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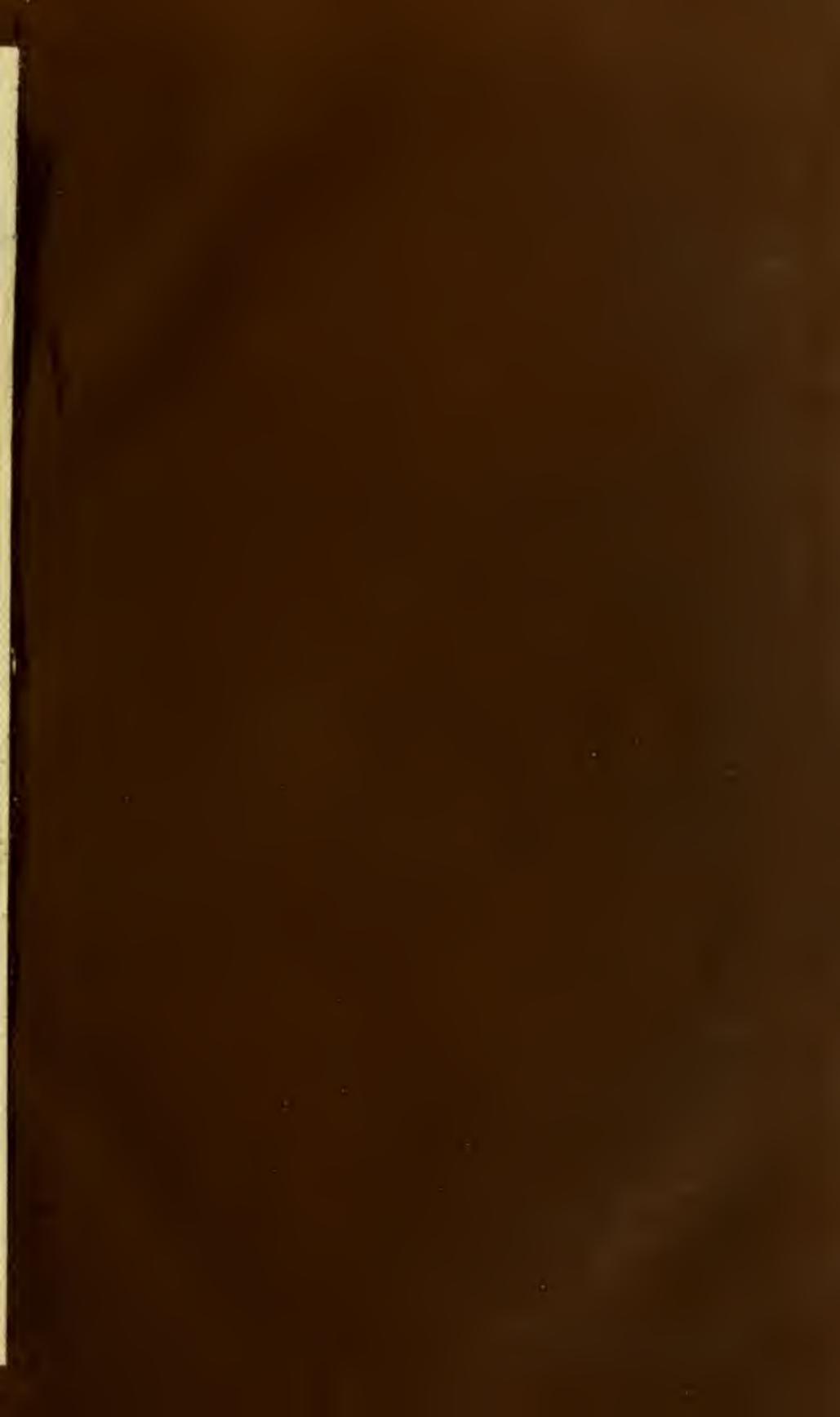
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THE BRITISH WEEKLY PULPIT.



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[WITH TITLE PAGE AND INDEX  
TO VOL. II., ONE PENNY.]

## THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. CANON DRIVER, D.D.

*Preached at Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge, on Sunday, April 27, 1890.*

“God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets, by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son.”—HEBREWS i. 1, 2.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews opens in the Greek with two significant adverbs *πολυμερῶς* and *πολυτρόπως*, which the writer uses for the purpose of characterising the revelation contained in the Old Testament. The first of these adverbs is one which it is difficult to reproduce in our language at once forcibly and idiomatically. Perhaps the sense expressed by it will be best understood if we recollect that it is opposed to *ἀμερῶς*, which would denote *singly, undividedly*: and that it thus conveys the idea of what, instead of being single and undivided, is broken into many parts. If we might illustrate the Apostle's meaning by a metaphor, we might say that he represents God's former revelation as not concentrated in a single volume, or mediated by a single agent, but as distributed through many channels, and mediated by a succession of different agents. In the use of the term it is, moreover, indirectly involved that the individual agents in whom God thus severally spake, received but a partial—we might almost say fragmentary—revelation of His will. *πολυτρόπως*, the other adverb which the writer of the Epistle uses, is explained more readily; it indicates simply diversity of manner, “in many modes.” The same two adverbs are used, as it happens, in combination by Clement of Alexandria,\* in illustration of the epithet *πολυποικίλος* applied by St. Paul to the wisdom of God in Eph. iii. 10, which displays itself, this father says, “for our advantage ‘in many parts and in many modes,’ in art, in knowledge, in faith, in prophecy.” It is the manifold and

\* Quoted by Dr. Westcott in his note *ad loc.*

multiform manifestation of God, received of old by the fathers through the prophets, which the Apostle here describes, and with which he contrasts the single and supreme revelation made "at the end of these days," in One who was no prophet, or other subordinate minister, but "a son."

I propose to offer for your consideration to-day some reflections suggested by these words of the Apostle, on the variety of form and circumstance and occasion, with which, as recorded in the Old Testament, God revealed Himself to the fathers. And first and foremost He revealed Himself to them in the prophets properly so called. With but few exceptions, it is only the prophets who make the claim to announce God's "word," to enunciate a message which they have received from Him. The prophet is in a peculiar sense the organ of Jehovah's will. He has listened in the council of the Almighty; he has stood, in vision, in the presence-chamber of the Most High, and heard there words which thrilled through his inmost being; he has felt within him the impulse before which he quailed as at the lion's roar, or which consumed his bones as a hidden fire; he knows that Jehovah "doeth nothing but He revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets;" ever and anon, as he speaks, it is "Thus saith Jehovah," "Hear ye the word of Jehovah," "'Tis the oracle of Jehovah." If there are degrees of inspiration, the highest degree must surely be sought in those who thus constantly and unwaveringly declare the plenitude of their inspiration, and claim to bring directly to men the message of the Most High. But the prophets did not always receive this message through the same activity of their mental organism. Sometimes they became conscious of it in a vision; more frequently, as it would seem, by an impulse or direction given to their waking thoughts, or by a quickening of their natural faculties of intuition or reflection. And their message when received was communicated to men in many different forms. Sometimes it was expressed in plain, direct language; sometimes it was made palpable in a significant act; more often it was clothed by the prophet's imagination in the gorgeous dress of poetic symbolism. In genius and character the individual prophets differ widely; but they all possess, in a rare degree, the power of presenting their thought in an attractive literary garb. The flowing periods of Amos, the condensed vehemence of Hosea, the majestic oratory of Isaiah, the artless pathos of Jeremiah, the studied pictures of Ezekiel, the warm and impassioned eloquence of the great prophet of the exile—all, in different ways, while they reflect the diversified individuality of their authors, at the same time excite profoundly the reader's interest and attention.

