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“ BARTHOLOMEW.”

A S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE TWO SOCIETIES

FOR

PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

AND

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL,

IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SALISBURY,

AUGUST 29TH, 1854.

BY

THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF NEW ZEALAND.

THE PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF THIS SERMON TO BE APPLIED TO THE DIOCESE
OF NEW ZEALAND.

SALISBURY: BROWN AND CO., CANAL.

LONDON: RIVINGTONS.

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PRICE SIXPENCE.

SALISBURY :
JAMES BENNETT, PRINTER, JOURNAL OFFICE.

A SERMON.

ST. MATT. x. 3, ST. MARK iii. 18, ST. LUKE vi. 14, ACTS i. 13.

“ BARTHOLOMEW.”

THE sum of all Christian knowledge consists in these two great questions: What the Gospel is, and how it acts upon the hearts of men? And, to attain this knowledge, it is necessary to study the character of Christ himself, and also the lives of those holy men of God, who are set forth as examples of the power of the grace of GOD working in man through Jesus Christ.

For this reason, it seems as if the right use of such occasions as this, when we assemble together on a week-day, is to study religion as seen in its influence upon man; reserving to the Lord's Day its own high and peculiar distinction, as being the day on which we should preach nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I should have been glad, therefore, if this Meeting had fallen on a Saint's Day, because I believe that our Church, so far from being guilty, as some think, of superstition in commemorating the Apostles and Evangelists, would have been wanting in her parental care

for her children, if she had not set before us lively examples of the power of Christ as manifested in man. Christ is the greater Light to rule the Lord's Day, and the Apostles and Evangelists are the lesser lights to rule the working days of the week, borrowing their light from the Sun of Righteousness, but differing from Him, as the glory of the moon differeth from the glory of the sun. There are three degrees of scriptural example placed before us—the one, the unsearchable and infinite attributes of the Eternal GOD: the other, the perfect pattern of the life of Him, who has left us an example that we should follow His steps: the last, the lives of His chosen servants, set forth for this purpose to teach us how impossible it is, even for the best of men, to come up to that perfect standard which is described by St. Paul as “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

In this spirit, my Christian Brethren, let us pray to be enabled to take up the name of the Apostle of this month (whose festival was celebrated on Thursday last), and see what lessons it can teach to bring us nearer to Christ.

Four times in the New Testament we find that name written, which has been read as the text, but the Sacred Writers have added no more. In vain we look through the three Gospels for some further notice of the Apostle: even in the Acts of the Apostles no acts of St. Bartholomew are recorded. The name stands alone, with emphatic singleness, in all the places of Scripture in which it is found.

It is true that, if we search the ancient histories of

the Church, we may find records of the labours of this Apostle in India; and that, in after years, the opinion grew, though unknown, it seems, to the Primitive Church, that Bartholomew is the Nathanael of St. John's Gospel, of whom our Lord said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile."

Be this as it may: if Bartholomew be not Nathanael we know nothing of him but his name: if he be Nathanael we know no more, than that he was that guileless man who was the first, John Baptist only excepted, to make that full confession of his faith: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of GOD; thou art the King of Israel."

And, as he was the first to confess his faith, so he was the first to receive the promise of glory:

"Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of GOD ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

It is not necessary, then, for my present purpose to state the arguments by which the opinion is supported, that the Bartholomew of the three Evangelists is the same as the Nathanael of St. John: all that we know of the one may be readily believed of many others: that he was an Israelite without guile, that he made an earnest and devout confession of his faith, and that he received a most signal blessing.

