider) put in mind of it, whenever we come in the way of a clergyman, an ordained minister of Christ. Every clergyman, as such ; every Priest or Deacon saying prayers or preaching in Church, or visiting the sick, or administering either of the Sacraments, or privately reprovng or comforting or instructing any in Christ's name, he too is a living and moving token of our Lord's Presence. For from some one of the Bishops, the Apostles' successors, he received a call to do these things ; and by virtue of our Lord's promise to His Apostles, he goes about doing them, and his doings are indeed a most serious concern, both to himself and others : for the Lord, Who is with him, is both to him and his flock either a savour of death unto death, or else a savour of life unto life. Where Christ takes part, the matter cannot be indifferent nor safely put by, as of small consequence. God give us grace to consider well, both *what* we say and do, and *how* we say it and do it : that His coming among us by His ministers

continually may be for joy and not for grief. Depend upon it, the presence of Christ's clergy is one of our chiefest spiritual blessings, not *outwardly* only, not for peace and order only, but inwardly and spiritually; a true token to faithful men of our exceeding nearness to Christ. Surely we have need to go about, as the Israelites ought to have done in the desert: in fear and trembling, in awe and veneration, feeling that the Glory of God is all around us, and might break out at any moment. Christ risen, and especially present among us by His ministers, how can we remember Him, but with fear and great joy? And if we are used to such thoughts, in our dealings with the ministers of Christ, it will help us to be very dutiful in the other parts of our behaviour. And He will graciously fulfil in us, what He promised to His ancient elect people, when they were on their way in the wilderness: "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

^r Ex. xxxiii. 14.

SERMON XIX^a.

THE CHURCH—HOLY.

DEUT. vii. 6.

“*Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God.*”

THE Church in which we believe is *One*, it is *Catholic*, it is *Apostolic*. So far, we have tried to understand what it is: and we have seen partly, what reason we have, as children of the Church of England in particular, to bless the Lord for making us, before we could do anything for ourselves, partakers of these good gifts. Now we come to the fourth word, *Holy*, which is indeed the greatest and most sacred description of all; for it is the title of God Himself, the Title by which especially He delights to be called. The Angels in heaven, who praise Him day and night, the Cherubim with their many wings and many eyes, who never rest from their work of adoration, say not, over and over, the words Great, or Good, or Almighty, or Glorious, or any of the other names of honour, which may be found ascribed to God in the Scriptures; but the word which they never tire of repeating is, *Holy*: “^bHoly, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” “^cHoly, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is

^a *Marked*, “Catech. on the Church 4.”

^b Rev. iv. 8.

^c Is. vi. 3.

full of His glory.” And the prophet David, speaking by the Spirit of God, invites us again and again to worship and adore Him on this special ground, that He is Holy. “^dO magnify the Lord our God, and fall down before His footstool, for He is Holy: worship Him upon His holy hill, for the Lord our God is Holy.” The word Holy, then, is that special title, or word of praise, which the word of God applies to the Lord Himself: and when any person or any thing else is called holy, it must be, because that thing or that person does somehow pertain especially to God. It belongs to God, or it is like unto God: there is something of God in it, which all who fear God or care for Him must acknowledge: and therefore we are to account them holy. Every thing is holy, so far forth as it belongs to God, and partakes of Him. This you will plainly see, if you consider how the word “holy” is used in the Bible, and also how we commonly employ it in our way of talking and writing about things. The Bible, as you have heard this very day, calls all Israel a holy people. “Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God.” So speaks the Almighty by Moses to all Israel, in the last year of their abode in the desert, when they were on the very borders of the land of Canaan. Was it that they had gone on so very well; that they had behaved themselves worthily of God; that He had no great fault to find with them? Far from it, alas! During all those forty years they had been by their sins tempting and proving Him continually, as we are put in mind every morning, in the ninety-fifth Psalm. They, the very persons to whom here it is

^d Ps. xcix. 5, 9.

said, "Thou art an holy people;" are very soon afterwards called a stiff-necked generation; they had been rebellious against God, from the first day that Moses knew them. How then could they be called holy? It is presently explained: "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." This He did solemnly and publicly, in the sight of men and Angels, in the hearing of heaven and earth, when they were on their way through the wilderness, and He met them in mount Horeb. They were then made and declared holy by an especial covenant, which was sealed between God and them by the sacrifice offered in the Mount. They said, "All that the Lord commandeth we will do:" and He said, "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." One might have supposed that they had forfeited this promise by their forty years well nigh spent in murmuring, unbelief, and disobedience. But you see the same gracious word "holy" is still applied to them. They are still a holy people, notwithstanding their many sins: because God's mark was still upon them; He had not yet left off counting them His own. And so all through the Old Testament, the things that are God's own, set apart for Him, have this title of "holy" given to them, whether there is any real goodness in them, or no. Thus creatures which have no life or no reason, mere *things*, which could neither obey nor disobey Him, because they could have no doings of their own, are called holy, just because He had vouchsafed to take them for His own. Thus Palestine is called the Holy

Land; Jerusalem the Holy city; Zion, the Holy mountain; the Tabernacle or temple the Holy place; the furniture of the Altar, the holy things; the robes of Aaron and his sons, the holy vestments. And we ourselves, as you well know, use the word holy continually in the like meaning. To-day, e. g. and all other Sundays, there is hardly a child here, but if I were to ask him would tell me that they are God's holy days: and if I asked him why, he would go on to say, Because they are God's own days. Again, if you were required to say, what Book is the holiest of all, you would at once say, the Bible, because it is God's own Book; the church, and still more, the chancel, because they are God's own abode, where He presents Himself in a peculiar manner; the Sacraments, because by them He makes us one with Christ and Christ with us: the Clergy, because they are His own servants: and so of every thing else: things are holy, according as they belong more entirely to God, or partake more of Him.

For this reason, it could not be, but that the One Catholic Church should be Holy, seeing it is the very Body of Christ on earth, His mystical Body, made up of persons, who are each of them united to Him, members of Him, bone of His Bone, and flesh of His Flesh. As His Natural Soul and Body are beyond compare the holiest things God ever created, for they are taken into union with God Himself: so His Mystical yet real Body, the Church, could not help being Holy, by reason of its nearness to Him. And again, the whole Church, and every member of it, must be holy, by reason of Him, Who came down to dwell in it and in each one, i. e. the Holy Spirit,

the Sanctifier, He, by Whom God unites His creatures to Him, and makes them, as far as they may be, partakers of Himself. The Church is Holy, as being the Body of the Most Holy Son, Redeemer of the world: and it is Holy again, as being the abode of the Most Holy Spirit, Sanctifier of the elect. Even as the whole congregation of Israel, and each one of them, was in a very true sense holy, because the Lord was among them, in such sort as He was not among any other people upon earth.

And to this agrees what is said of that Image of God, in which man was at first created. Man was made like God, not only in ruling the creatures, in having reason and understanding, in not being subject to death, but much more, as S. Paul tells us, "in righteousness and true holiness." As he was holier, nearer God in other respects than any of God's creatures on earth, so he was, and was to be, holier, nearer to God in goodness and purity, in righteousness and obedience, and in all kinds of heavenly love. This was his true holiness: and when he and we had so miserably forfeited it by wilful sin, He Who by His own Son provided for pardon of our sin, did by His Spirit provide also for our recovering a better holiness even than what we had lost. He gives Himself to us, He comes to us and makes His abode with us, not simply to assure us that we are called and elected, but to endow us with that grace, which will enable us to "make our calling and election sure."

The Holy Comforter, the Spirit of God, for Whose coming at Whitsuntide all communicants ought now to be earnestly preparing, He made us holy at first, by uniting us to Jesus Christ in our Baptism, and

He longs and desires and is waiting to make us more and more holy, by drawing us continually nearer to Christ, and transforming us into His likeness. But He expects that we in our measure should work with Him and under Him. For so is the Will of God in the whole business of man's salvation. The Lord having done His part, we must do ours. No matter how little, how very insignificant, *that is* which we *can* do: little or much, He has told us to do it, and hath given us strength to fulfil His word. We being once made members of Christ, the Father accounts of us as of persons belonging to Himself; holy, separate from all others. So must we account of ourselves. As He has set us apart from sin and the world, so we must keep ourselves apart. As He offers Himself to us continually in Holy Communion, so must we continually draw near to partake of Him. The Father hath once for all adopted us to be His sons. Can we do less than strive and pray in earnest to be like our Father, a holy family? A holy family! Think, dear brethren, what that expression implies. Would it not have been a strange and fearful thing, beyond all imagination fearful, if our Lord's own near blood-relations, living in the same house with Him, had proved to be wicked, such as Judas? Now why would that have been so very shocking? Plainly because, being so near to Him, their sin would have been without excuse, the most intolerable affront to Him. Well, if you will believe the Scripture, you must believe that any one of us, wilfully giving way to known sin, is at least as bad, as would have been one of the Holy Family falling away. And on the other hand, if we labour and

pray, we are as certain to be helped and favoured as any of those who belonged to the Holy Family.

So the Church prayed and laboured at first: and for many ages it grew wonderfully, and prevailed over the far greater part of the world then known. But now, we have too much cause to fear that there has been and is a great falling off. Men do not now keep themselves so pure, they do not pray and labour as in the primitive Church: therefore (as it seems), the Church does not thrive as at first: there are sad divisions and fallings away, neither do the nations of the world come in quickly, as at the beginning. In S. Paul's time, the unlearned and unbelievers, beholding the order and obedience which was kept up in the Church, were even constrained to fall down and worship God, and report that He was of a truth^f among the Christians. But now it is much to be feared that our disorder and disobedience is an occasion to many to continue unlearned and unbelievers. Men say in their hearts, and sometimes with their lips too, How can these be God's own people, whose behaviour has so little of God in it: these, who are, to all outward appearance, so very unlike unto God?

There is but one remedy for this great evil, and *that* is, for Christians to have more faith in their own high and holy calling. Once let us believe that we are holy, in that we are God's own, even more than the children of Israel were, "a holy nation," a peculiar people," let us believe this in earnest, and turn our minds continually to it, and we shall surely become holy, in the higher and more perfect sense

^f 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

of the word; we shall be made, by His Almighty Spirit, really and truly like unto God. E. g., suppose a young man believing, heartily and thoughtfully believing, that his own body is holy, even as a church or chancel is holy, because the Holy Ghost has made it His own by coming to dwell in it: such an one will feel that it is just as shocking to sin against his own body, as to deal rudely or profanely with a church or chancel. And believing the same of all other Christians, namely that their bodies also are temples of the Holy Ghost, he will treat them also with all respect and reverence and purity. Again, if you believe that you and the whole Church are God's peculiar elect people, you must believe that you and all of us, and not the Clergy only, are so far a sort of Priests unto God. And what kind of behaviour do we look for in Priests? Is it not that they should devote themselves, body and soul, to God's service? that they should live and die in the Psalmist's mind, when he said, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee: and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee." You are shocked, and think it a grievous scandal, when a minister of God's altar seems to make money or pleasure his god: remember then your own calling, that you too are a priest, called to offer yourself a daily sacrifice to Him: and be afraid and ashamed to go after the world and the flesh. Thus, I think, the simplest of us may plainly feel, that it would greatly help him towards true inward holiness, if he would steadily consider, how holy the Church is, to which by Baptism he belongs,

and how frightful a thing it must be for one brought so near God, one who belongs to God in so many ways, one who is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, to lead an unclean, a worldly, a profane life.

The Apostle in his earnest farewell to his Corinthian disciples says, “^hExamine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith : prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” I beseech God to write that word upon all our hearts. As Christians, we have a calling so holy, that, except we be holy ourselves, we are of all men most miserable. As a dead carcass is more loathsome than anything which never was alive, so is a worldly wicked Christian more hateful to God than a heathen. The soul, from which Christ the true life has departed, is more miserable a thousand times than that in which He never abode. Believe this, and strive earnestly to be holy in your lives, as you are holy in your calling. Then, as you are now the sons of God, so, when He shall appear, you shall be like Him. Then are you blessed now, and shall be more and more blessed for ever.

^h 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

SERMON XX.

THE FAITH THAT OVERCOMETH.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

1 S. JOHN v. 4.

“ This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

THE two holy weeks are now over, the week of sorrow and the week of gladness. The battle is fought, and the victory won, and we are come back again to the usual quiet times. If we have had any good thoughts of giving up ourselves more entirely to the love and service of Him Who died for us, now is there especial danger of our forgetting them, and falling back again into our old careless ways. Much as it is, when some good and kind friend is taken out of our sight by death: the thoughts of him seem for a time very fresh and strong upon our minds, and we feel as if we could never forget him: but too soon the world returns upon us, and except we watch and discipline ourselves, we grow again in a little while as cold, hard-hearted and selfish as ever.

Above all things let us beware of this kind of falling away from the wholesome remembrance of the Death and Resurrection of our Lord. We are most plainly taught, that He not only did and suf-

ferred these great things for us, but also that He hath wrought a great work in us. We have been made members of Christ, so that His doings and sufferings, His Death and Resurrection are, in some very true sense, ours. And now if we cast them away from us, as we do by living unholy careless lives, good were it for us if we had never been new-born, never sealed with Christ's saving Cross, nor washed with His purifying Spirit.

God forbid that such should be our miserable lot: and to prevent it, let us steadily consider what manner of persons we ought to be, who know not only that Christ died and rose again for us, but also that we have spiritually died unto sin, and risen again unto righteousness, in Holy Baptism. "a Examine yourselves," says the Apostle, "whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves," whether Jesus Christ be in you: whether you have those marks and characters, which belong to such as are risen with Christ. Perhaps you will say, in your heart at least, "this is a very great work: I am a poor unlearned person, and I know not how to begin. When you bid me examine myself, it does but bewilder me: I cannot command my thoughts." Whoever has this feeling, let him turn to his Prayer Book, let him diligently mark, what he reads or hears out of that. Though he be never so dull and ignorant, yet if he try in earnest and beseech God to help him, he will surely be able, on each Sunday, to gain some one good thought which may assist him in profitable self-examination. On each of these Easter Sundays, for example, a thoughtful man, though ever so simple,

^a 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

may by attending to the collects and lessons learn some question to ask himself, which may help him to judge whether he is going on as one risen with Christ or no. And the natural question for to-day in particular would be, Have I that faith which overcomes the world? All the particular services this Sunday point towards faith as the great matter of our trial. Faith is looking towards things out of sight, as real things; turning your heart and mind towards them: giving up the things which are in sight, for them. This faith is the great and immediate lesson taught us by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. For thereby we know that there is another world, in which we are very soon to find ourselves, both soul and body: and that such as we are towards Jesus Christ when we die, friends or enemies, in communion or cut off from Him, such we must abide for ever. These things are out of sight, and to have an eye to these things is faith. Faith is that in us, which receives our Lord's Resurrection as the eye receives light: and as the brightest light shews nothing to the eye which is obstinately closed against it, so is Christ risen, in a certain sense, nothing to the unbelieving heart. Have we then, my brethren, all of us this faith? Do we think of our Lord in heaven really and truly as we think of our friends and relations who are out of sight? Do we really contemplate His Presence, and put it home to our hearts that He is watching us, as we acknowledge the presence of any person whose eye we see turned towards us? When we pray, do we really speak to Him? or do we only say over certain words to ourselves or others? If we have been going on carelessly in our devotions, I do not very

well know what is to be said about our faith: certainly we have no right to boast of it, nor to be severe on others for want of it: certainly we shall do well to pray as the disciples did, "Increase our faith."

But we must not judge of our faith from our devotions merely, nor merely from what passes in our minds when we try to meditate directly on divine things. For so there might be a grievous mistake both ways. Some persons, feeling themselves at certain times greatly lifted up and deeply moved by Church-services or holy readings, might too easily make sure that they themselves had faith and were in a good way: others, finding their hearts dull cold and wandering, might too easily condemn themselves, and be cast down without cause. Therefore faith in Jesus risen, such faith as a Christian should have, is somewhat more than merely believing, and distinct from having eager feelings at times: it must be so real, so strong, so active and ready at hand, as that it shall really enable us to get the better of temptation. According to S. John's saying, it "overcometh the world." The world is the visible and outward course of things, amidst which we live and move: it is something different to each one of us, but each one finds it the same in this respect, that, by things in sight, it tempts and draws him away from things out of sight. The labourer's world is his hard day's work, his family cares, his regular or occasional holydays, all tempting him in their several ways to forget God and Christ and his own never-dying soul, and to live on from hour to hour as he best may, without providing for eternity. The world, to him who is richer and more at ease in his possessions, is the company

and the way of life which inclines him to say to himself, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die: or to "heap up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets:" or to "love the praise of men more than the praise of God." To overcome this world is really to turn away from the things which seem desirable in it, and to give them up for the sake of better things out of sight: and when our faith has this effect on us, when it actually causes us to forego earthly things in order to secure the things eternal, to please God and shew duty to Jesus Christ: then it is a faith which overcomes the world.

The Apostles, for example, had such faith. Of them and the first Christians generally, S. John appears to be speaking, when he says, "This is the victory which hath overcome the world, even our faith." They had already got the better: their contests had been so hard, their dutifulness to Jesus Christ so entire, that even in this life they might be said to have secured their crown. Think of S. Stephen on his knees, praying for his murderers while the stones were being showered on him: or of S. Paul in prison, working with his own hands that he might not be chargeable to the Church and offend any weak brother: or of S. Peter quietly submitting to be reproved by S. Paul: think of the noble army of Martyrs, how "they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword." Or rather, think of some young person quietly going on day after day in the faith and fear of God, in dutiful obedience to those set over him, in chastity of body and purity of heart, and see how resolutely and courageously, yet how calmly

^b Heb. xi. 37.

such a young person will reject the enticements of evil pleasure and the false shame of such as would laugh at him; think of such a case as that, and you will well understand what "overcoming the world" is. You will see also, that how high soever the Apostles' seats are above ours, still our resistance to sin, if sincere and constant, is the same *kind* of thing as theirs: nay, the same with our Lord's own resistance, when with one word, "Get thee behind Me," He subdued and drove away from Him the prince of this world, its kingdoms, and their glory. So great is His condescension, that He counts us to be doing likewise, if we do but silence for His sake some ordinary temptation. If a poor child, for instance, draw back his hand, and refuse to touch what is not his, or if any man overcome the longing of vain-glory, and really try to hide his good deeds, and this, because Christ has so bidden him: our Lord will add it in His Book to the treasure of His saints, nay of His own holy deeds. It is done in His Name, it shall in no wise lose its reward.

You may think perhaps in your heart, that no doubt the life of man may shew abundance of such single good deeds: you may feel in your own conscience that occasionally, from time to time, you could do such yourself: but how, you may ask, can one make such faith *habitual*? How are we to get into a way of *always* acting with an eye to Christ? *always* drawing back the greedy hand, closing the wanton or envious eye, shunning instead of courting the praise of men? I answer, If you can do this once, you can do it twice and three times, and so on till it become what is called natural to you. See how it

is in arts and trades, when people set to work in earnest. Suppose one learning to sing, or to play on any instrument, or to practise any kind of mechanical craft: he is commonly so awkward at first that he feels as if he never could succeed; but if he have a real good will, he perseveres for all that, and takes double pains; he does something right once, observes how he does it and studies to do it again: so he goes on improving by degrees: every day, or week, or month, he is able to do something which he could not do before; he fails often, but he will not let that discourage him, rather it makes him the more diligent: and thus at last he overcomes his difficulties, and learns the desired art or trade. So must we overcome the world and learn goodness.

Can you not tell by your own experience, what a power there is in a resolved and positive will, whether it be for good or for evil? And again, what a turn is given to our wills by the remembrance of things out of sight. A little child is left alone, and is tempted to touch something forbidden: it recollects its mother's words and draws back its hand. This is but a shadow of the power of faith when we call to mind some Gospel precept, some awful saying of our Lord or S. Paul, and control some unruly desire or action accordingly: or when we say a short prayer or renew the sign of the Cross in our foreheads, and the temptation departs from us. Moreover, we see with our eyes what strength there is in a heart truly dutiful to God, for ridding us of those temptations which come upon us from evil companions. It was well said by a wise and holy man, "If you let men alone, they will let you alone."

When people once see that you are determined not to yield to them, that you will not follow them to do evil, they will not think it worth while to go on tempting you much longer. They will abuse or scorn you for the time, as the case may be, and then they will leave you to yourself. Sometimes it may seem, bad men are even afraid to go on molesting God's servants in the discharge of their duty to Him: like those officers of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, who, having been directed to seize our Lord, returned to their employers, saying, "c Never man spake like this Man." There is a secret power in steady faith, to keep even the worst in order.

And if it is so in respect of bad example and the corrupt ways of mortals like ourselves, still more, may we believe, will our faith avail to drive away our invisible enemies, the most dangerous of all, the evil spirits. They can judge, probably, more truly than men can, of the reality of our faith, and know more of the awful and mighty helps which it engages on our side from God and His good Angels. "d Resist the devil," says S. James, set yourself against him, "and he will flee from you." It may take some time to convince men like ourselves of our being in earnest in any good profession: they can only see the outside of us: but the devil, it is likely, according to his subtilty, may sooner perceive the settled purpose of our hearts, and may depart from us, as he did from our Lord, when he found it was useless to tempt Him. Besides, who can tell what majesty and virtue there may be in true faith to rebuke that Wicked one when he draws near, so that the very

c S. John vii. 46.

d S. James iv. 7.

presence of a true believer may be even painful and tormenting to him: and each of Christ's members be to him in a measure such as Christ Himself was, when He forced him to cry out, "What have we to do with Thee? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

As faith is thus powerful against all sorts of enemies, so is it a help equally belonging to all sorts and stages of the Christian life. Little children learn it of their parents, when they are first taught to kneel down and pray to God, and to make a difference between Church and other places. Elder children need it to keep them from lying, from profaneness, from disobedience: no other reason can be given, why these sins are unhappily so common, but that our young do not really and practically believe. They do not believe that God is listening to them, and that for all this He will bring them to judgement. Then as to those sins to which young persons, as life goes on, are especially tempted; we know what was Joseph's safe-guard: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Joseph remembered God's Presence, and came off conqueror in a great and grievous trial. Christian faith has something more to remember, Jesus Christ crucified and risen again, and so united to us by His Spirit in Holy Baptism, that He feels our wilful sin as crucifying Him anew: if we sin against our own bodies, we affront the members of Christ. When persons remember this, and keep themselves in order accordingly, that is "the victory that overcometh the world," even faith in Christ crucified and risen again. And so to the

^e S. Mark i. 24. S. Luke iv. 34.

very end of our time, covetousness, discontent, greediness, the sins of elder life, are all to be resisted and overcome in the same way. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved from them all. Let us endeavour and pray to do so: let us have grace to call on Him in all temptation: let us be very much afraid of good words and good feelings without good deeds: let us beseech God to write on our hearts the lesson of the Church in to-day's collect, that it is in vain to think of being justified, except we be serving Him in pureness of living and truth. Thus may we, by His special blessing, maintain a reasonable hope that we are not wanting in the first great mark of those who are risen with Christ. Overcoming the world daily, we may hope that we have faith.

SERMON XXI.

PERSEVERANCE, A SPECIAL DUTY OF EASTER.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GAL. vi. 9.

“ Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

THE Apostle speaks here particularly of works of mercy and giving of alms. That is the well-doing which he means in this place: as we see by the very next verse; “As we have opportunity, let us *do good* unto all men:” and to the Thessalonians, “^a Be not weary in well-doing.” Be not weary, do not grow tired of it. Faint not; do not leave off for faintness. The saying seems to guard us especially against a temptation which too often hinders men in their works of mercy. They are tempted to leave off, from a kind of weariness, merely because they have gone on so long. A good deal of money, perhaps has been given, a regular allowance made, for a very long time, to the same person: and because the time is long and the money large, people begin to grudge it; though if they would consider the thing carefully, they would find very likely that the sufferer needs it now at least as much as when he

^a 2 Thess. iii. 13.

first received it, and it is as great a charity as ever to give it to him. In such a case, kind and thoughtful people put away their grudging thoughts as fast as they can, and try to go on relieving the afflicted one as bountifully and as cheerfully as before. And the Scripture for their encouragement says, "Faint not in so doing." Do not give way to the unkindly thought, so certain to come into your mind, "Really there is no end of helping this man." But as long as you see him in the same want as before, and yourself in the same plenty, do you help him as before: unless indeed by so doing you encourage him in some other sin.

Now what the Apostle says of almsgiving in particular may very well be said of all kinds of Christian goodness, especially when any circumstance has caused us for a time to be more awake and attentive to it than usual. Let us not be weary of it, let us not grow tired, let us not leave it off merely because we have practised it for a certain time, and because we do not like the trouble of it. There may be reason, just now, even more than usual, for our listening to such warnings as these. It is but little, I fear, that the best of us has done; yet something, one would hope, has been done this Lent towards our growing in Christian holiness, towards weaning us from the world, towards bringing us nearer our Saviour. If so, now is the time, or however it will soon come, when we shall be tempted to be weary in well-doing. Like persons who have got a certain way on a journey, we feel inclined to sit down by the road side, and say to ourselves, Is not this enough for one time? In many duties, of course

it must be so: such as direct prayer and Church communion, and that which particularly belongs to Lent, fasting. The very needs of the body make it impossible for us to keep on in them without fainting. And when we have done a sort of violence to ourselves, have fasted, for example, a little more strictly than usual, and the time is passed for that particular exercise, plainly we are in danger of carrying our liberty too far, thinking too much of it, and doing ourselves harm both in body and soul. And it is the same with other parts of our conduct. As we grow weary of strict rules concerning our diet, so concerning other things. To attend to one's temper, day after day and hour after hour, and keep it from breaking into anger or sullenness, is a great restraint, and we naturally fly off from it. To govern our tongue, to watch against evil words, whether in the way of falsehood, of boastfulness or of unkindness: to prevent our thoughts from wandering in our prayers: to be very careful of our time and money, so that we may be able to give account even of the smaller portions of both: these and other the like Christian and holy practices are, in their nature, more or less tiring. It is tiring, again, to keep to any rules at all, instead of doing or not doing things as men happen to be in a humour at the time. Ever since the unhappy fall of Adam, our nature has been weakened in all respects: and even when to will rightly is present with us, yet how to perform that which is good, left to ourselves, we find not. This weakness continues even in those who are regenerate, in the baptized, the members of Christ, and so much the more, as they unhappily may have fallen back

into their first state by sin. This then is one reason why those who have tried to be the better for Lent ought to be especially on their guard now Lent is over; viz. the weakness and frailty of our flesh, which of itself will bear us backward, if we let it alone.

Again, this, my brethren, is a time when we may expect the Evil spirit to be more or less busy with our souls. I mean that when Holy Week is over, the holy time when all who have any love for our Saviour keep themselves at rather more than their usual distance from the world, and when we come out each into his own world, into ordinary company, cares, and diversions again, it is reasonable to suppose that that Wicked one will be watching to take his old advantages of us, and we shall know whom to ascribe it to, should thoughts come into our minds such as the following: that one cannot go on for ever watching and praying: that it will not do to be always strict and severe: that now is the time to take a little pleasure: that you have kept yourself in order so long, have denied yourself such and such things, which other people took without scruple, surely now you have a right to some liberty: that it is long waiting for your reward altogether until you are in the other world: that this world, and your time for enjoyment in it, is fast passing away, and that it is fitting you should make some trial of it, as other people do, were it only that you may know what to think of it, and not give it up in mere ignorance. I say, when thoughts such as these occur, we shall know what to think of them, and whom to ascribe them to. They are in fact but the temptation which prevailed with Eve put into other words. Eve, I sup-

pose, had been a long time, or it seemed to her as if she should be a long time in Paradise, ever within reach, probably even within sight, of the Tree of Knowledge, yet forbidden to taste it: and no doubt the Evil one caused it to seem very hard to her deceivable mind, that she should be continued so long in the same trial and temptation, always having the same sin before her, and always expected to resist it. We are as she was: we rise up morning after morning, bound by the same holy vows, pledged to the same good rules, tried by the same ever-returning temptations: and when we have fought against them to-day and yesterday, we are apt, as she was, to count it hard that we should have to fight against them to-morrow also: moreover we have the same subtle enemy, too well aware of our weakness and ready to make use of it. We have also the world against us: the foolish and wicked world, which calling itself Christian, would fain take all the liberties of the heathen. It is too near every one of us. We all too know many persons who will keep us in countenance, and rather praise us than not, for slighting the strict rules and promises of our Baptism. Often they go further, and endeavour to turn us from our purpose by open mockery, or by pointing out all sorts of difficulties. Thus, supposing any one during this last holy season to have taken up a resolution that he will worship God in His Church at least every Sunday, or that he will prepare himself and regularly draw near to Him in Holy Communion: will not such an one be too certain to have scornful and unkind words spoken of him? Must he not be prepared to meet the ridicule, perhaps the displeasure, of many among

whom he lives? He is born of God, indeed, and by the might which his Father gives him, he may, if he will, overcome this wicked world: but it is well for us to know, that there it will be, for us to overcome: that we may pray the more earnestly for strength, and expecting the difficulty, be less tempted to faint and fall away when it really comes.

This time, then, of Easter, though a most blessed, is also a very dangerous time. In proportion to the good resolutions and beginnings we have made, will be the craft and subtlety of the devil and the world, trying to pervert our weak and frail flesh, of itself too soon weary and faint in the work of repentance.

The devil is very diligent to beguile us: and must not we be diligent and steady in resisting him? Is it not well to make up our minds beforehand, that a struggle we must have, and it cannot be helped, but that we, by God's grace, will do our part manfully in it? Why should we now give way? If we have at all tried to run well, why should we permit evil spirits to hinder us, that we should not go on and obey in our lives, what in our hearts we know to be the truth? If during Lent for example, you have taken up any good rule of fasting or other self-denial, were it not a great pity now, to leave it off altogether? If you have been wise enough to listen to your Lord's plain invitation, and come to His Altar without waiting to be old and infirm, O do not hereafter behave as if you were sorry to have believed and obeyed Him. Do not, by neglecting to come again, take away the joy which the good Angels, always waiting on Communion, felt, when they saw you for the first time draw near. If to prepare yourself for Easter

you overcame any bad passion, broke through any corrupt habit, beware that it return not now that Easter is over. A very little resolute watchfulness now, may save you a long and troublesome repentance bye and bye: nay, for aught you can tell, the life of your soul may depend altogether upon your resisting the slothful feelings which are now coming on you.

Consider that if God's strict rule was right and good when you took it up, it cannot be wrong and bad now. If it was good to examine yourself, to watch your tongue, to be careful of your time and money, to govern your thoughts and looks, during the Holy Week of our Lord's Passion, it must be good to do the same now, and in every week as long as we live. The punishment of our bodies need not perhaps be continued, but the ordering and amendment of our hearts, how can it ever cease to be necessary, seeing we may die at any moment, and shall have to give account for all?

Again, if we have, any of us, by God's mercy, gained some small ground during the weeks now past, what pity and shame were it to lose it again, and throw away the blessing! What a triumph to the enemies of our souls! What a grief to our heavenly guardians! In any business of this world, we know how much depends upon perseverance; what a reproach it is to a man, having made a fair beginning, to fail out of mere slothfulness. Our Lord Himself puts the case, of a person intending to build a tower and then leaving it unfinished, while all that behold it begin to mock him. So it will be with every one, who fails of being Christ's true disciple on account

of his childish sloth, which hinders him from keeping his own and his Master's good rules. He will be a scorn and a mockery, to be pointed at in the Day of Judgement. For very shame's sake let us go on now we have begun, and not throw away the mercy we have so little deserved. Depend upon it, however it may seem to you, repenting bye and bye will be a harder work, far harder, than persevering now. Every backsliding will make it harder, as every moment of steady resistance will leave you stronger to resist for the future.

Consider again, that for aught we know, upon our persevering in the very next trial we have, may depend our persevering at last. Final Perseverance is God's good and secret gift, we cannot tell to whom it is given; but thus much is quite plain, that regular steady perseverance in our several duties as they come before us day after day, *must* be the best and most we can do, to ensure this crown of all blessings! "b Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." In our burial Service we have a very solemn prayer, "That Christ would not suffer our souls, at our last hour, for any pains of death to fall from Him." We pray especially for perseverance, and God will answer our prayer, if we keep on asking for it in earnest. But all, for aught we know, may depend on the very next trial.

While we thus labour and pray to stand upright, the Evil one may not unlikely whisper, "you have broken many many vows already: you have transgressed and that wilfully: are you sure you can ever recover? Had you not better enjoy some delight

b Rev. ii. 10.

while you can ?” Thus he will tempt you to reckless despondency because of your past backslidings : or because in your devotions even now you feel tired, dull and dry : he will whisper, “ God hath forsaken you.” But do not you listen to him. Humble yourself indeed, and Christ will guide you now, and hereafter thoroughly heal and cleanse you. Avoid the evil spirit of sloth : put him from you : pass on : be quite sure that no work nor prayer of yours sincerely made to please Christ, can fail. It cannot be entirely lost : it is put down in God’s awful Book, to be read, and do us some good, before all, in the great Day. Live on in such endeavours, humbly confessing in your heart past sin and present unworthiness. So will the blessing of this Lent and Easter abide with you until another Lent begin : all your holy times together will prepare you for a holier eternity. In due season you shall reap, not having fainted !

SERMON XXII.

CHRIST RISEN, OUR RECOVERY AND OUR LIGHT.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

MIC. vii. 8.

“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.”

LAST Sunday, that great Sunday, the greatest Feast of the whole year, left the Church rejoicing in her deliverance. Christ had risen from the dead, overcoming sin and death for us, and we were all gathered together to give Him the highest possible thanks and praise, for setting us free from the slavery in which we were born. It was Israel, triumphing again in her ransom from Egypt. We took up the song of Moses, “^aSing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider,” Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the devil and all the powers of the world, “He hath cast into the sea.” The enemies of our souls are overcome, once and for ever.

Now I purpose, by God’s help, during these Easter Sundays to consider one by one some of the blessed effects of this triumph: and to-day especially I wish to consider, how Jesus Christ risen is made to us recovery after falls, and light in darkness.

^a Ex. xv. 1.

For as the people of Israel, when they had passed through the waters, did not find themselves at once in the Land of Promise, but had the great and terrible wilderness before them, full of many afflictions and trials: so is this mortal life to us Christians, the people and children of God. We have indeed One within us, Who will bring us safe through all, if we will seek and use His help: yet still we have much to go through: we are yet in the midst of temptation and danger. See how the prophets represent the condition of God's people in after times, and consider whether it does not answer but too well to our condition. Take, for instance, the words of the prophet Micah, which I just now read to you as a text. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me."

Israel, God's Church and people, is here speaking: not in the voice of joy and triumph, as on last Sunday, when just delivered from Egypt, but in the voice of deep fear, anxiety, and sadness. For times are altered. God's Church is grievously fallen, fallen into many most miserable sins and idolatries: and she has too much reason to fear God's heavy judgements. The prophet, foreseeing how it will be, teaches her how to speak and to think, when those judgements shall come upon her. He supposes her speaking to her enemy; the nation and kingdom of Judea speaking to the nation and kingdom of Babylon. For Babylon, as you know, was the enemy whom God raised up, to carry them away captive, and otherwise punish them, for their many sins. Jerusalem speaks to Babylon, and says, "Rejoice not

against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." As much as to say, that God's people, having fallen, might yet have hope in that everlasting love, whereby He had in the first place made them His people. He Who had delivered them from Egypt, would not wholly forsake them in Babylon. The remembrance of that past mercy would be both a comfort in their present affliction and a pledge of their future deliverance. Only let them take it as He intended, in deep humility and loving penitence.

Now let us apply this to our own case, looking back upon our Baptism. God gave us then a great victory over the Evil one. We renounced the devil and all his works: and thenceforward he could have no power at all against us, except by our own fault.

Suppose now that we afterwards fall: as most of us have done too sadly. Suppose we fall into wilful and grievous sin, such sin as separates from God, such sin, as that He hath sworn, "they that do the like shall not inherit His kingdom." No doubt we are inexcusable: nothing at all can be said for us. No doubt we have forfeited our part in the covenant. We could not say that our Lord dealt hardly with us, though He should cut us off for ever. But He has vouchsafed to become our Father. He has adopted us to be His children: and in virtue of that adoption we may hope that His bowels still yearn upon us with a Father's tender forgiving love. As the birth of a child is a pledge and token of the parents' loving care afterwards, so the regenerating mercy of our most compassionate God and Redeemer sealed and

given to us in Holy Baptism, is a pledge and token of His still being with us, as long as ever He keeps us here on our trial. He does not altogether cease to be our loving Father, till long after we have ceased to be His dutiful children. He waits to be gracious to us. He is that most merciful Father in the parable of the prodigal son: watching His penitent son on his return while yet a great way off, earnestly desiring to run to him, and fall on his neck and kiss him: and purposing in His heart to give him back again the whole portion and blessing of a son, if only he sincerely repent. Never has there been any age in the Church, in which the mercy of our heavenly Father has not been shewn in this way. As Holy Baptism has gone on continually, and is now as fresh and effectual as ever for the remission of the sin in which we were born, so is true and earnest penitence going on continually, as it were a second baptism of tears, for the remission of the sins into which we have fallen since our Baptism, but which we have now renounced for the true love of Him. Rejoice not therefore against us, O thou great enemy: thou envious spirit, thou proud and spiteful world. We have fallen indeed, too sadly, inexcusably fallen: but by the grace and strength vouchsafed to us in Holy Baptism we will arise, and go to our Father, and He will deal mercifully with us. Rejoice not, but remember Easter morning. Remember how vainly ye began to rejoice over the Cross and Grave of the Lord Jesus, and how, after He fell, He arose. Rejoice not, but remember the day, in which we sinners, unworthy as we are, were baptized into Jesus Christ, and made children of His God and our God.

In His Name, and by His strength, though we have fallen, we trust to arise so effectually, that none of you powers of evil shall ever be able to prevail against us, neither now, nor in the hour of death, nor in the day of Judgement!

God forbid that any one of us should ever be so foolish and ungrateful, as to indulge ourselves in any sin, depending on His pardoning mercy. There are indeed wonderful instances of it, enough to keep any from despair: but none, to encourage perseverance in evil-doing. On the contrary, we all surely feel that when a strict and careful father shews kindness to an undutiful son, it is that he may put him more throughly on his trial. The case is like that of the barren figtree in the parable of our Lord. If the master expressly let it alone, for one year more, that his gardener may dig about it and dung it, we are but the more sure, that if this trial also fail, if it bear not fruit after that, it will be cut down, and cast into the fire. The pardoning mercy therefore of our heavenly Father, sealed to repenting sinners in Holy Baptism, is no encouragement to sinners continuing impenitent. Almighty God, in the Old Testament, calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Was that any excuse at all for those who took no care to do the works of Abraham, but pleased themselves with merely being his seed after the flesh? Nay it was the seal of their condemnation: for how could He, Who blessed Abraham for his faith, be other than angry with them for their unbelief? O let us then be greatly on our guard, lest the Evil one tempt us to abuse God's mercy. We know that he will do so if we permit

him : as he tempted Eve in the beginning. To her his suggestion was, “^bYe shall not surely die : God is too mild, too forgiving, for that : He will not really fulfil so severe a sentence. You may as well commit this one sin, and take the profit or pleasure of it : depend upon it, He who delights in pardon will find a way of escape for you.” Thus the serpent talked with the woman, and thus he still keeps whispering to us. Turn a deaf ear to him, listen not to him, my brethren ; say with a firm and resolved heart, “Shall I sin, because God is merciful? Because He was so good that He gave His Son to die for me, shall I therefore count myself free to go on in my wickedness, as though I cared not how much I made Him suffer?” Surely that same compassion of our heavenly Father, which is all comfort to the penitent, ought to be all fear and shame to the obstinate and impenitent. But let us be well on our guard against so abusing it, and then He mercifully permits us to rest in hope upon His fatherly goodness, though our sins have been never so grievous. The thought of our Baptism, so far as it brings the remembrance of vows broken and grace forfeited, may well be very dreadful : but then it brings that other remembrance of the God of Love pledging Himself to be our Father : and so it becomes again, even after the saddest falls, the most soothing and comforting of all thoughts. By virtue of it the sincere penitent is enabled to say to his enemy, “Rejoice not against me ; when I fall, I shall arise.” Even from the death of grievous, wilful sin, we may arise by the power of Christ’s Resurrection, whereof He made

^b Gen. iii. 4.

us partakers, when He caused us to be members of Himself.

And as Christ risen is Life from the dead, so is He also Light out of darkness. "When I sit in darkness," says the penitent soul, "the Lord will be a light unto me." Easter time is in a remarkable manner a time of light out of darkness. What a change was that at the very place of Christ's death! On Friday noon, darkness coming on suddenly, and continuing over the whole earth until three in the afternoon: entire darkness at the very brightest hours of the day. On Sunday morning early, while it was yet dark, probably about two in the morning, the whole place lighted up by the glorious appearance of an Angel, rolling back the stone from the door of our Lord's sepulchre and sitting upon it: "His countenance like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." And so to Christ's disciples especially, and to the holy women, who were sitting by that grave in darkness, in the deep darkness of disappointment and bereavement, that glorious angel first, and much more the Lord Himself afterwards, came as a very glorious Light, which should never pass away.

The light of Christ risen again, whereof we are made partakers in Holy Baptism, cannot pass away, except by our fault, i. e., by our finally persisting in wilful sin. But it may be eclipsed, we may lose sight of it for a time, with little or no fault of our own. Men's spirits are not always equal: the corruptible body, more or less, weighs down the immortal soul. Then they sit in darkness: they are made to feel as if God, for a while at least, was hiding His eyes from them. It is what all must expect at times:

the purest even and the most innocent: much more those, who have at any time seriously broken their baptismal vows. If you have turned your back upon the light, and tried to shut it out, how can you think it strange if you have to sit in darkness? If you have given way to profane irreligious ways, if you have been disobedient to your parents or governors, unkind, unclean, dishonest, slanderous, covetous: why should you wonder at your Lord's depriving you of His Presence? Even a tolerably good man loves not to stay in a room with such as go on stubbornly in those sins: much less can the Holy Spirit, the Fountain of all Goodness, endure to stay in his heart. Darkness, then, the loss of the light of God's countenance, is to be looked for by all, even by the best, occasionally, for trial: by others, as a just yet merciful judgement. We must all expect, at times, to feel low, to be in doubt, and anxiety, and anguish, about the condition of our souls. It is a great mercy to sinners that so it should be. For what would become of them if they went on having sinned, or (still worse) yet sinning, and felt no uneasiness at all? Spiritual darkness must needs be our lot, at times. What is our special duty at such times? How would our Lord have us behave? We must "sit in the darkness." We must stay contented and resigned in our sorrow and anguish, until it please God to deliver us. So says the Prophet Micah: and another Prophet, Isaiah, gives the same answer to the same question. "c Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust

^c Isa. l. 10.

in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Let this be his remedy, simple trust in God's goodness: let him surrender himself up, body and soul, to Him Who is ready to take us up, when our fathers and our mothers forsake us. If He be with us, it is well, though we cannot see Him. If He be away, what good will our life do us, though in some deceitful dream we may still fancy we see Him at hand?