Nor are the topics with which the prophets deal less varied than their styles. The prophets come to the forefront in many capacities. They move with the times, and are the representatives of the best

thought and of the best culture which the Israelitish nation could produce. Politically, they are their nation's truest counsellors at the critical moments of its history. In earlier times they are influential in setting up or dethroning dynasties : at a later time they stand beside the king to admonish or advise. They saw more clearly than their contemporaries, as the result repeatedly showed, the bearing upon Israel of the movements and tendencies operative about them : they interpreted beforehand the signs of the times, and warned their countrymen how to face the future. With what clear insight do Amos and Hosea detect the germs of dissolution in the fabric of the northern kingdom ! How confidently and how unerringly does Isaiah declare, first the failure of Syria and Ephraim, then the failure of those more formidable aggressors, the Assyrians, in their projects for the ruin of Judah ! With what a just instinct does he plant his finger upon the hollowness of Egyptian promises ! And how truly a century afterwards does Jeremiah, apparently in direct antagonism to the line pursued by his great predecessor, foresee the success of the Chaldæans, and divine the purpose of Providence to crown Nebuchadnezzar as the monarch of Western Asia ! And yet another prophet, still in advance of his contemporaries, when the appointed term of the Babylonian empire was approaching, heralded the advent of the conqueror who was to overthrow it, sustained with glowing promises the failing spirits of his countrymen, and sketched in grand, imposing outline his nation's future destiny. From the time of Moses onwards, at every important epoch in the history of Israel, it was a prophet who assumed the place of authority, and taught his people the duty which the age required of it.

But the prophets were more than political counsellors ; they were the chief upholders of morality and religion. Not only did they uphold generally, in accents of solemn earnestness which can never lose their spell, the claims of righteousness, philanthropy, equity, and other social virtues—so apt in all countries, but especially in Eastern countries, to be disregarded—and the claims of Jehovah as against other gods whose worship possessed often such a strange attractiveness for the less spiritually minded Israelites ; but they taught also many special lessons. Amos, for instance, teaches the impartiality with which God views all nations, and shows that he demands of Israel precisely the same standard of equity and right which He exacts of other nations. Hosea, the prophet of religious emotion, teaches the love with which Jehovah regards Israel, and while reproaching Israel for the imperfect manner in which His love was requited by it, deduces the lesson that the individual Israelite who seeks to participate in God's love, must show love, on his own part, to his brother man. Isaiah, in imagery of which he alone is master, sets forth the majesty of Jehovah's Godhead, declares the triumph of righteousness and true religion in the overthrow of the Assyrian, and holds up before his nation the inspiring ideals

of a renovated human nature, a purified and transformed society. Ezekiel, while watching from his distant exile's home the toils closing around Jerusalem, asserts, in uncompromising stringency, the doctrine of individual responsibility, and vindicates—though in a very different manner from Isaiah—the majesty of Jehovah, which might seem to have been disparaged by the disastrous ruin of the city of His choice. And the prophet to whom I have already alluded as heralding the advent of Cyrus, preaches, in language more exalted and impressive than is to be found in any other part of the Bible, the transcendence, the omnipotence, the infinitude of Israel's God, His incomparable and incommunicable Being, and withal His purposes of salvation, which, though they are directed with special affection towards Israel, comprehend within their ultimate scope all the kindreds of the earth. In the approaching restoration of the exiled nation, he sees, what Ezekiel did not see, an event of crucial significance in the history of the world, and one adapted in the end to create a revolution in the religious feelings of mankind. In the case of every prophet, the message, which it is distinctively his to bring, is correlated partly with his individual character and genius, partly with the circumstances and history of his age. And thus in many parts and in many modes did God speak to the fathers in the prophets.

The historical books describe another aspect of God's dealings with His people; they narrate from different points of view, and with different degrees of historical precision, Israel's chequered history—the story how from small beginnings and through many vicissitudes it rose to be an organised nation, able to hold its own among its neighbours, shorn of part of its glory by the Assyrians, but succumbing finally only to the Chaldæans, and then wonderfully restored to its ancient home in order to complete its destined course of history. Providence watched over Israel's path, and guided the hands of its leading men. And the history, as it is told, is penetrated from the beginning with religious ideas.) The narrative of the Creation sets forth, in a series of *representative* pictures, the sovereignty of God; His priority to, and separation from, all finite, material nature; His purpose to constitute an ordered cosmos; His endowment of man with the peculiar, unique possession of self-conscious reason, in virtue of which he becomes capable of natural and moral life, and is even able to hold communion with his Maker. The story of the Fall shows how human wilfulness thwarted God's purpose in regard to the future of man, and introduced into the world moral disorder. The account of the Flood becomes a typical illustration of God's anger against sin, as the covenant formed by Him with Noah evinces the gracious regard with which, if they would but respond, He views the whole race of mankind. In the narratives which follow, although it is probable that we have mostly traditions rather than the testimony of eye-witnesses, both the contents and the animating spirit are not less