There is something very instructive in this simplicity of statement: the absence of facts makes it all the more striking. There is a superhuman dignity about the character of the Apostle; of whom some say, that the name only is known, and others, at the most, that

we know no more, than that he was a true-hearted and guileless Christian. We have no contrasts of disposition : no works of power : no words of authority : no records of holy living or of holy dying : we have only a Christian name united with the simplest form of the Christian character. We find nothing like the confession of St. Peter, followed by his denial ; the boldness of Thomas, contrasted with his unbelief ; the zeal of Saul, the persecutor, changed into the zeal of Paul, the Apostle ; we look again and again at the name of Bartholomew, as if we would fain compel it to give forth some of the treasures of the meaning which it contains : but there is nothing but the name, and with that name it behoves us to be content. How can we think it needful that the works of mortal men should be recorded, when many even of the works of Christ were left unwritten ? “ There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” (John xxi. 25.) And again (John xx. 30), “ Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book : but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ : and that believing ye might have life through his name.” One simple miracle of knowledge had convinced Nathanael, and that guileless Israelite needed no more to teach him to believe at once that Jesus is the Christ. How then could he think that any record of his own works could benefit mankind, when one of the least of the works of Christ had been sufficient for himself ? If he had been offered a larger

place in the Gospel of St. John, would he not have prayed the Evangelist to record some more of the words and works of Christ, rather than to waste one page upon an unprofitable servant like himself? The beloved disciple who lay in his Lord's bosom, and knew the mind that was in Him, would have known and felt that even Jesus used not his own Gospel as a means of glorifying Himself. "Many other signs truly did Jesus, but these are written that ye might believe."

No sooner was miraculous power granted to the Apostles, than the error began of boasting of works. Luke x. 17. "The seventy returned again with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.' 'But,' he said, 'in this rejoice not that the Spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.'" What a Book of the Acts of the Apostles would have been written if the Spirit of God had not guided the sacred writers. How would the name and works of Christ have been hidden under the cumbrous register of every act of an Apostle or of a Deacon. How eagerly would the men who debated, even at the last Supper, "which should be the greatest," have spent whole volumes upon the glorification of themselves. The same Spirit of God, by Whom they did the works, taught them to glory in nothing so much as in their own infirmities, that "the excellency of the power" might be seen to be of God and not of man, and that the strength of God might be made perfect in their weakness. But when the gifts of the Spirit were withdrawn, there followed an age of unblushing boastfulness grounded upon pretended

miracles: the world, from which many even of the works of Christ had been withheld, could scarce contain the legends and fables of Saints and Martyrs which displaced the Word of GOD from its candlestick in the Church, and hid it under a bushel. Even a Church arose, built, not upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, but upon the merits of men, and the pride of secular dominion; and the Spirit of Christ so far departed from the Church for which his blessed Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul had shed their blood, that he who called himself Christ's vicegerent upon earth, held high festival and offered up solemn thanksgiving for 2000 souls massacred in cold blood in the name of religion, in the city of one whom men called the most Christian King, and on the very day of the humble Bartholomew and the guileless Nathanael.

Such is the fruit of the Pride of Works: and well might Bartholomew, if his counsel were asked by the Evangelists, have prayed to be left unnoticed or to be recorded only by his name. For his prophetic eye must have foreseen, that the works of men would ever be most praised, when praise is least deserved. For there are four ages in every work of man, and even in the works of the Church. The first, in which men work, and talk not: the second, in which they both work and talk: the third, in which they talk and do not work: the fourth, the age of death, in which they neither work nor talk. He lived in the golden age of the Church, the age of work; when men, led by the

Spirit of God, were content to lay their stone upon the foundation of Christ, to be hidden as the building rose by other courses of goodly stones; all growing into an holy temple in the Lord. The pride of foundership could scarcely exist, when every Apostle might see by the Spirit of Prophecy, that the Churches would soon become corrupt, and some, like the seven Churches of Asia, pass away from the earth, while the universal Church of Christ would still grow and spread forth its branches, secure in the promise of its Lord, that “the gates of hell should not prevail against it.”

We see, then, in that simple name which is all that we have on record of this Apostle, the lesson, and a deeply important lesson it is, to give all the glory to Christ, as He himself will render up the kingdom to God, even the Father, “that God may be all in all.” But when we ascribe to Him the merit of all works, the excellency of all power, the perfection of all goodness, there remains to us still a name; and though a name alone, yet a name to be for ever valued, if it has been spoken by the mouth of Christ in his act of choosing and calling his disciples. “Rejoice,” he said to his disciples, “because your names are written in heaven.” What is it to have cast out devils, or to have healed the sick, compared with the glory of being one of those whose names are written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world? How unspeakable is the blessing of being one of those whom God has “chosen before the foundation of the world,” (Ephes. 1. 4.) and sealed with this his own seal—“The Lord knoweth them that are His.” (2 Tim. ii. 19.) To be

one of the sheep whom Christ calls by name ; one of the lambs whom He carrieth in His bosom ; one of the poor of this world rich in faith, whom men despise, but Angels carry to the bosom of Abraham ; to be one of the little ones of whom Christ said that “ of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” To be any one of these is a state as full of real blessing, as to do works greater even than the works of Christ himself.