We must sit contented in our spiritual anguish: only helping ourselves with prayer and good works: and above all things we must be careful not to light up fires of our own, i. e., not to invent unreal ways of assurance and comfort, false visions and lying divinations, words of peace, peace when there is no peace. The Scripture speaks awefully of the condition of those who venture on comforting themselves instead of waiting for God's comfort. "Behold, all ye that light a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which ye have kindled." As much as to say, "God will leave you to yourself: to the wild untrue ways of your own choice. Make the best of them; for from Him you have no better to expect. Alas, my brethren, how sad it would be were any of us, or any one whom we love, to go through life in such a fashion as this, contriving false comforts for himself, and then at the last to awaken suddenly, and find, when he comes to the other world, that all he had been leaning on here was a mere dream! And on the other hand, what an exceeding joy, what a blessing beyond hope or imagination, to pass one's time here, if so it please God, in more or less desolation

^d Is. l. 11.

and anguish of heart, but to awake up at last in perfect peace; and understand in one moment, how God, the all-gracious Comforter, had been abiding with you all the time, enlightening your darkness, and helping you up in your falls! How shall we rejoice over our enemy, when it shall appear that our very falls, being truly and timely repented of, served to keep us more humble and watchful: and that even in spiritual darkness we never left off trusting in the Name of the Lord, and staying on our God!

SERMON XXIII.

THE LORD'S DAY.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN XX. 26.

“After eight days again His disciples were within.”

THIS first Sunday after Easter is the day on which our Blessed Saviour gave the first sign, as far as we are told, that Sunday, the first day of the week, was in all time to be His own Day. Hitherto He and His disciples in this and in all respects had kept the law of Moses. They had rested the Sabbath-day according to the commandment: so regularly, so exactly, that their malicious enemies could find no fault with their way of observing it, except in such trifles as their rubbing the ears of corn in their hands, or in His bidding a man whom He had healed to carry his bed. All the Saturdays of our Lord's earthly life had been thus carefully observed by Him, because it was His will to be “obedient to the law for man,” and the Law commanded that the seventh day, i. e., Saturday, should be kept in every week as a day of rest. It pleased Him, the Master and Giver of the law, the Lord of the Sabbath, to submit Himself to His own law, to keep His own Sabbaths, so long as He walked here on earth. But

now that the Law was drawing to an end, and the time of the Gospel had begun, this also was to be changed. The Lord, the Father and Governor of our whole life, to Whom all times and seasons, all days and hours belong: still reserved to Himself a certain portion of our time to be holy, and it was still the same portion as before, viz. one seventh part: but instead of the last day of the week it was now to be the first; Sunday not Saturday; the day on which the Lord had commanded the light to shine out of darkness, not the day on which He had rested from His work of creation. This was to be a token, every where and for ever, that the former things had passed away, and the new world, the kingdom of heaven, had begun: that now God's people are not to think so much of their deliverance from the yoke and bondage of this world, as of their admission into the glorious liberty of the kingdom of God, the new world, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." The Jew's Sabbath was an ending, a rest from toil, but our Sunday, our Lord's day, is far more than that; it is a blessed beginning of a work which can never tire. If you consider, you will perceive that this great and happy difference between their deliverance and ours was well shadowed out and figured by their sacred day coming at the end of the week, and ours at the beginning. In fact, if the seven days of the week stand for the whole time of man upon earth, then the eighth day, which is Sunday again, is to be taken as standing for that which comes after the time of man upon earth, i. e., for the Eternity which will follow. If religious people would turn their minds to this, surely it would make their Sundays yet more

joyful and refreshing than they are. I mean, if they would bear it in mind, that the Lord's day is intended to be kept not as a *holiday* only, a day to rest from their ordinary work on earth, but much more as a *Holy Day*, a taste and sample of the Eternal Day in heaven. Our Lord's Resurrection was the sign that all His sufferings were over, and our keeping the day is not only in thanksgiving to God for raising Him up, but faith also and humble acceptance of His purpose to raise us His people from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. As neither pain nor infirmity nor death nor any other evil can now come near His natural Body, so we know that a time is at hand when His mystical Body, the Church, shall be wholly redeemed in like manner; Christ's people shall have the full freedom which He hath now purchased for them, and of which on their behalf He hath taken possession. He purchased it on Good Friday with His own precious Blood: on Easter Day He took possession of it, for He was "free among the dead," the grave could not hold Him: and therefore we Christians are sure that it shall not for ever hold us. The true Sun is risen, never to set again: therefore the true Light is shining on us all for ever. As the days of our Lord's humiliation on earth were now full, and He had nothing to do among us but to take His great power and reign, so before long the number of His elect will be full; they will have nothing to do but to hear His comfortable words^a, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father," and to inherit the kingdom prepared for them. Sunday, the memorial of our Lord's glorification, is the pledge

^a S. Matt. xxv. 34.

and earnest of ours. Because it looks backward in adoring love to Christ rising from the sepulchre, therefore it looks forward in sure and certain hope to the saints rising from their graves on the Great Day.

This gathering together unto Christ, this fulfilment of the number of His elect, is signified by what happened to S. Thomas on the evening of this very Sunday, the first Sunday after Easter. "After eight days again," we read, i. e. a full week after He rose from the dead, "His disciples were within, and Thomas with them." They were together again, it was in a manner natural for them to be so. Do we not know how commonly, when any thing very particular happens, in a family or neighbourhood or among dear friends, a birth, suppose, a death or a marriage; we mark the day of the week on which it happens, and are sure the next week to take special notice of it, with joy or sorrow as the case may be? How then could our Lord's disciples help being together again, and putting one another in mind, This is the day, this the hour, when He Who is all in all to us, vouchsafed to come among us? It was but natural, even if nothing had been said to them: but in all likelihood the Divine Spirit put it into their hearts so to keep the time. And Thomas who before had been absent was now with them: then came Jesus, as before, with His Spiritual Body, and made Himself known to S. Thomas and to them all. This, as I said, was a type of the saints meeting each other and our Lord at the Great Day. And another type of the same was what happened on the sixth Sunday afterwards, the first Whitsunday, when upon the coming of the

Holy Ghost so many proselytes were converted from every nation under heaven. *That* also to the eye of faith was a token of the gathering of the elect in the day when the Church shall be glorified. And that, as we all know, fell out on a Sunday. Not without special meaning did the good providence of God order it, that the two great Beginnings, the Beginning of Christ's glory by His Resurrection, and the beginning of His people's glory by their sanctification should take place on the same day, and *that*, the first day of the week: the day on which the old creation had begun by the calling of the light out of darkness. This new miracle, the descent of the Holy Ghost, did indeed effectually put Christ's seal on the Sunday, and mark it for the Lord's Day to all generations. To no lover of Christ, ever afterwards, could that day ever seem like another day. There was no need to set it down by a positive rule in any council of the Apostles: no need for it to be declared in express Scripture as the Will of God, that Sunday should be evermore kept as the Lord's Day.

There was need to declare that the Saturday need not be kept, because all knew of God's commandments in the old law requiring it to be kept. And accordingly we find it expressly declared to be abolished in the epistle to the Colossians: "^b Let no man judge you in respect of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come:" i. e., "Let no man blame you as Christians, for not keeping Saturday as a day of religious rest; for the Saturday sabbath, like so many other things in the old Law, was but a shadow

^b Col. ii. 16, 17.

of a good thing to come, of a better rest, remaining for the people of God: and now that better thing, the state of Christian freedom and rest from the bondage of sin, is come, the shadow is of course passed away." Thus you see the Jewish Sabbath was distinctly done away: but the Christian Lord's Day is, no where so distinctly set forth. There was no need of it: so plain it was as a law of Christian love, and as such the Church ever kept it; neither can any Christian make light of it without sinning grievously against the first and great commandment. Plain it is that the Church from Pentecost downwards never ceased to mark the Lord's Day by solemn assemblies for Holy Communion: as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "° On the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread:" meaning evidently, that it was of course their custom to meet on every Sunday and celebrate Holy Communion. They would hardly account themselves disciples, i. e. Christians, if they did not so: it was as much a matter of course with them as going to Church on a Sunday is with us. And you may notice that God's good providence chose out that particular time, the time of their Sunday Communion, for one of S. Paul's greatest miracles, the raising a young man, Eutychus, from the dead; thus again marking the raising from the dead as especially a Sunday work. Again, S. Paul mentions the first day of the week as the day on which it becomes Christians to offer something of what they can spare for the good of their poor brethren: i. e. to give it to God at Holy Communion, for which, on the Sundays, they naturally came to-

° Acts xx. 7.

gether. And once more, on the first day of the week the beloved disciple S. John, being in banishment for Christ's sake, was permitted to see Christ again, Whom he loved, face to face, and to hear of Him, for our warning and consolation, the things which shall befall the Church to the end of the world. S. John saw Christ in glory, being, as he says, "d in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."

We are of the same Body, to which all these tokens were shewed of our Lord's special blessing on the first day of the week. To us He appeared on Easter Day as well as to them; to us as well as to them the Holy Ghost came down on Whitsunday: we, no less than they, are invited not only to rest on this day from our own work, the ordinary week-day work of this present world, but also to apply the day to God's work, and spend it in preparing ourselves for the true Day of the Lord, that awful Eternity which is both the first day and the eighth. O my brethren, these our Sundays, which we are apt to deal so lightly with, are very mysterious, very alarming times, if we will consider them with ever so little faith. How may we keep them? How make much of them? For indeed there is not one of them, but will make a great difference for or against us in the account which is now being made up. In one sense, they are over and gone in a moment, and we could not recall one of them, if we would give the world to do so: but in another sense, there is not one of them but will meet us bye and bye, and look us as it were in the face, and bear witness against us, so far as we have abused it, or trifled with it. How may we

^d Rev. i. 10.

keep these precious days? How make much of them? Surely by practising ourselves, through God's help, in all Easter thoughts, words, and works, in joyfulness and gladness of heart, to think of our Lord's triumph, and His bountiful, condescending, unfailing love to us: as it is written, "e Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Again, earnest, continual Thanksgiving is very much of a Sunday employment: as we read of the assembled Christians on Whitsunday morning. The Holy Spirit, when He came on them, found them praising and blessing God; and when they were filled with Him, still they went on, speaking in all languages the wonderful works of God. Great stress is laid by the holy fathers on our not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together; and so we find that on Whitsunday "they were all of one accord in one place," even as in speaking of this night, He saith, "The disciples were *together*." Yes, depend on it, there is great virtue, great might, in *united* Christian prayers, such as we offer when we are *come together* in Christ's name. There is a sort of violence in them, holy violence, taking the kingdom of heaven by force. No dutiful petition is unregarded, but to the prayers of the Church extraordinary encouragement is given: "f If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." Moreover, doing good, the Lord's own proper work, is surely the proper work of the Lord's own Day; I mean waiting on the sick, relieving the needy, or at least shewing a wish to be kind to them, and in short, all works of mercy.

e S. John xx. 20.

f S. Matt. xviii. 19.

“^εIt is lawful,” so He proved by several miracles, “to do good on the Sabbath day;” and if lawful, surely most blessed. In caring and praying, as best one may, for the whole Church, we are just doing what our Lord’s own Apostles did every Sunday of their lives, from Pentecost when they were continuing in prayer and supplication with the brethren, to S. John falling down before the great Vision, and feeling laid on his head the Saviour’s own Hand to bless him. And lastly, frequent Communion is perhaps before all things a Sunday work. The feast-day requires a Feast. What Feast should it be on the Lord’s day, but the Supper of the Lord? Well for those who can be there constantly, when the disciples come together to break bread: and well in their several degrees for all, who try at least to be ready, and to prepare themselves to come oftener.

You know, my brethren, each one of you knows far better than any one can tell you, whether such as these have been usually your Sunday employments. If they have been, if you have but sincerely endeavoured to be thus dutiful on Sundays, you know also better than I can tell you what cheering comfortable thoughts such endeavours, sooner or later, bring after them; how sweet the recollections feel of good days so well spent. Well then, if you spent last Sunday thus religiously, will you not spend in like manner what remains of this Sunday? and the next? and the next? and so on till we come to the last? which will pass us on (so may it please God) to the Great eighth day, the Sunday of Sundays, the crown and end of all earthly sabbaths. Oh, how much better, how much

more truly cheerful and refreshing, so to keep our Easter in every week, than as too many of us now do, at best in mere idleness and play, just leaving off work for a few listless dreamy hours, or wandering about the streets or fields in search of something to pass the time away: too often I fear in much worse, in wildness and mischief; whereby the blessed days, which were meant to be so many steps towards Heaven, are turned into descending stairs, steps downwards towards Hell. Indeed, my brethren, the work of the world is too engrossing, it takes too much of the Sunday out of us, unless we are greatly on our guard, even when Sunday has been a good day. How much more, if we have thrown it away or worse!

The happy and comfortable way is, not to let the Lord's Day pass, without laying up a treasure of good thoughts and purposes to help us all through the week, as the Church teaches us the collect to say with our prayers for those seven days. Thus the Sundays of our whole life will be so many milestones to mark a blessed journey. Thus shall we weekly, by God's help, rehearse what happened this evening in that mysterious upper-room. We with all our Lord's disciples shall be every Sunday together, and Thomas, i. e. those who now doubt and hang back, will be more and more with us: Jesus will come and stand in the midst, and His word will be, "Peace be unto you." And so shall the gracious word be fulfilled, even to the poorest and simplest of us all, "^hThey will go from strength to strength: and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion." They will find grace in His sight, and He will know them by name.

^h Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

SERMON XXIV.

THE RISEN LIFE, A LIFE OF SELF OBLATION.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

ROM. vi. 13.

“Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.”

WHAT do you suppose would be our feelings, my brethren, if we had been actually raised from the dead, as some, we know, have been? What thoughts should we have then, different from what we have now, concerning God and Heaven and Hell and Eternity, and the value of our own souls? What sort of lives should we lead? What should we fear most, and what love best? What would be uppermost in our hearts, our treasure, our great care and concern? What would you expect in any other person, if you came to know that God Almighty had wrought so great a miracle on him? You would hardly expect to find him going on, just as if nothing of the sort had happened. E.g. suppose you had lived in Judea, between two and three thousand years ago, in the time of the prophet Elijah, and had become aware of that wonderful miracle which he wrought in the village of Sarepta, raising from the dead the child of a woman which was a widow. Suppose you had met with that child when he was grown a young man, and had been

told, "This is he who was dead, and whom the prophet raised from the dead," you would have looked at him, I am sure, with especial interest, you would have thought to yourself, "Now this person will not be just like other people: he has had help to know about another world, such as others have not had: he must needs think much of God, and of the great prophet whom God sent to bestow such a mercy on him: it will be strange indeed if he has gone after Baal, or worshipped the golden calves, or become a follower of the wicked Ahab and Jezebel." Or suppose it had been in the next generation, Elisha's miracle and not Elijah's, that you witnessed: the youth who was so far grown that he went out to his father to the reapers, and the sun beat on his head and he died, and the Prophet stretched himself on the child, limb to limb and face to face, and he revived and opened his eyes. Suppose you had heard of this, and had been by, ten or eleven years after, when Elisha's servant was telling the king about that miracle, and on a sudden the very same lad, with his mother, came to ask a favour of the king, and you had heard Gehazi say, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life?" how earnestly would you have looked upon that young man! And how disappointing would it have been, had you found that he had turned out undutiful to his widowed mother, a glutton and a drunkard: or even an idolater, and scorner of God and His prophet. Or, (to go on to the times of the Gospel), suppose we had been abiding in Judea when the Lord Jesus went in and out among men; what manner of persons should we

* 2 Kings viii. 5.

have expected those three to be, whom, as we read, He raised from the dead, Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus? Could we fancy that the young maiden could ever forget what happened to her at twelve years old? She was lying in the very sleep of death; her soul had actually departed from her body, when the Hand of the Lord touched her hand, and the Voice of the Lord came unto her, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise:" and immediately she arose and walked. Would not that Voice be in her ears, that gracious Hand seem to have hold of her hand, for as long as she lived after? So too the young man, the widow's son of Nain: he was nearly or quite grown up, when his great deliverance happened: so much the more impossible must it seem that he should ever have proved unmindful of the good Saviour Who stayed him on his way to the grave, and called him to life again: or of his own mother, the widow, to whom Christ so lovingly restored him. We can hardly fancy that young man going on afterwards in a godless undutiful way. And as to Lazarus, our Lord's chosen friend before He called him out of his grave, the Gospel seems to shew that Jesus continued His special favour to him afterwards: since, at that supper in the beginning of the Paschal week in the house of Simon the leper of Bethany, Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with our Lord, and it was the sister of Lazarus who made that costly offering, pouring on His Sacred Head three hundred penny-worth of very precious ointment: partly no doubt as a thank-offering for her brother Lazarus' marvellous restoration. We are not surprised at this; we say to ourselves, who *should* adhere closely

to our Lord, if not Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead? It seems a matter of course: we *should* have been surprised, had he fallen away, or proved any thing but a saint. Again, when we read or hear of Dorcas, or Tabitha, in the Acts of the Apostles, how she had closed her eyes in death, but opened them at the voice and touch of S. Peter, as Jairus' daughter at our Lord's voice and touch: we cannot doubt that she went on abounding more than ever in "good works and almsdeeds which she did:" she wrought for the poor widows more diligently than ever, for the sake of that gracious Saviour Who had just vouchsafed her such a token of special love. And the young man Eutychus, who fell out of a window up in the third loft and was taken up dead; whom God presently restored to life by the prayers and embrace of S. Paul: which of us would not account it more than usually distressing, if it should prove that that youth afterwards fell away from Christ's Apostle and from Christ Himself, and learned to neglect the solemn assemblies, and the Holy Sacrament, at which he had received life from the dead?

Try to imagine yourselves, my brethren, in the place of either of these, and you will feel, I think, that there seemed to be laid on them a special duty (I will not call it a burden) of thankfulness and adoring love; that they were in some sort more inexcusable than others, if they failed to spend all their time after in a deep sense of God and Eternity.

We should naturally expect it of them, and the reason is very plain. Other men know that death must come; but these actually felt it come. Other men know by the testimony of their fellow-creatures

that in death they will find themselves quite helpless and alone, except God Almighty support them: but these have their own experience of that awful hour to report of. No doubt the change which we call death has something in it so very mysterious, that as no one can be acquainted with it except by actual trial, so the words and thoughts even of Lazarus, and of the rest who returned from the grave, were in all likelihood utterly incapable of representing it as it is. Yet still the fact was so; they had died, their souls had departed from their bodies, they had gone out of this world, and had been alone with God: and now that He had called them back to life, they knew that it was but for a short time; they would soon, very soon, have to go through the awful separation again: in a word, they had been brought unusually near to God and to eternity; how then (so we instinctively imagine) could they help being unusually holy?

Neither is there in Scripture anything to contradict this our instinctive impression. In the case of Lazarus it is positively confirmed; we know that he was a holy person: and in one other case, that of the widow's son at Sarepta, there was an ancient tradition that that youth grew up to be a great prophet, that he was in fact the prophet Jonah. And very remarkable would it be, were it true, that in this one person should take place two of the plainest types of the Resurrection: his revival when a child, and his deliverance afterwards on the third day from the whale's belly. But whether this be correct or no, the tradition proves that the youth was supposed to have grown up a holy man. How-

ever, the point I wish you now to think of is, not what they really were, but what we naturally look for in them. They had died and were raised again; therefore we should expect them to be very good and dutiful and religious. As S. Paul puts it in the text, we should expect them to yield themselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead. And we should rightly expect it: but let us consider: is there not something in this our natural expectation, to make us have very serious thoughts concerning ourselves?

In the first place, which of us has not known persons who have literally and outwardly gone through something very like death and resurrection? who have for a time quite lost their senses and bodily powers by drowning, or have been violently stunned, and been to all appearance as if they were dead for a time. God's providence watched over them, and called them back, one might almost say, from within the grave and gate of death. Was it not a kind of resurrection to them? Was it not a call to yield themselves unto God? Yes: an accident and deliverance of that sort is indeed a call, a true call from God: but is it always, or almost always answered? Alas, how often, how sadly often do we read or hear of persons struck down and relieved in this way, and sooner or later, many of them quite immediately, returning to all the evils of their former ways; their having been so visibly brought near to their latter end, has seemed only to harden their hearts, and set them on sinning more desperately than ever.

We are shocked, when cases of this sort come before us. We say to ourselves, What hardened repro-

bates they must be ! Whatever be our own faults, from *their* guilt we think we are very far distant. But if we will take the Bible at its word, we may see reason to apprehend that Almighty God may be even now passing the like sentence upon many of us.

“Yield yourselves to God,” saith the Scripture, “as those that are alive from the dead ;” i. e. God expects us all to be as good and dutiful, as we should expect Lazarus and the rest to be. Why ? Because in God’s sight, Who seeth all things as they really are, we all are actually “alive from the dead.” It is our great Easter lesson. Naturally we were dead in sin, but the touch of the Second Adam in Holy Baptism restored us to life. It is a hidden life: hidden “^bwith *Christ* in God,” but it is not the less true and real. And we feel it within us: we feel, if we would but confess it; every one of us I am certain, feels in his conscience, that it is yet in his power, by God’s mercy, to use, in some measure at least, the grace which God hath given him: to refrain from this or that sin, to practise this or that virtue, for the sake of pleasing Christ. So far at least, brethren, you are all of you spiritually alive. You are living by the Spirit. O why will you not walk in the Spirit? You were born in sin, children of the first Adam who is in bondage with his children: benumbed and helpless, you lay in the chains of sin, like Jairus’ daughter on her couch, like the widow’s son on his bier, like Lazarus in his grave: and there we should have lain for ever, but for Him Who of His own free mercy, passing over the many millions of the heathen who never knew Him, came

^b Col. iii. 3.

where we were lying in our spiritual death, and stood by us, saying to one and to another, "Damsel," or "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise :—" "Lazarus, come forth." For this He spiritually said and did to each one of us, when by His priest He took us up in His arms, and said, "I baptize thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." It was our mystical resurrection. So S. Paul every where teaches: saying that "we are buried with Christ in Baptism, wherein also we are risen again with Him." If you have unhappily fallen, as too many daily fall, from the grace of this your Baptismal resurrection; if you have grown up and gone on careless of your new and hidden life, have become again dead in trespasses and sins, and the Holy converting Spirit has by God's mercy again touched your heart, and wakened you from your dangerous dream, and you are now by His help trying to walk warily before Him: surely to such an one it may be said, "*Thou* hast a special reason, over and above what all Christians have, to serve thy God with exceeding love and carefulness."

All of us in short, whether as persevering or as penitents, being spiritually alive from the dead, our Lord expects us to yield ourselves to Him. What is "yielding ourselves to Him?" It is just what we should expect, as I said, Jairus' daughter, or the young man at Nain, or Lazarus to have done. In return for so great a gift, as life from the dead, what could either they or we do less, than put ourselves entirely at our great Benefactor's disposal, all that we are, and all that we have, for this life and for the next, for time and for eternity? Little, yea nothing,

it is that we can offer in comparison with His Gift, which is Himself: but such as it is, He both graciously accepts it as a token of love towards Him, even as He doth a cup of cold water given to a disciple, and also He strictly requires it as an acknowledgment due to Him, which no true and obedient heart can deny. This then is yielding ourselves to God: it is presenting, exhibiting, surrendering ourselves to Him, wholly and unreservedly, keeping back nothing at all: offering ourselves to wait upon Him, to be His dutiful attendants, if we may, for ever and ever: as the Blessed Virgin *presented* the Holy Child Jesus to His Father in the Temple of Jerusalem: as all saints, both Apostles and disciples, are to be raised up by the Lord Jesus, and *presented* together to God in the last day: as Christ's will is to *present* His Spouse "° to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing:" as S. Paul was anxious to *present* his Corinthian Church "d as a chaste virgin to Christ;" and to *present* every man whom he should teach, finally "e perfect in Christ Jesus:" and our great Intercessor's office in heaven is, "f in the Body of His Flesh through death to *present* us holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight." A *present* we know, is something absolutely given to another: the mind of Christ our High Priest, and of the Apostles and others as priests under Him, is to *present* us one and all, to offer us and give us absolutely over to the great Almighty Father, as a sacrifice made holy and acceptable by the Blood of Christ. Christ's mind and the mind of His Church is to keep back nothing, and we are to have the same mind. We, as being

° Eph. v. 27.

d 2 Cor. xi. 2.

e Col. i. 28.

f Ib. 22.

each one a sort of priest under Christ, are to present each one, day and night, his own soul and body, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God:" and most especially we are to do this in the Holy Communion, which is called "our reasonable service." We have already been presented to God in various ways, every one of us; in Baptism, when we were marked with Christ's sign, in token that we were His altogether, spirit and soul and body, His absolute possession: in Confirmation, when we presented ourselves and were by the Holy Church presented to God, to receive the strengthening grace of the Comforter: as many as are worthy communicants, by the great Intercessor pleading for us in special, as living members of His mystical Body the Church: also we are daily presented before Him Who heareth prayer by the daily intercession of our kind friends, and of the whole Church. In all these ways we have been and are from time to time presented before God: yet all this gracious help will be nothing, worse than nothing, it will only turn to our condemnation, if we are not careful also to present ourselves. How may we present and yield ourselves unto God? Every morning on our knees in prayer, looking forward to the day which is beginning, its works, refreshments, temptations, helps, we may commit ourselves to Him in faith and hope: every evening, looking back to the day past, mourning over our failures one by one, as nearly as we can remember them, we may commit ourselves to Him in repentance and humble resignation. Every Sunday service, and especially every Communion, should exercise us in yielding and

presenting ourselves to Him more particularly and more solemnly than usual. We should get by degrees into a way of presenting and yielding to Him, as our rightful Master and only Redeemer, all our beginnings and all our endings: all our sins should be presented to Him in confession, to be washed out by the Blood of Christ: all our good meanings and purposes in especial prayer, to be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I say to thee, my brother, whoever thou art, keep back nothing wilfully and knowingly from Him: for thou knowest that He died to sanctify thee all over, all that thou art and all that thou hast, and that He kept back nothing, but offered His whole self for thee. Find out thy favourite sin and yield that up especially to Him. For only think, hadst thou been really dead for a time, and had thy soul been permitted to remember what it found going on in the unknown place of the dead, God would then have especially shewn thee what fruit this thy beloved sin is likely to bear in that world: and how couldst thou then have borne to return to it? Yield it up then at once; never mind, how sweet it tastes now. God forbid thou shouldst go on to taste its real bitterness in the other world! Once get rid of thy favourite sin, and there will be good hope for thee as to thy other sins: and by His merciful blessing upon these thy daily endeavours, thou mayest come at last to be presented "perfect in Christ Jesus."

SERMON XXV.

THE SHORTNESS OF TIME A HELP AND A TEMPTATION.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

1 Cor. vii. 29.

“The time is short.”

YES, indeed: who doubts it? The very course of the seasons, whether of the world or of the Church, almost forces the consideration on us. There is hardly a day, that we do not hear some one or other say,—that we are not tempted to say ourselves, How very quickly the days and hours pass. But yesterday, almost, it was Christmas, and now Easter is gone by. Just now we were looking forward to our Lent and our Holy Week, as times to come, holy seasons which we knew it was our duty to make the most of; now we have to look back upon the same seasons as days that have been, and never, never can be recalled, no not one single moment of them, any more than the single rain drops can be recovered, which have helped to swell any stream after it has mingled with the great ocean. The moments, hours, days, weeks, months, can never be recalled, but we are sure in one sense to meet them again, one and all. They are set down in the Great Book, the un-

erring account which will be spread out and exhibited before all in the Day that is coming. How will they look then, these fragments of precious time which have slipped away from us so quickly, one after another? Yesterday it was Christmas, now it is Easter: yesterday was the New Year, now a quarter of the year is gone by: and what have we all been about? What profit have we reaped from this treasure of precious moments? I trust that we have not all of us allowed them to pass away as in a dream.

At any rate, we may make *this* use of them, even now that they are quite gone by: we may consider that this season will very soon be gone in like manner: it is now spring, it will soon be summer: it is now Easter, it will soon be Whitsuntide. We know this very well, in the bottom of our hearts, however we may try to disregard it, we have the sure and serious consciousness that *this* time also is short, that for *it* also we are accountable; that if we choose to dream it away, it will nevertheless return to us, bye and bye, as an awful reality, not to be used; (it will be too late for *that*, but) to be required and accounted for.

Do we want something to bring this thought of the shortness of our time, still more nearly home to our hearts? Then consider this also, for it is a sad and a plain truth; how that yesterday as it were, in many and many a family, there were persons blooming in health, in the prime of life, full of activity and spirit, young men or young women rejoicing (as the Scripture says) in their youth, their heart cheering them in the days of their youth, and feeling

themselves free to walk in the ways of their heart and in the sight of their eyes. Thus it was with them yesterday; and to-day where are they? They are gone out of sight and their place knoweth them no more: they were flourishing like a flower of the field, but as soon as the wind passed over them, they were gone; you look for them in the usual place, but the place is empty: like as a dream when one awaketh, so that which might be seen of them on earth is gone, never more to return.

I say, "never more to return" *to its place on earth*: I do not say, "never more to return to our sight at all:" for Holy Scripture teaches, and I pray you, my brethren, attend to the lesson and learn it perfectly: Holy Scripture teaches concerning them which are asleep, that we shall undoubtedly see them again, though not here in their place on earth; "^aFor if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him." The great event of last Sunday, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the pledge, not only of our seeing our Lord Jesus Himself, but also of our seeing our friends who have died in the Lord, and who are now asleep in Jesus, in the Resurrection in the last Day. If we are not ourselves found unworthy, we shall see them again, for He has promised to bring them with Him: and what a joy will that be, a joy which none shall be able to take from us, a joy sure to last as long as the Communion of saints in Heaven!

And concerning these our departed: if the days, hours, weeks, seem weary and long without them,

^a 1 Thess. iv. 14.

and it is dreary and forlorn to feel as though we could now do nothing more in the way of waiting on them and ministering to their comfort: yet still, my brethren, if we will but attend to it, we carry about us, deep down in our hearts, a sure and certain knowledge that "the time is" really "short," and we shall soon see them again. For though it be sometimes very hard to *feel* it, we all of us *know* very well, that the time to come will be like the time that has been, and when it has gone, will seem to have gone very quickly. Whitsuntide, Michaelmas, another Christmas, another New Year, another Easter, may seem to some of us now a long way off, but we know that when they are here (if we are spared to see them), they will appear to have come before we were well aware of them: quite as speedily as any of the seasons now past. And so, when the moment shall come, according to our Father's good pleasure, for us also to depart into that eternal world where so many of our friends have gone before, the whole time of our separation from them will seem as nothing in comparison. Perhaps, if we loved them purely and entirely, it would seem little or nothing even now beforehand; like the seven years which the Patriarch Jacob had to serve in order to obtain his wife Rachel, and "they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he bare to her."

But the serious, the anxious, the important questions are, What *use* have we made, what use are we making, what use do we intend making, of this our very short time? We know from the Bible, as well as from our own observation, that there are two opposite ways of thinking and behaving in respect

of this our short time, on the part of those who cannot help being aware of it. Some, too many, argue in this way: "Because life is short, and opportunity still shorter, therefore we must not lose any chance of enjoying or enriching ourselves; we had need make the most of every moment, Sundays and week-days alike, for the obtaining a little more of worldly pleasure or worldly gain." Of such the Wisdom of Solomon speaks: "^bThe ungodly said, reasoning with themselves, but not aright, Our life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy; . . . our time is a very shadow that passeth away; and after our end there is no returning: come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth; let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us: let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered." And in the prophecy of Isaiah and in S. Paul's discourse of the resurrection, the same kind of persons are mentioned, uttering their mind in few words, "^cLet us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Who has not known people of this way of thinking; young men and young women whose only care in life seemed to be, lest they should grow old and die without enjoying themselves as much as they might? And others again one has known and heard of, so full of anxiety lest they should let slip any opportunity of improving their worldly prospects; so bent on laying up treasures in the earth, that they were quite impatient of our Lord's call to lay up treasures in heaven. Sunday is an displeasing day to them:

^b Wisd. ii. 1, 5-8.

^c 1 Cor. xv. 32. Is. xxii. 13.

prayer a mere weariness; devotional reading, even of the Holy Bible, a waste of time. If the law and custom of the Christian world did not hinder them, it is too plain that they would go on openly with their ordinary work even in the most sacred seasons. They do not say in words, but their whole behaviour says for them, "The time is short: to-morrow we die; let us then toil and moil, and heap up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets: we have no time to spare for looking after our souls."

Others, very many, there are, who shrink from such open irreligion as this, yet cannot bear to renounce the world as they have promised. These make themselves as easy as they can by turning away their minds from the shortness of the time, and their eyes and ears from any thing that would remind them of death. Like Felix, they say to every serious thought, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Every now and then, it may be, they start up, and in a sort of alarmed half-waking state make some faint endeavour to amend; as if it struck them all of a sudden, that the time is short, and there is something else to be looked after; and this of course is much better than abiding in entire contempt of God; for indeed by His grace it may be the beginning of true conversion. But alas! too often their goodness fades and melts away in mere wishes and half-purposes: they are so unstable and irresolute in what little they do for God, they are so continually looking back to Sodom, that the enemy takes heart and returns to the charge, and too soon prevails against them.

^d Acts xxiv. 25.

Others again there are—may the Holy and Almighty Spirit increase their number a thousand-fold; who knowing, not only that time is short, but also that eternity is very long, endeavour by God's gracious help to order their hearts and their doings accordingly. They have learned for certain what is coming on them and on all the world, and they set themselves in earnest to prepare for it. They would fain not lose a moment in doing or suffering something for the love of God their Saviour, because they love Him, and because He has told them that the least thing so done or suffered shall in no wise lose its reward. They are as restless as the wildest lover of pleasure to "enjoy the creatures as in youth;" but their enjoyment is to make the most of everything for the honour of God and in dutiful obedience to Him. They are as greedy of treasure as the veriest miser; only it is treasure in heaven. Their word, like that of the dissolute on earth is, "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die;" but it is heavenly Bread for which they hunger, and the Cup of the New Testament for which they thirst: and they are afraid to draw back, when invited to Holy Communion, for they know not whether they shall have another opportunity. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Let us eat of Wisdom's Bread and drink of her Wine which she hath mingled, even that Wisdom Who is God Incarnate, the everlasting Word of the Father, made flesh and dwelling among us. Let us eat and drink at her table, while there is time, while it is spread for us, and we are yet permitted to come to it: for the time is short, and if we make wilful delay, the moment will very soon

come when the fearful word will be spoken in our ears, "None of these men which were bidden shall taste of My supper."

Now, my brethren, I have set three pictures before you: three sorts of persons whom God's providence has called to consider the shortness of the time; and you have seen their different ways of behaving, how they deal with this short time, which is equally short, and equally precious, to all. Which of the three is in the right; he who because the time is short, tries to lay out every moment of it for God and his own soul? or he who makes the most of it for worldly pleasure and profit? or he who tries, as well as he can, to forget that it is short, and so goes on according to the fancy of the moment, without any rule at all? Which of these three classes, my younger brethren, for to you I desire to address myself especially, and most especially to those among you whom I have myself prepared for Confirmation, either now or in former years: I say, which of these three classes shall you wish to have belonged to, when strength and health shall have passed away, and you shall find yourself near the end of this short space called time, and on the very edge of long unbounded awful eternity? Which course of life will be a joy to you to look back upon from the other side of the grave? Any hour this may be your case; your God may call you at any moment; and with or without preparation, you must obey the call. Shall I tell you then whom you will wish to have been like; with what manner of persons you will most earnestly long to find your portion? You will

wish in the first place, that you had sought Christ in your youth; yea even from your very boyhood: that whatever temptations were around you to bad words and dissolute profane ways, you had, in a quiet unpretending way, withdrawn yourself from those temptations, and sought instead the acquaintance of your Lord and Saviour, Who condescended to become for you successively a boy, a youth, a young man, and that in a poor labourer's estate. You will wish that you had lost no time in offering yourself to be instructed for holy Confirmation; that you had learned your lessons in faith and reverence, and received the Bishop's blessing, and the Seal of the Holy Ghost, with an earnest purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord. You will wish that you had become at once a serious and humble communicant, and had so continued all the remainder of your life. You will wish that you had shewn your love of your God and Saviour Whom you have not seen, by greatly loving your neighbour whom you have seen; by unaffected dutifulness and attention to your parents, by diligence in your work, by honesty and punctuality in your dealings, by prudence and charity in your way of speaking of others, by Christian sweetness, kindness and civility in your behaviour to all men. You will wish to have led such a blameless and dutiful life, or to have so truly and timely repented of your sins, as not to have forfeited the gift of Christian joy, when your time came to lie on a sick bed; and to have been able to look death in the face, and watch him coming nearer and nearer, without losing the power of comforting those around you by a sweet childlike innocent cheerfulness: and

this, not from any sort of lightness, but because of the deep comfortable sense of God's mercy through Christ, making the awful change tolerable and even welcome to you. When we tell you of such things, brethren, we speak of what we know and have seen. God has mercifully permitted us to see it very lately. And when we speak in particular to you, young men, and bid you go and do likewise, surely you must feel that we are giving you good advice, and that he will be your best friend, who shall most effectually persuade you to follow it. Surely you must feel that it is far happier, even in this present world, to lie on such a sick bed, than to be enjoying the very choicest of the ordinary pleasures of light irreligious youth. How much more, when we think of the change from a sick bed to Paradise; the actual departing and being with Christ, which is far better than all!

Much indeed shall we have to answer for, if, having been set within reach of so sweet and fragrant an example of many Christian graces, we fail to profit by it. But whether you have yourselves known such an one or no, S. Paul's word of warning stands good to you, and to all: "This I say, brethren, the time is short," and what have you, so far, been doing with it? Have you made much of it for the world and worldly lusts? Then make much of what remains, for Christ and your own soul. Have you been timid, wavering, irresolute in goodness? Pray and strive to be always in your better mind. Have you, by God's grace, been tolerably steady and consistent? Never forget that you are still in danger, in great danger: and if you *should* fall, how little time remains to arise in.

For your lost time you cannot repent too humbly : but do not lose more time in vain regrets. Fix your eyes on the time to come. If you have unhappily lost this Easter, yet do not lose the coming Whitsuntide. If childhood has been thrown away, yet youth remains ; if youth is wasted, manhood remains : if manhood, old age remains. Every stage is an unspeakable loss : still we are invited, and still we must come, and there will be hope : *only*, there is no time to lose.

SERMON XXVI.

WATCHFULNESS, TO KEEP WHAT WE HAVE GAINED.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

REV. iii. 11.

“Behold I come quickly, Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

Do not these words sound very much like parting words from our Lord and Saviour, dismissing us after our Easter Communion? “You have had a great blessing: you are in a high and holy place: you have been lifted up very near heaven: strength has been given you to do great things. And now I am in a manner departing, the sacred and happy season is passing away; you will feel yourselves more and more left on your trial in the world. I am going, but I shall soon be here again. The holy time of Whitsuntide will soon come, and the solemn invitation to Holy Communion will be again renewed more solemnly than usual: and it may be even before that, certainly in no long time, your Lord Himself will be here in person, and His reward with Him, to give to every man according as his work shall be. He will come to see whether you still have the bright and clean wedding-garment, if not such as He put it

upon you at Baptism, yet such as He graciously restored it to you, on your true penitence, in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Be watchful then: hold fast that which you have: be it much or be it little, in any case beware of losing it. If you have this Easter worthily partaken of our Lord's Body and Blood, it is a great honour, a bright and victorious crown: take care that you lose it not: let no man, no evil spirit, take it from you."

Thus may we understand our Lord's warning, as an Easter warning especially: and great need, surely, my brethren, we all have of it. For great indeed is our natural slothfulness: the sloth and languor in spiritual things of every man since the fall. Hardly are we roused up to any real effort for our soul's good or the welfare of our brethren; and when for a wonder we have done, or seem to ourselves to have done, some one good thing well, it seems often as if the exertion quite exhausted us: as if we could do no more for a long time. What with this natural dislike of hard work, and what with the Evil spirit, whispering to us, "Now you have done well, now you may be pleased with yourself, now God and man are approving you, now at least you may take a little rest, and enjoy the sweet consciousness of your wise and good labours;" and what with the thousand temptations with which the world and the flesh keep assailing us on every side: it is indeed a hard and rare blessing, to keep what our good God mercifully bestows on us at holy times. If we have won ground during Lent and Easter; and surely it is our own fault entirely, if we have not; so many and gracious are the helps provided for us by our Lord in His

Holy Church; we must not expect to keep it as a matter of course; we have still need of patience and perseverance. We are like people in a boat on a running stream: if we leave off exerting ourselves, we shall not stay where we are, but shall drift of course downwards, and lose all we have gained before we are aware. Or according to the parable which our Lord uses in the text; we are like persons striving for mastery in some game; wrestling or running or boxing: where he who would win the prize must in a way challenge all comers: when he has got the better of one, he must be prepared to meet another, and so on till all are overcome. As one who in such a course had gained one or two victories would feel himself bound to exert himself more than ever, would be doubly ashamed to fail; so in our spiritual combat; if God has been so gracious as to help us in getting the better of one or two temptations, must we not feel ourselves the more bound to resist all future temptations the more bravely and hopefully? Would it not be a shame to be disheartened, because we still find new combats, new enemies coming on, new calls for exertion arising? Why, we knew from the beginning that we were to expect it. And He Who so earnestly charges us, "Let no man take thy crown," He will be near at hand with His grace, to help us in doing what He enjoins.