remarkable. In the history of the patriarchs we have the picture of men, who, in that distant age, are witnesses and examples of a lively faith to those of other nations with whom they come in contact, and who, while moving about with their flocks and their herds, and though drawn by their wives and children and family connections into various entanglements, are still the founders of a religious community: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment—" (Gen. xviii. 19). The patriarchs are engaged in founding not one of the empires of the world, but a kingdom of which righteousness is to be the rule. The ideal character and aims of the people of God are prefigured in their history. It is the religious colouring of the narrative which impresses us, the didactic aim which, apparently unsought for, nevertheless attaches to it. The story of Israel's ancestors might have been told very differently. The religious spirit might have been absent from it altogether. As it is, the patriarchs are types of religious characters; and their lives abound with lessons for ourselves.

Nor is the case different afterwards. In the Mosaic age the conspicuous figure is the character of Moses himself. The character of Moses is sketched with peculiar vividness and force: he is represented as endowed, in a pre-eminent degree, with singleness of aim, with nobility of mind, with unwearied and self-sacrificing devotion for the welfare of his people, and with that modesty both of word and demeanour which is observable in all the best characters of Old Testament history. Hosea styles him a prophet: prophetic insight and foresight are ascribed to him in the Pentateuch: Jehovah is represented as holding converse with him, not by a vision or a dream, but with some special and distinctive clearness, "as a man speaketh with his friend." To the period while Israel was at Sinai, there is referred the re-affirmation of the aim of Israel's national existence, which was foreshadowed in the history of Abraham: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all peoples: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (Exod. xix. 5, 6). To Moses, in a supreme moment of his life, is vouchsafed the manifestation of Jehovah's gracious character which dominates Israel's history and which prophets and psalmists, one after another, re-echo: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin: and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped"

(Exod. xxxiv. 6—8). To Moses are attributed the words which with a burst of grateful enthusiasm celebrate the theocratic privileges of the chosen people: "There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun, Who rideth upon the heaven for thy help, and in His excellency on the skies. . . . Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and that is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (Deut. xxxiii. 26—29). Upon all the pictures which we possess of the Mosaic age, there is impressed a profound consciousness of Israel's vocation, of the duties imposed upon it, and of the privileges which it enjoys.

In the Law of Moses, God speaks in different ways; and we hear his voice accommodating itself to the needs of different ages, and of different classes of men. In one group of laws the needs of a simple, comparatively immature, agricultural society appear to be held in view. While the Decalogue embodies the fundamental maxims of man's duty towards God and his neighbour, such as are valid while human nature remains the same, the group of laws following it regulates such subjects as slavery, the rights of neighbours possessing contiguous fields and pastures, compensation for injury to life or limb, cases of damage to property; and prescribe rudimentary principles of sacrifice and religious worship. One or two of the provisions strike us as harsh; and certainly, when applied literally, in ages deficient in the historical instinct, to altered conditions of society, these have sometimes led to disastrous consequences; but side by side with them we are sensible of an atmosphere of true philanthropy, and in one instance, note the anticipation, in a form suited to the time, of a genuinely Christian spirit, in the injunction, viz., not to refuse help to an enemy in his need—"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou shalt forbear to leave it to him alone; thou shalt surely loosen it with him" (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5). In another group of laws, those embodied in Deuteronomy, the requirements of a more advanced society are contemplated: the provisions of the code embrace more complicated relations of life; great stress is laid upon the moral and religious motives which should prompt obedience to them; the spiritual teaching is higher and more definite. In yet another group (Lev. xvii.—xxvi.) the holiness which should determine and pervade the Israelite's life is emphasised; and the principle is made the basis of a series of important moral and social obligations. And a fourth and larger group regulates with some minuteness the ceremonial institutions, which as time advanced became more and more distinctly the formal expression of Israel's faith. The ceremonial system of ancient Israel has played an important function in the religious