This was the difference between Christ and His disciples. In the midst of glory at His transfiguration His discourse was of death: in the midst of the sorrows of the Last Supper, there was a strife among the disciples, which should be accounted the greatest. So needful was the warning of our Lord, and God grant it may sink deep into all our hearts: “ He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.”

May this day, then, be to us, brethren, a holy lesson, in which one word, one name alone may be the guide of many a thought and action of our future lives. To all who have been received into the Church by Baptism, and to all who have renewed their Baptismal promise in Confirmation ; and to all who intend to come to this Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ ; and to us all who have chosen this day for our Diocesan Meeting ; a single word rightly applied, will be enough to point the highest lessons of the Gospel to our hearts.

To a heart prepared with guileless humility, a single word is enough: “ Mary” was that single word, that Christian name, which brought the first witness of the Resurrection to the knowledge of the Lord. “ So let

every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

Ye that are baptized, rejoice that your names are written in Heaven in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Ye that are confirmed rejoice that ye are numbered among the living stones laid upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets ; Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner stone.

We all who now intend to come to this Holy Communion must take warning from our Lord's Last Supper, not to come with the question who should be the greatest, but to confess that we are not worthy to gather up the crumbs which fall from our Master's Table.

And those among us who will assemble this day in the Diocesan Meeting, will learn from the name of this unrecorded and unpraised apostle the true spirit of our duties. He was called by our Lord Himself, and followed him whithersoever he went: he was with Him at the last Supper, when the Good Shepherd counted His own Sheep, and thanked God that one only was lost: he was present at those solemn meetings at which our Lord appeared after His resurrection: he witnessed His ascension: he received His blessing: he was present at the Election of Matthias, and at the first General Council at Jerusalem: he obeyed his Lord's Commandment to His Apostles, to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature:" but what he said, or what he did is unknown to all, save to God from whom nothing is hidden. He loved the

praise of GOD more than the praise of men. He cast in his lot among his brethren : he was content that all should have one spiritual purse. The individual will ; the personal conceit ; the selfishness of ownership ; and the pride of foundershship : all were merged in the Catholic Unity of the Apostolic Church. To be even a hidden stone in such a glorious building ; to be the smallest joint in such a divinely compacted body, was enough for one, who had learned at the feet of Christ, what it is to be converted and to become as a little child.

And yet, what man cannot and dare not assume, God freely gives. That name which appears so humbly among the Apostles of Christ, without record of acts, or praise of merits, was written in the Lamb's book of Life from the foundation of the world. That name was seen by angels written where men saw it not. It was written among the names of the twelve Patriarchs and of the twelve tribes of Israel : it was the name of one of the twelve Wells of Elim, whose waters fed the seventy Palm Trees (Exodus xv. 27), which like the disciples, drank life and wisdom from those apostolic fountains. It was written among the twelve pillars of Moses (Exodus xxiv. 4) ; and on one of the stones of the breastplate of the High Priest (Exodus xxxix. 14). It was written on one of the twelve stones which Joshua placed in Jordan (Joshua iv. 9) ; and of those with which Elijah built his altar on Tabor (1 Kings xviii. 31). It was seen in the twelve yoke of oxen of Elisha (1 Kings xix 19) ; and in the twelve oxen which supported Solomon's brazen sea (1 Kings vii.

25); and it is seen by Angels and by Evangelists in the humblest ordinances of earth and in the height of heaven. One of the twelve baskets of the broken bread of Christ was borne of Bartholomew (Luke ix. 17); and one also of the twelve fruits of the tree of life (Revelations xxii. 2). His name is written on one of the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem (Revelations xxi. 14); and on one of the twelve thrones which are set in heaven for the judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. xix. 28, Luke xxii. 28—30). One of the twelve legions of angels own him as its leader and its judge; and he is one of the twelve stars in the crown of the Bride of Christ.