Let us not then be disheartened or disappointed, but let us calmly consider, how great and how certain the danger is, of losing ground if we are not on our guard; and let us also turn our minds to some of the best ways of meeting that danger. First, observe what had been said, just before, of those to whom the

warning is given to hold fast that which they have. Our Lord says, "I know thy works:" that . . . "thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name. Thou hast kept the word of My patience. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Does it not seem as if He was speaking to the ordinary sort of good persons, who have kept themselves, by God's mercy, from known deadly and wasting sins: who may hope therefore that they still have the treasure of grace and innocence which He gave them in their Baptism; only there is danger of their depending too much on it: so far at least, as that they do not exert themselves with all the zeal and love that they might; they do not try night and day to do as much for God as they can? He seems to say to them, "You have been kept from known and gross sins, from stealing, from wilful slandering, from deeds of uncleanness, from habitual neglect of Christ, and the like. God's merciful grace given in Baptism has wrought in you to keep you from these. So far, you are still wearing your robe, you still have your crown on your head. But it is in great danger: there are many adversaries, and they will come upon you all manner of ways. The devil has ways of finding out when you are too well satisfied with your state and your doings, and he will be very active, very crafty, in taking advantage of such times." How many, because they have gone on well for a time, have said to themselves^a, "I am spiritually rich, and increased with goods, I have need of nothing," and so have begun to look confidently

^a Rev. iii. 17.

about them, and Satan has had the skill to put in their way just at the time the thing which he knew would most dangerously tempt them; and they have fallen, fallen miserably, fallen into mortal sin; and it is well if they ever recovered, while they lived here, to feel themselves in earnest wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Be not ye like unto them; but ye *will* be like unto them, if ye do not go on now in fear and watchfulness. Think with yourselves again and again, how great a treasure baptismal innocence is, and what a very special favour God Almighty did you, in bestowing it on you, when He made you a member of His Son: a favour denied altogether to the fallen angels, and not yet granted to the greater part of mankind. If in any measure you have been enabled hitherto to preserve this inestimable treasure, this is a reason, not for being careless and self-satisfied, but for watching the more willingly and cheerfully, out of thankfulness to the Great and Good Father, Who has all along granted you such especial, such unspeakable favours. It is much the same as in regard of God's earthly blessings: the old father Jacob, you may remember, poured forth his praises and thanksgivings to the Almighty for preserving him all his life long unto this day. Would it not have been a very strange reason to give, if Jacob had therefore left off taking pains to please God and serve Him and obtain His blessing afterwards? Yet this is just like the mind of many Christians, who because they have gone on in decency and order so far, allow themselves to be careless and lukewarm, and sometimes rather impatient at being spoken seriously to, and admonished

to do more for Him Who has so greatly blessed them. O, beware of this bad and selfish and unthankful mind: pray against it: pray that you may abhor it: pray with all your heart that you may at least persevere in such little goodness as you have already attained to. With such prayer your goodness will indeed be a blessing; but without such prayer there is reason to fear that even what you have well done may be a snare and a curse to you.

And now I must speak a word to another sort of Christians, to those who unhappily can have no doubt that they have been in mortal sin; that they have cast away the glory and the purity which the Holy Ghost had once put on them; but who have reason also to hope that they have laid hold in earnest of the plank which His miraculous mercy has provided to save us in such fearful shipwreck of our souls. I must speak to those who know they have been great sinners, but trust in their hearts that they have truly repented, and have obtained our Lord's gracious Absolution. Surely they also may hear His Voice at this Easter season, and He says to them, "You too have received a great blessing: you have the pardon of your offended God: He has restored you the white robe, which He gave you first at Baptism, and which you have sullied: He has commanded His servants to put it on you, and to admit you to His own royal Feast, as if you had never offended Him. You have Him again, Whom you had driven from you: Him Who is your God and your all. Hold fast that which you have: let it be your one care in life to keep the crown which your Lord has now restored to you." Think not that you are out of danger, because you

have lately had deep and strong feelings about your soul, deeper and more anxious feelings than ever you had before: so deep and so anxious, that it seems to you as if you could never forget them. Too certainly you will forget them if you are not careful to keep them up: as a fire has no choice but to go out, if it be not nourished with fuel. S. Peter thought he never could forget the keen and strong feelings which prompted him to cry out to our Lord, “^b Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.” But he did not nurse those feelings and keep them up, by earnest watching and prayer in the garden; though our Lord particularly warned him to do so. And so he fell very sadly when the temptation drew near. Three times he declared, that he was none of Christ’s. Should any one of us have gone home after Easter Communion, feeling as if he were now safe, as if the impression now made on him never could pass away from him: I am sure many things would happen, even before the day was over, to shew him how frail he is. “^c Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation,” then especially, when you have been greatly moved with hopes and anxieties about your soul: when you have seemed to yourself to confess your sins more humbly, and say your prayers more devoutly than usual. After strong feelings of any kind, we naturally become dull and weary: we fall back into our former state: and besides, there is this great danger, that the crafty tempter will begin whispering to us, that we may be pleased with ourselves, if we have served God with tears as well as prayers: if he can, he will set us upon flattering

^b S. Matt. xxvi. 35.

^c S. Mark xiv. 38.

ourselves, that now at least we have been truly contrite. And then what becomes of our contrition?

Wherefore, whether to penitent or innocent, our Lord by His Spirit gives warning night and day, "Hold fast that which thou hast:" "d that good thing which was committed unto thee keep:" your lamps are now lit, take care to have them burning when your Lord comes. Take care that He have not to say to you what His Apostle said to the Galatians. They were a people who thought very hopefully of themselves, yet S. Paul says to them, "e Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" What pity it would be, should our Judge and Pastor have some day to say to some of us, "Ye communicated well that one Easter: what prevented your going on in the way of godliness? When Mine Angels were looking, that you should grow more and more devout, as you had more of My healing and strengthening Presence: why did you on the contrary go back, and neglect the crown, and make it an easy matter for the Evil one to take it from you?" Were our Lord and Saviour this very hour to come visibly and openly among us in this very village, there are too many to whom He might say, "You came once to My holy Altar; that was, or seemed, a good beginning, a bright crown for you: but you never came a second time: was that holding fast what you had?" Alas, think better of it: do not imagine that your act in so coming can have passed away as if it had never been. Either you came unworthily, and then you have great need to go on repenting now and all your life long: or if you

d 2 Tim. i. 14.

e Gal. v. 7.

came then worthily, how unthankfully are you now trifling with His blessings, in that you have never thought it worth while to come again. O, think better of it: make haste and recover what you have lost by such negligence; come again very soon, only take care to come more worthily, at least in this respect, that you make it a special part of your preparation to settle it in your hearts when you will come the third time, and pray for grace to keep that holy purpose. I could wish to say this, not to those only who have proved so very weak, but to all of you who are at all in the way of approaching Christ's Altar, be it more or less frequently. I could wish to give it you all for a rule, Never go away from Holy Communion without forming some purpose in your heart, as to the next time of your coming. Make your resolution as in His Presence, and as in His strength, Who is even now come to abide in you. Make it with serious prayer, with earnest desire to keep it, but with great fear and mistrust of your own weak hearts.

And as you do in Holy Communion, so do in your other duties. When you are at your morning prayers, try to think shortly and calmly what the chief duties and temptations of the day may be, and beg a blessing on them beforehand. If you seemed to yourself to say your morning prayers in earnest, be very much afraid, as you go about the world, of losing the grace which you then may hope was given you. If you have kept your temper in one provocation, watch yourself the more courageously, that you may not lose it in another. If you have turned away your eyes once from any dangerous object, be all the

more resolute in turning them away the next time. By such simple rules as these you may, if you will, persevere in the good way: you may, as it were, every moment be striking a blow on Christ's side in His warfare against our great enemy: and who knows how bright and glorious your crown may prove in the Day of Reward? For His bounty is unspeakably great, and if we do but try humbly to keep what we have, He will cause it in marvellous ways to grow into a great deal more.

SERMON XXVII.

WATCHFULNESS, NOT TO LOSE ANY REMNANT
OF GRACE.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

REV. iii. 2.

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”

LAST Sunday I spoke to you of Christ's warning, how necessary it is for those whom He has favoured, to hold fast that which they have, in all cases, even the best. Even those who have so far won their crowns, may yet have them taken away. For the battle, the race, the agony, is not yet over. And there are many enemies, eagerly watching for our harm. Therefore our Lord's word, even to those who not only seem, but are indeed most perfect and victorious, is still, “Hold fast that which thou hast.” *Hold* it: it will not stay of itself. The grace which our Lord gives in this world, even to His own highly favoured, is spoken of as a jewel which may be lost, as a garment which may be defiled, as a lamp which may be put out. We must trim our lamps, we must keep our garments clean, we must treasure up our precious jewels. Of this I spoke last week, with an eye particularly to those who may be doing well.

But now we are rather to turn our thoughts to those who seem all but lost: who have to a great extent sinned away the grace given them when Christ made them His own. It is but too plain, alas! that there are many such among Christians: like a plant in a garden nearly rooted up, and only holding on to the ground by one or two threads, often very slight and slender. It is plain there are many such, and our Lord says something here which may well make us fear, lest there should be more of them than at first we might be apt to imagine.

For thus He speaks to the Angel or Bishop of Sardis; which Sardis seems to have been at that time a large, prosperous, quiet town, such as any respectable large town among ourselves might be now. To the bishop of the Christians in that town our Lord says, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." Here one thing is very plain: that there is no depending on good name and good character. Fair appearances before men, the being praised, well thought of, and looked up to, all this, our Lord here tells us, is no sufficient sign of our continuing in God's favour. Some of you may be thinking within yourselves, "We all know this well enough:" but, good brethren, though we know it when we are told of it, do we always make the right use of it in judging and managing ourselves? O, remember that saying of our Master's, "^aWoe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you." It is indeed a most grievous

^a S. Luke vi. 26.

snare, when persons hear a good deal in praise of themselves: it tempts them at once to think that they are better than the ordinary sort; that they in a certain way have goodness enough and to spare. Look at that unhappy man, whose history the Church sets before us in the lessons for two Sundays at this time. Look at Balaam: what sort of a man was he? He seemingly had the credit, far and near, of being so good a man, as to be able to prevail greatly with God by his prayers. Balak said to him, “^bI wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.” This was a great thing to say: it was as if one should come to a man now, and say, “I know you to be a good and holy man, a great saint, and one who has found favour with God, therefore I beg of you especially to bless me, and pray for me.” Persons who speak so to another, may do it in well-meaning, but they had better not: they are tempting that other to think himself good enough. And so we may believe, that the miserable man Balaam was more or less lifted up, when he heard such talk about himself. He thought that he was in some way high in God’s favour, and that he might, without offending God, wish and yearn after what He had plainly forbidden. And so he wished and yearned to be permitted to curse Israel, though God had distinctly told him, “Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.” We know the end: he went on from bad to worse: tempting God’s people to sin, that he might have leave to curse them: and cut off in the end by the just judgement of God. Look at Balaam, and pray that you may be saved from trusting to the

^b Num. xxii. 6.

snare of a good character. Pray that you may fear and tremble when men praise you. Think of the misery of waking up and finding that you had been dead in sin, while you and all around thought you were living in true goodness. Many people are not aware how easy it is to deceive one's self in this matter. They think that a man must know himself inwardly in his heart: that he cannot be living in deadly sin at least, without being conscious of it. But many by their own sad experience know, and we who have the care of men's souls know, that such things are but too possible. We know that the Evil one too often finds out ways to persuade sinners that what they do is not deadly, though the Word of God might plainly shew them that it is so. And one of his most subtle ways of working this mischief is, to get other people to praise us, and us to take delight in their praise. When we find that on every side we have a name that we live, it is so much the more possible for us to be dead in God's sight, dead in sin, without knowing it. What does this teach us all? Never for a moment to depend on the praise and good opinion of others, as if it were any safe token of our being in a good way. Rather let us make it a rule to be alarmed and stand on our guard, whenever we hear men speak well of us. - For we may be sure that our guileful enemy for his part is there on the watch, to make us take delight in that praise, and think so much the less of our sins.

This then is one token of that dangerous way, which our Lord here warns the falling Christian against: when a man hath a name that he liveth, and is pleased with that name. Another such evil

token is this: "I have not found thy works perfect before God:" *perfect*, i. e. complete, and thoroughly fulfilled. And the perfection, completeness, thorough fulfilment of a work,—what is the one thing which it most depends upon? That it be done before God, begun, continued, and ended in Him: with an eye to Him, in the hope of His gracious favour, in fear of displeasing Him, and in dependence on His continual help. This, you see, is what our Saviour requires of us: that we should not only keep the outward letter of His law, but should also bear Him in mind all the way along, from beginning to end of our doings. If we loved Him, we should of course do so: for this is the very mark of love, to remember the beloved in all we do, to do everything as we know will most please Him. Mothers love their children; therefore all day long they try not only to do something, but even to do their best for their children. If they are content with less than this, they may have some love, but it is not perfect. So it is with the love of God. You come, for example, here to Church: it may be for love, it may be to please some neighbour, it may be for custom's sake. I will tell you how you may know whether you come for love's sake or no. If you not only come within those doors at the appointed time, and take your place and stay with the rest; but also try, all the service through, to bear your Saviour Christ in mind, as you would bear the Queen in mind, had she invited you to the royal palace; if you not only kneel, but try to say the prayers in your heart; if you watch against all irreverence both of body and mind, not bearing to affront Him to His Face in His own

House, Who hath done so great things for you : then this your coming to Church will be counted by Him a work of love : He will not mark the human frailties, which after all will have sadly blemished it : He will "blot them out as a cloud," for His own sake : He will account it a perfect work. But in whatever way or measure you fall short of this devout and constant purpose of heart, so far your very Church-going will require deep fear and penitence. So far to you is the word spoken, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die : for I have not found" this Church-going of yours at all "perfect before God." You have come here ; so far was well ; but you have not tried for My sake to behave well here in My Presence : to be inwardly and outwardly reverent for My Name's sake.

What should we do, good brethren—and sisters, should Jesus Christ, Who is all the time among us, suddenly make Himself visible to us, and say some such words as you have just now heard ? What if He should examine us in this way, not only as to our behaviour in Church, but as to our whole way of life ? I do not know what we should do ; but I know what it would be our best wisdom to do, for He Himself has told us. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." "Remember how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent." As if He should say, It is true, you are sadly imperfect, but My will is not at all, that you should fail at last. Thou art not where thou mightest have been ; thou hast but a few things left in comparison, out of the rich store which I gave thee in thy Baptism : but think not of giving up :

dream not for a moment that it is too late. Remember as well as you can what you have lost by your sins, and pray and strive to recover it: and above all, make much of what is left. For instance: in the matter of prayer, many, too many Christians forget in course of time a great many of the good words and ways which they were taught when they were young: but they do not, I trust, often, quite forget the Lord's Prayer and the Belief. The words of these, and the custom of saying them, remain, when so much is lost of what is good. Then what I say is, Make much of those precious words and customs: it is a very great mercy that God permits you to remember them at all. Try, every day of your life, to say the Lord's prayer more devoutly, and to enter more and more into its meaning. If amid much sin and imperfection you have kept up the practice of saying prayers night and morning, I beseech you cherish and value this good practice beyond all treasures: on no account willingly interrupt it: never be hasty or careless about it: consider beforehand how you would wish to pray, what serious thoughts you would desire to have of Him to Whom you speak in prayer: and when the time comes, try in earnest to have such thoughts.

If in the midst of bad company, loose and dissolute thoughts and words, you have yet by His undeserved and special grace been kept from deadly sin: bless and praise Him with all your heart for so interfering to preserve you, and watch night and day over that remnant of goodness: strengthen and establish it with all Christian care: never endanger it by wilfully drawing near what you know will

tempt you the other way. It is but a small thing in itself, for a Christian man to abstain from open lying, malice, or lewdness. But if we carefully watch against those grievous sins, and draw back from the slightest thing which would bring them upon us: He will, by little and little, not only strengthen us in these respects, but will also lead us on to other duties which we have too much neglected. He will enlighten our eyes, that we may see what is right: He will give us tender consciences to start at the first whispers of the Evil one: He will by degrees restore us, even in those respects, in which we have sinned, to something like happy childlike trust in His forgiving love and mercy. Only let us hope on, and work on, in earnest: His promise He will most surely keep and perform.

See what further help He vouchsafes to us in the way of good and holy examples. Even in the worst times, and the most fallen places, He seems to say, there will ever be some who will shine like lights in the world: whose faith we are to follow, considering the end of their conversation. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." Why is this said, but to encourage the fainting penitent: who having been just told, "I have not found thy works perfect; except thou watch, I will come unto thee as a thief," might be altogether bewildered in doubt and amaze, and not know which way to turn? Nay, saith the Good Shepherd, here is proof at hand that My grace is sufficient for you. Here are some, even in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments: and their

reward shall be great: I will point to them at the last Day, and will say, These are they to walk with Me in white: I account them worthy, because they have kept themselves pure. What *they* have done all their lives long, *you*, by His help, may do for the short time of your life yet remaining. You may keep from sin and defilement, as they do. You may observe their good ways, and wish and seek to have the benefit of their holy and humble prayers. If you mark them narrowly, not to talk about them, not to praise them, not to find fault, but with a sincere wish and prayer to profit by them, doubtless you *will* profit, and that not a little. See how quickly they set about their work, whatever it be that God would next have them to do. When you see a man so doing, setting about his work at once, what hinders you from making a firm resolution in your heart that you will do the same: you will rise early to do your appointed task? When you see him commanding his temper, or turning away his eyes from something on which they ought not to rest, think with yourself, "I too, by God's assistance, will try this. If one man do it, another can, by the power of Him Who has promised to be with both. I will try, though it cost me something." You know, this is how children rise at school from a lower to a higher place. They mark how their elders and betters speak, how they do their tasks, and they try to do them as well. If a thoughtful master or parent is pleased to see his children do so, let us be sure that Christ is pleased, when He sees imperfect fallen Christians humbly treading in the steps of such as do more. He will not deny them what they ask, but will gradually

purge out the defilement they have contracted. O happy time, when our robes also shall be clean as when we came out of the bright baptismal water, and so we, having on the wedding garment, shall be allowed to sit at meat for ever in His kingdom. God grant it to you and to me!

One word more there is, which our Lord repeats often in this warning, as He did when He was on earth. "Be watchful," He says; and "If thou watch not, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I shall come upon thee." Who would not watch, and watch more earnestly than ever, when that precious and tender thing, his own soul, is just beginning to recover, after being nearly ruined by himself? We know not what hour He will come upon us; but we know that if we are found watching, all will be well. "c Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Watch with Him for this one little hour, in faith, in hope, and in true contrition: knowing that *He* never tires of watching over you.

c S. Luke xxi. 36.

SERMON XXVIII.

UNSELFISHNESS AN EASTER LESSON.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

PHIL. ii. 4, 5.

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

THE Scripture teaches us to think of the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour as being not only a sure pledge of a great blessing, but also a shadow and token of our own duty. The very temper which a Christian should be continually striving after is, ^a“To know Christ, and the power of His Resurrection and the fellowship of His Sufferings, being made conformable unto His Death; if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” He does not say, *believing His Death, or trusting in it*, but “being made conformable to” it. There should be something in our way of life, our daily behaviour, which should put thoughtful persons in mind of the death and resurrection of Him Whom we serve. The first Easter thought is, to believe in Christ, to continue believing in Him, though out of sight, and so to be more and more justified before God. And this is what the

^a Phil. iii. 10, 11.

services of last Sunday, the first after Easter, particularly remind us of. In like manner, the second Easter thought, the thought which should particularly take up our minds to-day, is about following our Lord's example, treading in His steps, doing as He did. Thus our Church teaches us, in the collect, that Christ was given us to be "both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life." Again in the epistle, "Christ hath suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." And in the Gospel He sets Himself out as a pattern for pastors in particular: "The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." And the lessons give us the same instruction from the contrary, in the miserable history of such as Balaam, who perished because, having faith without love, he corrupted the Lord's flock which he should have blessed.

Let us then consider with all reverence, how the thought of Jesus Risen naturally sets all Christians upon following His blessed example. First, and generally; in that He rose, never to die any more, for which cause He is called the first-born from the dead, we learn that He expects of us, new-born as we are and made children of God in Baptism, never to sin any more. "^bChrist being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once" for all: "but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Or, as

^b Rom. vi. 9-12.

S. Peter tells us, “^cHis own self bare our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness.” As our Lord’s life after His Resurrection, even though He staid a while on earth, was altogether heavenly and spiritual, so should be the life of those who are made members of Him. As He continued with His disciples, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, so should our conversation be altogether Christian, in respect both of the company we keep and of the words we utter. As He ate and drank with them, not for His own pleasure, but as the work which He had vouchsafed to enter on required, so our rule is, “^d Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” As He, even in His glorified Body, bears still the marks of the Cross, the Five Holy Wounds, the print of the nails in His Hands and Feet, and the scar where the spear pierced His Side, so are we, in all parts of our life and being, to remember His saving Cross, to carry the print of it about with us every where. This is the particular point which S. Paul urges in the text, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others : let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” that is, endeavour always to have such a mind and temper, as our Lord and Saviour had, in respect of doing good, and behaving to men, as you would have them behave to you. And because this cannot be done without constantly denying yourself, learn, I beseech you, from the beginning, to keep yourself in order, to give up your own wishes for the profit and innocent pleasure of others.

^c 1 S Pet. ii. 24.

^d 1 Cor. x. 31.

Here are two great and plain thoughts, most worthy to take up all a Christian's heart: the one, what happiness it would be, always to follow his crucified Lord's example, in doing all the good he can, and nothing but good: the other, how he may quietly deny himself, seeing that the only way to such happiness is the way of self-denial, and of the Cross.

Now we may judge a little of the joy and happiness of doing unmixed good, by recollecting and observing how men feel, not the best of men only, but all who have not cast off human feelings, on certain common occasions. For instance, I suppose almost every one has, before now, wished himself able at once to relieve bodily pain; almost every one has, before now, envied the physician's or surgeon's skill, when he has seen sharp agonies at once assuaged or cured by their interference: and sleep, and comfort, and cheerfulness restored to persons who for days or weeks have known little rest of body or mind. Or again, suppose a person in grievous poverty, and think of the delight of only bringing to such an one any certain news of better times; suppose a poor person and his children starving, and that it falls to your lot to inform them of some relief or allowance which the mercy of God has provided for them: surely it is a bright hour to any one, when he has but to be the bearer of such good news to a fellow-creature: how much more, should Almighty God enable a man to be himself the giver of such effectual relief. Or to take a simpler and less grave instance, one however which many will understand: the mere waiting on little children, when one is enabled to keep them quiet and happy, how real and

hearty is the satisfaction that goes along with it. Much more, if any person, like S. Barnabas, has the gift of comforting the afflicted, a treasure of kindness and wisdom in words, and looks, and ways. All men, I make no question, feel in their hearts more or less the joy that belongs to such doings as these, though but in one or two instances: but imagine a whole life spent in that way; imagine yourself doing nothing from morning till night, but healing pain, relieving want, cherishing childhood, comforting distress: how infinite is the sum of delight which Almighty God puts in a man's power, when He calls him to such a life. Think of Job in the days of his prosperity: he was happy, not so much for the plenty and respect which he enjoyed, but because he could truly say, "e When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgement was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out: and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." Who would not call such a man happy? And yet Job was in all this but a figure and shadow of One Who came after him, Who "f went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." Job in his first bright days was a type of our Lord Jesus

e Job xxix. 11-17.

f Acts x. 38.

Christ working those miracles of grace, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, comforting the broken-hearted, preaching the Gospel. Job was a type of Him, and whensoever God enables any of us to do any little good in any of those ways, that is so far a remembrancer and token from Him: and by the delight persons then feel they may judge of the happiness of being so employed continually: which is indeed an approach to the happiness of God Himself: for God is Love, "He is good and doeth good:" and the very reason why our Lord went about thus, doing good always and nothing but good, we are told by S. Peter, was this, that "God was with Him." The Fulness of the Godhead abode in Him bodily; therefore good and nothing but good ever proceeded from Him. Our doings are sadly blemished. Even he who has least forfeited his privilege of being a member of Christ, has much, very much that is not good proceeding from him, whereby the blessing and happiness of such things as are good is greatly spoiled: yet so far as we are members of Him, by His Spirit yet abiding in us, what we do for good, be it little or much, is His, and we are called to partake more abundantly of this His proper glory, to go about doing good as He did; and in the same measure, to inherit His proper blessing.

But then, as Christ, all the while, bore His Cross and denied Himself, so if we would do good and receive a blessing as members of Christ, we must be prepared for our Cross and our self-denials. The bitter, in some sense or other, must go before the sweet: no happiness can be had by sinners in any

other way: and least of all the great and divine happiness of doing good in imitation of Jesus Christ. This was especially set forth by our Lord's wonderful Incarnation and Birth, as S. Paul teaches in the words following the text; "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, made Himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." That was indeed, if it may be so called, the great mystery of self-denial; out of which virtue flows to all such weak endeavours, as frail man, by the grace of God, may be capable of. What our Lord did in taking our flesh on Him, though it be so high beyond our thoughts, yet He condescends to make it the pattern of our own behaviour on the commonest occasions. If we do but desire to put ourselves a little out of the way to do a kindness, or submit to an affront, or wait on some one in distress, and that for Christ's sake, He graciously gives us, to bring our desires to good effect, a portion of that good Spirit by Whom He became Incarnate of the Virgin Mary. He permits us to hope that such little efforts, being washed in His precious Blood, will be presented by Him to His Father and graciously accepted, will be set down in His Book and will in no wise lose their reward.

Our Lord's first humiliation of Himself was in a manner repeated in all His doings upon earth: in His lowly Birth; in His persecuted Childhood; in the poverty and obscurity of His Youth; in the wanderings, labours, cares, sorrows, fears, the blasphemy and reproach and all the contradiction of sinners, which He willingly endured all the time of His Ministry.

Every instance of that kind was a sort of shadow and figure of the first great humiliation, God made Man ; and the whole was completed on the awful and saving Cross. His whole life in every part of it, every one of His mysterious mercies and sufferings, looks backwards to His Incarnation, and forward to His Cross. So should it be with the lives of us His members, and with all that we try to do and suffer for His sake. Our rule should be in every thing to look backward to our Baptism and forward to our death. Our Baptism answers to Christ's gracious Incarnation ; we then pledged ourselves to mortify the flesh daily, to live according to the Cross which we received in our foreheads : let the remembrance of this vow accompany us in all our temptations : let us continually say to ourselves, " I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back." Again, our death, whenever it comes, will in some sense answer to the Cross of our Lord : there will be the separation of soul and body, such as He underwent : and who knows what else of mysterious agony, more or less partaking perhaps of the unknown pains of His bitter Passion ? Moreover to us as to Him death will be the end of our appointed and most awful task ; we shall have to say after Him, It is finished. Therefore as our Lord was constantly looking on to the Baptism of Blood which He was soon to be baptized with, so ought we to be looking on to our death. As we must then part from earthly and carnal things for ever and ever, whether we will or no, so now let us daily practise our weak frail hearts in giving up something or other which we should be glad to keep : thus, as He commanded us, bearing our Cross daily.

This is that yoke of Christ, which He so earnestly invited all His disciples to take on them, promising them that by the help of His Spirit they should find it easy and light. Without this, we are not to expect any real peace or lasting hope: for His word is, “^hTake My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” We shall then find rest, when we give up our selfish and anxious ways, and set ourselves in earnest to do our best for all whom God has in any way put under our care, or caused us to wait upon: when we have done repining about our own vexations, and have learned with a noble generous unenvious spirit to rejoice in the well-being of our neighbours: even though we see them growing rich in the very blessings which we most desire, but have now lost, perhaps through our own fault. Whether for the innocent or the penitent, depend upon it, there is no peace but in entire resignation of heart, the sacrifice of our own will to the Will of our God and Saviour. And this can in no way be thoroughly learned, without the daily practice of parting with our own wishes, in little ordinary things to please others for their good.

People may say, they have faith in the Cross, and put their trust in Christ crucified: but surely their faith and trust is but a dream, if they still go on pleasing and indulging themselves. “ⁱEven Christ pleased not Himself.” That adorable joy of His, which He took in doing good, in healing the souls and bodies of all that came near Him, He tasted it not without bearing the heavy burthen due to the sins of mankind.

^h S. Matt. xi. 29.

ⁱ Rom. xv. 3.

He sighed, wept, groaned in spirit, in some of His chief works of mercy. “^k Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.”

We who call ourselves disciples of Christ, how dare we, how are we not ashamed, to go on always studying our own ease, and taking the best of every thing, so far as circumstances allow, for ourselves, whereas our Master went about not having where to lay His head: and “^l had no form nor comeliness, nor any beauty that men should desire Him?” “^m He that saith, he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.” So speaks S. John, that disciple who best knew the nature of Divine love: and by his manner of speaking one may judge, how strange, how intolerable a sight it must be to the saints and Angels in Heaven, when any one calling himself by the name of Christ is seen to go on in selfish ways, looking on his own things only, seldom or never on the things of others.

What should we ourselves think, if we had lived in the time of any great saint, of the Blessed Virgin herself, of S. Peter or S. Paul, and we had found them, on a nearer acquaintance, no better in point of selfishness, no severer to themselves, no more self-denying, than we ourselves have been hitherto content to be? Yet surely the Blessed Virgin, S. Peter and S. Paul, could not be saved one way, and we ordinary Christians another. If we should have been shocked at finding them indolent and careless, given up to bodily appetites, slothful and easy, taking care only of themselves: how can we be satisfied to go on with the same low miserable habits in our own persons?

^k S. Matt. viii. 17.

^l Isa. liii. 2.

^m 1 S. John ii. 6.

Our Lord Himself told His Apostles, “ⁿ I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you :” and one of His Apostles tells us all, “^o Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ.” Think on those words, my brethren. Is there one of us who can think of them in earnest, and not feel anxious and afraid, lest his own way of life be found at last utterly opposite to the lives of Christ and His saints? Let us make much of those misgivings: they are God’s gracious inspirations for our eternal good. Let us not think to live or die to ourselves, but when we have a choice (and we are called on to choose every hour), let us make it our rule to favour and prefer one another. The gracious Lord, Who spared not His own life for us, will accept such humble earnest labours of love, as if they were indeed a return for His unspeakable goodness, and will silently make us truer followers of Him, less unworthy to see His Face, one day, with joy.

ⁿ S. John xii. 15.

^o 1 Cor. xi. 1.

SERMON XXIX.

THE COMPLETENESS OF OUR DELIVERANCE.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

ROM. vi. 14.

“Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law but under grace.”

WHEN holy times are over, holy desires and good purposes are apt to depart and die away out of our minds. We come to Church, for example, and are moved by something in the prayers, the lessons, or the sermon. While we listen, it seems very affecting, and we think surely we shall not soon forget it. But before we have gone far out of the Church, something is said or done, some worldly object comes in sight, which takes up all our thoughts, and the devout feeling passes away almost as if it had never been. It is like the morning cloud, or the early dew ; a moment ago it seemed fresh and beautiful, but we look again and it is quite gone.

Thus we go on, too many of us, Sunday after Sunday : and it is much the same in respect of the sacred seasons of the year, especially this which is just now passed, Lent and Easter. Few Christians, it is to be hoped, are so hard and cold of heart, as

not to be at all moved by the yearly remembrance of Christ dying and rising again: few, very few, persevere thoroughly in the good thoughts, which the Holy Week brings with it. We smite our hearts for the time, but we return speedily to our old thoughts and ways. Why is the most sacred Memorial of Him Who gave Himself for us so much better attended at Easter and at Christmas than at any other times in the year? Because, if people have any feeling, any love towards Christ at all, they cannot but be moved when they see Him first stooping so low, then enduring such agony, for them. Why, having thus attended, do so many of our brethren draw back all the rest of the year? Because whatever feelings they had, for the time, of duty and affection, are allowed too soon to dry up and vanish away. When they have received the heavenly Guest, they take no especial trouble to keep Him with them. They do not go on forcing themselves to be more earnest in attending to their devotions: they make no rule to remember their Saviour as their first thought in the morning, and the last when they lie down at night. The Holy Week is no longer than other weeks, and if we do not make it our business in one way or another, to continue the good thoughts and feelings which God's Holy Spirit then gives us, and make them sink deeper and deeper in our minds, they will of themselves wear out and die away.

Indeed, this happens so commonly, that there is very great danger of our making up our minds to it, and consenting, if not loving, to have it so. Even good sort of people too commonly come to take it as a matter of course, that good resolutions cannot be

altogether kept, nor holy desires and stirrings of the heart continued. Insensibly we allow both ourselves and others to go back to the world, when the holy times are over: I mean not merely in outward observances, but in our ways and works, in our mind and heart. We cannot go on, all the weeks in the year, as frequent in attendance on Church ordinances, and in other exercises of devotion, as in the one sacred week before Easter: and too often we permit ourselves to fancy, that neither can we go on with our hearts raised above the world, and fixed on the Cross of Christ, as they were during that time. Yet surely it need not be so with us. Surely the very contrary is taught by the sacred mystery of Easter Day. Christ died and rose again, not that we might follow Him in our thoughts, in reverential humble sorrow for one week, in thankful joy for one day, and then go on just as we did before; but "that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness," for the whole remaining time of our short lives here. The Easter season ends not with Easter, but continues quite until the time of our Lord's Ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost. So should our new life in Christ go on until He comes again to make us ascend with Him. As He lived on through all that season, all those forty days, still on this lower earth, yet still with the same heavenly and Divine life which He had, when He rose from the dead on Easter Day, so should we keep, through the whole of our earthly pilgrimage, the same good mind and holy rule of life, which we loved and wished to have, when on Easter Day morning we drew near to receive His Holy Sacrament to our comfort.

And we may do this, if we will. It is, by His grace, possible for us to persevere in our good mind and will, to keep Easter all the year long. As I said before, this is the very mystery of Easter, as the great Apostle by the Holy Spirit explains it, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him;" therefore we being raised from among those who are dead in sin, are to sin no more: sin is to have no more dominion over us. This is one way to partake of our Lord's Resurrection, that we may be found worthy, bye and bye, to partake of His glorious Ascension. Let us set our hearts to consider it.

Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more. Others have been raised, before and since our Lord, such as Lazarus, the widow's son at Nain, Jairus' daughter, the children in the time of Elijah and Elisha, Tabitha or Dorcas, whom S. Peter bade arise in Christ's Name. All these were as truly raised from the dead, as our Blessed Lord Himself. But here was the difference: all these died again. They lived their appointed time after their resurrection, and were then gathered to their fathers and saw corruption and decay, as we must all of us in our turns. But He Whom God raised again, as He saw no corruption after death, so neither could He die any more: death had no more dominion over Him. Therefore He is called the first-fruits of the harvest of the Resurrection, and, again, the First-born from the dead: not that He was the very first who arose, but the first Who so arose as never to die any more. He staid on earth forty days, and then, as we know, instead of dying, went up bodily into Heaven, where

He is now, with that very Body which was crucified, sitting at the Right Hand of His Father, and ordering all things in heaven and earth for the good of them that love Him and keep His commandments.

Now we are members of this Holy Jesus, this crucified, this risen Redeemer. We are verily and indeed parts of His sacred Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones: as truly so, as Eve was part of the flesh and bones of Adam, out of whose side she was taken. As He then is crucified and risen, so are we crucified and risen also. In respect of our old sins, the old bad nature we have from Adam, we are nailed to His Cross, no more to do such things: no more to stir hand or foot in the service of the Evil one, or in any work of darkness; just as one crucified is no longer able to make any use of those limbs, nailed as they are to the cross. In respect of our old sins, our old bad nature, we are crucified: but in respect of the righteousness of Christ, that new and good nature which the Spirit of God gave us, by making us members of His Son in Holy Baptism; in respect of that we are risen, and alive again. We are dead to sin, and alive unto righteousness. As death had no more dominion over Christ once risen, no more need sin have dominion over any one of us, once baptized and born again in Christ.

Observe, the Apostle does not say, Sin shall not touch us, shall not come near us any more; but it shall not have dominion over us. What is "having dominion?" It means being sovereign lord, owner, master, tyrant, over people; so that they are no longer their own, but his whom they so look up to. To be under the dominion of sin, is to be a slave to

it: not merely a servant, such as servants are among us, but an actual slave, with no power to give warning and withdraw yourself, no power to help yourself at all. Every wilful transgressor is either in this sad condition already, or he is fast coming towards it: as He Who is the Truth teaches, “^a Verily I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” Do you not see how miserable this sort of slavery is, when you look to those unhappy persons who are led captive by their own lusts, daily committing things which they ought not, deeds of darkness for which they hate themselves, yet still going on with the feeling that they cannot help it, they must indulge the wrong desire, come what will of it: and so the good that they would they do not, and the evil which they would not, that they do? Oh sore and noisome and intolerable mark of shame, grievous and galling burden, prison of darkness, corroding anguish in the very heart and bosom! to go on in practices, secret or open, for which a man scorns and hates himself, and knows that the end must be a worse anguish for ever, and yet to feel as if one could not help it! to say with despairing Israel^b, “There is no hope, none: for I have hitherto followed strangers, corrupting and defiling ways, and after the same I will continue to go.”

This is the condition of a wilful determined sinner: of one, over whom sin has dominion: but is this the condition of a Christian, of one risen with Christ? Surely not: surely such an one has no need to be the slave of sin: the snare is broken, and he is delivered. He is not indeed altogether exempt from sin: from

^a S. John viii. 34.

^b Jer. ii. 25.

sins of infirmity, from secret faults, from sins which are not unto death, he will never be so delivered in this life, as not to have to struggle and pray against them, and occasionally to fall into them ; but wilful, deadly, wasting, habitual sin, shall not, may not, must not have dominion over him : his nature is no longer so weak, so corrupt, as that he must needs fall, more or less, into plain transgressions of the ten commandments, or into the works of the flesh reckoned up by S. Paul.

We are not thus dead in sin, but we are alive unto righteousness : that is, we have power, through the grace of Christ given us in Baptism, to do such works as shall please Him by the help of His Holy Spirit, and to refrain from what will displease Him. “^c If we be dead with Christ,” says S. Paul, “we believe that we shall also live with Him.” We have a certain life from Him, by which we may, if we will, keep His commandments. How strange you would think it, were any body to come up to you, and try to persuade you that you were lying dead, and could not stir hand nor foot, whereas all the while you feel that you have life and breath, and can move your limbs at your will ! And yet we listen to our own foolish hearts, or our bad companions, or the Evil spirit, when they would whisper to us, that wilful open sin, pleasing the flesh and displeasing God, is a matter of course and cannot be helped. God forbid you should care for such evil suggestions ! God give you a courageous and faithful heart, to use the spiritual life which He has given you ! God keep you from having received His grace in vain !

^c Rom. vi. 8.

I could wish to speak to those more especially, who stand in need of special warning as concerning the Holy Communion, either as being invited to receive the Blessing themselves, or as having children or servants, or god-children who ought to be preparing for it, or, (too common, I grieve to say, among us,) having drawn nigh once or twice, and then repented of it, and turned away from their Saviour. Too commonly, the mercy which our Lord intended for us by that holy and gracious ordinance is sadly trifled with, if not forfeited, by these low notions of our Christian calling and condition; as if baptized people had not the power given them from above to keep their own vows, if they will. I beseech you, let us one and all refuse to attend to such fancies: let us have faith in Him Who says plainly, "sin shall not have dominion over you:" and let us attend also to His reason: "ye are not under the law, but under grace:" that is, you are Christians and not Jews: God has given you not only the knowledge of your duty, but power to keep and do it, if you will. Christ has given you His Spirit of Life; do not imagine yourselves so many dead corpses. You have power over the members of your body to serve God with them, if you will. You have power over your hands, to lift them up in reverential prayer, to put them forth in acts of mercy and help to your neighbour. You have power over your eyes, to turn them away from temptation, to fix them upon good books and good men, and upon such things as are apt to make you contented, and to stir up holy desires. You have power over your feet, to hasten away from places where you know you ought not to desire to be. You

can try, if you will, to attend to your prayers, to deny your own wishes, to please God and your neighbour rather than yourself. Mind, I say, you can *try* to do these things. I do not say, you can at once do them. Perhaps you have already got into bad habits, and then all these good duties will of course be hard to you: they will go, as is said, against the grain: but you know in your heart that you can at least *try* to do them. And if you try in earnest, never forgetting to *try*, and pray also for God's gracious help, depend on it, you will not be forsaken: the grace given at the font will never depart away. As it has brought you first to the Altar rail, to receive there a larger portion of the blessing of God's good Spirit, so it will bring you, if you will permit it, to the very Altar itself, yea to the High Altar in Heaven. Be not afraid to set forward at once and prepare yourself for that greatest favour, the Holy Communion, as many of you as have been confirmed. Christ is there: He says, "d It is I, be not afraid." Be not afraid to give up the pleasures of sin for the sake of receiving Him, Who is the Fulness of joy, and at Whose Right Hand are pleasures for evermore. Be quite sure that the loss is very great, yea in one sense irrecoverable, the loss I mean of every year, every month, every week, during which you permit your unsteady heart to keep you away from Christ, Who is your Life. Be greatly afraid of three things: the putting from you the notion of coming to the Holy Communion now that He so solemnly invites you: the coming unworthily; and the falling back afterwards. Doubt not however, but earnestly believe, that the safe-

^d S. Matt. xiv. 27.

guard, the only safeguard for each of these, is, by His grace, in your own hands. You may, if you will, turn your thoughts now to the Communion. You may if you will, examine yourself, and come worthily. You may, if you will, watch and pray afterwards, and come worthily again and again. And then you will not fall away.

SERMON XXX.