education of mankind. It enforced and deepened the sense of sin. It declared the need of restoration and forgiveness. It developed—perhaps gradually—in the form of institutions the great principles which regulate man's converse with God. It emphasised the significance of sacrifice under its different aspects, as eucharistic, dedicatory, propitiatory. It taught more and more distinctly that an atoning rite must precede the acceptance of the worshipper by God. It thus established the principles which in the fulness of time were to receive their supreme and final application in the sacrifice of Christ. In all its stages, the Mosaic law held before the eyes of Israel an ideal of duty to be observed, of laws to be obeyed, of principles to be maintained; it taught them that human nature needed to be restrained, it impressed upon them the necessity of discipline. And in an age when disintegrating influences might have operated disastrously upon the nation, the institutions of the law bound together the majority of its members in a religious society, strong enough to resist the forces which threatened to dissolve it. In many parts and in many modes did God, through the ordinances of the law, speak to His people, training it till it should be able to dispense with their aid, and be ready to assimilate the higher teaching of Christ. But the imperfect and provisional character of the law is, in principle, expressly recognised by our Lord, Who says of one enactment that it was written "for the hardness of your hearts," and Who even propounds a higher standard of action than is presented in the Decalogue itself. It thus affords a conspicuous example of God speaking to His people in language that had not only a relative value, and was suited only to the needs of a particular people, and of particular times.

God spake again to the fathers through poetry, the language of the emotions, the language in which every nation has uttered some of the deepest thought of its heart. The poetry of the Old Testament is surpassed in its kind by none; who is insensible to the charm of its light and graceful movement, its balanced responsive rhythm, so grateful to the ear even in a translation, the truth and force with which the scenery of nature or human life and character are delineated in it? It is moreover singularly varied in its themes; the Hebrew poets speak in many strains and in many moods. We hear fragments of the martial lyrics in which national victories or the deeds of national heroes were celebrated by the nation's poets; and more than one triumphant ode in which the nation or an individual renders thanks for the deliverance vouchsafed by Jehovah has been preserved complete. We have the dramatic poem, in which by the interchange of argument a great problem of human life is illustrated on its different sides, and the reader is thus gradually led up to the truth which the poet desires finally to unfold. We have, at least in a rudimentary form, the drama itself, in the Song of Songs, where

with rare delicacy of language, and beauty of figure and of thought there is represented the triumph of faithful love over the blandishments of a monarch and the attractions of a gilded court. We have the elegy, in which the poet in accents of tenderness bewails his lost friend, or speaking on behalf of his nation dwells pathetically upon its sufferings, appeals beseechingly to the Divine compassion, and ends with the assurance of restoration to come. We have gnomic poetry, founded, as it seems, by the wise king Solomon, cultivated after him by others of those shrewd observers of life and character whom Israel produced, in which the wisdom of many generations is stored up for the instruction of future ages. In the Psalter all voices of the human soul are heard. There is a despondency unrelieved by any gleam of light; there is grief ending in hope, or even in a strain of thanksgiving in confident anticipation of coming deliverance; there is distress and anguish, sometimes caused by persecuting foes, sometimes by a faithless friend, sometimes resulting from sickness, sometimes produced by the consciousness of sin; there are psalms of faith and resignation, of rejoicing and jubilation, of yearning for God's presence, and the spiritual privilege of communion with Him; there are didactic psalms, psalms deducing lessons from the past, or meditating on the problems and contradictions of the present; there are psalms echoing national calamities or successes; there is the cry of penitence wrung from the nation's heart by the bitter experiences of exile; there is its new-born consciousness of a wider and more glorious future in store for it, in the psalms which declare that "the Lord is King"; there are prophetic outlooks into the future; there are meditations on the power and goodness of God as shown in creation, in history, in His dealings with the human race and with Israel. In the Psalms the devotional element of the religious character finds its completest expression; and the soul is displayed in converse with God, disclosing to Him its manifold emotions, desires, aspirations. It is the surprising variety of mood, and subject, and occasion in the Psalms, which gives them their catholicity, and fits them to be the hymn-book, not of the second Temple only, but of the Christian Church. In the Psalms we hear the voices of many different men, possessed of different temperaments, moving in the midst of different circumstances, and living at very different periods of the nation's life. But national history was the instrument which, in God's hands, struck the keynote of the deepest utterances of the psalmist, not less than of the prophet, in ancient Israel.