Such is the glorious fruit of Catholic Unity: that we may live not to ourselves but to God and Christ; seeking not the praise of men but of God, loving ourselves least, merging all private feelings in the public good; following in all things St. Peter's golden rule, "All of you be subject one to another," and be clothed with humility.

We are called this day to a great and holy work: no less than the fulfilment of our part of the commandment of our Blessed Lord, to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." We have seen, I hope, the principles upon which that work must be carried on, in quietness and confidence towards God, and in humility and moderation towards men. In an age when missionary zeal has flagged, and charity has become circumscribed within narrow limits, it may be necessary to have recourse to public meetings and other means of excitement, to impart information and

to awaken interest. But let us always remember that this is not the work itself but the remedy for the defect of work ; it is the age when men talk rather than work, and not the true apostolic age in which men are so much absorbed in their work that they have scarcely leisure so much as to speak. The water is most certain to be shallow where the brook bubbles most. It ought to be enough, and the time will come when it will be enough, to read as an offertory sentence before a missionary collection, the simple commandment "Go ye into all the World and preach the Gospel to every creature."

And then every heart will recognize the duty, and especially those who dwell at home at ease, of offering up their prayers and their alms for the promotion of a work in which they cannot engage in person. What a little thing it seems to give alms, or to offer prayers ; and yet if we could follow those alms and those prayers throughout their ministry in earth and heaven, we should see every penny stamped with the image and superscription of Christ ; and every prayer borne up by Angels to the one great Mediator Who is at the right hand of the Throne of God. How thankful then ought we to be that our Church recommends a solemn offertory in which our prayers and our alms may go up together as a memorial before God ; prayers spoken out of the abundance of the heart ; alms offered up in the name of Christ. We do not give because we are moved by present excitement, we give in the fulfilment of a great and constant duty ; we shall not give at the Church doors, and retire, like the ostrich that lays her

eggs in the sand, and leave our gifts unblessed. We do not send our gifts merely to be counted at the table of the money-changers, but we shall lay them humbly and reverently on the table of the Lord. Why are those banners hung up in this house of God, but because they were once consecrated to the God of battles, and blessed in the name of the Lord of Sabaoth? Much more, your alms offerings, which will go forth to-day to support the Soldiers of the Cross, must be consecrated and blessed in the name of the Lord. We shall not give our alms to-day that our names may be recorded in subscription lists, or read out with applause at public meetings, but in the spirit of Bartholomew, adding our contributions to the general bank of the Church, without any record left behind to tell what we have given or what we have done.

Especially when we regard the object for which our alms are given, we shall see how needful it is that they should be accompanied with prayer and blessing. For, half of the alms which we offer up this day will go to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the oldest Missionary Society of the Church of England, which sends the Bible and the Prayer Book into every village in this country, and has sent out a version of the Prayer Book in the language of New Zealand; and the other half will go to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which now for a century and a half has sent forth its missionaries to the Colonies of the British Empire, and is recognized as the Parent of the great Sister Church of the United States, and of the 28 Dioceses of our Colonial Empire, and is now

stretching forth its arms to India and China, and Africa; to the 500,000,000 of Heathens who live on the confines of our Colonies. Every pound that is given to-day will gain, I trust, its five or its ten pounds. I pray you then to give in faith, strive to see in the coin that is given the visible sign of great works of grace to be accomplished in the name of Jesus Christ, and by the power of His Spirit. Give as if you could see your gift entering in the form of a Bible into the cottage of the poor, or teaching the child to pray in the words of our Holy Mother the Church; or as if you could see it swelling and multiplying and bearing fruit an hundred-fold, in countries which you will never visit, and among people of unknown countenances and divers tongues. They are now unknown, but you will see and know those whom your prayers and your alms have brought to Christ, in the day when we shall stand trembling yet rejoicing, in the midst of that "great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who will be gathered at the last day before the Throne of God and of the Lamb.