THE LOVE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

1 S. PET. ii. 25.

“Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

HERE are two pictures in one short verse, drawn for us by the Finger of God: the one, of sheep going astray, the other, of the same sheep when they have found their Shepherd again, and are brought once more under His loving care. Nothing in the world which we see, more forlorn than the one; nothing more thoroughly at rest and in safety than the other. Sheep, among animals, seem to be especially unfit to take care of themselves: to depend more entirely almost than any others upon the care which men take of them. And for this, perhaps, among other reasons, it has pleased God, in Holy Scripture, to liken us His people so often to sheep, and Himself to the Shepherd. If it were merely for the care He takes of us, we perhaps might have been as well likened to larger cattle, and He to our Herdsman. But the parable would not have suited our helplessness so well. To make us entirely aware of *that*, as well as of His Infinite Love, the prophets first, and

afterwards our Lord Himself, had many times compared our condition, man's natural condition, to that of a lost sheep. "a All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." So says the prophet Isaiah: and our Lord Himself tells us that the case between Him and mankind is as "b if one should have a hundred sheep and lose one of them, and should leave the ninety and nine, and go after that which is lost, until he find it." He, the Owner both of Angels and of men, leaves the ninety and nine which had not gone astray: leaves the angels which had never sinned, in their glorious place in heaven, and goes after lost mankind until He find it. S. Peter, in his epistle, takes up this parable, and reckons it among the glories and triumphs of the Cross. Christ Himself, he says, "bare our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by His stripes we were healed: for we were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls." We were lost, but He recovered us. And how did He recover us? By His Death and Resurrection. We cannot doubt Whom the Apostle had especially in his mind when he wrote those verses. Of course he could not but think of himself, how he for a short time had gone astray, denying his Lord, when he saw death coming on Him: and how the Good Shepherd did not forget him, did not let him go his own way, but sought and found him by one merciful and seasonable look. "c The Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord." That denial, and that look, was

a Isa. liii. 6.

b S. Luke xv. 4.

c Ib. xxii. 16.

in one short moment a sample and pattern of the whole history of our fall and our Lord's redeeming us: and we cannot doubt that S. Peter thought earnestly of it, when he wrote of our being like sheep gone astray, and returned.

And we too, my brethren, during these weeks of Easter, in which we are especially invited to look back on the blessed days of our Lord's Death and Resurrection, and to rejoice in the great things which have been done for us: ought we not to consider each one for himself, "Surely I am that lost sheep, whom the Good Shepherd recovered at so dear a rate! I myself, so far as by God's mercy I am not yet irrecoverably lost, I myself am one of the tokens of the great victory won by the Cross. My soul and body are part of the spoils which He hath taken from the Evil spirit. Not only did all mankind go astray once for all in Adam, but I myself have inexcusably gone astray. I have turned to mine own way, even when He had set me in His way: I have climbed, like a wilful, wandering sheep, over the fences with which He had mercifully guarded me. From my very birth almost He brought me within His fold, watched over me, set His mark on me, provided me with all that I needed: but I would not be contented: in one way or another, as time went on, I contrived to get beyond the bounds. I wandered on, in wilful and known sin; as sheep will go straying on the mountains, till they are far from their safe fold without being conscious of it. And our Lord knew beforehand that I should do all this. He knew of me, worthless and bad as I am. He knew of me, and had me in His heart, all the time of His bitter Passion.

He had my sins before Him, every one of them; He was well aware of each sad and shameful circumstance; how I should go on in spite of warning: how I should take a kind of pleasure and pride in committing certain sins with a high hand, and in scorning all that others said, all that God put into my heart, against them. He knew how cruelly I should sin on, though it came full into my mind that my sin might cause others to sin, and so I might be the ruin of many souls. All this and a great deal more concerning me was present in our gracious Saviour's heart during all He did for me: and yet He went on and did it all. He did not refuse to come down from Heaven for such an one. He did not abhor the Virgin's womb, did not draw back with loathing from being of the same nature with such an unworthy, such an ungrateful offender."

And not only did He thus come down, once for all, to redeem those whose sins He foreknew, but also, when it all came to pass, when those sins of ours were actually committed, still He was to us the Good Shepherd: not leaving us to wander on in our sins, but calling after us, warning us over and over again: so that we could not but hear His voice, if only we did not shut our ears to it. Is it not so? Was it not His voice, as often as parent, or master, or friend, or spiritual pastor said any thing to us, or did but make us a sign, to keep us in the right way? Was it not His voice, when we were taught prayers and catechisms, and good and holy words out of His own blessed Book? Was it not His voice, when conscience within seemed to prick us and we felt we knew not what secret resistance to some bad purpose which we had

allowed ourselves to form? Was it not His voice, when we heard the Church bells, when news was brought of any strange providence of His, especially when we heard of death or of dangerous sickness among friends and acquaintance? O, surely all this and much more that kept happening to us was the voice of our Lord Jesus calling us back to His safe and happy fold. He called us one by one; called us by name; that is, He suited His providential calls to the particular circumstances of each one of us. We cannot now understand it, but if we be worthy, we shall understand it hereafter, how wonderfully this gracious Shepherd suited all the great and little accidents of our life to the several wants and dangers and temptations of each one of us, His several sheep and lambs. As earthly shepherds know the faces and ways of each sheep and lamb in their flock, so and much more completely has our heavenly Shepherd ever known each one of us, and looked upon us, and provided for us accordingly. He hath fed us all our lives long unto this day: He hath fed us, would we but have taken it, with food most convenient for us His members; with the Bread which He brake, and the wine which He mingled for us, in His most Holy Sacrament. He has not left us ignorant where we might find a safe fold: there is not one of us but has long ago known in his heart, would he but have attended to it, that if we would do as we are here taught out of the Bible and Prayer Book, our souls would be, through God's mercy, safe for ever. Again, and especially, as the true and good shepherd is never daunted nor wearied when seeking the lost, going on by night and day, in all manner of weathers and not

leaving off for the seeming perverseness and wilfulness of the senseless animal, which keeps starting away from him when he just thinks he has recovered it, and is sure almost, when driven, to turn in the wrong direction wherever there is a choice, yet the shepherd perseveres in trying to guide it home: so the Shepherd of these our too stubborn souls, grieved as He is by our undutiful ways, yet ceases not to follow and to help us: we rush on, each his own way, heady and self-willed, like a flock that will not be directed: but He ceases not to accompany and direct us: He is still at hand, and so we shall find, would we but stop in our wild course and listen but for once to His fatherly voice. He minds not what He endures, what rough ways He is dragged along, what thorns pierce Him, what cruel enemies surround Him, what a burden He must bear, how He faints, nay dies, by the way, if only He may find us and bring us back to His fold at last.

I say, "bring us back" to His fold: not "guide," not "lead" us, not "shew us the way," but bear us and bring us back: as it is in His own parable, "when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing." He not only calls us back, but gives us strength to return, and watches us every step of the way, and will not part with us at the end. He is not only our Shepherd, to recover us when lost, but our Bishop also and Overseer, to have an eye to us when found. After He has converted a man by His grace and good providence from the ways of wilful sin, and brought him back to His fold the Church by true penitence and entire absolution, He does not leave him, nor forsake him, no not for a

moment. Day by day, as long as we live, this good Shepherd will be at hand to feed, to nurse, and to guide us. When the time comes for us to lie down in our last sleep, He will watch over our graves: and even in that awful hour when He will come as a King to judge this world, in the clouds of Heaven, on His great bright throne, and with the trumpet of the Archangel sounding before Him, He will not forget His character of a good Shepherd. For we read, “^bBefore Him shall be gathered all nations, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and He will set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left.” Still, even in that dreadful Judgement, He will be to His own as a Shepherd to His sheep: knowing them each one by name, setting them in the best place, keeping them from those who are determined to be wicked and miserable. What a token of mercy is it, that the great and terrible Judge has promised not to forget that He is a Shepherd, not to forget how dearly He bought us, how He loved and watched over us, and never was tired of interceding for us! And if there be anywhere in this or in any other congregation a heart truly bowed down and broken with shame and sorrow for past sin and present unworthiness; vexed to have so ill requited so good a Saviour, and dreading what may come of it: let such an one know for certain that this gracious title of Shepherd is one which our Lord would have *him* especially remember. When he hears it, he is to think of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth: a joy, of which the shepherd’s delight at

^b S. Matt. xxv. 32, 33.

recovering the lost sheep is but a very faint image and shadow. He is not to be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow, but is to set himself with all his heart to meet this great love which he knows is felt for him in Heaven, by making his own calling and election sure. Every good work that he does, every temptation that he resists, for love of his Saviour, he may have the comfort of thinking that it adds in some unspeakable way to the comfort and bliss of those his friends out of sight: it is in some sense a joy to our Lord Himself, even as the stubbornness and sin of the impenitent is a sort of wound to Him, a crucifying Him afresh.

Rejoice then, even in your contrition and in all your penitential tears; rejoice, ye who try to repent in earnest, for the joy of the Good Shepherd and His holy Angels, who are even now watching and approving you from Heaven: rejoice in hope: but remember in your rejoicing, that as the safety of the recovered sheep depends on its abiding in the fold, so the safety of the penitent depends on his persevering in his penitence. He is to be "sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." If his sorrow for his sin pass away, he has no more right to rejoice in the Lord; neither will Jesus Christ and His angels and saints any longer rejoice over him.

Again: as it would be madness in the recovered sheep, if it had reason, to venture unnecessarily on the very edge of the fold, knowing how he would be tempted to pass beyond: so is it far worse madness for the recovered sinner to go on purpose to the edge of his old sin. And yet there will generally be great

danger of our doing so: it is very seldom that an ill custom is so completely mastered by grace, as that the longing for it shall not at all return: even as sheep or cattle that have been used to stray are not easily kept within bounds. Let us be aware of this, and pray earnestly against it: and as the best security, let us deny ourselves, in those things especially which tend towards our old sins: and let us ask God with all our hearts for a blessing on our self-denial. Let us never think ourselves safe: and then, by God's mercy, we shall be safe.

SERMON XXXI.

THE GATHERING-IN OF THE FLOCK.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN x. 16.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.”

EASTER work, as we were taught last Sunday, is building up ourselves in our most Holy Church and Faith: and it is also building *in* others into the same. To-day the same work is set before us as *gathering*; gathering, as a shepherd does his scattered flock. It was our Saviour's own Easter work: for His little flock, His twelve chosen disciples, had been sadly scattered on the night and day of His Passion: as He had Himself foretold: “^aAll ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.” And so indeed, as soon as ever it appeared that He was really about to give Himself up to suffer, as soon as He had said, “This is your hour and the power of darkness,” all the disciples forsook Him and fled. They were “scattered

^a S. Matt. xxvi. 31.

every one to his own, and left Him alone." The Evil one so far prevailed against them, he whose business it is to scatter, as our Lord's is to gather. So it was in Passion-tide: but (as I said) no sooner had He risen, than He began to gather again, to gather and to go before them, and do all the work of a Good Shepherd: according to His own promise, "After that I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." What were all those messages so joyful and comfortable, of which we have been hearing through the last fortnight, "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said, Come see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and behold, He goeth before you into Galilee;" "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee;" "Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God;" "Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." What were all these sayings, but so many calls from the Good Shepherd to His scattered flock, inviting them to assemble again, and appointing them a well-known place, where they might gather around Himself, a place where He would be; and with Him, as they knew by sweet experience, green pastures and waters of comfort; that so His word spoken by His prophet hun-

^b S. Matt. xxvi. 32.

^c Ib. xxviii. 5, 6, 7.

^d S. Luke xxiv. 5, 6.

^e S. John xx. 17.

^f S. Matt. xxviii. 10.

dreds of years before might be accomplished, “^g He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.” And what was the expression so often repeated, “I will go before you into Galilee,” but a hint that, however they might have strayed, He would still be their Shepherd as before, “putting forth His own flock and going before them;” and they to follow Him knowing His Voice? Yet again, what were those special instructions to the twelve, solemnly spoken from time to time during the same blessed season, “^h As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you; . . . Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” “ⁱ Go, teach, [make disciples of] all nations;” “^k Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find;” “^l Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;” “Follow Me;” “^m Feed My lambs, feed My sheep;” “ⁿ Ye shall be witnesses unto Me unto the ends of the earth;” what are all these, but pastoral words, the Great Shepherd appointing under-shepherds, which should minister to Him, each in his own time and place, and by whom He would bring in the other sheep, which were not of the fold that then was, not children of Israel after the flesh; yet in His mind’s eye He saw them and loved them and chose them to be His own sheep, His own people, His own children: as the Apostle says to the Ephesians, “^o He predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the

^g Jer. xxxi. 10. ^h S. John xx. 21, 23. ⁱ S. Matt. xxviii. 19.

^k S. John xxi. 6.

^l S. Mark xvi. 15.

^m S. John xxi. 15, 16.

ⁿ Acts i. 8.

^o Eph. i. 5.

good pleasure of His will." "He predestinated us," both you and me, says S. Paul, "both me, Saul of Tarsus, who, when Christ was on earth, either knew nothing of Him, or knew only to scorn and hate Him; and you, Ephesian Gentiles also, who were mere blind heathens, "having no hope and without God in the world." Such we were, both you and I, (so the Apostle seems to say) but upon both sorts the Father had His Eye from the foundation of the world, and of both the Son spake when He said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." He spake then of us also, my brethren, not of those Jews and Gentiles only, who were to become Christians at that time, but of all who should at any time believe and be baptized through the word preached by the Apostles. The work of gathering which began by our Lord's grave when the Angel first spake to the women, that work has been going on ever since: it will not cease until the Day, in which He shall gather together His elect from the four winds, and shall separate them finally from the reprobate, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

Brethren, it is a great thing to be one of those so chosen from the beginning unto salvation: a great, a high, a rare privilege. I say "a *rare* privilege," for in truth it is but a few out of the whole number of Adam's children, who are so much as gathered into God's outward and visible Fold. Think how many generations had passed before our Lord came down to be one of us, before there was at all a kingdom of heaven upon earth. Think how many years that holy and beloved kingdom, the Church of Christ, has continued among men, and how small a part of

mankind has even at this day learned to profess and call itself Christian. I suppose, not one out of three. How little then was our chance, as men speak, the chance of each of us to have been a Christian, so much as in name! And whom have we to thank for it, that we are so? Not ourselves; for we could know and choose nothing: not our parents, for neither could they choose for themselves. It was entirely His free and distinguishing goodness, and we can never think enough of it. We indeed are apt to take it as a matter of course; because all that we see around us, all that we have ever known, are Christians, it appears to us no great thing, nothing to be especially thankful for, that we are so ourselves. Indeed, as you all know, the word "Christian," among many of us has come to mean merely a human being, one who is above the dumb creatures, and accordingly we care little for being a Christian: it is to us no more than being like other people. But the holy Angels and all good spirits, who have eyes to see what is invisible, they are quite of another mind. To them the thought of being a Christian is indeed a very awful thought; for they know the great consequence of it, that it brings either a blessing or a curse beyond what words can express, because it brings one so unspeakably near to God.

Well,—into this fold, into the number, small by comparison, of persons thus highly favoured, we have been chosen, and we, as I said, cannot think enough of it. Christ's choosing us is our only hope: it ought to be our joy and crown; we cannot value it too highly. Yet beware, my brethren, of so valuing your privileges, as to make them an occasion of pride

or jealousy. Sad it is to confess, yet it must be confessed, that spiritual privileges may be so abused. Remember the Pharisees: how haughty and selfish they became, by supposing themselves nearer to God than others, and therefore of course better men and higher in God's favour. Their pride and selfishness shewed itself in their being vexed, when others, not of their own particular fold, were brought in by the Good Shepherd, and freely admitted to the same privileges as the natural-born Israelites. They could not bear to have the door of faith opened to the Gentiles. We in our day are in danger of something like the same fault; spiritual envy; grudging to our neighbour his share of God's best gifts, even His favour which is better than life: I say, we are in danger of this; even many of those among us who desire to have their souls saved, and try to be in earnest in spiritual matters. There are unhappily many divisions and differences; and the Evil one, if he can, will make men envy and hate one another because of them. Even among those who belong alike to the Church, and worship together, one serious person will sometimes grudge another the good that he does, and will try to make it out that it is evil rather than good, by reason of some difference of opinion between them: he will have a secret joy when he perceives the other going wrong or falling into error. Such an one may be right in his opinion; but what good will his right notions do him, if they allow him to indulge uncharitable thoughts? willingly to think evil of the other? to rejoice in his mistake or sin? Can you fancy the holy men of old indulging such a mind? S. Paul, you know, had

once a serious difference with S. Peter: can you imagine the one of those Saints rejoicing in the error of the other, and pleased if he could detect him in anything wrong or lessen the credit of his goodness? No: it is impossible; you perceive at once that, if they could have such a mind, they would not be saints. Do you not then also perceive that it will never do for any one who wishes to be a good Christian, to be glad when others fail, or sorry when they do great things for God? Rather strive always to rejoice and be thankful for any good which God allows any of your fellow Christians to do: and if you know them to be wrong in any thing, pray the more for them, and the more earnestly, that God may add unto them that grace also which they want: but never take delight in making any one out as bad as you can.

Neither again should a Christian be down-hearted, because he does not always *see* the good work going on, Christ gathering in His sheep as He seemed to promise. I suppose it is a temptation which most persons feel more or less, to give up caring for a good work, and putting themselves out of the way for it, unless they can see with their eyes that it prospers and advances. It ought not to be so in respect of Church-work, which is altogether a matter of faith: and in which especially, we are told that we have need of patience. How should we be faint and weary, and inclined to say, "There is no hope;" we, whose Divine Master found in His own place Nazareth no one to believe Him but a few sick folk?

If ever such misgivings come over you, take to yourself thoughts of comfort: say in your hearts,

The Lord keeps His word, He is always bringing in His other sheep, which were not of His first fold. However ill some may behave, and appear to us to be falling away, *three* sorts at least there are, always being added by the Lord to the Church.

First, there are little children, brought one by one to be baptized. Whatever else we may doubt, of them we may be quite sure, that every one of them was in our Lord's mind when He said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." Every one of them is made, for the time being, one of Christ's lambs, whom He bought with His death, and for whom He shed His Blood. Whatever may be going on elsewhere in the Church, every infant duly baptized is so much "clear gain;" so much for the Lord and His Angels to rejoice in.

Secondly, God's work, we may confidently hope, is always going on, more or less prosperously: His Church increasing, more or less rapidly, by the conversion of Gentiles at a distance from ourselves. The kingdom of God is like a large and thriving tree, which grows at every bough; not only in the main trunk but in every little twig, grows and spreads in all directions. Christ told us so Himself, when He likened it to a grain of mustard seed. Be not thou too much cast down, nor think God's arm shortened, if thou discern no growth or increase in the part where thine own work lies. Go on praying and doing thy best: remember that the right prayer, the right mind and wish is, that God's kingdom may come, not that it may come through you or me. A good servant will rejoice to see his master's work better done by another than he could himself have

done it; and he will thank God, take courage, and try again the very best he can do.

Especially when persons are cast down with the sense of bad times, and of the little good they themselves do, let it encourage them to think of the seven thousand which never bowed the knee to Baal, which Elijah knew nothing of. God has always some hidden saints, and (as we may humbly trust) many hidden penitents, and so the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ goeth conquering and to conquer, until He have put all things under His Feet.

Never fear therefore about Christ's work, but fear, lest in the end you prove to have had no hand in it; lest you be rather found to have been working against Him: lest that prove true concerning you, which was threatened of old to Queen Esther, to keep her from being timid in God's cause; "p If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed." For you may depend upon it, that this is a war in which there is no discharge, no standing by. You must take one side or the other, "q He that is not with Me (saith the Lord) is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." The Great and Good Shepherd, Who is come down to seek His lost sheep and is pursuing and looking after them wheresoever they are scattered in the cloudy and dark day, He expects us all, one and all, to lend Him a hand and a voice in His merciful work. If you refuse, and say, I have other things to do, I am not my brother's keeper; you know whom you will be

p Esther iv. 14.

q S. Luke xi. 23.

like, even Cain ; and whose work you will be doing, even that Wicked one's, to whom poor selfish Cain had sold himself.

I say, the Good Shepherd expects you to do shepherd's duty under Him, in caring both for yourself and for your neighbours. Every Christian may sing or say with a holy writer of our own land and neighbourhood^r,

“My soul's a shepherd too ; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.”

that is, as a shepherd orders his flock, and directs it where to feed and to drink ; so a good Christian's heart and conscience direct all his thoughts words and actions by the rule of God's Word and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. And the same love of Christ which makes him do so, will cause him, as God shall call and enable him, to do as much for his brethren also. You may think it hard and tiresome and disagreeable, to be thus continually keeping yourself in order : and others, whom you are bound to look after, may in their turn dislike being kept in order by you. You and they may both think it pleasanter for each to go on doing just what he likes at the time, free from the restraint and weariness of living by rule. But all the time you know very well in your hearts, what is sure to come of that way of going on. How is it with sheep if they are let alone, if they have no one to look after them, or if the person appointed to do so neglects his task ? Why, if you do but turn out a flock upon a common for a few hours, you know they must be watched, or

^r George Herbert.

they will go astray, or do mischief. How is it with little children? Do you reckon it a wise thing to leave them in a room with an open fire, or with things that they can easily come at and spoil? O try to be as wise and thoughtful for your children's souls, as you are of their bodies, as you would be for a few sheep. And for your own soul, do you really think you can trust it by itself, to have its own way? Have you found it by experience, that you went on best when you took least care of yourself, and were taken least care of? You know it was not so: you know very well, if you would consider, that however good you may have been in respect of some particular things, in which your duty came easy to you, there were other things of no less consequence, in which you were sure to go wrong, unless something kept you in order. David was generous and noble in forgiving his enemies; it had come to be, as it were, natural to him: but when he was to turn away his eyes from a forbidden object, then he needed a stricter rule; as his sad fall unhappily proved. Which of you is wiser and better than David? that you should be able to live without strict rules, when he needed them so much. O, listen to the Good Shepherd; do not rest, until you have brought your whole self, your soul and body, into His fold and under His obedience: and not only yourself, but every one belonging to you.

May God forgive us, and keep us from trifling any more with His unspeakable blessings, and from encouraging others to do so!

SERMON XXXII.

DUTY AND NECESSITY OF RELIGIOUS STRICTNESS,
WITH OURSELVES AND TOWARDS OTHERS.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Ps. ci. 11.

“I shall soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land: that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.”

SOME persons think that, because “God is Love,” there can be no severity in Him: because it is said, “^a he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him:” therefore every thing that seems at all harsh and strict is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. They cannot bear to have much said in sermons about the terrors of the Lord, the final fate of the ungodly: they love not to be put in mind themselves, nor to have others put in mind, that “^b the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God;” they cannot deny that the most merciful Saviour Himself uttered those fearful words ^c, “their worm dieth not, and the fire shall not be quenched;” and ^d, “It were better for such a man as Judas that he had never been born:”

^a 1 S. John iv. 16.

^b Ps. ix. 17.

^c S. Mark ix. 48.

^d S. Matt. xxvi. 24.

but still they will have it, that such threatenings are no part of the Gospel of Christ: they know that He expressly said, “^e He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;” and yet they cannot well endure the like saying in the Church’s Creed, “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith: which Faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” And again, “This is the Catholick Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.”

Too many talk and think in this way: and many more, without any distinct words or thoughts on the subject, do nevertheless make up their minds to behave as if God were “^f a man that He should lie, and the son of man that He should repent:” as if that saying were true, which led our mother Eve so fearfully wrong, “Ye shall not surely die,” although the Almighty threatens you with death. We are none of us, I trust, quite unbelievers; yet how easily, how lightly, do we for the most part pass over the warnings we are continually receiving of the consequences of our sins, both in this world and in the next! Go into any hospital, and see how many there are who have lost their health by excessive drinking, or in other shameful and wicked ways. They are “^g chastened with pain upon their beds, and the multitude of their bones with strong pain:” “^h their strength faileth them because of their iniquity, and their bones are consumed:” God with rebukes is chasten-

^e S. Mark xvi. 16. ^f Num. xxiii. 19. ^g Job xxxiii. 19.

^h Ps. xxxi. 12.

ing them for sin, and is making “ⁱ their beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment:” and the cause is not doubtful: all that know about them can see plainly that their sin, their iniquity, has brought this evil upon them. This is their condition. Now suppose any one, corrupted with the very same sins, to come and look upon the sufferers. Will they indeed repent and amend? Will they stand still in time, and turn back from the miserable course, of which they plainly see the end? Alas! too often they go away without any serious thought at all: too often, if they are moved at first, they take no pains to sustain the good impression: “^k it passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day.” So it is: the world is full of the misery which cometh of sin! all men see and know it, yet they go on sinning. Parents, friends, pastors, warn us: the Word of God, “quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword,” meets us like “a consuming fire,” to whichever side we turn: voices, one after another, make themselves heard deep down in our consciences, and they know that each one is the voice of God, saying, “O do not this abominable thing that I hate.” Yet men contrive, each one for himself, to make themselves easy in their sins: each one imagines that in his own case, somehow or another, allowance will be made, and the general sentence, passed upon all, will not apply to him. And so they go on till their own turn comes, to drop down into the pit; which was all the while gaping for them, close at their feet, but they would not see it.

ⁱ Ps. xxxix. 12.^k Wisd. v. 14.

No wonder if men, thus careless of themselves, deal carelessly also with the souls committed to their charge : with the children, servants, or others, whom God has given them to take care of, and whose souls He will require at their hands. But it *does* seem very wonderful, that any who are mindful of their own account should neglect those with whom they are entrusted, and leave them to their own way. It is wonderful ; yet it sometimes happens. Eli was a good religious man himself, but his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not : and a dreadful judgement came upon him. Too many are a good deal like Eli : well-disposed themselves, the sin and danger of those whom they love is so painful to them, that they hide their eyes from it ; they will not look it in the face. In spite of everything, they persuade themselves that things are not so very bad : and then there is the sad temptation of saving themselves trouble, the most irksome of all trouble, the anxious wearisome endeavour to mend those who positively set their faces, like a flint, against all amendment : and there is the Evil one ever close at hand, ready with his horrible whisperings, “It is no use tiring yourself : if he is to be lost, he will be lost for all you can do ; or if God wills to save him, He can save him without you : at any rate, there is no way in which *you* can help him.”

And in another way many of us are very much the worse for this our sad disposition to pass lightly over God’s threatenings. When people do come to a sort of repentance, when their sins are leaving them, and they begin for very shame to think it time to leave their sins, they are for the most part contented

with something very short of deep, serious, continued repentance. The very first thing in such repentance, as the Prayer Book teaches us when preparing for Holy Communion is, to "*bewail* our own sinfulness," i. e. to be really sorry for it, grieved at heart, to feel the burden of it intolerable, to tremble at the thought of it, and to be ashamed and vexed with ourselves that we are not more entirely broken-hearted: to go softly, as a great penitent of old, all the days of our life. Alas, how unlike is this to many who profess to be penitents, in respect of their thoughts concerning their former sins: so little troubled about them, so ready to forget them in blaming others, so unwilling to submit thankfully to the reproaches, mortifications, calamities, which our merciful Chastiser sends upon us by way of penitential exercise: so little prepared, with holy Job, to say in our hearts when trouble comes on, "¹Thou makest me to possess the sins of my youth." Nay, not seldom we can see too plainly that persons fancy the mere time, which has passed since their sins were committed, has a kind of virtue to wear out the stain of those sins: they have no need now to repent of them, because they were committed so long ago. And thus it comes to pass that even grievous and notorious sinners go down to their graves expecting a judgement to come, yet seeming unalarmed at it: no broken and contrite heart, no judging ourselves that we be not judged of the Lord, nothing in any way answering to the fasting, sackcloth, and ashes of those who of old obtained forgiveness, turning to God with their whole heart. Who can say what cruelty men are guilty of to their own and

¹ Job xiii. 26.

others' souls, by indulging the vain notion that God is in such sense all Love, as that He will not really fulfil His plain threatenings, as if it were possible for a wilful sinner to see His Face without true and earnest, deep and bitter repentance.

But it is *not* possible. Consider only, my brethren, such a plain saying of God our Saviour as this in the text: "I shall soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land: that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the Lord." It is Christ's saying; for in His Name all the Psalms, we know, are spoken: and in this Psalm He tells of two things, mercy and judgement: mercy in this world, which is the time of trial: judgement in the other world, when all trial will be over, and He will "render to every man according to his works." Then, while on the one hand, His eyes "look upon such as are faithful in the land, that they may dwell with Him" for ever, on the other hand, "there shall no deceitful person dwell in His house, he that telleth lies shall not tarry in His sight." While he that leadeth a godly life shall be Christ's servant, He will soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land; He will root out all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

Christ speaks it, as a law of His kingdom, by which if it were possible for Him not to rule, He would not be Christ. "I shall soon;" *soon*, because "the time is short," and when it is come, it will appear to have come very quickly. *Soon*; i.e. in the morning, very early: at which time the Judges of Israel used to take their places in their courts. Early in the morning: too early a great deal, as it will seem to

poor lost sinners, will the Almighty Son of God come forth, and sit down on the Judgement Seat. Soon, very soon, before we think or imagine it, He will be here, punishing those who obey not His Gospel with everlasting destruction from His Presence. Soon, very soon, the door will be shut, and the foolish will be left standing outside of it, and will knock in vain. Soon, very soon, the man without the wedding garment will be cast out where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. All these awful sayings, all the threatenings of the Old and New Testament, are but various ways of expressing God's most certain and unchangeable decree, that the wicked and unworthy must in the end cease out of Christ's kingdom. They will come to an end and be rooted out of it: either by destruction or by true conversion and amendment. The sayings which teach us this stand out as plain on the surface of Holy Scripture, as the other sort of sayings, that "God is Love," and whatever else He has said to assure us of His mercy.

Observe what plain warnings there are of God's finally destroying the ungodly, in the portion of the Mosaic history, from which our lessons at this season are taken. There was "the matter of Korah," and the three fearful judgements connected with it: first, the earth opening her mouth and swallowing up the rebels, Dathan and Abiram, and all that appertained to them: second, the fire of the Lord consuming the schismatic Korah and the two hundred and fifty that offered incense with him; and thirdly, the wrath which went out from the Lord, the plague that began in the congregation, for murmuring against Moses and Aaron, as though they were the cause of

so many perishing. All these sore judgements God told us of last Sunday morning; and on the evening of last Sunday, and on this day morning, we had the still more awful history of Balaam: more awful, because it was more subtle and concealed, more between God and that one sinner, than those former great rebellions, in which all was open and visible to man.

This evening's lesson completes Balaam's sin, telling us how the women of Midian and Moab by his counsel (as we learn in chapter twentyseven) came tempting the children of Israel to offer sacrifice to idols, and to commit fornication. And then, most terrible to read, besides the plague that came on, two of the most daring and desperate transgressors, in the very depth of their sin, were slain at one blow by Phinehas: and so the plague ceased. Now mark in this history, my brethren, how many things there are directly contrary to the vain irreligious imagination, that God will allow sinners to escape easily, much more easily than He Himself has threatened.

The sin of incontinence, for which those miserable persons suffered, how lightly, alas! is it judged by too many! How easily are excuses and palliations accepted for it, and how little concerned are many even sober and religious persons to discourage it effectually: to root it out, as completely as they might, from their own family and household, and from among those whom they employ; as being among the worst of those wicked doings, which Christ will hereafter root out from His temple, His Church! I suppose if one were to name two sins, which are little thought of in our age and nation, and are very much taken as matters of course, they would be these two, irrever-

ence to authorities, and indulgence of sensual lusts; but you see what came of the one, in the matter of Korah, of the other, in the matter of Zimri and Cosbi. You see what came of them in this world: you do not see what will come of them and the like sins in the other world.

Again, what is generally more unpopular than severity and strictness of discipline, *if it be carried fairly out*, if a man try to discountenance alike *every one* of the deadly sins by which Satan makes havock of souls? Do we not, year by year, hear the Church complaining on Ash Wednesday, that her old rules, which were of this impartial kind, cannot yet be restored again, how much soever such a thing is to be wished? And why cannot they be restored, seeing that they are in substance the very rules enacted by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the eighteenth of S. Matthew and elsewhere, and observed by the Church Apostolical for many ages? Just because people will not bear it: because Christians have made up their minds not to take Christ at His own word, not to treat incorrigible fornicators, deniers of the Faith, and other notorious sinners, as Christ ordained that they should be treated, i. e. as heathen men and publicans. There cannot be a clearer or more alarming proof, what danger there is of even "good sort of people" coming to dislike discipline and strictness. But what is the mind of Almighty God? What were His dealings of old in the like cases? Why, we see in the matter of Korah, which I mentioned just now, what a curse came upon the whole congregation for murmuring against Moses and Aaron and saying, "ye have killed the people of the Lord." Presently

the cloud covered the Tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord appeared, and His word was, “ⁿ Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” Wrath went out from the Lord, the plague began, and in the short time before Aaron, the figure of our great Mediator, could get his incense ready to be offered, and run and take his stand between the dead and the living, fourteen thousand seven hundred had perished. By this we understand how the great Judge looks down from heaven upon the persons and nations who reject His godly discipline, and that if they do not perish utterly at an instant, it is owing to the merciful Intercession of Him Whose laws they have agreed to despise. And how will it be in the end thereof?

On the other hand, you have heard this evening what a blessing came upon Phinehas, and what a deliverance he wrought for Israel, because he *did* execute judgement and, fearing not what people might say, *did* work out the godly discipline which God had ordained for him to do. The plague was staid in a moment: Phinehas’ prayer and timely severity had the same effect as Aaron’s intercession; and God’s word concerning him was, “^o Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood: and he shall have it and his seed after him, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.”

See here, Christian brethren, the blessing of our Lord on those who, as far as in them lies, try to keep up the fear of the Lord in themselves and others by a holy severity and strictness, and are not led

ⁿ Num. xvi. 45.

^o Ib. xxv. 12, 13.

away by a false goodnature, and a fear what the corrupt world will say of them. See how many souls, by God's mercy, such a man may be instrumental in saving. The timely example made by Phinehas of those two most presumptuous sinners stayed the plague in behalf of the whole people. And a Christian father or master may often have it in his power, by firm yet charitable severity towards one offender, to preserve many from deadly sin. There is a peculiar blessing for such, and a peculiar sin and shame will lie on those who try to weaken their hands and make their good work harder, by speaking and thinking scornfully of Christian strictness, and encouraging resistance to it. All of us are in danger of that sin; all may have our share in that blessing. But in order to have it, my brethren, we must first be very strict with ourselves; for severity, like charity, (of which indeed it is a part,) ought always to "begin at home." You must use yourselves not to be afraid or ashamed of exercising holy discipline over your own ways and doings: you must courageously decline evil company, however inviting, unless duty call you into it: you must practise self-denial, not of course making a shew of it, yet without being too much troubled if people take notice of it. He that in these things serveth Christ, is sure to find a blessing in his honest endeavours to make others serve Him: only he must not shrink from the trouble, which such endeavours of course bring with them. A person trusted with others must be watchful; he must be ready to endure for love's sake every sort of strange and froward behaviour: he must remember on the one hand, what a sad thing it would be to come to such an end as

Eli's, to die and rise again with the heart-breaking thought, "Such and such persons are lost, because they made themselves vile, and I restrained them not:" and on the other hand we should remember also for our comfort, that such as do their best for other men's souls, however thankless their labour may appear now, are sure to be thanked at the Last Day, both by their brethren whom they shall have helped to save, and also (what is above all) by their Saviour, under Whom (in their own little measure) they shall have worked. Oh may we never forget those comfortable words, which the weakest and worst of us, on true repentance, may hope to hear spoken to himself, "P Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

P S. Matt. xxv. 23.

SERMON XXXIII.

SORROW FIRST, JOY AFTERWARDS, THE LAW OF
CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN XVI. 20.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.”

I NEED not tell you that among the sayings of our Lord set down in the Holy Gospels, there are a good many which begin as this does, “Verily, verily, I say unto you;” and others again, in which the word “verily” (which is, in the Latin Greek and Hebrew, Amen) is repeated only once. Those in which the word comes twice are all in S. John’s Gospel: those which have it once are all in one or more of the other three Gospels. But whether the word come once or twice, the meaning of it in such sayings is the same. It is a word which no one ever so utters but our Lord: and it means that our Lord, in the sentences which He so begins, is pledging Himself in a particular way to the truth of what is said. Our Lord does not add the “Verily, I say unto you,” except in matters where it is His Will that we should

mark how He is speaking with authority. It is always something, of which we could not be quite sure; often it is something, of which we could know nothing, except by what He may be pleased to tell us. Sometimes it is some law or secret of the kingdom of heaven: as when He lays down the necessity of the two great Sacraments: “^a Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” and again, “^b Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you.” Sometimes the word “verily” introduces a prophecy, a declaration of things to come, which God only knows: e. g. “^c Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down:” or again, “^d Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.” Sometimes it relates to a secret hidden in men’s hearts, of which none could have full knowledge but He Who searcheth the reins and the hearts: as when He tells the unbelieving Jews, “^e Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled.” In each case, you see, it is something which God only could know, and which our Lord requires us to believe upon His telling us, because He has the knowledge of God.

Here then in to-day’s Gospel, our Lord, speaking to His Apostles the night before His death and through

^a S. John iii. 3.

^b Ib. vi. 53.

^c S. Matt. xxiv. 2.

^d Ib. xxvi. 13.

^e S. John vi. 26.

them to all of us at all times, would have us believe most firmly, upon His Divine Word, that we "shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and we shall be sorrowful, but our sorrow shall be turned into joy." Now this is both a prophecy of what should happen, and a law by which it was God's will to order the course of His Church and people to the end. It was a prophecy of what should happen to the disciples, His own eleven faithful friends, to whom alone He was speaking face to face in the upper room. "Ye shall weep and lament," that, you know, was at His Crucifixion and Burial, and all the fears and agonies which came upon Him; "but the world shall rejoice:" the chief priests and Pharisees, the heads of the wicked world, as against our Saviour, will triumph for a while and think they have got their own way; but I will rise again and this sorrow of yours shall be quickly turned into joy: even as the wicked joy of Christ's enemies shall be turned into rage and fear; in fulfilment whereof we read in the Acts, "they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay" the Apostles. But the prophecy reaches, no doubt, far beyond the Apostles: it extends through them to the whole Church in all ages. The Church in this world is always to be a widow, mourning for the absence of Him Whom her soul loveth, until that happen of which He goes on to speak, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Taken in this general way, it is not simply a declaration of what shall be: it is a kind of law or rule of Christ's kingdom: it is the decree of

^f Acts v. 33.

^g S. John xvi. 22.

the Great King, *ordaining* how it must be with His friends. “^hWe must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” The lot of Christians is to weep and lament, while the wicked world is rejoicing: it is to be sorrowful, but with such a sorrow as is sure to be turned into joy.

Many indeed are the refreshments and consolations of life: and at the worst there is, in the weary land, the shadow of the Great Rock, and that Rock is Christ. Still the saying of our best friend and only Redeemer holds true: “ⁱIn the world ye shall have tribulation:” but listen to what He says next: “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Fret not, be not disheartened, at the difficulties which are around you, whether of mind, body, or estate: they are but Christ’s mark, the sign of His Cross, which you have borne all along from your Baptism. If you had no affliction, no trouble, no misgiving, you would indeed have reason to fear; it would seem as if Christ’s mark were worn out of you, as if He had given you up. Then you would have no faith, for you would be always *seeing* your good things, not believing them: and you know it is said of all who are in a right way, “^kWe walk by faith, not by sight.” Neither, if you were always comfortable in all respects, could you be said really to have hope, Christian hope: for “^lhope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? . But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” Thus in order to have faith and hope, i. e. in order to be in a good

^h Acts xiv. 22.

ⁱ S. John xvi. 33.

^k 2 Cor. v. 7.

^l Rom. viii. 24, 25.

way, we must have more or less of tribulation. And why should we think it hard? We shall not, if we have any the least true love for Christ. We shall not grudge to live by faith and hope, if we have but a spark of real charity in our hearts. Do you not see how it is in families where people love one another? How fathers, because they love their wives and children, will go on doing their best for them in the way of hard work and hard living, although they cannot be certain how it may turn out: they can but believe and hope they shall be able to get food and raiment for their beloved ones: they cannot positively *see* their way before them: but they work on, because they love. Do you not see how mothers go on nursing and watching over sick and helpless children? They know not how the sickness will turn out, nor whether they shall be able to rear the child: but they go on, not minding themselves, in hope that all will be well. And why? Because they love their children: they know they should never forgive themselves, if, giving way to despair and fretfulness, they had neglected waiting on the child and any harm had come to it. Thus for their children's sake they bear all hardships: they are content, for love's sake, to walk by faith not by sight; to hope for what they see not, and so with patience to wait for it. If earthly love makes us thus willing to endure, surely spiritual love, the love of Christ, "Who loved us and gave Himself for us," will teach and help us to be joyful in all our tribulation.

But if this is so, if the Cross in our foreheads is a true token of what we must expect in our lives:

if you have been told from the beginning that you must have trouble, inward and outward, and it hath come to pass and you know it: do you not perceive how vain and foolish it is, when Christians, as we too often hear them, complain of not having their reward in this world? Some in their ignorant simplicity speak openly in this way. They make no secret of it, that they think it very hard they should go on so long, so many months and years, soberly and honestly, perhaps also regular in the outward worship of God, and yet not be more prosperous in the world, nor more looked upon by their neighbours (so they imagine) than others whom they judge, and it may be rightly judge, far inferior to themselves in those respects. They grumble at their neighbours, who seem to them more favoured than they are, much in the same tone as the devil murmured against Job: asking, "do they fear God for nought? are they not well paid for it?" We may sometimes *hear* this kind of talk, and we may be quite sure, that it is in men's hearts many times more than we hear of it. And if men indulge it in their hearts, that is to God and His Angels the same or nearly so, as if they spoke it with their lips. And how does it sound to those heavenly listeners? It is unamiable enough to *us*, when we meet with any one complaining like that elder brother in our Lord's parable: "These many years do I serve thee, and yet thou never gavest me a kid:" it sounds hateful enough to such as we are. What must it be to our loving Lord and Father, and to all the blessed loving inhabitants of heaven?

So again, seeing that it is a customary thing, nay even a law of God's earthly kingdom, that His dis-

ciples should have their portion in weeping, lamentation, sorrowful thoughts, while the rest of the world is rejoicing, we know what to think of it, when it comes into our minds to say, "Look at such and such a person, what liberties he takes: how boldly he breaks the commandments, yet what an easy prosperous life he leads. Strict religious people blame him, but how is he the worse off?" When it occurs to you, as sometimes it may, to have such fancies as these come into your mind, you will know from whom they come: who it is that would teach you to "call the proud happy," and to admire "the covetous" and sensual, "whom God abhorreth." Christ has warned you beforehand, that very often in this world the good and holy will have to weep and lament, and that constant outward rejoicing is rather a token, that a person belongs to the wicked world. Christ's own word is given, "^m Blessed are ye that mourn, for ye shall be comforted:" and, "ⁿ Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you." If you have but the least faith, this will be enough to put away both temptations. You will neither murmur that you have to wait for your reward, nor will you grudge against those who seem to have theirs already.

One thing more. Our Lord pledges Himself, not only that we shall have first sorrow and then joy for our sorrow, but also that the very sorrow shall be in some manner the cause of our joy and the way to it. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." The very thing you are mourning for, the

^m S. Matt. v. 4.

ⁿ S. Luke vi. 26.

very bereavement or disappointment you feel most keenly, you shall find before long, that you could not have been so happy without it. So it was remarkably in the Great Sorrow, the Great Consolation of all. Our Lord's Death is turned to His and our immortal life: for only "through the grave and gate of death" could He pass to His own glorious Resurrection, or become to us "the Resurrection and the Life." Our Lord's departure is turned to His more perfect Presence: as He said Himself: "° It is expedient for you, that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." "ª I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." And so entirely did the disciples believe this, that when He went out of their sight, instead of bewailing the loss of Him, as was natural, "they returned to Jerusalem," we read, "with great joy." Why? Because they had His own word for it, that in Spirit and truth He would be nearer to them than ever: that they would be able to touch Him more inwardly and more blessedly, now that He was ascended to His Father. His very going away, as I said, was the token and mean of His close approaching, nay, of His actually abiding in their hearts and bodies. Thus their chief sorrow became their greatest joy.

And that this might not appear too strange; that it might not seem incredible to them who had not yet seen it fulfilled by His Ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost; behold the sign and token which He gave them, "ª A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon

° S. John xvi. 7.

ª Ib. xiv. 18.

ª Ib. xvi. 21.

as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." The pain then and peril of child-birth, and the joy which comes after, are as a sign given by our Lord to every Christian person, but more especially to every Christian woman, of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory, to which He will turn our light and momentary affliction. Child-birth, I say, with its pangs and its joy, is a sacramental sign or shadow of the Lord's dealings with His whole Church and with each particular Christian. Great and sore were the travail-pangs of the Holy Church, the mother of us all, or ever she could bring forth the child who was caught up to God and to His Throne; full of pain and danger and agony the work which must go on in each one of us, or ever Christ can be formed in each one thoroughly, as He seeks to be formed. But as the whole world is saved by the great Child-bearing, the Incarnation, Agony and Death of the Son of God: so is each particular person saved by a kind of mystical child-bearing, Christ formed within him by much labour, travail and suffering.

What is it then, brethren? If we are to reign with Christ, we must suffer with Him: there is no other path, but only the way of the Cross. Be not then faint-hearted, but accept courageously and heartily at our Father's hand your cup of bitterness, whatever it be. Whatever it be that most troubles you, I beseech you, accept and welcome it as a token from our Lord that He has not forgotten you; that He is preparing a place for you. Yea, even if your grief be, that your good and holy purposes seem one after another to fail, and no benefit to come of them: yet

count it not entirely a failure: for God can turn even this to good: *that* God, Who expressly told His own first missionaries, "If the house you bless, be not worthy, your blessing shall return to you."

Neither permit yourself, on the other hand, to be too much lifted up, when the work of your hands seems blessed, and your substance is increasing in the land. Remember, earnestly remember, to pray that you may not be lifted up to a tempting and dangerous fortune. Try to be alarmed, not elated, at every outward and visible success. Beseech God not to deny you that chastening which is a sign of His love. And whatever you do, never envy the prosperous; never amuse yourself with imagining, how much better you would employ *their* advantages if you had them. Grudge not against them, but rejoice with them, and pray for them.

And mind, above all things, to be in earnest in this. For it is far easier to say comfortable words, than really to mean them, if times go at all hard with us. Pray Him then to make you earnest. Pray Him that you may mean as well as say, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Pray, not to be spared all sorrow, but that you may so take your portion of sorrow, that it may be turned into joy: such joy as no man may be able to take from you.

SERMON XXXIV.

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, OUR JOY IN DEATH.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN xvi. 22.

“Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”

ALL common things, rightly taken, are parables of heavenly truth. The things which are seen are shadows of the things which are not seen. I often tell you of this; for indeed it is of great consequence; and without bearing it in mind, we can neither understand the Bible nor our own daily life. As for instance, see what a parable is contained in the Gospel for this very day. “Ye,” i. e. Christ’s disciples, Christians left without their Lord in the world, “shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.” By this we understand that a child’s birth into the world is a sort of pattern of a good Christian’s departing out of it. In both, sorrow is turned into joy. The pain and peril of child-birth, which are so very very great, are but a figure and pattern

of the pangs and throes of death. Both are part of the penalty of sin laid upon the first sinners from the beginning. The same voice which said to Eve, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children," said also to Adam and Eve both, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." But the mother's heart is so full of love to her babe, and she is so thankful for the birth of it, that the pain and danger are quite forgotten in comparison. "As soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." So is the penitent Christian's heart so full of love for his Lord, that death, which is the greatest of pains and sorrows, is turned into joy to him, because it brings him to his Lord. It is but the travail-pang, which brings him instantly to a new and better birth.

Many and remarkable are the resemblances between these two hours, the hour of birth and the hour of a Christian's death. Both are so far sudden, that no one knows the exact time of either. For as it is said concerning death, "thou shalt not know in what hour I will come upon thee," so concerning the pains of birth, it was even a proverb^a, how suddenly they come on: "Sudden destruction cometh upon" the wicked, while they are saying, "peace and safety:" "as travail upon a woman with child." Yet though the very time is uncertain, she knows that it must be within so long a time: and so in regard of our death: we know not when we shall die, but we know that it will be, before so many years are passed. Both are looked forward to for a long time: of both, when they are at hand, it may be said,

^a 1 Thess. v. 3.

“Thine hour is come : thine hour of agony, the hour for which thou hast been so long waiting, partly in fear and partly in hope : the hour, in which you can do nothing for yourself, through which God only can bring you. It is come, and it will soon be gone, and if you are brought well through it, how great will be the joy!” In all these respects, I say, but especially in the last, does Holy Scripture compare our birth to our death, and make out the one to be a parable and shadow of the other.

Observe ; the joy and the blessing, both in birth and in death, does not only come *after* the sorrow, but is itself the fruit and effect of the sorrow. Our Saviour’s words distinctly express this. “Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” It is not only, that they should be first sorrowful and then glad, but the gladness was really to arise out of the sorrow. The travailing woman’s pains are turned into the joy of the mother : the dying Christian’s pains are turned into the delights of Paradise. So that as she who desires to be a mother, however she may shrink from the pain, yet rejoices to have it come on : so he who loves Christ heartily, though he shrink from the agony of death, yet he is humbly thankful for it, hoping that it is his Father’s way to bring him to Christ.

Now what the joy is, when a child is happily born into this world, we see and know : what a sunshine it makes in the house, and how the friends of the family, far and near, make haste to wish them joy. But we do not see the far greater joy, when a true, persevering Christian, a member of Christ, and a child of God, is born anew, if one may so call it, by

a holy and happy death, into that other and better world. We do not as yet hear the glad songs of the Angels, when they are carrying such a blessed soul, where they carried Lazarus, into the bosom of Abraham; or when they are congratulating one another and all good spirits, on the happy and glorious change. We see not, nor hear these things: yet we know by the sure Word of God, that they are all around us, whenever a devout person dies. If the Angels rejoice, as He has told us they rejoice, over one sinner that repenteth; who shall doubt that their songs of exultation go up over the death-bed of the righteous, when the fruit of his faith and repentance are made sure once for all, when they are sure that he can never lose his crown?

And we may well imagine, that both to the righteous themselves, and to these their heavenly well-wishers, the change is the more joyful, because it comes so suddenly. People count it a blessing, when a young child comes to see the light of day. Truly, they say, “^bthe light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.” How much more when the worn and wearied spirit is called from its sick bed to Paradise! One moment a person lies in the great and manifold distress, which we know commonly comes upon the children of Adam when they are at the point of death: there are pains, and convulsions, and one sense failing after another, and the sad heart-breaking sense of extreme weakness and helplessness, and many pangs besides of body and mind, which none of us perhaps shall be able to understand, till our own turn comes: at one moment,

^b Eccl. xi. 7.

I say, all this is going on, and in the next moment the body lies in calm sleep, safe in the guardianship of God and His holy Angels; and the soul is where it has long desired to be, safe also, safe with Christ, safe from the miseries of this sinful world; still, perhaps, more or less imperfect, but sure and certain of eternal life when the day of the Resurrection shall come; and, in the meantime, seeing Christ more blissfully and clearly, as their obedience has been more exact and loving. Who can imagine this change? Who would not long to know it, the only way it can be known, by sweet and joyful experience? Who can bear the thought of casting that hope away for the sake of some miserable fancy, some short-lived pleasure of this world, gone before it is well enjoyed, and bitter in remembrance for ever? Who would not say to himself, and wish to say it with all his heart, "I will no more trust in vain things: be Thou, O Lord, the strength of my heart; be Thou mine only portion for ever?"

But O, my brethren, remember well, on what it all depends, what it is which will make all the difference. It all depends on our Lord's saving Presence: if He be with us in our dying hour, and we cling to Him, all will be well; if He forsake us, and we let Him go, it never again can be well with us for ever. For what is the promise, that He hath promised to those whom He favours? "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." The life, the happiness, the joy of heart, all is wrapt up in the sight of Christ. If people do not care for that, the promise is no promise to them. Just as if you were invited to spend some time in a

place, to have the company of such and such a person; it would be nothing to you, unless you were partial to that person; so it is in this case. If we are so happy as to die with the love of God in our hearts, then it will be a joy and blessing to us to be with God in heaven: but if we do not love Him, though we could be in Heaven, it would not make us happy. Now in order to love Him with the true love of a dutiful child, we must be used to Him; we must accustom ourselves to delight in His Presence here. If we give ourselves up to worldly cares, and permit ourselves to forget Him: still more if we get into mischief, and would rather rejoice, if we could, to be out of His sight here, like bad servants delighting in their Lord's absence: can we for a moment hope or think, that we should, all of a sudden, be so altered by death, as to feel Him the Strength of our heart and our portion for ever? It may not be. In this respect, as in many others, "where the tree falls, there it will lie." We must be exercised in the love of God by repentance and devotion; else the seeing God will be no blessing to us. His glory which is light and life to His own, will prove a devouring fire to His enemies.

This is doubtless one reason why He has so mercifully given us His Sacraments. Baptism and the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the other ceremonies and customs of the Church, are so many special tokens, so many various means of His Presence. This is the reason, why Christ's people find in these Sacraments so much comfort and support. Christ is in His font and at His altar in ways of His own, and His own people love to be there because

they are sure of meeting Him: and so meeting Him, really believing Him to be there, and lifting up their hearts to Him as well as ever they can, they not only receive a great present blessing, but they are also training and preparing themselves for the holy home, where they hope to dwell with Him hereafter.

This is one reason, why good and considerate persons take so much delight in Holy Communion, and think so very much of it, especially when the hour of death draws on. As eternity draws nearer, they feel more their need of Christ, and strive more and more to lay hold of His hand, graciously reached forth unto them out of the cloud. Holy men and women have been used all their life long to pray that, when their time should come, they might have an opportunity of receiving that Holy Sacrament: and many Christians call it, as by an especial title, "the provision for the way," because we need it so much on that last and most awful journey. And all who have faith, when they hear of a Christian being ill, are anxious to know whether he has had, or is likely to have, this great blessing: and are relieved, when they know that it has been providentially vouchsafed to him. All such things, the whole use of the Sacraments, have their meaning and their virtue from this, that the Sacraments are especial means of preparing the soul for that happy time, when Christ shall come to see us openly and to be seen by us.

We need not go far to make out what precious gifts of God unto this end are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion: how they enable us to endure the burthens of life, by bringing us straight to Him Who

took on Himself those burthens. Only look around you, my brethren, you will see the proofs on every side. This very evening, as soon as this service is over, we expect to hear the Church bell go for the funeral of a little girl. There, to be sure, will be sorrow, most deep and trying sorrow: but will it not be turned into joy? Is there not good hope; yea sure and certain hope for the parents and others who loved that little child, that if worthy, they shall see her again, and their heart shall rejoice, and their joy no man shall take from them? Yes, there is certain hope of this blessing: for that little child had been baptized and born again in Christ, and was too young to have done any thing to cut herself off from Christ. Her Baptism had grace to save her, without any farther Sacrament. The good Shepherd has taken her up in His arms as a lamb, and is gone away with her, and she is happy with Him. When we see the calm sweet patient countenances of such little innocent sufferers: how they appear at times lost in some deep and very serious thought, as if they saw something which *we* could not, we seem to discern in a way the working of the grace of their Baptism: how it is every moment bringing them nearer to our gracious Lord, and so preparing them to see His Face with joy. Of such, thank God, there can be no doubt: and in cases where from age there might be a doubt, the other Sacrament, Holy Communion, frequently and worthily received, is the most perfect, the fullest pledge of a like happy end. Whether you be a little richer or a little poorer than your neighbours, at home or in some other place, surrounded with kind and dear friends and kinsmen, or watched and nursed

only by strangers; your bed soft or hard, your body in pain or at ease, nay, even whether your soul be perfectly calm or in more or less fear and anguish; these are not the things which will make the difference in your last end: but that which *will* make the difference is, whether our Lord Jesus Christ be there with His saving grace, to forgive our sins and nourish our souls and bodies to eternal life. We do in a manner speak what we know, and testify what we have seen, when we speak of sick beds visited by Christ in His Holy Sacrament with a deep and silent blessing, such as the world cannot give, nor the devil take away: such a blessing, as we should fear to imagine, much more to speak of, had we not the sure warrant of our Lord Himself in His holy word, “^d As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.” When the outward and visible life, the life of this world, is departing, then oftentimes the portion of Christ’s persevering members in that inward and eternal life is manifested more than ever in that unspeakable Communion. Before He takes them out of sight, He makes Himself and them known to us in breaking of bread. And even when we see not any thing remarkable in their demeanour, yet if they be worthy and penitent receivers, we are sure that He has ways of His own, ways which as yet we know not of, whereby He is preparing them through His Sacrament to see and enjoy Him for ever. Perhaps they cannot speak nor look up: their signs of consciousness may be such as only an experienced nurse can discern, yet the very greatest of works, the

^d S. John vi. 57.

perfecting of a regenerate soul, may by His mercy be going on gloriously within them, and the last Communion may be the seal and crown of the whole.

When we are permitted to hear of such things, much more if we stand by and see them, O let us never forget, that it all depends on our truly loving Christ, and that this love, generally speaking, cannot be learned on a death-bed : it must be learned before, in good time, by earnest endeavour to please and obey Him. If we wish our Lord in His Holy Communion to come indeed to our bedsides, and be with us to bless and hallow our death, the sure way to have our wish is, to acquaint ourselves with Him now, that He may first bless and hallow our lives. All good feelings, short of this, have something false and hollow in them ; we must not depend on them for a moment.

Rec'd 3rd S. 1889

SERMON, XXXV.

THE LOOK OF CHRIST.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. John xvi. 22.

*“I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice,
and your joy no man taketh from you.”*

BEHOLD the gracious condescension of our heavenly Master! He is comforting His friends and disciples, who were heart-broken at His going away. He knows well, that when a dear friend is going away out of sight, the only real and effectual and perfect comfort to those who love that person dearly is to look forward to a time when they may have a sure hope of seeing him again: and accordingly, all through this His farewell discourse, He keeps on telling them, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself;” “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” “I go, and come again unto you;” “A little while, and ye shall see Me.” But in the Gospel to-day He says it differently: not “ye shall see Me,” but, “I will see you again.” As if His happiness depended on seeing *them*, even as their’s on seeing *Him*; as if the Lord of all had need of His poor sinful servants, according to His own saying, when He sent His disciples to fetch the ass and the colt,

the types of believing Jews and Gentiles, on whom He was to ride into the holy city: His word then was, "the Lord hath need of them:" so here, "I will see you again:" as if He were even straitened and the time would seem long to Him, until the happy hour when those who have fallen asleep in Him are to be called out of their graves and, looking up after their long sleep, to behold His gracious Eye fixed upon them. We cannot be happy without Him: that is what no one can doubt who will but consider, for one minute, Who He Is and what we are: and here He seems to say (speaking after the manner of men) that He will not account Himself altogether happy and perfect, nor His glory altogether complete, without us. O wonderful, unspeakable love of Him, Who is one with the Father, Perfect God, all Blessed and glorious! that He should be looking forward with a sort of loving expectation to the meeting again with such as we are! that it should be a delight to Him to say, "I will see you again."

But observe well, my brethren, this other instruction, which is surely contained in those words: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." It is not every one whose heart will rejoice with a joy that cannot be taken away, when Christ shall see them, and they see Him, face to face. Not to every one is the encouragement, "^aLook up and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh." But it belongs to those who have been with Jesus on earth, who have rejoiced to be with Him, who grieve when He hides Himself from them, who cannot bear to be out of His Presence, or to go on unnoticed by Him: in

^a S. Luke xxi. 28.

a word, the promise, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you," belongs not to all who will look upon Him by and bye, but only to those who had come to be His loving friends, His true followers, His attentive and earnest scholars: in such sort that (as I told you two Sundays ago) persons seeing them might say at once, "These men have been with Jesus." You will be glad to see His eye upon you then, *if* you have used yourselves to feel that upon you now. You know very well, that this is by no means impossible. When you are in company with any one whom you love and respect from the very deep of your heart; any one, for whose good opinion you care very much indeed, it is not necessary that you should always be *looking straight towards* that person, and *see him looking towards* you; you have a sort of feeling that you are all the while in his sight: and loving and honouring him truly, you take especial care not to do anything which would be likely to offend or annoy him. And then you have comfort indeed, all along, from the sense of his presence; and when you come to be alone with him, for nearer and more familiar talk, face to face, as a man talketh with his friend, to perceive that his eye and his heart are fixed on yours, as yours upon his: then you have the fulness of the joy which his and your mutual affection can give you. Not so, if you have been careless of his presence, if you have not watched all along for the glimpses and tokens of it, if you have not from time to time tried (as the saying is) to catch his eye. Every instance of such negligence was a token of your not loving him as you ought to have done; and

of course, if you did not love him in earnest, the seeing him again will be no great joy to you. As I said, you must use yourself to watch for Christ's Eye, while you are in this world on your trial, to think of it very often as fixed upon you (for you know it really is so); otherwise it will be no joy to you, when you wake up at the sound of the last trump, and behold that awful Eye looking straight down upon you, and yourself compelled to look towards it, not able to turn away and forget it, as you had used yourself to do here, that you might enjoy the pleasures of sin. You may look away from Christ here, but you will not be able to look away from Him then.

O then, to prepare for that awful moment, to save yourself that unspeakable misery; use yourself, I beseech you, in good time, to do as the saints, the friends of Christ, have ever done. Remember what was Hagar's comfort, when she fled from Abraham's house and found herself utterly forlorn and forsaken in the waste and lonely wilderness. God sent His Angel with a message, making known His Presence: and she learned to say in her heart, "^bThou, God, seest me." Whether she were looking for Him or no, she knew always from that day forward, that His eye was upon her. "Thou, God, seest me:" let it be a word written in the heart of every one who desires at the last Day to see his Saviour's face with joy. Remember what the Gospel teaches of His friends and disciples who walked with Him after the flesh; what an effect His gracious Eye had on them, when they became aware of Its being turned towards them; towards any one of them, particularly, on any re-

^b Gen. xvi. 13.

markable occasion. E. g. S. Mark gives an account of the young man who came running to our Lord, in care for his soul, desiring to know what he must do to inherit eternal life: and he says, “^cJesus, *beholding* him, loved him.” Could he ever forget the awful, loving countenance, turned so seriously upon him? Or if he did forget it, giving himself to worldly things, (as we know that for the time he went away sorrowful, and took himself out of our Lord’s bodily sight) fearfully indeed, some day or other, must it come back upon him. But see how the same history goes on to speak of the *looks* of our Blessed Saviour. After the rich young man had departed, sorrowing, “^dJesus, looking round about Him, said unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.” He looked around, to draw their attention to Him. Here again was a trial for them, whether they would attend or no: and you are put on *your* trial, every time that the will of God comes before you in anything like a startling form: either by the sudden blows or turns of His providence, or by the sharp alarming words of His Scripture or His ministers: when sickness or death, disappointment or bereavement, want or anguish of any kind, comes suddenly upon you, in common perhaps with many others, then you will do well to imagine our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Corrector and Avenger, looking round to see, who are moved by His chastenings, and who harden their hearts against them. When sayings in the Scripture or in a sermon or in any good book come home to you, and cause you to cry out with the disciples,

^c S. Mark x. 21.^d Ib. 23.

“Who then can be saved?” be sure that our Lord’s Eye, His searching and gracious Eye, is just then turned earnestly towards you, as it was towards His disciples, when He told them, “You think My doctrine too strict, and that according to it no man could be saved; and so it would be, if men were left to themselves: but with God all things are possible.” Remember, His grace can do all, and may be had for asking. Why did Christ, in teaching this lesson, look on His disciples more earnestly and directly than usual? To make it sink deep in their hearts, and remain there steadily: like a sharp nail driven home by a strong hand. Understand then, Christian brethren, that your Master’s eye is most directly upon you, and His hand most lovingly reached out to help you, when your task seems hardest, and the perfection required of you most out of your reach. His promise is, “^eAs thy days, so shall thy strength be.” *End*

Again, Holy Scripture takes notice of a grave, sorrowful, reproving look of our Lord’s: when, in conversation on the parable of the wicked husbandmen in the vineyard, He had forced them to say words which condemned themselves, and they, instead of repenting, went on in their sullen unbelief, “^fJesus *beheld* them, and said unto them, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?” We may in some sort imagine His grave reproving look, and how it will one day rise up, as it were, in judgement against those who felt it, but would not feel it to repentance. And so will the grave, reproving looks and words, the charitable discipline, of those who

^e Deut. xxxiii. 25.

^f S. Luke xx. 17.

stand in His place. Deceive not yourselves. If those Scribes and Pharisees must give account, who by the hardness of their heart made even the meek and lowly Jesus look round about upon them in grief and anger, you must not think never to hear of it again, who have so often grieved both Him, and those whom He had set over you; your parents and other superiors, by your proud and sullen continuance in sin, hardening your neck when you were reprovèd.

Once more, “^gthe Lord,” we read, “turned and looked upon Peter,” just as he had spoken the last of his three denials and the cock crew the second time. Peter at once remembered, and repented, with that true and hearty and lasting repentance, which is set before us for a pattern to all Christian penitents. The Saint did not miss his Master’s eye, accustomed as he had been to watch for it, and to be guided by it, now for so long a time. And that one gracious look did its work in a moment, and sent him out of the place of temptation and bad company, to weep bitterly as he thought on what he had done. In this S. Peter was but one instance of the way and practice of all the saints, walking as they did before Him, listening for His voice, fastening their eyes upon Him, feeling after Him if haply they might find Him; for they knew for certain that He never could be at any moment far from any one of them. His Presence is both their safeguard and their joy: as it is written, “^hThe Lord God is a sun and a shield;” a light and a defence. They rejoice in the midst of their troubles, because He is with them, Who is the fountain and treasure of all joy. And they resist

^g S. Luke xxii. 61.

^h Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

temptation, because they cannot bear the thought of sinning under the very eye of their Saviour.

You may judge a little what the behaviour of true courageous saints will be, and how their Master's Eye helps them, by observing how it is with those, who, though very far perhaps from saints, have yet faith enough to believe that Christ is present, here in Church, in a particular way. In such measure as you believe this, you of course try to behave well in Church: you would not come here to insult your Saviour to His face. If then you are seen, any of you, not once or twice but regularly, shewing that you care not for the place, nor yet for the service, is it not too plain that you are yet a heathen in heart, that you do not believe Christ to be here, you are not trying to acquaint yourself with Him: and how then can you expect to rejoice with His people when you see Him bye and bye? But those who try to remember Him here, in Church, to them He gives this blessed assurance, that He will see them again, will behold them with that look, which is the very happiness of the blessed in heaven. They shall see His power and glory, so as they have seen it in the sanctuary, only in unspeakably more perfection. They join here in the songs of Sion, and hear in them a voice as of many waters, all gathering into one strain, "Worthy is the Lamb which was slain;" "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ:" and they find bye and bye, that in so doing they were acquainting themselves beforehand with the voice of the Son of Man, concerning which it is written, "that the dead shall hear it, and live." And not only here in Church, but in your private devotions; and not only

in your devotions, but in your good and charitable dealings and all your honest and religious undertakings, both at home and abroad, Christ will still give you, if you seek for them, such glimpses of Himself, as will prepare you to behold Him hereafter with open face, and yet to live. Is there any one here who has accustomed himself really and truly to meditate on Jesus Christ, to see Him with his mind's eye, every morning and evening of his life? any one who is used, regularly and of course, to recollect all through his prayers that he is really speaking *to* his God and Saviour? Such an one may hope that by God's mercy he is in training for the endless unutterable joy. He is learning at least the first lessons in the divine school which is to prepare him to take his part in the choral service of heaven: a few words here and there in the language of the eternal and glorious kingdom. To him it will not be altogether strange, when the veil shall be drawn up and the glory of the Lord shall appear in the inner sanctuary, and he shall hear the melodies of the New Song, which no man may learn but those that are redeemed from the earth. So it is with the devotions of steady sincere Christians, and so it is with their works and thoughts and words of charity. So far as true love is in them, the true love of our Lord Jesus Christ, so far they partake of heaven, and are in their degree a rehearsal of heavenly joy. Away with the vain and foolish notion, that true religion, the loving service of Christ, is a dull, dry, melancholy, unpleasing task. Nay, rather hear those who have tried it, not half-tried it, but thoroughly; not as an effort now and then, taking its turn with

other pursuits, but as their one thing needful, their joy and hope and crown of rejoicing. Give ear to those who know by experience the joy of waiting upon our Lord here, and judge by that of the bliss of seeing Him hereafter. “ⁱ O taste and see, how gracious the Lord is !” “^j Though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” “^k We rejoice in hope of the glory of God : “^l And hope maketh not ashamed.”

Yet even the joy of the saints, in this life, can be but intermitting : it comes and goes, most commonly by short glimpses and flashes : like that of the disciples while they only saw Christ in the flesh. He was not always in sight : they were not always in a condition to rejoice in the sight of Him. A day is coming, when all that imperfection will pass away and vanish for ever. Jesus Christ and His faithful servants will behold each other, face to face : they will know, what now they can only hope, that His Joy, the joy which He took in them when He first made them His own, that joy remaineth in them, He still delights in them, and will never cease to do so : and with that assurance, their joy will be full.

This, brethren, is the hope and the portion which God offers you, every one of you. Ever since you can remember, He has been offering it to you. But what have you been doing? How many of you have chosen it with all your hearts, and are now making it the end and purpose of your life, to see our Lord’s face with joy? If you die before you have made that choice, you know the consequence. O why will you lose more time?

ⁱ Ps. xxxiv. 8.^j 1 S. Pet. i. 8.^k Rom. v. 2.^l Ib. 5.

SERMON XXXVI.

ETERNAL LIFE BEGUN HERE ON EARTH.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN V. 24.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.”

WHAT is Eternity? What is everlasting Life, and that other most awful condition, everlasting death? And when shall we, each one of us, begin to have our portion in the one or the other? Most people, I suppose, would say, “When we come to die.” In spite of ourselves, though we know how short this life is, that we may die at any moment, and that when we come to die, the whole of our time from our birth to that moment will seem to us but a short dream: we go on fancying, each one for himself, that we have yet a good deal of time to spare, that to-morrow will be as this day; and as to eternity, though we acknowledge (as we cannot help doing) that it must be thought of and provided for, at some time or other, yet we persuade ourselves that there is no hurry, that that other world is yet far away from us. And even when men are grown very very old, or when any

thing else happens to bring home to them this undoubted truth, that there is but a step between them and death; still they too often go on turning their minds away from it, under the notion that the other side the grave is in all respects so very different from this, that nothing they can do will really help them to prepare for it. Everlasting life and death, they imagine, are things which will not begin really to exist until the last Day.

But is it so indeed? Is Eternity altogether a thing future? And are everlasting life and death things which do not in any sense begin here? Our own thoughts, if we would consider them, give us a different account of Eternity; Holy Scripture gives us a different account of our own part in everlasting life or death. For again I ask, what is Eternity? Is it not something of which, when we look forward, we cannot discern nor imagine any end, even as when we look backward we cannot discern nor imagine any beginning? Yes: surely Eternity is something of this sort. But if so, then *as* surely, my brethren, we are in Eternity already, and by no means at a distance from it. For look on, any one of you, and tell me, beginning from this moment, how long your soul will last, or look back and tell me how long it is since your soul [in the mind of God] began to be: you cannot: you cannot count the years, you know that it is a sum which goes beyond all number: you can only make answer and say, For ever: for ever and ever, world without end. Why then, if this be so, your soul, that is yourself, is in the midst of this great sea of Eternity already. You may know it as certainly as a mariner far out of sight of land knows

himself to be surrounded by the deep immeasurable ocean. You are in the midst of Eternity: it is so, and you cannot help it: all the choice you have left is, whether that Eternity shall be to you happy or miserable, with Christ or without Him: eternal life or eternal death.

But further: as we are all in the midst of *eternity*, yet many of us feel as if we had not yet come to it, as if it would not begin until the Day of Judgement: so it may be that some among us have even now begun to taste of *everlasting life* or *death*; which, nevertheless, we are apt to imagine, cannot overtake any until the Day of Resurrection and final Judgement. We are apt to imagine this: but Holy Scripture, as I said, gives us a different account of the matter. It represents eternal life as something which has its beginning in this world, though it cannot in any case be made perfect until we are caught up to God and to His Throne. The things of faith, according to the Bible, are so far like the things of sight, that our dealing rightly with what we see is a rehearsal, a practice, a preparation for what we are to be and do, among the things that we cannot yet see. Our duties here are like the lessons we learned in boyhood, whereby we were trained for mature age, we ourselves knew not how or why at the time. How hard and strange, very often, does it appear to children, that they should be forced to spend so many hours a day in learning to read and spell hard words, or in getting by heart sentences which they cannot understand: but in time they come to know and feel the benefit. So the saints in heaven praise God, in adoring wonder, for His severe unsearchable ways

and judgements, whereby He taught them one after another the lessons which are now their joy and glory in heaven. The tender, minute form of the full-grown plant is contained, they say, in every little seed; so in every one of Christ's little ones is that living Image of Him begun, concerning which we know not yet what it will be in its perfection, but we know thus much, that when He shall appear, such shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.

Accordingly He distinctly tells us, that there are persons on earth, who already have everlasting life. Mark His solemn words in the text: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life," not *will have*, but *hath* it already, "and shall not come into condemnation," is not on his way to judgement, to have the sentence of damnation pronounced upon him, "but is passed from death unto life," not, *will* one day pass, when his time shall come to die and to rise again," but, "*is passed*," hath already gone over, "from death unto life," i. e. from the condition in which he was born, which is a kind of death, for "in Adam all die," and we were "dead in trespasses and sins"—from this condition, says our Lord, the believer hath passed into life. What life? Evidently the same which had been spoken of in the former part of the sentence, and that is, *everlasting life*, "^afor as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," and "^byou, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Christ." The life of our Lord and Saviour, to which He raised Himself from the dead, is of course ever-

^a 1 Cor. xv. 22.

^b Col. ii. 13.

lasting life, for Christ, "being raised from the dead, dieth no more," therefore ours is an everlasting life also, for "we are quickened together with Him." The same thing His forerunner had taught before Him: "c He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:" and Himself afterwards to the perverse Jews at Capernaum: "d Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life:" and His beloved disciple: "e These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His Name," *believing*, not "*having* believed;" not by and by, but now, immediately on your believing, this heavenly life begins. And again in some of his last words, "f These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life;" not "that ye may come in time to have it," but, "that ye may know that ye now have it."

What now is this Eternal life, thus expressly and repeatedly promised, not simply as a final reward, but as an immediate gift, to all who believe in the Son of God? He Who hath bought it so dearly for us, He has Himself told us what eternal Life is. "g This is Life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." Truly and really to know God and Christ, whether here imperfectly, or there as the saints know Him, this is life eternal, and it is promised to all believers: they have it in their measure, even here in this present world.

c S. John iii. 36.

d Ib. vi. 47.

e Ib. xx. 31.

f 1 S. John v. 13.

g S. John xvii. 3.

But observe, my brethren, it is promised not to such as merely believe, but to those who so believe as to *have* Christ, to possess and hold Him for their own; for “^hhe that hath the Son hath life.” And if you ask again, How are we to know that we have Him? There is no lack of plain tokens: charity to our fellow-Christians is one of them. “ⁱWe know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” It is not mere good-nature, observe, nor brotherly kindness to all men, which the Holy Spirit here speaks of; but it is that special love wherewith one Christian ought to love another, *because* they are both members of Christ, and therefore children of God, and brethren one to another. It is a sort of family feeling, which cannot be except in the regenerate. If we love one another in this sense, Christ dwelleth in us, the grace of our Baptism is not departed from us, we have passed from death unto life, even to that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. True, self-denying love is one of Christ’s appointed signs that we still have Him, and having Him, have Life.

Again, He gives you another sign: “^jVerily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life.” Here again, my brethren, you see what our Master teaches. He that receiveth Holy Communion worthily, hath, for the time, eternal life: he is so far like a young child newly baptized, that if God were to take him at that moment, his soul would be sure to go to his Saviour.

^h 1 S. John v. 12.ⁱ Ib. iii. 14.^j S. John vi. 53. 54.

But then there must be perseverance. The gift, alas ! may be forfeited. Great indeed is the joy and consolation, when Christians, seriously and humbly examining themselves, find reason to hope that they really believe, that they really love their brethren, that they really receive the heavenly Gift in the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood. For then, according to His own promise, they are in such sense one with Christ, and Christ with them, that they are crucified, quickened, risen, ascended with Him: they are dead to the world, and their life is hid with Christ in God: they are even now reigning with Christ on His Throne: their treasure is indeed in heaven, where neither thief may approach, nor rust nor moth corrupt. They have eternal life now; but it does not follow that they will have it always. Remember the angels, that fell from heaven. Remember our first parents: they had at first the gift of immortality, but they sinned, and earned death for their wages. Remember, there is such a thing as falling away, after one has tasted of the heavenly Gift, and so, treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the Blood of the covenant an unholy thing^k. Therefore S. John says once more, "If that which ye have heard from the beginning *abide* in you, ye also shall *continue* in the Son and in the Father: and this is the promise which He hath promised us, even eternal life." Our final abiding in the Father and the Son, this is in the most excellent manner and degree the eternal Life which He hath promised to us.

Therefore, my brethren, pray and strive for per-

^k Heb. vi. 4. x. 29.

^l 1 S. John ii. 24, 25.

severance. It is a special gift, and requires special striving and prayer. It is the crown of all gifts; therefore we must labour and pray for it in the most effectual way we can. We must be very jealous of all unsteadiness, all wavering, all falling back from good rules. We must keep on examining and proving ourselves, whether or no we still have eternal life (for we certainly had it just after our Baptism as infants), and we must prove and try ourselves, not by any *one* of the tokens I have mentioned, but by all of them in turn, since all alike most surely have His warrant. Thus, it will never do to rest on good-nature to your brethren. You must really believe and love God, and wait on Him in His appointed ways. Again, what could be vainer than for a man to say, "I hope I have eternal life, for I am a constant communicant, though I cannot say but there are some whom I have not yet brought myself to forgive?" These and other like sayings do not suit a Christian man: they cannot well come out of the mouth of one, in whom eternal life is abiding. Such an one, as I said, will try himself by *all* our Saviour's tokens: he will not be satisfied, if he find himself wanting in any of them. Just go back for a moment to our text. "He that heareth My word:" of course not *simply* hearing is meant, but so hearing as to believe: and then, if you mark it, our Lord does not say, "He that heareth My word, and believeth *on Me*," but "on Him that sent Me." His word, we know, was all one with His Father's: He is Himself the Word of the Father: to believe Him, is believing the Father; to contradict Him, is affronting the Father: and on the other hand, all the Father's words

are His : the commandments as well as the creed, one article of the creed as well as another : we must not pick and choose, and say inwardly, "This word of God I will mind and not the other ;" when we know in our hearts that God sends them both alike to us.

Our hearing, moreover, and our believing, will be comparatively vain, if they do not lead us to be constant communicants and true unsparing lovers of our brethren.

Thus, and not by any kind of feelings, may a Christian form a humble and sober judgement, whether or no he is in the way of condemnation ; whether, though Christ at his Baptism passed him over from death unto life, he may not by want of purity and charity, have slipped, as it were, backwards and be still abiding in death.

One word more, about our having passed from death unto life. Our Lord and S. John appear to dwell with special earnestness on that saying, "We have passed from death unto life." It would seem as if every Christian were expected to think a good deal both of his own original condition, and of the good hand of his God upon him, in raising him out of it and placing him so very high. Come before God, Christian brethren, very often with such a confession in your heart, as the Holy Ghost by Moses taught the faithful Israelites to present along with their yearly basket of first-fruits^m. "A fallen and lost sinner was my father, and I too was fallen and lost ; but Thou, O Lord, lookedst on my affliction, and camest down from heaven, and diedst for me : Thou hast brought my soul out of hell, and hast made me a member of

^m Deut. xxvi. 5.

Thyself: whereas I was dead, by Thee I live: grant, O Lord, that I may never die unto Thee any more. Preserve in me that eternal life, of which Thou hast made me partaker by making me a member of Thyself: for Thou art the true God, and eternal Life. To this end give me grace very often to examine myself and see if I have in me those tokens which Thou hast appointed for us to know, whether we are abiding in the life which Thou hast given: whether we believe all Thy words and the words of the Father: whether we truly love all Christians as brethren: whether we are regular, serious, penitent partakers of Christ in Holy Communion."

We have great need to pray thus; for if we are wanting in these signs or any of them, great indeed is our danger of losing the Life eternal, and dying the second death. This is as certain as that Christ's own word is true. Examine yourselves then, dearly beloved, now in this Easter time, whether you are persevering in that eternal Life, which is the proper gift of Easter. "Prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" O awful yet blessed thought! I beseech God to keep it in all our hearts.

^a 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

SERMON XXXVII.

IMPROVEMENT, THE REWARD AND TEST OF FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE.

FOURTH-SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

DEUT. vii. 12, 13.

“It shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which He sware unto thy fathers : and He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee.”

God's promises to the Jews in Canaan are shadows of those to Christians in the Church. Canaan itself, considered as their home after their long wanderings, was a type of “the rest that remaineth for the people of God.” The corn and wine and oil, the milk and honey, with which that land flowed while it was the Holy Land, represent the blessings of the Christian Sacraments, and other holy ordinances, by which the blessed Spirit feeds and comforts our hearts. The city and Temple of Jerusalem, to which they were always to resort, was a figure of the One Holy Catholic Church, which binds all Christians together in one body. The use they made of the treasures, the buildings, and the other works of the heathen whom they had cast out, was a pattern of what

Christians should do with the good things of this world, hallowing them all, and turning them all to God's glory.

By considerations like these we may understand, how the book of Deuteronomy is particularly proper to be read, as it is in our Churches, at this particular time of year. It is full of such promises, and of threatenings of the contrary evils to such as should break the Lord's covenant. That is, according to its meaning, it is full of promises and threatenings to us Christians, according as we keep our Baptismal covenant or no. According as we strive or neglect to conform ourselves to the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we may feel comfort or fear in the gracious and awful words of this heart-piercing book. We may say, that from beginning to end it speaks to us Christians as to persons who are risen with Christ, calling on us, by all that is dear to us in heaven and earth, to live worthy of that Resurrection, to seek the things which are above.

Among other blessings which the Jews might look for in Canaan, if they walked in God's way, was that of continual and abundant increase. In every page almost of the Mosaic promises you will find God speaking as in the text. "If ye hearken to these judgements, and keep and do them, the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and mercy which He sware unto thy fathers: and He will love thee and bless thee, and multiply thee; He will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn and thy wine and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which He sware unto thy fathers to give thee."

Now this temporal outward and bodily increase is, of course, a shadow of spiritual increase and growth. If the Jews did well in their land, they were continually to become more numerous, richer and more prosperous: so, if Christians make a good use of the graces and blessings which God gives them in His Church, they may humbly hope to receive more and more of those graces and blessings. “^aHe that hath, to him shall be given.” It is our Lord’s own promise. Continual improvement, growth in holiness and goodness, is part of that likeness to Jesus Risen, which He called us to, when He made us members of Himself. He staid not on earth any longer than was necessary for Him to make known to His disciples the nature of His approaching kingdom, the Church, and what He would have them do in it. Having done so, He went away into heaven. So ought Christians to mix themselves up as little as they may with the concerns of this present life. According to the collect for this day, we should love that which God commands, and desire that which He promises, “that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found.”

Now do not say, This is all very well, but it is not in our own power. We have not the command of our own hearts: we cannot make ourselves love and desire things as we please. Do not say this; for though it is very true, it is no sort of excuse for a Christian’s loving the world. Because, as this very collect teaches, though you cannot order your own hearts, God can. And He will, if we ask Him in

^a S. Mark iv. 25.

earnest. He "alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men." For this very reason we are taught thus to pray to Him, because we are weak and He is strong.

Moreover, as the Gospel goes on to remind us, the Holy Comforter is come down, on purpose to teach and guide us and be our Comforter; to be in Christ's stead with us: so that our own weakness is done away, and we may improve by that strength from above, instead of remaining miserably contented in our own poor low way.

If you say, "I wish to improve, but I know not how to begin;" here is a plain simple rule laid down for us in the Epistle for the day. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." All persons, whoever they are, have to speak and converse continually. Here then, whoever you are, here is a plain matter in which you may begin, this very day, to draw nearer what a Christian should be. You may watch against excess of speaking. You may check the disposition, if you have it, as most people have, to be talking for talking's sake. You may force yourself often to keep silence, when you would be glad to break it. Even by such a common matter as listening patiently to what others say, waiting till they have done, however you might wish to interrupt them, you may do yourself much good. It is what persons do continually for the sake of some worldly advantage, or out of mere customary courtesy. Do you practise it in seriousness, in the fear of God, and because it is doing as you would be done by, and it will be a good beginning of the very highest improvement. Among other things, it will help you

to be slow to wrath. How often do we see and feel, when provoking things happen and men's hearts are hot within them, that free and unguarded speaking makes the matter very much worse: each fresh word is a fresh affront, till at last the heat which would have died down, like a spark trodden out, is fanned into a great and deadly fire. Whereas, if we always made it a rule to be silent as long as we are angry, the very feeling of wrath would commonly pass away, and we might go calmly on with our duties, both towards those who have affronted us and towards all other. Our Lord Himself is set before us, an example of silence, as of other self-denial. " ^b He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." Let the thought of the Blessed Jesus, silent before His false accusers and murderers, help us in this beginning of improvement, to keep our tongue from anger, and our hearts, that they nourish no dislike.

Another point, from which we may begin amending ourselves, if we will, this very hour, is our manner of receiving our Lord's instruction, thus spoken of in the end of to-day's Epistle: " Laying aside all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls:" i. e. humble yourselves under the mercy of Jesus Christ: hear His word, and receive His Sacraments, with a lowly and patient temper. Do not make yourself a judge; do not willingly find fault. With heart and mind full of sorrow for past sins, hearken to what He says concerning you. And be not content with doing thus to-day only: do the

^b Isa. liii. 7.

same to-morrow again, and again the next day, endeavouring to be more and more perfect.

I have mentioned these two simple matters, governing the tongue, and meekness in hearing the word, as examples of the sort of gradual improvement, which Christ expects of those who are partakers of His Resurrection. Let any one begin with these, or with any other part of duty, in earnest; let him seriously pray to God to shew him the way that he must go; and let him accompany his prayer with fasting, as health may allow, and dutifulness to the Church may direct; and he will find himself daily and hourly drawn on to more exact rules and more earnest goodness, greater love of God and his neighbour. If you really have a will to improve, no fear but He Who gives the good mind will point out the way.

But if this be so, what a serious question is it, which we have, each of us, to put to ourselves. Have we any reason to think that we are improving? Have we good hope that more is being given to us, that our heavenly treasure is increasing? Looking back as far in our life as we can well remember, can we really feel a comfortable and sober hope, that we are better persons than we were? that we do our duty better as we grow older? It is a *very* serious question: because most assuredly, according to the plain letter of Holy Scripture, if we are not getting on, if more is not being given to us, we have reason to fear that we have lost, or shall very soon lose, that which we at first had. Just as in matters of worldly riches, according to our Lord's comparison: if a person sees a man thriving, to whom he has lent money, he is

willing to trust him with more : but if he seem hardly able to go on, the way of the world surely is, to call on him to repay what has been lent him. If then you practise no spiritual diligence, if you are not improving your spiritual wealth, this is provoking God to take it quite away from you. Again I say, ask yourself seriously how this matter stands. Is your conscience really more tender, your time better spent, your conversation more innocent, your kindness to your brethren more unwearied and more active than it used to be ? You do not perhaps find a difference from day to day : that was hardly to be expected : but do you, in good earnest, find a difference, from year to year ? As we look at children, morning by morning, we see no difference in their height and size, between yesterday and to-day : nor do we expect to see any between to-day and to-morrow : but if we take some longer time, two or three months or more, we do expect to discern an increase, and if none appear, we begin to doubt whether the children are quite healthy. So, in examining our own behaviour, it is not always easy to determine whether to-day was better than yesterday or the day before, but we can generally feel certain enough, whether we have gone backwards or forwards in any particular part of our character since this time last year. I mean, if we are at all used to watch ourselves : for I verily fear and believe that many of us have been going on in so light and careless a way, that we could not at all say, if we were asked, how we had really been going on. We pass from hour to hour, and from day to day, pleasing ourselves and following others : but how it all looks in the sight of the Almighty Judge, as we

do not much regard at the time, so it is impossible for us fully to imagine afterwards.

As far, however, as we do recollect, what sad thoughts and fears are generally mixed with our memories! How alarming to feel, how long the sparks remain of our bad habits which we really have tried to put out! In our prayers, for example, if we got into careless habits in our childhood; if we have unhappily used ourselves to say holy words, and speak to the Holy One, without meaning what we said; how hard is it, when we get older, to fix our wandering thoughts, and pray to God in earnest! If men have fallen, still more unhappily, into shameful and wilful sin, how miserable to find the thought of it haunting their memory, not always with such abhorrence as they would wish to feel; and that perhaps at times, when they would most long to have their minds free for better things. Then how grievous to be in doubt, as persons who have gone very wrong naturally are, whether all that seems right in them may not prove untrue and unreal before God; and whether their account is not loaded with many things most grievous in His sight, which they through carelessness have forgotten, or through hardness of heart take far more lightly than they ought! These are the kinds of thoughts which made the Psalmist cry out, “^c My sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up: yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me.” Such thoughts, however painful, are full of hope in one respect, that they go along with true and earnest repentance: but too

^c Ps. xl. 15.

often I fear our own conscience will tell us that we are less shocked at our own sins than we used to be. The time was perhaps, that our hearts smote us if we had but entertained an unkind thought of any person: and now we permit ourselves, with little or no scruple, to deal out severe and unkind words. We once perhaps tried in earnest to be regular and punctual in our devotional exercises, and in our times and ways of self-examination: and now we have given way to difficulties, and our consciences smite us very little when we omit such holy thoughts, or deal lightly with them, or hurry them over. We were once strict in attending to our prayers, but now perhaps it scarcely troubles us, when we come to the end of collect after collect, psalm after psalm, and yet find that we have been hardly thinking of God at all. Such things are bad signs: they need not make us despair, nor faint in our duty: but they should by all means waken us up, and cause us to have serious misgivings about ourselves. They are like symptoms of an old complaint, not yet thoroughly subdued. It is our wisdom to attend to them, and take counsel of God Almighty, His Word and His Church, how to get the better of them.

It may be, you have quite left off some sins which once were but too familiar with you: but be not too confident that you are therefore right before God. Some sins go on for a time, and then naturally spend themselves, and there is no more temptation to them, any more than to drink when you are not thirsty: it is no proof of holiness, when a man's life becomes quieter or more decent in such a way as that. But if besides leaving them off, you still keep humbling

yourself for them: if you are more and more diligent in all that is most contrary to them, then you may hope that you are in earnest getting on.

Do not, however, depend upon entire satisfaction: do not expect that, however sincere you may be, you are to have the full consciousness of your own improvement as you go on. Even those, who have been from the beginning most innocent, dare not look for such continual comfort as that: how much less they who have sinned wilfully and have to be healed, as they may, by continual penitence. For the most part, we must be content to find our own doings seldom pleasing, never perfect: while we earnestly long and labour to amend, still we are not to be too much disheartened, if we do not perceive ourselves to have amended. It may be with God's faithful servants in the matter of goodness, as it is in respect of health, or in learning any art or trade. Very often, when a person is getting the better of any sickness, he does not feel himself improving from day to day: if he is learning any business, it proves commonly slow and disappointing work: it seems to him often, as though he were going backward rather than forward: but such as are in earnest persevere, notwithstanding all this: they use all the appointed means of improvement, and in the end the improvement shews itself: the sick man finds that he has health; the learner, that he is become skilful in his trade.

Wherefore let no man's heart fail him, from a feeling that repentance is a long and hard work, and that, although he seems to himself to try, he cannot make it out whether or no he is better to-day than

he was yesterday, or yesterday than the day before. We are not so to brood over the past ; but having seriously examined ourselves, and humbled ourselves for our many and great sins and omissions of duty, we are invited to go, as it were, out of ourselves, and lay out all our strength in His service, Who bought us to be His own, and paid so dear for us. Here as in everything else, we must have faith. Just as it is hurtful and childish to disturb the ground, to see how seeds are growing, so it is vain to think of seeing or feeling distinctly the work of the Lord in our souls, as it goes on. If we work on, in the earnest desire to please Him, He will surely prosper our work. The seed will spring up and bear fruit, we know not how.

SERMON XXXVIII.

THE WORD ENGRAFTED ONCE, BUT TO GROW
CONTINUALLY.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JAMES i. 21.

*“Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which
is able to save your souls.”*

HERE is some instruction from a very ancient preacher on the best way of hearing sermons. S. James, called our Lord's brother, who was probably His first cousin, (he with S. Jude being both sons of Cleopas and Mary, the blessed Virgin's sister,) S. James, I say, tells us in this verse, how the Lord would have us receive His Word. We are to be “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” We are to “lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,” the dust and dirt and remnants of evil, which gather from time to time about us, and clog up the way to our hearts, and make it unclean: all this rubbish we are to get rid of as well as we can, and make a clear and easy passage for the gracious word into the very deep of our hearts. As when some great and noble visitor is expected, we naturally sweep and garnish the house, and clear all impediments out of the way, so shall we try to do, if we are wise and dutiful, when we are hoping and expecting to obtain more

of the word and wisdom of God ; when we are waiting in the Lord's House for the Lord Himself to come in and do some great good to our souls.

Observe what the Apostle says, to make us in some measure understand, *how* the word should do us so much good. He calls it "the engrafted word:" the word made part of ourselves in such manner, as a bud or twig engrafted is made part of a tree: made part of us so entirely as to grow along with us, and by degrees to turn us altogether into its own kind, correcting the wild and rude nature which we had before. For this, we know, is the meaning of engrafting: a wild, useless stock of a tree, a crab, e. g. or a sloe, has grown up in a man's garden, and he wants to improve it, and cause it to bear good fruit: to change the crab into an apple, or the sloe into a plum. What course does he take? He chooses out a tree which bears good fruit, of the kind which he wants to procure, and he takes a healthy twig or a bud off it, and makes a little slit in the bark, and fastens it in: planting, as it were, the good wood in the bad: and so he leaves it, and goes his way, and sleeps and wakes night and day, and the good wood grows in the bad, and turns the bad into its own nature, he knoweth not how; by the sure working of the Great Almighty Gardener and Planter. This is natural grafting, a sort of thing well-known and constantly practised by such as have the care of gardens and woods and plantations. Now let us see, how well it answers to the spiritual grafting here mentioned by S. James. Naturally, you know, we are all of us sour and wild stocks. We are corrupt trees, and cannot bear good fruit, until we have been

changed by the Almighty power of God's Spirit : as it is written in the book of Job, " ^a Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." And how does God's Spirit change us? By making us members of His Son Jesus Christ, which is done (as the catechism teaches,) in Holy Baptism. Thereby we are both grafted into Christ, and Christ, in another way of speaking, is grafted into us. We are so joined to Him, as to become limbs of His mystical Body, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. As if boughs of a wild vine or a wild olive tree should be grafted into the true vine and the good olive tree, and should live by a different life from what they had before, i. e. by what they draw from the root of the good tree, to which they now belong, so is every baptized infant taken out of his natural state and made part of Jesus Christ, so as to live henceforth by a new and heavenly life, which he has altogether from Jesus Christ. But in another way of speaking, Christ, as I just now said, is grafted into us : the seed, or bud, or branch, of a new and heavenly nature, is in a manner implanted in us, with power to change and transform us entirely into the same good Thing which itself is, unless we wilfully hinder it. And this S. James calls the engrafted *Word*; because the *Word*, as we know, is one of the names of Jesus Christ : as it is written, " ^b The Word was with God, and the Word was God." S. James therefore had said a little before, " ^c Of His own will He," God the Father, " begat us with the word of truth ;" meaning that in Holy Baptism God gave us a new life in His Son : and so again he

^a Job xiv. 4.

^b S. John i. 1.

^c S. James i. 18.

says here, "Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls;" i. e. "Receive with a meek and humble mind Jesus Christ, Who only can save you; Who was grafted into you, planted in you, once for all, when you were regenerate, and Who vouchsafes to come daily to you, more and more, in His saving Word and Sacraments." This is some account of the Apostle's meaning: and there are two points in it most needful to be thought on by all of us.

First, he teaches that the word of God mends His people, changes their nature, and in the end saves them, not by being taught and heard only, but by being engrafted into them first, and ever afterwards received with meekness. As I just now explained, the Living Word, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God and Man, He it is that saves our souls: He only can do that work: and He saves our souls by entering into them in the power of His Holy Spirit, and so changing them after His own likeness, that they may be forgiven whatever has been or is amiss in them, washed in His Precious Blood, and made capable of serving and pleasing Him here, and of glorifying Him with His saints hereafter. Thus did the Word of God save us, when He made us His at our Baptism, grafting both us into Him, and Himself into us. But the work of salvation was not then completed; He meant it to go on all our lives through: just as the good ingrafted branch or bud keeps on growing and spreading, absorbing into itself the whole strength of the tree, and prevailing by degrees against all the remains of the old corrupt and sour stock. What that growth is in the branch, the

same is growth in grace all through the heart and life of a Christian. He has received Christ once for all; yet he is called upon and invited to receive Him more and more entirely every day, hour, and moment. The work of Christian renewing, begun in Baptism, is never to cease, as the engrafted bough is still to keep on growing. All good thoughts, words and actions are signs and helps and means in this heavenly growth: more especially that Holy Communion, in which He Whose Name is, the Word of God, has pledged Himself to be continually present, dwelling spiritually more and more in us, and we in Him, by virtue of His word spoken, "This is My Body." We receive the ingrafted word in the highest and most special sense, when in true faith and repentance we receive the Holy Communion: but we receive It also in a very true sense whenever we hearken to the teaching of Jesus Christ, and this seems to be more particularly the meaning of S. James in the text. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." As if he should say, the engrafted word, Jesus Christ, Who is only able to save your souls, comes to you from time to time, very particularly, in His word written, the Bible, and in the instructions which His servants give you out of the Bible. Take care how you receive that word, and those instructions. They are meant to sink into your hearts, like water nourishing the good plant at the roots: if you only hearken, without so receiving the word, it will do you no good at all, but rather increase your condemnation. It must not be taught only, but it must be implanted and grow in

you. The knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ is not like any other lesson, to be learned and said over as a part of scholarship. It is heart-work rather than head-work. When we set about learning it, for instance when we open our Bibles to read a chapter or a verse, or when we sit listening to the lessons in Church, or when the ministers of Christ speak to us in His Name, either in the pulpit or out of it: still it is the teaching of God, and His message: it is the word of God, offering to be received into our souls: it is Jesus Christ, standing and knocking at the door of our hearts. It is not enough that we hear and own His Voice: we must also get up and open the door, and admit Him, that most sacred and beloved Guest, that He may abide in our hearts, and save us to the uttermost. If you believe this: if you believe that in all which the Church teaches you of Christ, Christ Himself is present to teach you, then you will understand what an awful thing it is to be a hearer and learner in that school. It may seem as if there were nothing particular, nothing more than what is very simple and ordinary, to do as you are now doing, to come here into Church on a Sunday, and sit in your places listening to a Sermon. But can it be indeed simple and ordinary, can it be other than extremely awful and overpowering, if He of Whom we speak, the Living and Personal Word is indeed here with the word spoken? And surely He is here, for He hath promised: here are two or three gathered in His Name, be sure then that here is He in the midst of them. Ought we not then all this time to be, as it were kneeling, in our hearts? Should not a sort of silent prayer be breathed continually upwards,

both by those who teach and by you that hear? The eyes of all that were in the synagogue, we read, were fastened upon Christ when He taught the people of Nazareth: so should our thoughts, the eyes of our heart, be all fastened on the same Jesus Christ, when we are receiving the instructions of His holy Church. We must think, not only of what is said, but of Him Who saith it, even our Saviour: not as though He were saying words for us to hear at a distance, but as though His Spirit were going along with every word, to plant and make it fruitful in our hearts and consciences.

Now upon this follows very plainly the other great lesson which the Epistle teaches us to-day, that we are to receive the word with meekness; i. e. with a gentle, quiet, obedient spirit. Any good advice whatever, though it came only from a man like ourselves, nay even if the person giving it were ever so much our inferior, ought to be thus meekly received: how much more, when the Instructor is Jesus Christ, God and Man, our only Saviour and Redeemer, and when, along with the instruction, He offers His good Spirit, to graft it into our souls? It is no great thing to ask, that men should not feel hard and sullen and disrespectful, be affronted, nor out of temper, when the Most High God is teaching them. It is only the clear and quiet waters, which can reflect the image of the heavens: so if we would take impression from Christ's teaching, and copy His divine Image, we must try and pray to receive Him into a clear and quiet soul. We must not be angry, nor wince too tenderly, at having our faults exposed. I suppose it may sometimes happen that persons com-

ing to Church, and hearing a good deal said on particular subjects, on which they feel their own need of warning, may be rather put out, and may spend their time in fancying that they are being vexed and ill-treated, instead of humbling themselves under the mighty word of God. To such the Apostle plainly says, "Receive it all with meekness: consider that it is Christ speaking, by His Scriptures or His minister, and be angry with nothing but your own sins, which only have made His most true sayings at all sharp and irksome to you." Perhaps what we hear or read tells strongly against some favourite doctrine or fancy of ours; perhaps it shews us that from our youth up we have been more or less in error, and it grieves us to part from that error; it has become so like an old friend. Here again, "Receive all meekly," saith the Lord: "do not allow yourself to be put out of temper because you find you have been in error: say always with all meekness from the very bottom of your heart, what S. Paul said when Christ's Light struck him suddenly to the earth, 'd Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?'" Never mind, if some duty newly-learned seem to put you out of the way; if the practice of it seem beforehand as if it be particularly inconvenient and irksome. Endeavour, notwithstanding, to be cheerful in setting about it. Some persons, to a great degree honest in making out their duty and trying to do it, have yet blemished their performance of it by faults of temper, by sullen and wayward behaviour. Something of this sort, perhaps, there was in Moses, when he cried to the Israelites in anger, "e Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you

^d Acts ix. 6.

^e Num. xx. 10.

water out of this rock?" It seems as though he had not fixed his mind steadily on the awful Presence of God, Who was with him to do the miracle, and at Whose special command he was striking the rock. So far, he did not believe the Lord, to sanctify Him, in the eyes of the children of Israel. He spake the word, but not in meekness: and we know how severe his punishment was. He was forbidden to enter into the Land of Promise. What if in some measure it should be the same with us, receiving the word but not in meekness? What if we should lose more or less of our reward, by doing our tasks for God in anger, in discontent, or in some other wilful disorder of mind? What if some of us before now have quite cast away that great blessing of honest, kind, wholesome reproof, because, when it came, we received it with black and sullen looks, stubbornly refusing to amend upon it? Think well on this, my brethren. To have a wise and seasonable reprover, is a great trial, a great talent. We see it very awfully in the case of Judas, how he was warned and reproofed again and again by Him Who saw his heart through and through: how, after every warning, he might have repented, but chose to be black-hearted and sullen; how, in the end, the word which was meant to save proved the utter ruin of his soul. One reproof received with meekness might have made all the difference to that unhappy man. So it may be with any one of us. Sin is very subtle; the devil is very crafty; passion, vanity, self-indulgence, are apt to make us very blind. Left to ourselves, we may be far gone in deadly sin without knowing it. There is no security, but in cherishing a tender and exact

conscience; praying to have ears and hearts always open to His kindly rebukes, Who would have been Judas' Saviour, if Judas would have permitted Him, and will assuredly be ours, if we do not hinder Him. "fAs many as I love," saith our Lord, "I rebuke and chasten." O may we always be zealous to hear all His rebukes meekly, and to repent when we hear them, truly and courageously. It is the only way to save our souls.

f Rev. iii. 19.

SERMON XXXIX.

REVELATION, INCOMPLETE BEFORE, COMPLETED
BY, THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN xvi. 13.

“When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.”

You may remember that in one of our Lord's merciful miracles, the opening of the eyes of a blind man at Bethsaida^a, He did not perform all at once. First, He took hold of his hand, and led him out of the village, and then He put the spittle upon his eyes, and laid His hands upon him, and then, on Christ's asking him if he saw aught, he answered, “I see men, as trees, walking.” Whereupon our Lord laid His hands upon the man's eyes the second time, and made him look up, and he was restored, and saw all men clearly. Now whatever else this miracle may be meant to teach us, at least it shews that our Lord's gracious purposes are not always wrought out at once: that He cures men often by degrees, and they must not be disappointed, if they do not find all right at once, when they are brought to Jesus to be healed. May we not well imagine, that it was a great disappointment to that blind man and his friends, when after the first touch of Christ, instead of being cured,

^a S. Mark viii. 22-25.

he only saw men as trees, walking? If they had at all impatient and unbelieving minds, they must have been tempted to turn away from our Lord, and to treat Him as a deceiver; but they knew better; they knew in their hearts that if they left Him, they had no one else to go to, and so they patiently and faithfully waited, until it pleased our Lord to perfect the cure.

Now, the case of that blind man, after our Lord had once laid His hands upon him, seems rather like the case of the disciples, after they had believed in Christ, but had not yet received the Holy Ghost. They were in an imperfect state. Christ had said many things to them, which they well understood, but He had also said many which were quite beyond their understanding: and He had more things to say, which as yet they were unable to bear. The great truths, belonging to the kingdom of heaven, were as yet dimly and faintly seen by them: even as that blind man, the first time he looked up, saw what appeared to be trees, walking, and knew not at first that they were men. But Christ's second touch healed him entirely, and caused him to see all clearly. So Whit-Sunday, and its great and awful mystery, was intended to perfect the Apostles. This is what He tells them in the Gospel for the day: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. He will supply what is wanting: He will help you to put all together, in such form as may most glorify God, and do most good to the souls of His redeemed. What you now behold dimly and

faintly, you will then see in all clearness. The Holy Spirit will cast His light upon all that has been said and done before, and will shew you all as it really is." S. John takes notice of this often in his Gospel, as concerning *single events* in our Lord's life: as about His entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. " ^b These things understood not His disciples at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him." And in another place, " ^c When He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He spake this unto them: and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." What S. John tells us here concerning *special events and sayings*, our Lord tells us, in the text and elsewhere, concerning the whole Gospel of His kingdom. It was not to be complete, it was not to be understood, until the Holy Ghost should come down and fill the hearts and souls of the disciples; and then it was to be entirely complete; then it was to be thoroughly understood. Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Day, Ascension Day, all the great days of our Lord's Life, needed that one great Day more, to make us understand, and reverence, and love them as we ought. But when that one great Day more came, the work would be complete. The kingdom of heaven from that moment would be regularly and entirely set up in the earth, as a ship, being builded and fitted out, is launched in the sea, and has but to hold on its course. Until the consummation of all by our Lord's coming to judgement and our rising again from the dead, nothing can or

^b S. John xii. 16.

^c Ib. ii. 22.

will happen so great as the things which we remember at Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension-tide, Pentecost. No other season in our year can be compared to those: no fresh mystery can be added to our Creed. It was once for all delivered to the saints: no man, not the best of men, no not an Angel from heaven, may add to it, or take anything from it.

I wish to make a few remarks on each of these two points: first, that the Faith and Kingdom of Christ was imperfect until the Holy Ghost came: secondly, that when He came, it was perfect at once. Both points are clearly contained in those words of our Saviour, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." As much as to say, that until the Spirit came, they would not be guided into all truth. *That* is the first thing. The other is, that when He came, He *would* guide them into all truth. No fresh dispensation, or revelation, would be needed afterwards.

Now as to the first of these, that without the Spirit they could not have all truth, it depends very much upon this, that truth in the Gospel often means Reality, the very thing itself, and not the shadow of it. So Christ is called the True Vine, the True Light, the True Paschal Lamb: that is, the vine and light and lamb, which men see, are so many different figures and shadows of Him. Now the coming of the Spirit, which was the beginning of the kingdom of heaven, brought with it the accomplishment of all these figures and shadows. It brought the new law instead of the old one; and therefore the Holy Spirit is in a particular sense the Spirit of Truth,

since by Him the True Light shines upon God's people, the True Bread feeds their souls, the True Lamb is mystically offered upon their Altars; the True Vine is planted upon earth, and each one of them grafted into it; and so of all the rest. Within the Church, i. e. in Christ, all is true and real; without the Church, i. e. without Christ, all is either false and empty, or at best, shadowy, imperfect, unsatisfactory. Thus was the Comforter the Spirit of Truth to the Apostles, because when He came at Pentecost, He guided them into all truth: into the fulfilment of all the old types and shadows, all the parables which figured the kingdom of heaven. And this could not be till He came, because till then the kingdom of heaven was not to be set up. Until the Holy Ghost came, people could not yet be guided into all truth, because they could not yet be made members of Christ, Who is the Truth.

But when the Comforter came, He would do His work *perfectly*. He would guide the Apostles into *all* truth. The shadows of the old law, the parables of the prophets and of our Lord, would be *all* fulfilled in the kingdom, which He would set up. And the *whole* of the truth, the *whole* of the blessed Gospel, would at once be made known and preached among those to whom He came. Doubt it not, brethren, the *whole Counsel of God* was declared as entirely at Jerusalem to those Christians, who on the first Whitsunday were converted by S. Peter's preaching, as it has ever been declared since by those who knew it most perfectly. It was not yet for the most part written; for the New Testament did not begin, for many years, to be set down in writing: but it was entire and

complete in the memories of the Apostles: as our Lord had promised, "°He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And as they knew it entirely, so they taught it entirely. It was a faith, a Creed, a form of sound words, once for all delivered to them, once for all committed to their trust: and however they might differ in words, the meaning of one of them was just exactly the same as the meaning of another. Thus the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost guided the Apostles into all truth: taught them the whole Counsel of God, the whole course and order of Divine doctrines, which we must believe faithfully, else we cannot be saved. They were guided at once into all truth, i. e. all truth necessary to salvation: for as to the things of this world, or other things not bearing on salvation, the Holy Spirit was never promised to teach us anything about them.

Now, if I have made the two things plain to you, first, that the Gospel was incomplete until the Day of Pentecost, second, that, from and after that great Day, it was finished and complete, I trust you will be able to understand and carry away two or three cautions, very needful to be remembered: very needful always, but especially needful just now.

First, as God's work was not perfect without the coming of the Holy Ghost and the setting up of the Church, so neither can our faith or our religious life be perfect, except we believe and accept the Blessed Spirit and His work, as they are declared in the latter part of the Creed. Faith in Christ crucified will not save a man, so long as he continues at a distance

° S. JOHN xvi. 26.

from Christ; and how can we be brought near to Him, but in the ways which He Himself has ordained, by His Holy Spirit, in His Sacraments? My brethren, I desire to say this with all earnestness, this, I mean, that I am going to say; for surely it is a matter, which nearly touches our salvation, and a matter too, on which we are all but too likely to be tempted. I say, Beware that you never think of separating the Faith of Christ from the Sacraments of Christ. Those Sacraments are not shadows: they belong to the Spirit of Truth and Reality: they are great truths, great realities. But I need not talk to you much of this, for I know that, by the blessing of God, those who are in earnest among us think very much of the blessed Sacraments, both of Baptism and of Holy Communion. God grant that you may always think much of them! And you cannot but do so, if you will take the plain words of the Prayer book and be guided by them. The Prayer book sets the two Sacraments before you as great Truths, great Realities, as the Apostles set the same Sacraments before the first Christians at Jerusalem. Do you receive them as such, obediently and humbly, and very thankfully: looking back always to your Baptism, as the root and ground of your spiritual life, and forward to your next Communion, as the one great thing which you have just now to prepare for. In this way the blessed Sacraments may happily take up your whole time, and each time you receive Christ's Body will be to you a step in a mysterious ladder, like that which Jacob saw, reaching from earth to heaven. The ladder is the Incarnation of God the Son; the steps are the blessed Sacraments; the Lord Himself, on the top of it, is Christ our Saviour calling

us to Him, to be made for ever partakers through Him of a Divine nature and glory. In a word, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, is come to guide the Apostles into all truth: therefore we are not to doubt that the Sacraments which they left in the Church are Truths and Realities, not mere signs and shadows. God grant, we may all of us know it more and more, by our own happy experience!

But again: seeing our Lord says plainly, that the Spirit would guide the Apostles into *all* truth; that from and after the Day of Pentecost the Gospel was finished and complete; we are none of us to be looking after new things in the Church of God; but always to keep to the old commandment, the word which we have heard from the beginning. In other matters, in things of this world, in arts and trades, in business and politics, in the knowledge of things natural, discoveries are continually made; and from time to time, something is found out, which changes the whole course of men's practice and belief. Not so with the things of God, the truths and doings necessary for man's salvation. They have been once for all settled by the Spirit of God; and what the things are which are so settled, can only be declared with authority by the Church Universal out of Holy Scripture: and all those things, God be thanked, are sufficiently declared in our Creeds, as explained in the Prayer book. Therefore I say, Be very jealous of any teaching, which would make it *necessary* for you to believe more than is contained in the articles of the Christian Faith, as they are set forth in the three Creeds, in the catechism, and in the Offices of the Prayer book. I say, which would make it *necessary* to believe more, for

I would not deny, that there may be useful and edifying truths, not plainly there contained: but I say, that, by God's mercy, our Prayer Book contains enough to save each of our souls, if we will cordially accept and *practise* it. I advise you all to make up your minds to this. Stand fast in it, with a holy and loving stubbornness. Keep always to the old paths, where is the good way. Men are tempted in all directions in the hope of finding rest, but it is written, “^d Ask for the old paths, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” We are tempted all ways, but, by God's mercy, we are at rest already, if we would believe it and do accordingly. Do you not see how earnestly the Scripture warns us, “^e Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it?” Why even the Holy Guide, the Very Spirit of Truth, does not, we are told, speak of Himself. That is, as He proceeds from the Father and the Son, so He in an unspeakable way hears from the Father and the Son, and conveys the Truth to us. And this our Lord mentions here, partly perhaps to put us on our guard, that we may not set up to be independent and judge for ourselves, but may thankfully accept, and religiously hold, what the Holy Church throughout all the world has undoubtedly held; and, in what she has left doubtful, submit ourselves to the judgement of the particular Church, whereof God's mercy hath made us members. Do this, my brethren, to the very best of your power and judgement, and He will surely guide you. But you must trust His love, and you must work with Him and under Him: and you must not depend on man.

^d Jer. vi. 16.^e Deut. iv. 2.

He will guide you, but He will take His own time. He will guide you into all truth, but not completely, until you come to the next world. In the meantime, take the guide which Almighty God has given you : and that guide, to those who can use it *among us*, is the Church, with its ministry and its Prayer Book. If you put by this, and pretend to guide yourself, there is great danger to your humility, even where you happen to be right : and if you are wrong, (O fearful thought !) you will have to bear the whole burthen.

. Let us all pray to God, that in these dangerous days He would keep us from being “^fhigh-minded” and having “proud looks,” that we may not exercise ourselves “in great matters which are too high for us.”

^f Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2.

SERMON XL.

TRUTHFULNESS.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN xvi. 7.

“ I tell you the truth.”

As those who had been with Jesus were known from the beginning by their loving, pastoral care for one another—for it was a saying, “Behold, how these Christians love one another;” so were they also known by their exact care to be true and just in all things. As often as the question was asked, “Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill?” part of the answer always would be, “^a He that speaketh the truth from his heart.” Truth, as well as love, is a most necessary part of the heavenly fragrance or “sweet savour of Christ,” the ointment poured out, whereby those who have been with Him may be known.

One of His very Names, taught us by Himself, is “the Truth.” “^b I am the Way the Truth and the Life.” For He is “^c full of grace and truth:” “^d Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ:” “^e They that worship the Father, must worship Him in spirit, and in

^a Ps. xv. 2. ^b S. John xiv. 6. ^c Ib. i. 14.

^d Ib. 17.

^e Ib. iv. 24.

truth :” i. e. in the Holy Spirit and in Jesus Christ. “^fThe Truth,” that is, Christ, “shall make you free.” “^gThy Word,” the Eternal Word, Only-begotten and beloved Son, “is Truth.” He is the Truth that dwelleth in us, and abideth with us for ever.

Why has our Lord and Saviour taught us to know Him especially by this name, “The Truth ?” There seem to be two very deep and holy reasons for it, pointed out to us in Holy Scripture. First, He is the Truth, because He is the very real Substance, whereof all other good things and persons are mere shadows. E. g. He is “^h the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world :” i. e. this light which we see in the sky, which guides us on our way here on earth, is a type and token of Him, every where around us, by His Holy Spirit within us, shewing us our path to heaven ; warming, cheering, quickening us to do God’s will. And He is “ⁱ the true Bread from Heaven,” of which the manna in the wilderness was just a shadow : His Body is the heavenly Food, provided to sustain us on our way to the heavenly world, as our fathers on their road to Canaan were sustained by that manna in the wilderness. And He is “^k the true Vine,” from Whom, smitten and pierced upon the Cross, the holy Blood flows, as wine from the pressed and bruised clusters, to be the very cleansing, life, health and gladness of our souls. And He is the true, the very Paschal Lamb, offered to take away our sins, as that lamb in Egypt to save the Israelites from the destroying Angel : the true Melchisedek, the true David, pattern of all who are

^f S. John viii. 32.

^g Ib. xvii. 17.

^h Ib. i. 9.

ⁱ Ib. vi. 32.

^k Ib. xv. 1.

or ever have been priests and kings over God's people. These are but a few among very many instances, in which our Lord Jesus Christ vouchsafes to be that perfect Truth, of which the best and holiest and greatest persons on earth, and the most blessed and effectual of God's gifts to those whom He has chosen, are ordained to be shadows and patterns: faint indeed and in themselves very unworthy, yet truly and really such.

But our Lord is also the Truth in another sense, in that He always and in every respect speaks and declares the Truth; He is God and cannot lie: He can neither deceive nor be deceived. "I tell you the truth," He says to His disciples, when He was explaining to them, how it was good that even He should depart out of sight and the Comforter come to them in His place. It was a hard thing for them to believe, but they must believe it, for He told them Who is the Truth, He Who in this very discourse had told them, that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. "I tell you the truth." How often do we hear that profession made by all sorts of persons on all sorts of occasions: most readily, alas! when they most mean to deceive. But here He utters it, on Whom we can entirely depend, in such sort as we never might depend on any other of the children of men.

Christ is the Truth; He speaks the Truth; and His Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. This also He told His disciples at the same time, "When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all Truth." The Holy Ghost the Comforter is the Spirit of Truth, in that His coming and entering into the hearts of men and joining them to Jesus Christ, was the setting

up of the kingdom of heaven, in which all the shadows of the old times were to be fulfilled and turned into real substances. The Spirit of Christ changed the Passover into Holy Communion: the sabbath into the Lord's day; the bloody sacrifices of the old law into the Church's perpetual Sacrifice, which is the continual Memorial of Christ's death, by the offering of His Body and Blood both in earth and heaven. The same Spirit declared to us the One true Priest, Jesus Christ, taking the place of those many priests, the sons of Aaron; and so in all other things He was and is to His Church, the Spirit of Truth, in every thing substituting the reality in place of the shadow, the thing itself in place of the type and figure.

And I need hardly say that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth in that other sense also, that being the Most High and Holy God, He cannot deceive, neither can He be Himself deceived. All His words therefore are true and His works faithful. The Bible is all true, from beginning to end, because it is written by His inspiration. He held, as it were, the pen of the holy Apostles and Prophets. And the Church, the whole Church from the beginning, is true in what it has affirmed and does affirm with one consent, because the same Holy Spirit abides in it, and guides it, according to Christ's promise, into all truth.

If then a man is in Christ and is led by the Spirit of Christ, he too is true, real, earnest. His religion is a substance, not a shadow. It abides, it does not pass away. It is something which acts and works, and produces an effect, not something which passes away in mere sound and sparkle. It makes a differ-

ence, a great difference, in the man and his doings, not in some of his doings only, but in all of them : the more completely so, in such measure as the man is a more consistent and earnest Christian. It is not saying, "Lord, Lord," but it is doing the Father's will. My brethren, there is not one of you who would think for one moment of doubting or denying this : but how many of you have seriously considered it, and turned their minds inwards, to what their own conscience, if fairly consulted, would tell them about themselves ? How many of you lay down last night, and will lie down again to-night, taking your chance, as it were, how it might be with you, if God were to require your soul before morning : and what if it had gone wrong with you, as it has done with so many before you ? What if you had waked in the other world, and found yourself unexpectedly lost ? How would you then wish that you had looked really and earnestly at your own condition towards God, and had so prayed and striven as to die with a reasonable hope, that you yourself were really in Christ, not only with your lips and fancies, but in your heart and life ; that you had been "doing the truth," not professing it only !

And you may depend upon it, whoever you are, that one leading wish of your heart in that day will be, O that I had always *spoken* the truth. For this again is one of the most essential signs of your being a true man, true indeed to your God and Saviour, viz. that nothing besides the truth should ever willingly come out of your mouth. S. Paul mentions it¹ as the very first mark and test of your being renewed

¹ Eph. iv. 23-25.

in the spirit of your mind, and having put on the new man after the likeness of Jesus Christ, that you should put away lying and speak truth with your neighbour, that is, with every one. It must be so, brethren, indeed it must be so, if men and Angels are to take note of you as having really been with Jesus. "No lie is of the Truth;" no liar, continuing such, has any part in Jesus Christ. Do then, I earnestly beg it of you, do examine yourselves on this point: are you in the regular and constant habit of speaking the truth from your heart? You cannot say it is a hard question to understand, though for many causes it may be a hard one to answer. You cannot pretend that you do not know what is meant, when you are required, as in your Maker's sight, to ask yourself, Do I make a point of never telling a lie? Alas! too certainly may we know concerning very many Christians, that the only proper answer for them to make to such a question would be, to confess that to their lips the lie comes at least as readily as the truth; that in fact they are used to say, not what really *is*, but what they think will give others most pleasure, and cause least inconvenience and trouble. Now then reflect, each one of you, on what you do, when for any reason whatever you tell any manner of lie. Suppose you have done wrong and are tempted to deny it for the sake of avoiding punishment: or as often happens, to save yourself the annoyance of vexing some friend, and causing him to look angry. You tell the lie and it all passes off: you escape for the time unpunished; your friend is well pleased: very likely the whole thing passes from your memory altogether. But is there then an end of it? Oh no!

It may sleep in silence ever so long, but it will awake against you bye and bye : sooner or later you will be sure to hear of it again. This lie of yours, that you uttered quite as a matter of course, with no thought that any man, being in your place, would have said anything else ; this lie of yours is written down in the Almighty Lord's unerring register. It will confront you at the last. You will be asked, How came you to tell it? And how will you answer then? You will be forced, then, to confess the whole : you will have to say, " O God, I knew what was coming : I knew that there is the greatest encouragement to speak the truth always in Thy Presence : I knew that it would all be set down in Thy book ; but I could not bear such an one to look offended with me though but for a quarter of an hour." Alas! what sort of an excuse will this be? How will the Judge bear it? And if such lying have grown into a habit (as in too many cases it has done,) what must needs be the portion of those who have accustomed themselves to it?

Or it may be, your telling the exact truth, in such and such an instance, would tend to your earthly loss. E. g. you are buying or selling, and the opportunity arises of profiting, by a word or hint, carefully put in, to raise or sink the price of the property : only that word or hint you know to be false. This is a great temptation and a frequent one : so mischievous does it prove and so unavoidable that it came of old to be a proverb ^m, " As a nail sticketh fast in the joinings of a door, so sin between buying and selling." Now we know how great a portion of very many men's life and conduct is taken up with buying and selling.

^m Eccl. xxvii. 2.

If you have not watched against this temptation, if you have not prayed God earnestly to make you true and just in all your dealings, all this great part of your life will be found, when it is looked into, full of lies, full of sin. And how will you be able to bear it?

I have mentioned only two sorts of lies, to which people are tempted continually, lies told for fear of affronting others, and lies told in bargains and in business, for credit and profit's sake. But there are many many other occasions of falling into that grievous sin. Only think for a moment how strong the inclination is, when you are relating any thing, to put in words for your own credit, or for the amusement of the hearers, or for some purpose which you have at heart, which words are not at all true. How many lies do people utter, when they are in a passion, or in a fretful complaining way. So that on the whole each man's own experience, if he would but attend to it, would tell him the same with that melancholy verse in the psalmⁿ, "As soon as men are born, they go astray and speak lies." The lying spirit, the Evil one who teaches us to lie, is about our path every where: lurking, where we least expect it: he is in the mouths of children denying their childish faults, of poor persons giving false accounts of their own poverty and want, of rich persons to excuse themselves from giving, of lazy and idle persons to save themselves trouble, of sinners, aye even on their sick beds, even when they are at the point to die, that they may avoid confessing their sins. They have done nothing particular, they say; they

ⁿ Ps. lviii. 3.

have not broken any of the great commandments : and yet they have been thieves, drunkards, fornicators, disobedient to parents, altogether ungodly for some of the best years of their life. They do not consider that in making so light of their sins they are but deceiving themselves, and those who look after them : and too often, I fear, it ends in their going out of the world with a lie in their mouth.

And yet all our lives long we have been calling ourselves by the Name of Him Who is the Truth, Who came into the world that He might bear witness unto the Truth, and Who, when He left the world in regard of His visible bodily Presence, sent down the Spirit of Truth to be in His place, to guide us into all Truth. We have been from our childhood learning in His school. How is it that we have so imperfectly learned that plain and simple lesson, to speak the truth ? If the devil has been close at hand, the Spirit of Christ has been still nearer : for the devil indeed is every where around us in the world, but the Holy Spirit is within us. "Greater" therefore, infinitely greater, "is He that is in us than he that is in the world." Infinitely greater and infinitely nearer is the Spirit of Truth, given to each Christian in Baptism, than the spirit of error who is at the same time cast out of him. So that you are without excuse, as many as have used yourselves to make any manner of lie. You had but to apply yourselves by prayer to the Truth Himself Who was abiding in you : you had but to say to Him, "Lord, help me to speak the truth," and the Evil spirit would have gone away ashamed. Nor is it now too late : even though you have gone on for ever so many years in the habit of lying. The cure though

hard, is certain, if you take the right way. Pray to Him Who came to save liars as well as all other sinners: ask Him to give you the good Spirit, Who can teach you truth as well as all other graces. Draw nigh unto Him, and He will draw nigh unto you. Only take care to be earnest in seeking Him: earnest in trying to love and speak the truth for His sake. The next time you are tempted to say a false word, remember that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life: and that you must, indeed you must, keep the *Truth*, else you cannot be in the *Way*, nor come to the *Life*.

SERMON XLI.

THE FEAR OF GOD, THE BRIDLE FOR THE TONGUE.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JAMES i. 26.

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.”

OUR holy mother, the Church, is very careful to appoint these plain direct practical warnings to be read at this Easter season especially. Why? Because this is the season of faith, and it is of such exceeding consequence to us to remember that “faith without works is dead.” We are in course of remembering and acknowledging the mighty and merciful works of God, the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost, from the Death and Passion of our Saviour Christ, to His glorious Ascension, and the Comforter’s descent on the Apostles. There is, of course, no small danger of our admiring it all and so letting it pass, and going on our way, our own way, our own selfish, worldly, or lustful way, just as if no such great things had been done for us. Therefore, as our Lord said to His disciples, just when He had been washing their feet, “^a If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them:” so the Church says to us every year, at the

^a S. John xiii. 17.

time when perhaps we have felt most inclined to be hearers of the word,—at the time of Easter. “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

This, in general, in regard of all parts of our practice: but the Apostle, and after him the Church, goes on to warn us about one sort of error especially. “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue.” By which we understand that there is some peculiar danger for persons seeming to be religious, of not bridling their tongue. He does not say, If he seem to be religious, and live in filthy lust or uncleanness; if he seem to be religious, and disobey his parents; if he seem to be religious, and give himself up to covetousness; but, “If he seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue.” Now, why is the tongue so particularly mentioned? Partly, no doubt, from the extreme difference which it must make to a man’s character at all times and under all circumstances; which caused S. James to say in another place, “^aIf any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” There again, you see, he speaks of bridling, as of something needed for the tongue especially; and goes on to say that if our words be well kept in order, the whole man will go right: “^bBehold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body:” “even so the tongue is a little member,” but if any man offend not in it, he is able also to bridle the whole body. Our Lord Himself said the same: “^cBy thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy

^a S. James iii. 2.

^b Ib. 3.

^c S. Matt. xii. 37.

words thou shalt be condemned." For as all goes right if the words be right, so if the words be habitually wrong, there is nothing too bad to be expected. A wicked tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, no man can tame it, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therefore it is necessary at all times to caution Christians against abuse of the tongue. But why at Easter time especially? Because, when persons have been more or less moved, as most of us are apt to be at least for a time moved, by the great things which Easter brings before us; especially if they have taken part in the Easter Sacraments with anything like good feeling at the time; there is danger, as the feeling goes off, of their becoming careless, trusting, more or less, to the good feeling, which they are sure was real while it lasted. And one of the surest signs of such carelessness will be their not setting a guard upon their tongue, not keeping the door of their lips. They will lose themselves in bad and idle talk, the more readily perhaps, because they were so ready and so full in good and devout talk, while the warm feeling lasted. Therefore, you see, the Holy Spirit of Wisdom, He Who knows what is in man, speaks of him who, seeming to be religious, bridleth not his tongue, as of one who "deceiveth his own heart." He is not perhaps trying to deceive others; in *that* sense he may not be a hypocrite; but he is sadly, woefully deceiving himself. Yes, depend upon it, brethren, no seeming shew of repentance and amendment, no trust in the Cross, no affectionate ways of speaking and thinking of *our Lord*, no lowly ways of speaking, or even thinking, of *ourselves*, no exactness in prayer and religious

services, no fervency in partaking of them, can keep our religion from being null and void, if we permit our tongues to go on unbridled. Such an one does but deceive his own heart: he will find bye and bye, God grant it may not be too late,—that he has been trusting in himself and not in his Saviour, and therefore that his trust is a mere broken reed, going into his hand and piercing him when he leans on it. Neither our devout breathings at holy times such as this, nor our bursts of remorse and sorrow on our sick-beds, nor any partial amendment in our ways, can be depended on, unless our tongues be kept in order: unless we are really in a way to break ourselves of all wilful sinning in our words.

To say nothing now of other ill consequences: only think, my brethren, of this sad effect of evil words: a very sad, and a very certain effect: that so far as we permit ourselves to use them, so far they make void all the service we pay to Almighty God: our prayers, our Sacraments, our reading of Holy Scripture and other good books; our Creeds, our confessions, our hearing of sermons, our morning and evening devotions, our Church-going: all, yes, all these things, and whatever else men do in the way of religious service, is in a manner forfeited and done away with by the indulgence of an evil tongue. How do we know this? God Himself has told us so. He has told us so in the words of S. James, the last words of my text: “that man’s religion is vain.” His “religion” means his service and worship which he pays to Almighty God: and its being “vain” means that it is made altogether empty and useless by his not bridling his tongue. Now only just consider, my

brethren, what this comes to. You seem to yourself to be religious, because you say your prayers regularly, you go to Church, you attend Holy Communion: and it is true indeed that all these things are necessary acts of true religion: they are, for Christ's sake, most precious in God's sight, most profitable to your own soul, if you offer them rightly: but they are all spoiled, you cannot offer them rightly, except you keep your words in order. You confess your sins, e.g. regularly, in the beginning of morning and evening service, and "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins:" but not, if we are hasty to judge others: not if these same tongues of ours, the moment we come out of Church, are employed in hard and sharp speeches concerning our brethren: not if we break out into angry words when our own faults are mentioned, but have no scruple in saying the worst of our neighbour's faults, and putting the most unkind interpretation upon what he does. You say your prayers regularly, in Church and at home, and sometimes, perhaps, you feel to yourself quite in earnest, deeply moved, as you say them: but what if, bye and bye, when you are provoked and eager, you are just as ready to abuse His awful Name, by cursing and swearing, or by light scornful discourse about holy things. Surely you have reason to fear that your prayers too are in vain. You are well pleased to take your part in holy Psalms and hymns: but what good will they do you, if at other times you are equally ready, just as well pleased, to utter or to sing words of profane mirth, or otherwise unbecoming a Christian, or to applaud them when uttered by others? You say your Creed,

as you think, with all your heart, and you do well, for it is the very truth for the salvation of your souls: but how does it suit with your utterance, how does it sound from your lips, if at other times, and in your ordinary talk, you are used to speak truth or falsehood just as is convenient? O my brethren, receive the saying, and let it sink deep in your hearts,—“if any man seem to be religious,” because he says the true Creed morning and evening at home and joins with the congregation in saying it in Church on Sundays, and yet keepeth not his tongue in order, so that it shall have no custom of speaking untruths: “that man’s religion is vain.” I wish to say this with all possible earnestness, because I fear, I fear for various reasons, that this evil custom of telling a lie, or something as near a lie as one dares, is but too common even among those who desire not only to seem, but to be, religious. Why is it that faults are so seldom owned? that the truth is so very hard to find out? and yet all Christians are sworn to tell it? O beware, lest in the end you find that by such false ways you have been trifling away the virtue of that holy Faith, which you profess to God every day, and by which alone you hope to be saved.

I need not say how especially fearful it is, if those lips and that tongue, which have tasted Christ in His Sacrament of Holy Communion, should afterwards be found full of cursing and bitterness, of unclean, profane, false or corrupting words: those even, who do not fear the rest, very often fear this, and shrink from it. We all know for certain, that the Holy Sacrament is vain, and worse than vain, to him who

bridleth not his tongue, in purpose and intention at least, praying and striving against such evil words.

And if sins of the tongue thus render our divine services void in regard of our own souls, even more plainly is it so in regard of the souls of others. Alas! I would it were not so plain as it is, that the very names of God and of Christ, of His Church and Sacraments, are blasphemed every where among those who know no better, on account of the loose, or wild, or false, or unkind, or angry words, which persons seeming to be religious allow to proceed out of their mouth, not once nor twice, but as often as temptation occurs.

But it is worse than we know of or feel. You may judge of it a little, my brethren, by reflecting how it would seem to you, were any person on his death-bed to break out in violent words, of bitter scorn or hatred of another, or of violent anger and malice, or of wild profane blasphemy, or of foul uncleanness, or of malicious and scandalous falsehood. Such things do sometimes happen; for instance, when people, through the violence of their sickness, are beside themselves, and know not what they say: and then it is our comfort, that they are beside themselves: but if, being in their right senses, they should break out in the same way, we all feel how sad it would be. We know what we should then think of the prayers, and confessions, and communions, and holy readings, which at other times, it might be, the same sick person was seeming to take comfort in: we should fear, that somehow or another that man's religion, even on his death-bed, was vain.

Well: but is it not just the same with any of ourselves, who not being sick, give way knowingly to these sins of the tongue? Sickness, and being on one's death-bed, are but a kind of outward accidents, they do not change the nature of things. In one sense, we are all on our death-beds; the sentence of death is passed on all of us, and we cannot possibly say how soon it shall be executed. Why then are we not afraid and shocked at the evil words which too often arise to our lips, as we should be afraid and shocked at them, if we knew that we were just going to die, and if our friends were waiting round the bed to witness our last breath? If it would be too fearful, then, to speak profanely or unkindly, how is it not too fearful now? For if we rightly take it, we are always at the point of death.

Well now, my brethren, can we deny any part of what has been now said? It is most plain, that men's seeming religion is all nothing, if they go on wilfully in these sins of the tongue: they do but deceive their own hearts in seeming to themselves to be religious. Is it not also but too plain that most of us have more or less of this kind of reason for suspecting our own religion? It is a sore evil, and it meets us every where. But thanks be to God, the remedy is at hand also. It is prescribed by the Holy Spirit in one word, where He speaks of bridling our tongues. The tongue of man is restless and unquiet as a young horse not well broken in: an unmanageable member, not to be tamed by man: as it is written, “^dThe tongue can no man tame; it

^d S. James iii. 8.

is an unruly evil." Well then, some one may say, "if it is altogether unruly and unmanageable, what is the use of trying to manage it? we may as well give the matter up." Nay, but observe well what is said by S. James: not that no being at all can tame the tongue, but that "none among *men*" no *human* being, can tame it. You cannot subdue the wild beast, and put on the bridle, by yourself, but you may do so by the help of Him, Who brought the wild beasts to Adam and Noah, Who shut the lions' mouths, that they should not hurt Daniel. He has put the bridle into your hand, and has given you power to use it, if you will. What is the bridle? The holy fear of God: which He gave us, if we would but have kept it, with His own Blessed Spirit, in Baptism and in Confirmation. In all your religious services, my brethren, in your devotions at home and in Church, and in your preparation for Holy Communion, ask of God this favour, that He would put His fear in your hearts, to guide and restrain your tongues. You know the use of a bridle with an unruly horse: he is neither to be altogether let loose, to run away at his will, nor yet to be always held in as tightly as possible: so should the fear of God be to these unruly tongues of ours: they should never be left to themselves, yet they must have a certain degree of liberty: the bridle must be kept steadily in hand, with no sudden changes, but with gentleness and firmness, more or less of each, as the time may require. Now this will not make us cold and stiff in our talk, but it will leave us free to speak out strongly and boldly when we ought, while at the same time it will keep us upright: the fear

of God will take away all slavish and cowardly fear of man, therefore we shall speak boldly as we ought to speak: but it will make us conscientious and wary, that we sin not in word: as, having a firm yet free hold of the bridle enables a man to go on fast, yet avoid stumbling-blocks. Fear God, fear Him in earnest, fear Him at home and abroad, in work and in play, and you will be preserved, without yourself knowing how, from wilfully offending in your talk, in respect either of truth, of kindness, or of reverence. You will neither tell lies, nor call names, nor talk unkindly, nor speak as the scorners do, nor say words, at which a chaste and religious person will stop his ears. But speaking always the truth in love, your tongue even here on earth, even (if it should so fall out) amid the filthy conversation of the wicked, will be trained and put in tune for heaven: where, as we know, the tongues of the redeemed will for ever be employed in glorifying Him Who made them: as the Psalmist prophesies: “^eAwake up, my glory:” “^fI will sing and give praise with the best member that I have.”

^e Ps. lvii. 9.

^f Ib. cviii. 1.

SERMON XLII.

FAITH: AND THE SIGNS FOLLOWING.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. MARK xvi. 16.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.”

WHEN a great and good father is about to leave his children for any length of time, they make very much of his parting words: and he in his wisdom and goodness considers what he may say to them, which being remembered may do them most good. So did Jacob, so did Moses, so did Joshua, so did David, when they were on the point of departing out of this world: they had each of them their last words to say to their families or their people; which last words, of course, they who loved and revered them could never forget.

Much more did our Lord, the true Father and King of us all, the true Jacob, Moses, Joshua and David; much more did He, on withdrawing Himself out of our sight, entrust with His loving children and subjects those portions of His Will, which it most concerned His Church to remember. The whole indeed of His Great Forty Days was employed in preparing for His Ascension: but most especially the morning itself of Ascension-Day; when our Lord

paid His Apostles a farewell visit, (so we may call it,) particulars whereof are to be found in three several portions of Holy Scripture. It is related once in S. Mark's Gospel, once in S. Luke's, and once in the Acts of the Apostles. And in these three accounts so many particulars are given, as may well take us up during these four days, in which we are to prepare for the keeping of the great Day of Ascension, as the Apostles had then to prepare for the Ascension itself. To-day I take the account in S. Mark, of which you heard something in the catechising.

The Apostles had returned to Jerusalem from that solemn meeting on the mountain in Galilee, in which Christ had told them of the end of His humiliation, and the setting up of His Almighty kingdom : in which He had proclaimed His law of Baptism, and His promise to be with them always, on their teaching men to keep His commandments. He had since shewn Himself to S. James in particular : and now He shews Himself to all the eleven, who were assembled on the fortieth day after He rose from the dead, in Jerusalem ; most likely in the same upper room, where they had been together with Him, six Thursdays before, when He first consecrated and gave them the Holy Communion ; and in which, ten days after, the Holy Spirit descended upon them. There they were, sitting at meat : for it was His Will, as on other occasions, so now, to depart from them, as it were, at a feast. So it was when at the marriage in Cana He separated Himself from His Mother and His brethren, to set out regularly on the work of His ministry : so when for a little while they were not to see Him, because of His Passion. Even so now

again, when He was to go out of their sight, as far as relates to this world, for ever, He makes a feast for them on bidding them farewell: and partakes of it, as we read in S. Luke: “^a while they yet believed not for the joy and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? and they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and of an honey-comb, and He took it, and did eat before them:” thus both shewing the reality of His Presence, and giving them the same token of love as men give to one another, when they take leave of their friends, as I said, with a farewell feast.

At the same time He put them in mind of their past unbelief, and reproved them for it: “^b He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.” Their hardness of heart probably means their dulness: they had been so inconsiderate, so slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken: not from any want of love to our Saviour, but because it all seemed so strange to them, and as the saying is, “too good to be true.” Our Lord reminds them that so it had been on the very evening of the Resurrection: they had refused then to believe S. Mary Magdalene, the two disciples at Emmaus, and others who had seen Him after He was risen. For this He now reproves them, and requires of them for the time to come a sounder faith: they were to believe rightly themselves, and to teach others the same: they were not to give way to wavering, unbelieving fancies. Our Lord accordingly goes on to warn them, by repeating the great commission, given

^a S. Luke xxiv. 41, 43.

^b S. Mark xvi. 14.

to them before in Galilee^c: only as He is speaking of belief, He says more of *that*, and less of keeping the commandments. Then He had said, Teach them “to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always.” Now He says, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Salvation, you see, is promised to two things, Faith and Baptism. What Faith? Faith in the Gospel: that Gospel which the form of Baptism itself teaches: the Gospel of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, not every thing which calls itself the Gospel, but that very Gospel, neither more nor less, which the Apostles were commanded to preach to every creature: that Gospel, concerning which S. Paul said, “^d Though we or an Angel from heaven preach any other Gospel to you than that which we *have* preached unto you, let him be accursed.” In this we must believe, i. e. *we* and all Christians must turn our minds towards it, we must order our doings with a view to it, though it be all of things out of sight. Otherwise there is but one event which can happen to us, “he that believeth not shall be damned.” “This Faith except every man do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” Such is the plain and sure word of God plainly declared by His whole Church. *What* the Apostles preach, *that*, all to whom they preach, are bound to believe, and to go on believing, on pain of losing their souls for ever.

The message being so awful and weighty, the Lord Who sends it gives ample token of its unchangeable truth and absolute certainty, leaving the unbeliever

^c S. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

^d Gal. i. 8.

without excuse. “^e These signs shall follow them that believe. In My Name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.” Here it is so plain, that they who cannot at all read may understand it, how our Lord, when about to bid farewell to His Apostles, commanded all men to believe their Gospel, with the promise of miracles to confirm their faith. As if He had said, “Go, carry such and such a message to such a man: if he hear you and believe in earnest, it will be his salvation: if not, it will be his ruin: and that he may have no good excuse for his unbelief, go on and work these wonders to convince him.” Not that any promise is here given, that every single person even in the Apostles’ time should have mighty works wrought in his own sight, whereby to convince him that Jesus is the Christ: but that miracles would go on to be wrought in the Church as our Lord Himself had wrought them, so as that all, not being wilful unbelievers, might come sufficiently to know of them, and to reverence the Gospel, in behalf of which they were wrought. This is the command, and this the promise, as given to the Apostles themselves. How do they apply to us, who live so long after the Apostles? It is not very hard to see.

To us, as to the whole world, the holy Gospel has been preached. We profess to have believed in it from our very young days indeed. But have we really and earnestly believed? Remember, as I have said over and over, we do not really believe a thing,

^e S. Mark xvi. 17. 18.

unless we frequently turn our minds towards it. We are not believers, within the promise of salvation, unless we look often towards the things in which we believe. They are out of sight, yet nevertheless God has put in our power to call them up, as it were, in our mind's eye, and to regard them as entirely real : as much so as if we really saw them. So a man thinks of his wife and children, his home and friends, when he is far away from them. He thinks of them many times a day, and that, as earnestly as if he could actually behold them. Why? Because he loves his wife and family and home : and Christians may depend upon it, that if the love be sincere, which they feel towards their heavenly home, the family of their God, and the Spouse Himself of their souls, Jesus Christ, these great objects will be very often present to their imaginations : they will think the time lost, that is not spent in thoughts and wishes and doings, such as may help them in that good way. They will not account it enough to be convinced and know that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God has really died for them and risen again : they will not be well pleased with themselves, unless they have come in some tolerable measure to "walk before" God and be "perfect : " to do things and refrain from doing them, with an eye to the great eternal invisible world. For example : the Gospel of our Lord which is preached in all the world has come unto you also of this place, who are engaged, most of you, in the work of tilling the ground : and it has told you quite plainly what those may expect from God hereafter, who have allowed themselves here to take His Name in vain. Yet how common, how sadly frequent is it, to hear in

our quiet lanes and fields, when ploughing or other work, with cattle especially, is going on, how common is it then to hear the most brutal and profane language. What will come of this, do you think? Will the Lord hold such men guiltless, will He count them true believers, who, although they may have said their prayers in the morning and mean to say them again at night, yet know no better than to fill up the working hours of the day with cursing and blasphemy? They have been baptized, it is true, and in some sense, perhaps, they believe, some few moments of their time: but the promise is to those who believe steadily; too steadily to allow of their going on in any known sinful habit. This is one instance out of many, which may help us to understand what *kind* of faith, what kind of believing, it must be, to do our souls real good.

In the next place, as miracles were the sign appointed, by which men in that time might know the Apostles' preaching to be true, so they have been in all times, so they are yet in our time. Well, but you will say, how can that be? I am sure I never saw a miracle. Wait a moment, and I will try to shew you. It is true, you never saw a miracle, such as Holy Scripture tells us of, and the history of the early Church. You never saw a Prophet or Apostle open the eyes of the blind, cleanse the lepers, or raise the dead. But neither did the greater number of persons in the days of the Apostles see such things with their own eyes. They were content to hear of them and believe them upon the testimony of those whom they could trust. As were those believers in the first times, who had no chance to see a miracle

themselves, but took it on the witness of persons whom they were bound to believe, such it may be, or nearly such, are the whole multitude of the Christian people now in these later times. The miracles follow them, i. e. are present to them in every place, not as being actually wrought in their sight, but as being brought nigh to them by the true and certain witness of God Himself in His Holy Word, i. e. by the Bible, known to be His Word by the universal agreement of all Christians in all times. The Bible put into our hands by the Church, and understood as the Church understands it, is the Gospel preached by the Apostles: and the miracles of the Bible are the signs following them that believe, known wherever the Bible and the Church are, and confirming to all thoughtful persons the word of God in the mouth of His saints. And thus, whether or no such miracles have been vouchsafed in our own or any other of the later times, still the parting promise of our Lord is fulfilled: the Lord confirms the word with sufficient signs, whenever He calls on men to believe it.

But—mind what I am going to say: there is another thought, which should never be far from our minds, when we read in Scripture of miracles as a necessary part of God's work in the Church. That is, that these miracles have a spiritual and inward meaning, in respect of which, they are not only brought home to us by the Scriptures, but are continually, really, actually coming to pass in all generations of Christians. What is that spiritual meaning? The old fathers of the Church tell us. Hear the words of a good and great Bishop, S. Gregory, the first who sent the Gospel to our fathers here in England, when

they were heathens. He says in a sermon, "You do not see these outward miracles, my brethren : do you therefore fail to believe ? Nay, these were necessary in the beginning of the Church, like water at the first planting of a tree : but the gardener leaves off watering when the tree has well taken root. As S. Paul notes, they are a sign not to believers but to unbelievers." So far S. Gregory is speaking of the outward miracles. "But now," he goes on, "we have something deeper to remark concerning these signs and wonders. For the Holy Church doeth every day in the spirit the same as by the Apostles she then did in the body. Do not her priests cast out devils when they lay hands on believers, and by their blessing prevent the evil spirits from abiding in their hearts ? Do not the faithful speak with new tongues, when they leave off talking on profane and worldly matters, and taking their part in the holiest services, praise their Creator to the very best of their power ? And when by their good advice they expel mischief from other men's hearts, they take up and cast away serpents. When they hear words of pestilent temptation, but in no way consent unto them in act, what they drink is deadly, but it shall not hurt them. When they by help and good example encourage their neighbours who are weakly in well-doing, this is laying hands on the sick for their healing. And these miracles are all the greater for being spiritual ; in that the souls not the bodies of men are raised up by them. Now these inward and spiritual miracles, you, my dearest brethren, if you be willing, may and do perform by the holy inspiration of your God."

Such are the sayings of the blessed S. Gregory on

this part of our Lord's Farewell to His Church: and what they come to is nearly this: that as faith is needful to salvation, so these works of spiritual mercy, —good wrought by one Christian to the souls of other Christians—are needful as signs of faith. If then any one be here who has reason to fear that he has none of these signs to shew; that his ordinary way of life is doing no good but rather harm to his neighbour's soul; I beseech that man, for Christ's sake, and for his own eternal life's sake, to give ear to our Lord's terrible warning, "He that believeth not shall be damned; and these signs shall follow them that believe:" but you have none of these signs. What then is to become of you? Alas, my brethren, the time is very short, Holy Thursday will soon be here, there are but three short days to prepare for it. And another, the great Holy Thursday of all (if so we may venture to call it) the Day of our Lord's final Ascension, the Day when after judging the world He will carry His redeemed with Him back to His Throne in heaven: that Day also is near at hand: you cannot tell how near: and one great preparation for it, you have heard the Judge Himself say so, is working with Christ in His spiritual miracles: i. e. living in such a way as to do good, not harm, to your brethren's souls. Those who are so doing are preparing for themselves a double blessing. Those who by careless or wicked living hinder Christ's work instead of helping it, what can they expect but to suffer double reprobation: once for their own sins, and once for the sins to which they have given occasion in their brethren?

SERMON XLIII.

CHRISTIAN PRAYER.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN XVI. 24.

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

THIS is called Rogation Sunday, and the three following days of this week are called Rogation Days. Rogation means asking: asking of God: and asking of God, you know, is Prayer. These four days are then in some special sense Prayer days, days of prayer. From very old times in the Church they have been accounted days of solemn supplication, not without fasting and confession of sin: whereby the way is prepared for the great Feast of the Ascension, as Lent prepares the way for Easter, and Advent for Christmas. Accordingly, the Gospel for this day speaks especially of Christian prayer. It seems to tell us, that among the other changes which the coming of the Holy Ghost would bring with it, it would make an entire change in respect of our prayers. The state of things from and after Whitsunday was to be a new heaven and a new earth, as in all other respects, so also in respect of the prayers of God's people, which are one of the chief bands to bind heaven and earth together. From the beginning of the

world God's people had always prayed to Him, but now that the Son of God, God the Son, had been made Flesh and died for us, and the Holy Spirit of God had come down to dwell in our souls, prayer was to be a far higher thing, a far more blessed privilege, a far more mysterious and heavenly work, than ever it had been before. How could it be otherwise, when the Lord Himself had come down from Heaven, among other things to "teach us to pray?"

"Hitherto," says our Lord, "ye have asked nothing in My Name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Here are two great and wonderful things, to make a Christian man's prayer more holy and more blessed than any which had gone before. First, what was asked before, was not asked in our Lord's Name: and secondly, it was "nothing" in comparison of what was now to be asked. And so, as in regard of teaching our Lord says that the least in His kingdom, the least Christian, is a greater prophet than the Baptist: so in regard of prayer, we are not to doubt that any little simple Christian child, kneeling down in such faith as belongs to its tender age, and lifting up its innocent hands, and saying the Prayer of our Lord, prays better than ever did Abraham or David or the greatest of the Old Testament saints: better than ever S. John Baptist prayed; better than ever the Apostles prayed during the time that our Lord was among them.

Now, why and how was this? First, up to this time when our Lord so spake, not any of the saints, not even the blessed Apostles, might pray in Christ's Name, in the same sense in which every the simplest believer may since that first Whitsunday. His Sa-

crifice had not been offered, He had not died upon the Cross: therefore the congregation of His flock could not as yet plead before God His Agony and Bloody Sweat, His Cross and Passion: they could not say as we do at the end of almost every collect, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." They could not plead His Death, for He had not yet died, nor His Intercession, for He had not yet gone up ^a "to appear in the Presence of God for us." So far, then, they had not hitherto asked anything in His Name.

Again, down to the Day of Pentecost, however near and dear to our Lord they might be after the flesh, they were not yet members of Him, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh; they were not yet joined to Him by that marvellous union, which joins to Him in Baptism every little child. They were not yet made members of Him, so as to be called by His Name, and in Him to be really made children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. They had not been baptized into the great and saving Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; they could not say, "Our Father," with the same deep and loving certainty, as we may say it.

The Israelites then pleaded God's wonders of old time, how He had brought His people out of Egypt; how He had fed them with manna in the wilderness, had brought water out of the rock of flint, had divided in two parts the Red Sea first, and the river Jordan afterwards: how He had been with Moses, with Joshua, with David, and all the good prophets and kings, how He had brought His people out of captivity. By all this they might plead with Him,

^a Heb. ix. 24.

but they could not yet plead with Him by the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But we, Christians, may so plead with Him; we may take into our mouths, and may mention before our God, the Name which is above every name, the Name of Jesus, at which every knee must bow. Most especially in the Holy Communion, not only by word but by what is done, are we permitted to remind our God of every part and event of His Son's mysterious Passion; of the agony and betrayal, the stripes and scourges, the shame and spitting, the thorns, the nails and the spear, the thieves and the Pharisees reproaching, His Mother looking on. When in the service of Holy Communion we put God in mind of all these things, by offering to Him the symbols of His Son's Body and Blood, we do most especially and most powerfully pray in His Name.

We do so, again, in all our devotions, when we come before Him as Christians, i. e., as members of Christ. We say in a manner, We have no name of our own; our old name has been as it were done away with, and we answer to it no more: but we come to Church, we wait on our brethren, we do all that we do, in the Name of Jesus, and especially we pray in His Name: we would have our God look upon us, not as we are in ourselves, but as in Him. This, we may believe, is part of Christ's meaning, when He tells S. Peter and the rest, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name."

Another part of His meaning may be this: that what they and all God's servants had hitherto asked of God was as nothing in comparison with what they were now invited to ask. The common people of

Israel when they prayed, were most apt to pray for earthly blessings: for abundant harvests, peaceful times, recovery from sickness, prosperity in their doings, wives and children who might be a blessing to them. Even the best and holiest among them, the very greatest and wisest of their prophets, knew little, it is likely, of the meaning of their own words and prayers. We now understand their meaning, because God's Holy Spirit has given us the key to it: but they, as our Lord once said to some of them, knew not what they were asking. They asked in general for great blessings, for God's favour, for a portion in His good things: but it was reserved for Christians to know of the heavenly union and communion with God Incarnate, by which alone those marvellous promises are fulfilled.

This is another observation, as I before mentioned, which holy men of old have made on this saying of our Saviour: viz. that in saying, "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name," He might partly mean to remind them, that what they had been asking for was *nothing*: nothing, to what they might now have; nothing, to that which was prepared for them. It was partly perhaps as if He had said, Lift up your hearts, for great things are set before you. You ask life, you naturally love it, and behold He giveth you a long life, which shall endure for ever and ever. You ask for a few months or years, but what is that, in comparison with what He offers to those who ask heartily in Christ's Name? What are a few years to the days of eternity? And eternity is that, for which you are invited to pray. You ask to see the Lord's power and glory in the sanctuary, to praise

and magnify Him, as your righteous fathers were used to do, as long as you live, and to lift up your hands in His Name. You ask all this in the Psalms: Shall I tell you the deep meaning of it all? Shall I teach you the mystery of your own daily prayers? "As long as you live" means "eternal life," a life like the Angels, which shall never know end nor change, except in going on from glory to glory; and seeing His Power and Glory in the sanctuary means seeing His Face in the kingdom of heaven: partaking more and more of His Divine Nature, by virtue of that Human Nature which is everlastingly joined with it. This is what Christians pray for: to see Him as He is, and be made like unto Him, and draw nearer and nearer unto Him for ever. Surely all things else, all that you have hitherto asked for, is nothing in comparison of this: and therefore, says our Lord, I say to you, "Hitherto ye have asked nothing: all that ye have asked is as nothing." Think well on this, my brethren, and then go on in your minds, and think on the next words, what love and mercy, what infinite bounty and grace, our God and our Saviour does there pledge Himself to. "What ye have asked for as yet is as nothing, neither was it asked in My Name: but now ask for that which is something, ask for that which is real and true and eternal, ask for the very enduring substance, and not for the shadow which endureth a little time and then vanisheth away; ask for eternal ever-growing union with the Father and the Son, and ask it in the Son's Name: for this 'ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' Do not be timid, nor shy, nor scanty in your petitions: draw near to God with a true heart,

in full assurance of faith, and beg of Him in your Saviour's Name for the very highest and best of all goods: beg that you may see His Face: and I, your Saviour and your God, promise you that ye shall not ask in vain: you shall receive, and your joy shall be full."

Observe particularly those words, "That your joy may be full." It is a saying which occurs several times in S. John's writings, but not, I believe, elsewhere in Holy Scripture. It seems to relate especially to the joy, which a loving heart feels on seeing a dear friend: as in one of those short private letters of S. John, which we find just before the book of Revelation, he says, "I hope to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full." And the other S. John, the Baptist, speaking of the favour shewn to him, in that he was to be the first great witness of the Incarnation of our Lord, says, "^bThis my joy therefore is fulfilled." The presence, the near and happy presence, of some one whom we dearly love, this it is which fulfils or perfects our joy: and now see how our gracious Lord, He who is our Friend as no other can possibly be, see how the same gracious saying is uttered to us by His Divine lips. "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full:" i. e. that you may see Me again, and your heart may rejoice, with a joy which no man shall take from you: that you may be happy, the only way in which fallen and redeemed man can be happy, by entire union and communion with his Lord and Saviour in heaven. He had used the same form of words a little before, after cautioning them by the parable of the Vine what

^b S. John iii. 29.

care they should take to abide in Him. "These things have I spoken to you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Christ would have you keep the commandments, that He may always take the same delight in you, as when He received you into His arms at your Baptism, and that your joy and delight may hereafter be made full and complete by everlasting union with Him. Our joy is His Joy. O unspeakable condescension! The most High God really and truly rejoices and takes delight in beholding the joy of us His unworthy creatures. As a father or mother rejoices over the children of their own body, when they come home with a good character, so our Lord Jesus Christ will rejoice over each one of us, who shall be so happy as to inherit the kingdom prepared for the righteous by His Father. Our joy is His Joy: and His beloved disciple, who knew His mind so well, takes up His words, and declares in the beginning of his epistle, that he also in all that he wrote had respect to the same fulness of joy: "cThese things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

What would we have more? What can we wish for or ask, seeing that He Who is the Truth, is for ever speaking such gracious words to us? Alas, we do indeed want one thing more, and such a thing, as that without it all these mercies will be in vain to us. We want a heart and mind to think rightly of these great things, and to long for them earnestly. The light is all around us: but our eyes must be purged to discern it. The heavenly music fills all the air, but our ears must be opened to receive it.

c 1 S. John i. 4.

I will hope, dear brethren, that with none of us is the case so entirely and utterly bad, as that we are quite blind and deaf in our spirits. God forbid I should think so: but too surely there are great and sad imperfections in the spiritual sight and hearing of each one of us: and we ought not for a moment to rest satisfied with ourselves as we are. Which of us thinks all day long of eternity? Which of us thinks of it but for a part of every day? that I say not, which of us has ever had one real and deep thought concerning it? O let us try, not once nor twice, but continually, to open our eyes and look out and look on into the wonderful and infinite world, in the midst of which we are, if we would but attend to it. Let us try to feel all day long that we have souls which will last for ever. Then we shall also feel, and not only say, that Christ is indeed all in all to us. Then to see Him, as He is, will be to us the fulness of joy: we shall wish and ask heartily for it: and we shall ask in His Name; for knowing ourselves unworthy, we shall not dare to put up any petition, except in reliance on His Sacrifice, and as being made members of Him. We shall not put off the work of confession and amendment, but shall make all haste to repent and receive His merciful Absolution, that we may not plead His Sacrifice, and name His Name to His Father, in vain. So shall His joy remain in us; beholding us at our prayers, He will love us, with the same tender love as when He first took us up in His arms and blessed us: and in the end our joy shall be full. For He will come again, and receive us unto Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.

SERMON XLIV.

WHAT IT IS TO PRAY IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

S. JOHN xvi. 23.

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.”

HERE is another of our Lord's great and special promises, a word spoken with all authority, first to His Apostles directly, then, through them, to all of us, on the night before His death: one of His last gracious engagements, signed and sealed, the day after it was made, with His own precious Blood. He had left them, just before, the legacy of profitable sorrow: “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy;” and now He leaves them the legacy of prevailing prayer, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.”

Many such promises there are in the Holy Bible; “^a Ask and ye shall have;” “^b All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive;” “^c If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto

^a S. Matt. vii. 7.

^b Ib. xxi. 22.

^c S. John xv. 7.

you;" "d If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven."

Many and many such promises there are: and great need there was for them, when we come to consider it. For how could poor sinful creatures, such as we are, know that we are at all at liberty to approach God; that He would not be affronted at our speaking to Him; if He had not Himself told us so? And especially how could we know that it is worth while for us to pray, seeing He of course knoweth, and hath settled all beforehand? How could we know that nevertheless it is our wisdom and our duty to come before Him with our requests, even as we should come before an earthly father, whose mind is really capable of change, and who cannot know for certain, nor settle quite positively beforehand, what he will do with his children? "e God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent: hath He spoken, and shall He not do it? or hath He promised and shall He not make it good?" And yet the same Scripture tells us over and over, how God repented of the evil which He had said He would do unto His people, and did it not, upon their fasting and prayer. As it was in the case of Nineveh, when they repented at the preaching of Jonas, He repented of the evil which He thought to do unto them; and as it would have been in the case of Sodom, upon Abraham's intercession, had the All-seeing Eye discerned there but ten righteous men amid so vast a multitude. But none of all this could we have known or imagined, any more

d S. Matt. xviii. 19.

e Num. xxiii. 19.

than merely guessing at it, except the Lord Himself had told us. That our prayer, the wishes and sayings of poor insignificant creatures such as we are; that this should any way affect the Counsels and doings of the Great God Who filleth heaven and earth, Whose counsels and doings are for ever—this, when we come to think of it, is indeed a great mystery, far beyond what any of us could reasonably have imagined, only that He Himself hath assured us of it.

Neither again could we have known, otherwise than by His telling us, what *kind* of prayer it must be to win a blessing of Him; *how* we must ask, in order that we may receive. In old times, and among the heathens afar off, there are and have been vain imaginations, as though God could not help being so pleased with large and costly offerings, that for their sake He would forgive sins, and bestow blessings, which otherwise He would refuse. As one in the prophecy of Micah puts the question: “^fWill the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil?” and then, going on to another kind of offering, “Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” As if the All-Merciful and All-Righteous could be prevailed on to hear prayer and forgive sin by the mere painfulness, the extreme agony, which the offering would cost His worshippers. So it is, men, left to themselves, went on feeling their way as they might, how they might draw near to God: but they never could *know* anything, either as to the fact, *whether* God would receive them, or as to the manner,

^f Mic. vi. 7.

how He would receive them, except by His own gracious instruction.

But such instruction He in His mercy gives us abundantly in Holy Scripture : more especially in the words which His Son spake to His chosen Apostles that evening before His death, and *most* especially, perhaps, in the promise of this Sunday,—this Rogation, or prayer Sunday—so the Church is used to call it. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.” In those words we have a full answer to *both* the deep questions concerning prayer, which, as I have said, would naturally arise in the mind of persons wishing to obtain God’s favour and not well knowing how. They tell us, first, how we get what we need, i. e. by prayer ; “ whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, He will give it you : ” and we are also told what kind of prayer it must be ; “ whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name.” The Father makes no promise of giving it to you, unless you ask in His Son’s Name. But when you do so, the promise seems positive and unreserved : Whatsoever ye shall so ask, He will give.

Now here at once a difficulty arises ; a difficulty felt more or less, I doubt not, by all thoughtful readers and hearers of Holy Scripture. Men do not always seem to obtain what they pray for, though they be never so careful to use the Name of Jesus Christ. For instance : good Christians often go on for a long time praying at home, and often the Church adds her prayers, week after week, that such and such a person’s sickness may not be unto death : and after all he dies : the sickness carries him off. Or an anxious parent begs and prays with all his might

for years together, that his son or daughter may be kept from evil ways, and grow up in the fear of the Lord: and after all the child turns out ill. But why do I make mention of such examples as these? We know that one of the chiefest Apostles besought the Lord three times that a certain trouble or temptation, his thorn in the flesh, might pass away from him, and the infirmity was not removed; only an answer of God came, that His grace would be with S. Paul, to make him, weak as he was naturally, perfect in bearing it. And what is yet more wonderful: the whole Church from the beginning, taught by our great High Priest in that first sacrifice of Holy Communion, has been praying that all that believe on Him might be One, and yet, for the last thousand years at least, the Church has been divided and broken up, as Judah of old was separated from Israel. What shall we say to these things? One thing we are quite sure of, that God is true, though every man were a liar, and that in some way or other He doth and will keep His promise, to do what we ask in His Name, whether we can for the present discern Him keeping that promise, or no. But perhaps, by God's gracious help, we may be able to see on consideration, that the very words themselves of the promise, rightly considered, would prepare us for such seeming failures. For observe the exact words of our Lord. He saith not simply, "Whatsoever ye shall ask," but, "Whatsoever ye shall ask *in My Name*, He will give you." *That* is the point. We must ask really in His Name; else we have no claim to receive anything of the Lord.

Now, what is asking in His Name? Not surely.

the bare repetition of His Name at the end of each of our prayers: not the mere saying after every collect, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord." But a man prays in Christ's Name, when he prays as a true and real member of Christ, so that his tongue shall be in a manner Christ's tongue, his mind Christ's mind, his prayer Christ's prayer, and the petitions which he asks on earth, shall be taken up and presented to the Father by the great High Priest and Intercessor in Heaven. For so the New Testament teaches; that, as what we offer on the Altar-Table in Holy Communion is effectually joined to what He is then and always offering for us to the Father in heaven, so all our other prayers, which we make as Christians, are effectually joined to His perpetual Intercession. Thus, and no otherwise, may we come boldly to the Throne of grace, when we come as members of Him, Who on our behalf ascended up on high, to receive all good gifts for us. Our prayer hath no warrant of God's word to prevail, except it be a Christian prayer, one of those "prayers of all saints" which the great Angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ, is offering night and day to the Father, on the golden Altar before the Throne. That is the first and principal thing meant by "praying *in Christ's Name*," or "*through Jesus Christ our Lord*." And the second, which follows upon the first, is this: that since our High Priest's continual Intercession is for His people's *true* good, for their *eternal* good, i. e. for their *souls*; we may be sure that what is not really good for our souls, is not really asked by us in His Name, although we repeat that Name ever so distinctly, and depend upon it never so unreservedly,

when we are asking for that thing. As in the instance which I mentioned: S. Paul, as a true member of Christ, besought the Lord thrice that a certain calamity might depart from him; he seemed to himself, no doubt, to be asking in Christ's Name: but the Lord saw that it would not be good for his soul, and therefore in mercy denied him the particular favour he asked, to give him something better. Yet did not the Lord break His word given, to grant whatever should be asked in His Name, because this thing was not really asked in His Name; it was not so asked as to be joined to His heavenly Intercession.

And there is yet a third thing to be remembered; that praying in Christ's Name, i. e. praying according to the mind of Christ in His heavenly Intercession for us, signifies of course that we submit ourselves to His mind and will, as to the time and manner of giving whatever good thing we ask for. Even though it be good for our souls, it does not follow that it should be good immediately, or at least so good, as it will be after a time. It may be a great point in God's mercy to keep us waiting, to try our patience, for our own, or others' edification. Only think how great a loss it would have proved to that blessed woman of Canaan, had our Lord granted her request at once, instead of that long and weary trial, which at the time must have appeared as sore to her, as to His disciples it appeared strange. If He had spared her the pain, first of His seeming neglect, then of His sharp and almost scornful words, "the children's bread is not for the dogs," she would not have had the joy and crown of hearing from Him, "O woman

§ S. Matt. xv. 28.

great is thy faith." And so, to say one word more of S. Paul's example: his request was really granted; for the scourge, whatever it was, hath long ago departed from him, only God took His own time and way of delivering him. As we see continually in cases of grievous sickness, devout and loving friends and kinsmen cry mightily to Almighty God, for weeks, months, years together, that such an one may recover his bodily health, if it be God's gracious will, and yet the sickness proves to be unto death. Is the prayer then not heard? Are we to conclude that it was not really asked in Christ's Name? Nay verily, but it was heard, if the man were a good Christian; it was heard in a sense infinitely higher and truer than the persons offering it could know of: as the holy Evangelical Psalm says: "^hHe asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest Him a long life, even for ever and ever." O what a consolation is there in that saying, to a loving heart, earnest in prayer for some beloved one, and equally earnest in believing God, that He knows what is best for us, He loveth us better than we do ourselves. Let such an one say to himself, "I beseech God for my friend's recovery, or for such and such an earthly blessing for him, but I know in the bottom of my heart, that if the Lord deny for the present the particular thing which I ask for, it is to give it more perfectly in His own good time. If He deny life, it is to give a long life, even for ever and ever." And there is something yet more to be said: for you know, my brethren, of Whom the prophet David is speaking, when he speaks of One Who

^h Ps. xxi. 4.

asked life and received everlasting life. It is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in that awful hour of His Agony. He prayed, "If it be possible, let the cup pass," and the cup did not pass. Not His Human will, but His Father's and His own Divine will was done: yet in the end, and in reality, the Father gave Him what He asked: and He became a pattern and a token to all who pray in His Name, that they will surely be heard, sooner or later, to their true and eternal good, however He may seem to disregard or disappoint them in this world.

In short then, praying with faith, to which so great things are promised, is the same as praying in Christ's Name; and we have heard from Scripture who they are that pray in Christ's Name. They are, first, members of Christ, baptized persons, baptized into the Name of the Holy Trinity, and so baptized into Christ: secondly, they are not, thanks be to God, separated from Christ by wilful, deadly sin; their living and wholesome union with Christ remains: else they are not so one with Christ, as that their prayers may be counted before God as His, being indeed offered up by Him in His merciful Intercession. Thirdly, those who pray in Christ's Name care for their own souls, as Christ cares for them in heaven, and do not even desire to be heard, if He in heaven knows that their petition, if granted, would rather hurt them than help their souls. And fourthly, if you pray in Christ's Name, of course you have patience to wait and work under Him, and suffer Him to work His own will upon you, however trying and severe in this world. You will not seek

your own ways, nor fix your own times: you will leave all that to Him.

Has it been so, brethren, with you and me, and with such prayers as we use to offer? Is it so now? Is it in a way to be so? I beseech you to consider this: for if we are not praying in His Name, what is to become of us? Alas, I fear that, in too many of our prayers, we have not even asked with our wills and thoughts; we have only said words, which sounded as if we were asking. The good things mentioned were spiritual, and we would not put our minds to them. For those prayers, of course, we could expect no return. Or if we *did* ask, yet we did not "ask the Father:" the wish passed through our minds perhaps merely *as* a wish: we did not try to place ourselves in the Presence of God, to be full of the thought that we were really speaking to Him. Or if we had some sense of His Presence, still we did not ask *as Christians*. We forgot how very near we are to Him, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. Our hearts therefore were nothing like so thankful and loving as they ought to have been: nor yet so penitent, if, as too likely, we had more or less fallen away. There was no deep awe, no fervent reverence, in our asking. Or if we were quite in earnest, as all men *are* apt at times to feel their pressing need, in their own sickness e. g., or in the sickness of a friend, or in want and poverty, or in harrowing, distressing doubts, we did not submit the matter entirely to our great Intercessor in heaven, leaving Him to present the prayer or no, as might be best for our souls: and so, not praying in the mind of Christ, we failed to pray

in the Name of Christ. Or lastly, we failed in patience: we found we had to wait for the blessing, or it did not come in the manner we expected, and so we left off really praying for it.

How many of us are there, my brethren, whose prayers have not failed in one or other of these ways? God grant that it may not be so always! Let us see to it this very evening. We know not whether we shall be able, if we wait till to-morrow, to pray at all.

Read May 26, 1889.

SERMON XLV.

ASCENSION-TIDE A GREAT TIME FOR PRAYER.

ROGATION SUNDAY.

S. JOHN xvi. 24.

“ Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

THESE four days before Ascension Day, are very special days for prayer, days in which the door of heaven stands, as it were, entirely open, and God invites us very earnestly to draw near, and ask of Him all that we need.

Now, why should we think so much of prayer just now? Why do our dutiful requests come before God with so much virtue at this particular time? We may partly understand it in this way: that in all families, when great and glad events happen, people's hearts are naturally open, and they, whose minds are at all towards God, are more than usually disposed to shew themselves thankful by inviting others to partake of His good gifts. Among the rich and noble and honoured of the earth, when there is a wedding or the birth of an heir, you know that there are often bountiful and abundant gifts, as one chief part of the rejoicing: and so it is especially, when a king comes to his throne. Now at this time, the King and Father of the great family of heaven and earth permits us to keep the most high and solemn feast of His Son's Coronation. For next Thursday is, as it were,

the Coronation of Jesus Christ; since on that day He went up into heaven, and sat down at His Father's Right Hand, as a king, sitting down for the first time on the throne of His kingdom. He therefore, as a new-crowned king, is ready to open His treasures, and deal out His precious gifts: that there may be joy and gladness, and that all may rejoice in His glory. Now, therefore, is especially a good time to draw near to Him, and ask Him all that we need: because, as I said, He is as a King just set down on His Throne and keeping His Coronation Feast.

And there is also another reason, and a very great one, why this should be a time of prayer above most others: a reason which you will the better understand, if you consider that our Lord Christ is not only our King but our High Priest also. Why are any of our prayers heard, why are we sinners permitted to draw near and pray to God at all, except for the sake of His Son's most precious Sacrifice? "Through Jesus Christ our Lord:" *those* you know are the prevailing words, *that* is the great and wonder-working Name, in which and through which only any good thing can be obtained for us, any prayer accepted in heaven or in earth. And the Holy Name Itself prevails by virtue of that Sacrifice, which our Lord made of Himself upon the Cross. As that Sacrifice was offered up, once for all, on the first Good Friday, so it began to be pleaded for us in heaven on the Day of our Lord's Ascension. Our Divine Redeemer took up with Him into heaven, the Soul and Body in which He had suffered on the Cross; and which had come together again at His Resurrection. He took them with Him to the Right Hand of His Father, infinitely above the highest Angels, and pre-

sently began His gracious Intercession for us. From that time forward He hath been pleading for us in Heaven: night and day He hath been presenting to His Father His own sacrificed Body and Blood; that He, looking thereupon, and well pleased therewith, might graciously accept our prayers, and bless our persons. We, from time to time, by Holy Communion especially, take our part in this Sacrifice: but our Lord continues it always. We offer up our prayers, night and morning, and at our other set times: but He never ceases to present them to Almighty God. So it has now gone on for eighteen hundred years: and so it will go on until the end of the world; for "He ever liveth to make intercession for us:" and as we on earth at set times, so He in heaven continually maketh memorial of His Sacrifice, shews forth His Saving Death, until He come again to judge the quick and the dead. So it has been for more than eighteen hundred years, and this is the time when it began to be so. This is the time of year, when He went up with His crucified Body and all the marks of His Wounds, to present Himself as a solemn Offering to His Father and our Father. From that time forward the prayers of God's people have been more precious than ever in His sight, being united with that adorable Sacrifice. From that time hath been fulfilled indeed that saying, which the Old Testament so often repeats concerning the old shadowy sacrifices, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour." A sweet and precious savour indeed: for only think, Christian brethren, what That is, which the Son of God is even now exhibiting to His Father on our behalf: think of the Sacrifice which He offered on Mount Calvary, how precious it is, how

unspeakably holy and Divine: for it is His own Body and Blood. That is the Sacrifice. And Who is the Priest that offers it? It is Jesus Christ, God and Man, the Only-begotten of the Father; our Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek. We may not doubt that the Eternal Father will ever look down with a sweet and propitious countenance on every sacrifice prayer and intercession, which the Well-beloved Son shall present before Him, bathed as it were in His own Blood, and filled with the virtue which has gone out from Him.

And this more especially, when we regard in the third place, how dearly He purchased this high privilege for us. In order to complete His Sacrifice, He endured His Agony and bloody Sweat, His Stripes, and chains and mockings, His Cross and Passion, the pains of death and the sense of His Father forsaking Him. How should that prayer be void, which is presented to the Almighty Father by His own Son, God and Man; for which He pleads the Sacrifice of His own most pure Body and Blood, costing Him, as it did, not only those three long and most agonizing hours on the Cross, but all the calamities too and miseries of His long and wearisome sojourn among men, in a poor, despised, wandering, persecuted condition? No wonder such great things are promised to the prayers even of sinful men, duly offered in that Name. No wonder He should say, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you:" and again, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." For, as I have now shewn you out of Holy Scripture, to ask "believing," and to ask "in Christ's Name," is to ask, so as to have your prayer presented by Jesus

Christ the great High Priest, God Incarnate Who died for you, upon the High Altar in heaven : and how should the Father refuse anything, to His Only Son so offering ?

Fear not then, Christian brethren, to draw near, and offer all your petitions. Every morning draw near, cast yourselves humbly on your knees before Him, and tell Him, with fear and reverence, all your wants, all your requests for that day. Every evening draw near again, make your humble confession, own your unworthiness and His Mercy, beg of Him pardon and peace, and whatsoever else will secure you "a quiet night and a Christian end." Come, not once nor twice but regularly ; come daily, at least twice and as many times a day as you can : and come boldly, that is, in hopeful cheerfulness : knowing indeed your own unworthiness, yet not afraid to ask even the very best blessings of Him. For what is His own word ? "*Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Ask, not salvation only, not escape only from God's anger, but the very best of His blessings : ask, not heaven only, but fulness of joy in heaven. Fulness of joy ; i. e. such a joy as leaves nothing to be desired : entire, perfect, absolute bliss, such as has no cloud, no spot, no evil remnant of sorrow or discontent in it : such joy as the holy evangelist and prophet describes in the book of Revelations : "^a There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away

^a Rev. vii. 17.

all tears from their eyes." *That* is the fulness of joy; that is the pleasure for evermore, which is to be found *there* only, where our Lord and High Priest now is, namely at the Right Hand of God. He is there, interceding for us, receiving all gifts on our behalf: all is at His command, neither can the Father deny Him anything. As He hath begun our joy in this world by uniting us to Himself, so He can and will complete it in the world to come. It was His own prayer to His Father, the night of His agony: "b Now come I to Thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." What He prayed for in words then, that He intercedes for in deed, since He has gone into heaven, continually: representing evermore to His Father His own marvellous sacrifice of Himself for us and for all Christians, that we may have not only joy, but the joy of our Lord: not only have it, but have it fulfilled and made perfect in ourselves. Christ is at God's Right Hand, pleading on our behalf, not only for good things, but for the very best that can be given us.

And now, what are we to learn from all this, over and above that plainest lesson of very dutiful and thankful love? This we may learn, and we have all great need to learn it; we may learn how to make the most and best of good things. We complain, at least we feel in our hearts very often, how exceeding imperfect, unsatisfactory, disappointing, are all things, even the best, in this fallen world. "c Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Our plans, our cares, our hopes, our pleasures, our gains, our diversions, our studies, nay even our good deeds and holy purposes,

b S. John xvii. 13.

c Eccl. i. 2.

our devout and charitable thoughts and ways : all, all are imperfect, all more or less shadowy and unreal. We know it well, we own it in words continually, we feel it in our hearts more and more, as afflictions come on and we grow nearer to our latter end.)

By God's bounteous and undeserved mercy, we all have joys; some have many joys, but our joys are not full. As Christians, we all share in Christ's joy : but His joy is not yet *fulfilled*, not yet made perfect; even so perfect as it might be in this world. What shall we do, to obtain more success in our undertakings, to make life more satisfactory? Let us try and season our purposes and doings with prayer; not some of them only, but all: all, I mean, which are of any importance. You cannot possibly think this too hard a saying: it is such plain common sense, and Holy Scripture speaketh it out so clearly. How often do we read in the Old Testament of persons more or less going wrong, because, at first setting out, they had not asked counsel at the mouth of the Lord! Our holy mother, the Church, has taught us all, would we but mind it, far better than this. Her Prayer-book contains in it, as you know, a good deal besides the ordinary services, for daily and Sunday Common prayer and Sacraments. I say, besides all these, there are the occasional services, special forms of prayer, to bless and hallow the chief events of our lives. If people wish to marry, there is the Marriage service; if a child is born, there is the Baptism service, and for the mother, when sufficiently recovered, the Churching service. For the sick, there is the Visitation service, and for the dead, the Burial service: for public calamities, there is the Litany, and for deliverance from them,

the Thanksgivings at the end of the Litany. Put all this together, what does it shew? It shews that, according to the mind of the Church, there is but one way to have our joy full, to get the most happiness we can, even out of these worldly and present things: and that one way is, to commend our undertakings entirely to God Almighty. Without that, all will go wrong: with it, though for a time, even then, we may seem to endure more or less of disappointment, in the end our joy will be full. The marriage will be unhappy, depend upon it, if the parties do not seek to hallow it in the Name of Jesus Christ. The child who is not baptized, and made holy to the Lord, will grow up a heathen; how then can his parents have joy of him? How intolerable is the bed of sickness, without that peace which the minister of Christ brings with him! How dismal the burial of the dead, were we not even yet permitted to think of them with hope, and to mention them in our prayers! In all these and all other the greater events of life, I see not how a thoughtful man woman or child could either have joy in God's goodness, or comfort in His chastenings, except by prayer, such prayer as our Lord enjoins. His own word is, *Ask*: ask earnestly, ask perseveringly, ask dutifully: and ye shall receive. Ye shall not receive as the wicked doth, whose prayers, not seldom, God hears in His just anger, and sends him the thing he prays for, to his great injury: but ye shall so receive, as that your joy may be full: there shall be nothing to damp your satisfaction, no drawback, no disappointment. It is His servant's word, depending on His sure promise, "d My cup shall be full."

^d Ps. xxiii. 5.

These are great and precious promises.) “The God Who heareth prayer^e,” is verily a sweet and precious Name. So much the more does it behove us all to be very fearful of forfeiting these mercies. So much the more ought we to watch, that our prayers may be prayers indeed, and not sins. For we know that there are some, of whom it is written^f, their “prayer shall be turned into sin.” How are we to watch against this? How make sure that our prayers will be heard? By taking care always to offer them in Christ’s Name. But take notice of this, that no man prays in Christ’s Name, who is not a member of Christ, having cut himself off from Him by deadly sin unrepented of. In order then to pray in Christ’s Name, the first thing is to examine yourself and see that you are not going on wilfully in any deadly sin, such as pride, envy, sloth or lust: and if you have been hitherto, that you turn from it with all your heart. (This is the first and principal thing: do it this very evening, when you are about to say your prayers: do it, if you can, thoroughly: in any case do it. For it is written, “^g If I incline unto wickedness with mine heart, the Lord will not hear me.”) But when a man by true self-examination and humble confession has begun to cast out his wickedness, then for him it is also written, “^h God hath heard me, and considered the voice of my prayer:” then, by God’s mercy, he is in a way to go on saying to all eternity, “ⁱ Praised be God, Who hath not cast out my prayer: nor turned His mercy from me.”

^e Ps. lxxv. 2.^f Ib. cix. 6.^g Ib. lxxvi. 16.^h Ib. 17.ⁱ Ib. 18.

SERMON XLVI.

WHAT PRAYERS ARE NOT MADE IN CHRIST'S NAME.

ROGATION MONDAY.

S. JOHN xvi. 24.

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

I HAVE observed, my brethren, as I go in and out among you, there are no words which one hears more commonly mentioned than these, “We must pray to God.” Suppose, for instance, one is beginning to speak to a person about preparing for Confirmation, let him be ever so thoughtless or ignorant, he thinks it right, being asked what he should do to be saved, to make answer and say, “pray to God.” Again, if one is discoursing with any of you on the sad case of those who, being Christians, have sinned grievously, and if one ask, What must they do to be forgiven: the ordinary answer is still the same, “pray to God.” And it is a thoroughly good and true answer, provided only persons would use it with seriousness, and not just say the words without caring for them: merely because they must say something. Prayer to God is indeed all in all; but then we must rightly understand what Prayer is. Prayer is, not of course merely saying the words even of the best form of

devotion, no, not of our Lord's own prayer; but it is, when in our heart and inward meaning we speak to God Almighty and ask Him for what we want. When you think of prayer, you think of a very helpless child begging something of the greatest and most loving of fathers: only that in this case the Father is out of sight. On the one side there is the great King of heaven and earth, the Lord of Angels, sitting on the Throne of His Glory, infinitely above all creatures: on the other side a little child perhaps, or a decrepit old cripple, some one whom the world thinks least of, and prayer brings the two together. Prayer, earnestly and obediently offered, makes a real difference in the doings of that Almighty and All-wise King. "aThe prayer of the humble pierceth the clouds;" the voice and secret sighing of that poor faithful-hearted cripple prevails with God, to order things according to his devout wishes, both for time and for eternity. Who could have dreamed or imagined such a thing as this, if God had not told him? Who can doubt it, now that God has surely told him? And yet, though no Christian doubts it, it is sad to reflect, how greatly it is disregarded among us.

For only think of the gracious promise which we heard yesterday out of the mouth of God: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." We have known this promise, many of us, all our lives long: all our lives long we have been asking the Father for things, after a sort, in the Name of Christ: and no one can tell, how much good he has got by his prayers, imperfect as they may have been. God for-

^a Ecclus. xxxv. 17.

bid any should leave them off, or undervalue them, or think slightly of them! Still I suppose that almost or quite all of us, looking back generally on our whole life, the whole time which has passed since we began to say prayers "through Jesus Christ our Lord," must confess that we do not *seem* at least to have found that fruit of our prayers, which our Lord's words here promise. We have prayed for peace, and behold trouble: we have prayed for a right understanding of all things, and have been permitted to fall into many errors: we have prayed for deliverance from all adversity, and the things which we greatly feared have come upon us: and yet all the while our Lord's promise has stood in the Scriptures, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." How is this? If you will attend, we will try and consider it together: but let us take care to have this thought all along uppermost in our minds, that God's word cannot but stand true and firm for ever, whether we can explain it or no. As the holy Apostle says, "b Let God be true, but every man a liar." If His promises seem not to be fulfilled, we may depend upon it, the fault is in us, not in Him.

This being so, consider and forget not, *what* petitions of us sinful men our Saviour so largely and mercifully promised to grant. Whatsoever we should ask the Father *in His Name. In His Name; in Jesus Christ's Name*: fix that well in your hearts: think of it over and over. Yesterday morning I tried partly to explain to you, what is meant by praying in Christ's Name. So to pray, a person must first be a true and real member of Christ, and secondly,

^b Rom. iii. 4.

he must offer his prayer in union with Christ's everlasting intercession in heaven. I will say a few words on each of these two things.

First, To pray really in Christ's Name, you must be a true, real, living member of Christ: such as He, of His great mercy, caused you to become in the moment of your Baptism. For then you were baptized into that Body which is called by His Name. You put on Christ and His Righteousness, as a holy robe, so that the Father, looking upon you, saw not you a sinful child of Adam, but His own dearly beloved and most holy Son. Thenceforth you were in a manner called by Christ's Name, and your prayer was in a manner the prayer of Jesus Christ Himself; dear to the Father, not for any good in itself, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, Who, by uniting you to Himself, has made it His own prayer. For as, according to S. Paul's teaching, the bodies of Christians are members of Christ, so no doubt the prayers of Christians are truly and really the prayers of Christ.

But then, in order that God may so account of our prayers, it is plain we must so behave, as to keep that blessing which was given us in our Baptism. We must not be living in grievous sin of any kind; for that will both cut our persons off from being members of Jesus Christ, and will also take the virtue out of our prayers, so that they will no longer be the prayers of Jesus Christ. Here then is one reason, I fear too plain a reason, why many of us may seem to themselves to have been, all their lives long, praying in Christ's Name to little purpose; in deed and in truth they have not been praying in Christ's Name,

because, for all or a great part of the time, they have been living wilfully in known sin, and the Spirit of Christ, being grieved, has so far departed from them; and their prayers have not been, in God's account, the prayers of Christ Whose members they had been made. Has it been so with any of you, my brethren? Have you, as I may say, damaged those great and holy Names which you bring at the beginning and end of all your prayers, the Names of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, by using them lightly and profanely, in common talk, in rash story-telling, or angry cursing, or profane jesting? Surely, then, you cannot wonder, if you find that the same holy Names appear to do you little good, however constantly and scrupulously you appeal to them in your prayers. And so in respect of all other known sins: so far as you have indulged in any, Christ's Name in your prayers has been made void. Alas! how many of us then had need lay our hands on our mouths, and own at once, that we can scarcely be said to have been praying hitherto in the Name of Christ: and therefore we must not complain if our prayers have borne no fruit. But blessed be God, the remedy is plain. We have but to leave off the sin which has been separating between us and our God, and our supplication will again rise up before Him, as a cloud of sweet incense, when that which intercepted it is taken away: and thus the moment a man begins truly to repent, his prayers begin again to be, in God's sight, the prayers of Jesus Christ, Who owns him still as a member. What he then asks, he asks so far, in Christ's Name, and for Christ's sake his prayer will be heard.

Only, as I said, there is one other thing to be attended to, in order that our prayers may be altogether in Christ's Name. They must be offered in dependence on Him, ascended as He is into heaven, there to be our High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. He is our Priest in two ways. On the Cross after the order of Aaron; in the Holy Communion, after the order of Melchisedec. On the Cross He offered Himself once for all, a bloody Sacrifice, never to be repeated: in Holy Communion He offers Himself continually, and will do so to the end of the world, in remembrance of that precious Sacrifice of the Cross. He offers Himself in heaven, as we offer, according to His command, on earth. And with Himself He offers to His Father the prayers and good works of His saints on earth: and our poor and feeble prayers will be then accepted, when they are, in heart and will, united to His prevailing intercession.

Now in this respect again I much fear we have been wanting. We have not prayed in Christ's Name as we ought to do, because, even when we came before God unburthened with any gross sin, still we were cold, listless, in a manner unbelieving: we did not lift up our hearts with our hands to our great High Priest Who is passed into the heavens. Too often, we have been content to pray with scarce any serious thought at all; we have knelt down or stood up, in Church or at home, and have said over the words of our psalm or prayer, or have answered "Amen" when another said them, and our minds, all the while, have wandered no one knows where, and we, when we came to think, were not really afraid nor ashamed. We passed it off all easily, as a matter of course.

Could we have done so, had we really believed and borne in mind, how at that very time, our gracious Intercessor in heaven was watching those prayers: watching for them, if haply He might find in them but one spark of true love and faith, such as might render them not unworthy for Him to present to the Eternal Father? Too surely we had no thought of the kind; we could not have recollected Christ in heaven pleading for us, although we outwardly seemed to pray in His Name.

Again, how can any person think that he has been truly praying in Christ's Name, who has hitherto made light of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood? All prayers, to be effectual, must, as I said, be offered up by Him Who is our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, in union with His own appointed memorial Sacrifice. But how should *his* prayers find a place there, who has, all his life long, slighted that precious Sacrifice? Look to it, Christians, in good time. The holy Bishop Wilson said, he should be afraid to say his prayers, if he were not a communicant. What a sad thing it will be, should the Judge at the Last Day have to say to us, in a different sense from that in which He said it to His disciples, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name," and so all our prayers should prove void, because we irreli- giously neglected His one dying command.

Finally, I cannot but say, that it seems to me a great loss and no good sign, that this holy season in particular should be so little thought of as it is. Is not Ascension Day a great day, one of the very greatest of days? Are the holy Angels even now preparing to keep it, preparing to wait on our Lord

and welcome Him within the everlasting doors ; and all saints with them answering one another and saying, "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory?" Is all this taking place in heaven, that He may be there as our High Priest, to receive our prayers and give us every blessing ; and shall we, whom it most concerns, take no notice of it? I know what many of you would say to this : that it is all true, but you never gave it a thought. Well then, give it a thought for the time to come. Try to think so much now of Christ going up into heaven to be your Intercessor, that, all through the year and all through your lives, you may pray the better for it. Let it be like a handful of good leaven, leavening the whole lump. Whatever you do, keep on attending to your prayers, until you have got into a way of really praying in Christ's Name. This will be, if, before you pray, you try to purify your hearts from sin : if you become and continue a worthy communicant, and if you earnestly desire that every prayer of yours may be presented by Christ in heaven to His Father, and united to those prayers which He offered for you on earth.

SERMON XLVII.

BE NOT LESS REVERENT TO GOD, THAN TO THE
GREAT UPON EARTH.

ROGATION TUESDAY.

S. JOHN XV. 7.

“If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

YESTERDAY and the day before, I tried to shew you what a very serious thing it is to pray to God: how much higher and deeper than any of us can imagine, easily and lightly as we too often talk about it: and especially how that, when we pray, we should think very much of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, since our prayers have then only a promise to be heard, when, being members of Him, we truly offer them in His Name. And then only do we offer them in His Name, when we present them to Him in the hope that He will present them before God and the Father, in union with His own Sacrifice of Himself on His High Altar in heaven. Also I pointed out to you, how this season of Ascension is a time for especially thinking of these things: because this is the time, when our High Priest entered once for all within the veil, i. e. into heaven, to present His sacrificed Body and Soul, and with it all our prayers made, and good

works done in His Name, to the Almighty Father, and so obtain for us all blessings. Ascension-tide is a great time for prayer, because at that time our prayers began to be acceptable, in a way in which they could not before have been.

But Jesus Christ is not only our Priest, but our King. Not only does He stand at the right hand of the Throne of God, to be our Advocate and Intercessor, to plead for us, and present our otherwise unworthy offerings, but He also sitteth (so the Creed speaks) at the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. He is the "great King upon all the earth:" the King, exalted to the Father's Right Hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in the world to come. All things are put under His feet: and this is the time when all things were so put under Him. This as I shewed you on Sunday, is the time of His Coronation: and as kings at such times are apt to be very bountiful, so we are encouraged to draw near to Him at this time and receive from Him all good gifts. Indeed, when Scripture tells us about kings, it very often adds something about large and plentiful gifts. As our Saviour promised His disciples, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," so we read in the Bible, more than once, of mighty princes encouraging those who might depend on them, with very large promises. When Solomon had just begun to sit on the throne of his father David, Bathsheba his mother came to him with a cer-

tain request, and he told her, “^aAsk on, my mother : for I will not say thee nay.” When king Ahasuerus, in the book of Esther, would shew his love and respect for his queen Esther, he told her, her petition and request should be granted her, even to the half of his kingdom. And Herod, in the Gospel, gave the same kind of pledge to the daughter of that wicked Herodias. He said with an oath, “Whatsoever thou shalt ask, I will give it thee, even to the half of my kingdom.” Herod’s was a very bad case: but both he and the other kings, whom I have now mentioned, were so far types and shadows of our Lord Christ, in that they were kings: and their promise to such as they wished to favour was like our Lord’s promise in the text, “Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” As David first, and afterwards S. Paul, instructs us, this was one great purpose of His Ascension, that He might receive gifts for men: that, in answer to our prayers made in His Name, He might receive of the Father and send down to us the Unspeakable gift, His own good and glorious Spirit.

You see, then, that ever since our Lord went up out of our sight, He has been truly and especially *our King*, for *us* to ask favours of. Whenever we say a prayer, we are begging something from the greatest of Kings. And now, at this time of Ascension, we are begging it of Him on His Coronation day.

Think then, my brethren, how you would feel, think how you would wish to behave, if you had to appear before some great earthly prince, to petition him for some great benefit to yourselves or your friends. Suppose you were going to court, to ask a

^a 1 Kgs ii. 20.

gift or a favour of our own Queen Victoria. Suppose further, that it was some great thing which you wanted: no trifling matter, which you could very well do without, but a matter of life and death: pardon of some grave offence, or something to keep yourself and your family from starving: and suppose the Queen was known to be very particular, very exact in requiring certain rules to be kept, certain behaviour to be practised, by all who came near her as petitioners. What would be your mind and feelings about all this? Do you not think you should consider of it a good deal beforehand? Should you not be apt to lie awake, wondering how it would all be; whether you should get a favourable answer or no: and very anxious to learn in good time all the rules you were expected to observe, and fearful lest you should forget or mistake any of them: and as the time drew on for appearing before her majesty, should you not be often saying to yourself, "This day month, or fortnight, or week, this time to-morrow I shall have had my answer: God grant that it may be a favourable one?" All this and more, I suppose, would pass through our minds often, had we to appear with any important request at the court of the queen of England: and shall we make no preparation at all, shall we set about it any how, as a matter which little signifies, when we are to bring our prayers, our petitions for the very life of our souls, and for the souls of all dear to us, into the court of the great King of heaven and earth?

Further: when the time drew on to enter into the royal presence, you would not of course go in dirty, just as you had left off your ordinary work, without

cleaning yourself. You would of course put on the most decent apparel you could afford. Your own common sense would tell you, if the parable in the Gospel had not warned you, that when the queen came to look on her guests, she would expect to see them having on a festival garment. But even as the queen, if you presented yourself before her, might see how you were apparelled, so our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, before Whom we present ourselves in prayer, looks to see how our souls are apparelled. And if He see that we have not on the robe of His Righteousness, that holy robe which His Spirit put on us in Baptism, how can we think that He will be at all pleased with our prayers? If, although we still have it on, we take no pains or very little to keep it pure and clean as He gave it us, then, in proportion to the spots and blemishes which He sees on it, will be His displeasure: and we had need accompany every prayer with some real exercise of deep contrition and penitence. Just as, if you found spots on your best apparel, you would do what you could to get them out, before offering yourself to be noticed by a king or queen. And so much the more, for that the king or queen might not happen to notice the defects of your clothing; but we know for certain, that the ever-watchful Eye of God would discern every blemish in your heart and conscience.

Another thing which a prudent person would bear in mind, if he went before the queen as a petitioner, is this: that all the while he was in her presence he should take care to be very respectful, and not use any kind of familiarity or saucy boldness. So, when we come to ask favours of our God in the Name of

His Son our Saviour, how careful ought we to be not to forget the reverence due to Him ! And yet I fear it is one of men's most ordinary faults. Why are prayers said over in such a hurry ? why is there so much ill-behaviour at Church ? why are persons, who might easily kneel, so unwilling to fall on their knees before God : except they forget that He is a great and dreadful King, and that it is the greatest of favours to be admitted into His courts ?

One thing more I will mention. Do you not suppose that, if you waited on the queen with a petition, in a matter, as I said, of life and death, and she gave you leave to tell her what you want, you would at least take the trouble to think of what you were saying to her ? If you allowed yourself to be dreamy, absent, inattentive, if your eyes and mind were plainly wandering after all manner of childish trifles, far from what you were speaking of : do you imagine that the queen would think you much in earnest, or be very much inclined to grant your petition ? By the same rule, we can hardly expect to find our prayers to our Great King answered, if we ourselves take no pains to attend to them, and really to mean what we say. Why should He listen to us, when we do not listen to ourselves ? Why should He give us those blessings, for which we care so little, that we will not leave off whispering one with another, or gazing about, or attending to our dress, to ask them ? These may seem little things : but God Almighty knows that they are tokens of great faults. A little shred or leaf, close to the eye, may shut out from view a large portion of the heavens : so may these our disrespectful ways do more than we think, to

separate between us and our God. I beseech you then, be mannerly yourselves, and teach your children to be mannerly, here in God's House, for it is the Palace of the great King, and we come here as His humble petitioners; and, as you would not willingly come before your queen in an unprepared and irreverent way, so and much more be afraid to come unprepared, and behave ill, before your God.

Remember, too, that if you asked ever so humbly, and behaved ever so orderly, you could not be sure that the queen would grant your petition: but here I have read to you our Lord's plain promise, that, as our King, He *will* grant us, sooner or later, whatever we ask in His Name. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." This is His word of promise: and though we here in this world see but a very little of His doings, even *we* may see enough to know that it *is* fulfilled in a great many cases, and to believe that it surely will be fulfilled in all. Look round among your acquaintance; see which among them all, so far as you know, has served God most constantly from his youth up in the true ways of His holy Church, believing the Creed, keeping the commandments, praying and communicating as the catechism teaches. Find such a man, and ask him, Have your prayers been in vain? Has our Lord and King broken His royal word? Has He in all things dealt bountifully with you or no? Ask him this, and if, in his fulness of heart, he be able to answer you at all, I am sure he will tell you, that our Lord's bounty has been to him more than he could ask or think, He has done far more than

He promised, He has continued His blessings long after we had forfeited them, and has kept us from evils which we had desperately called on ourselves. He is that good and mighty Shepherd, Who not only came to seek us when we were lost, but has wrought even beyond His covenant, to keep us from casting ourselves away after we were found. O then, for the short, the very short space of time which remains, brethren beloved, abide we in Him, and let His words abide in us. Abide we in Him by continual watching against sin: let His words abide in us, by our always seriously considering what He would have us do. Be this our rule at all times: so may we come near at times of prayer, with a confiding yet humble heart, and ask what we will, and sooner or later He will do it.

Why should we not, even now, before we leave the Church, make these two promises with serious prayer to our God,—that we will henceforth watch against sin, and seek to please Him, in all things? Begin now, if you have not begun long ago: begin now at once: there cannot be a better time. Christ your Priest is ready to offer such your good prayers in heaven: Christ your King is ready to give you strength and aid, to keep your good promises. All will be well, if you are not wanting to yourself.

SERMON XLVIII.

CHRIST OUR TEACHER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ROGATION WEDNESDAY.

S. JOHN xvi. 23.

“In that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.”

THIS verse seems to relate to the Prophetical Office of our Lord, and to tell us, how that would be in some respects changed by His Ascension into heaven, as the verses, which we have considered hitherto during this week, relate to His Priestly and Kingly Offices. For you know that the Word made Flesh came to be our Prophet as well as our Priest and King. He came to teach us, as well as to die for us and to govern us. And it was His pleasure to be first known as a Prophet. He taught first, then He died, then He sat down on His Throne. And as His Priesthood is a Priesthood for ever, after the order of Melchisedec, and as His Kingdom shall have no end, so will He to the end of the world be the one Good Master, the great Prophet and Teacher of His people. Only His Ascension has made a remarkable difference in the manner of His teaching: which difference seems to be set before us in the verse just now read to you.

“In that day (i. e. when I shall be out of your sight in heaven) ye shall ask Me nothing.”

Now here is a difficulty, which all, I suppose, who have the least serious thought, must have felt. “Ye shall ask Me nothing,” says our Lord; and yet we know that all Christians pray to Him day and night. How is that? The truth is, that the word “ask” in this first part of the verse does not mean the same as in the latter part. In the first part, to ask means to ask questions: in the second part it means to ask a favour, or to pray. When our Lord says, “In that day ye shall ask Me nothing,” He means that He should be no longer in their sight, keeping company with them as He then was, ready to hear all their enquiries, if there was anything they wanted to have explained. When He goes on and tells them in the next words, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you,” He means that, after He should be gone out of sight, prayer to the Unseen Father in His Name would be their way to obtain all good things, and among the rest, instruction in answer to their questions. Thus you see that He was speaking of His office as their Prophet or Teacher, and telling them of a change to be made in His way of exercising it. Let us consider this change a little.

When our Lord went in and out among His disciples, S. Peter, S. John and the rest, He was their Prophet and Teacher in this way: that, if they wanted to know anything, the meaning of a place in Scripture, the right and wrong of what was being done, or the like: anything in short concerning their duty: they might go straight to Him and ask Him a ques-

tion about it, as the Jews of old asked the prophets which were among them. And so in the Gospel history we find them, S. Peter and the rest, continually doing. Now what a great and unspeakable privilege this was, we all in some sort understand and feel at once: all who have the least care to know what is good and right and true. We know what a loss it is, when we are but forced to part from some good and wise parent or friend, a frail mortal like ourselves, only a little better and wiser. How much more, when they had to part from Him Who is perfect and infinite Goodness and Wisdom! Surely they must have felt like persons travelling abroad in a dark stormy night, on the point of seeing their only lamp extinguished. No wonder, if the deepest sorrow filled their heart. Now He is with us, and we can ask Him: but when He is gone, whom shall we ask? How shall we make out our duty and the meaning of our Bibles? Thus no doubt they thought and spake one to another. See then how our Lord relieves them. "I shall be no more in your sight, but you will be in My sight just as much as ever. You will not be able to come to Me and ask your questions face to face, but you may fall down on your knees and pray in My Name, and I will teach you by My Spirit. Fear not therefore: ye are not to be left alone, without an instructor, without a guide. In this respect as in all others, Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world ^a." It is true, He made these promises in the first instance to His Apostles: but through the Apostles He made them to all Christians according to their measure: as we learn from many

^a S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

other Scriptures, and especially from that of S. James: “^b If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him:” that is, as our Lord in the text says, “Though Jesus Christ is not here in sight, for you to ask questions of Him in the way of conversation, yet if you ask the same questions of Him in the way of dutiful and humble prayer, He will surely answer them in His good time, so far as the welfare of your souls requires.”

Here then, Christian brethren, is a short and safe way for you to practise in all your doubts and perplexities, whether about worldly things or heavenly. Go and ask counsel of the Lord. Say with S. Paul, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” If you dare not bring the matter before Him in this way, it is a sign of its being either a very bad matter, or else a very trifling and childish matter. If it is too bad to inquire about, or pray for a blessing upon, then of course it must be let alone: if it is too trifling, you must leave off being anxious about it: as the disciples were once forbidden to be anxious about their having brought no bread. But whatever is fit to bring before God in prayer, as being neither positively wicked nor altogether childish, concerning that you are sure of a sufficient answer, if only you pray as you ought to do. In all such matters, Christ is still engaged to be your Prophet and Teacher, quite as distinctly as Moses was the prophet and teacher of the children of Israel in the wilderness, or as our Lord Himself was the Prophet and Teacher of S. Peter and the rest before His Ascension.

Still we must remember all along, as in all that

^b S. James i. 5.

has been said before of this great subject, that the promises are not simply to every one who asks, but to every one who asks in the Name of Jesus: to every one who is still His child by Baptism, and who keeps on relying on His merits and intercession. To be still His child, as I have told you again and again, you must either be innocent or penitent: you must not be wilfully going on in any kind of sin. And to keep on really relying on His merits, you must be devout and diligent in using His means of grace, His holy Scriptures, the prayers and instructions of His Church, and most especially His holy Sacraments.

When we consider that all this is requisite, in order to our asking for wisdom in Christ's Name, we need not wonder at there being some who seem to ask for it, and yet it never comes to them. What I mean is this. Here is our Saviour's promise, "When I shall have gone up into heaven, and taken My place at My Father's Right Hand, ye shall ask in My Name for answers to all questions that need trouble you, whether about faith or duty, and I hereby pledge you My Troth, Verily, verily, you shall have an answer." On the other hand, we look around us, and we see people apparently seeking after the Truth, and professing to ask in Christ's Name, and yet either continuing in doubt all their lives long, or making up their minds in ways most opposite one to another. Christ's will indeed, and Christ's promise, would make all of the same mind: but as it is, Christians are far from agreeing, and the confusion, alas! every day seems worse rather than better. How should this be? We can only account for it by supposing, what we may too well understand by our

own sad experience, that the most part of people do not regularly pray in His Name. They use it in their prayers, but they do not really pray in it. Either they have separated themselves from Him by grievous sin, or they mar the virtue of their prayers by not really offering them up in union with His heavenly Sacrifice: and this last, as I have told you, is certainly the case, where there is carelessness in regard of Holy Communion.

These are very serious thoughts for us all. I do not suppose there is one in all the Church of Christ, who has not great need, especially at present, to look well to the prayers which he offers for light and instruction, lest they be more or less made void by want either of repentance or thorough Church communion. More especially, in some sense, should those look to it, who are, as the disciples were when our Lord made them the promise; very poor, very helpless, very low in all outward knowledge and accomplishments. Hard-working, ignorant people, as they are called: people in fields, and shops, and workhouses: they are apt to pass over their religious duties far too lightly, because, as they say, they are "no scholars," and they are now too old to learn. Nay, my brethren, but you have souls: souls which must endure for ever: souls which must either be saved or lost: and you can say some prayers, and think of God while you say them: and you have read or heard of Christ and His Cross, and you know that He only is able to save you. As then, if you were starving, you would know how to ask a friend or a father for bread, so you know how to kneel down and ask God to teach you the way to heaven. If

you have little or no scholarship, surely then it is all the more plain to you that you can by no means find out the way for yourself, and that you have but one thing to do, and that is, to give yourself up to God's teaching. You need not be out of heart, because you are no scholar. I suppose that very few, in comparison, of the first generations of Christians, and of the holy men and women, who have done most in spreading the Gospel through the world, were what would be now called scholars. Very many of the saints and martyrs, I daresay, were never able to read. But what of that? They were able to pray; they did pray in the Name of Christ, keeping themselves earnestly from all that they knew to be sin, and making the most they could of His Church and His Sacraments. Christ was not in their sight, that they might ask Him in person what they ought to believe and do: and they could not use their Bibles so as to find it: but they prayed the Father in Christ's Name to teach them, they took advice from those to whom Christ said, "° He that heareth you, heareth Me:" and so by degrees they got on very far in the school of Christ. Why should not any poor well-meaning person among ourselves do just the same?

Jesus Christ Himself was a poor man, a very poor man; people took Him for a carpenter's son; and wondered how He should know anything, seeing, as they thought, He had never even learned His letters. But on the Day which we are now preparing to keep, on Ascension Day, this same poor unlearned Carpenter, being indeed the Eternal Son of God,

° S. Luke x. 16.

went up above the highest heavens and sat down at the Right Hand of the Father, and, presently after, sent His Spirit to teach the hearts of all those poor and unlearned, who were but willing to believe Him and keep His commandments. Do but fairly make trial of Him in that way : He will enlighten you in ways which you know not of. Though you should never be able to read, nor repeat, nor discourse, nor make clever answers, only be sincere and obedient, only open your hearts to Him, and He will open your eyes and teach you wondrous things out of His law^d. For as He is a Priest, to save sinners, and a King, to protect sufferers, so is He a Prophet and Teacher always at hand, to shew His simple ones what He would have them to do.

^d Ps. cxix. 18.

**By Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension,
Good Lord, deliberate us.**

NOTE TO PAGE 98.

The simple hymn, of which the beginning is here given, is a traditional hymn for children in other parts of England also.

“ I go to my bed, I go [*or as*] to my grave,
I pray the Lord my soul to save ;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

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