And thus in many parts and many modes did the voice of God speak unto the fathers in the prophets. Yet we must not suppose that it spoke in them mechanically: the prophet was not, <sup>ions,</sup> <sup>the forme</sup> the Greek *μάντις* was imagined to be, the unintelligent medium through which truth from another world was communi-

cated to man. (The psychical conditions under which God spoke in them, the nature and operation of the initial impulse which brought them to the consciousness of Divine truth, may belong to those secrets of man's inner life which God has reserved to Himself: but by whatever means this consciousness was aroused, the Divine element which it contained was assimilated by the prophet, and thus appears blended with the elements that were the expression of his own character and genius. The Divine thought takes shape in the soul of the prophet, and is presented to us, so to speak, in the garb and imagery with which he has invested it; it is expressed in terms which bear the external marks of his own individuality, and reflect the circumstances of time and place and other similar conditions, under which it was first propounded. Divine truth is always presented through the human organ: it is always, though not perhaps always to the same degree, coloured by the medium through which it has been transmitted. The Divine and the human elements are inseparably blended, and not as it would seem, in every part of the Old Testament, in precisely the same proportions. The material data contained in the historical books lay no claim to be derived from other than human sources, and there are at least portions of the same books, the spiritual value of which is not as great as that of the Prophets or the Psalms. Nor can it be denied that there are parts of the Old Testament in which a personal, or national, temper asserts itself in a spirit which is not that of Christ. And if, moreover, it be true that in the religion of Israel that which is perfect is not yet attained, but is only in process of being reached, then, as the venerable Delitzsch has remarked in his last work,\* it ought not to offend us even should the Old Testament Scriptures prove to contain more elements that are relatively imperfect than has hitherto been supposed to be the case.

But viewed generally the human element, whether it be present in a larger or smaller proportion, is interpenetrated and suffused by an element higher than itself: it is illumined, elevated, and refined by a peculiar and unique operation of the Spirit of God. True and noble thoughts gleam like flashes of light from the pages of the great thinkers of ancient Greece; the labours of modern scholars have disclosed to us the forms of those searchers after truth, who in a remote past, and in distant climes, felt after God, and in part also found Him (for "He left not Himself without witness" among men): but the voices of these men are dim and faltering, as compared with the clear and vivid consciousness of truth which is reflected in every part of the Old Testament; and the truths which they reached contrast strongly, in respect of fulness, warmth, and richness, with those which are enunciated by the prophets and

\* *Messianische Weissagungen* (1890), p. 20.

poets of ancient Israel. These writers speak from a soul that has been touched, and a heart that has been warmed by the Spirit of the living God. And that the religion of Israel, though subject in its growth to historical conditions, is not to be explained as arising solely out of them, is not, in other words, to be treated as a natural product of the genius of the people, appears besides from the fact that it stands from the beginning above the ordinary level that was reached by the nation generally: throughout its history the people are represented as needing to be taught by others, as declining from truth by which they ought to have been guided, as falling short of the ideal propounded to them. The natural tendencies of the nation did not move in the direction of spiritual religion. There is no ground to suppose that, apart from the special illumination vouchsafed to the great teachers who originated, or sustained, the principles of its faith, the religious history of Israel would have differed materially from that of the kindred nations by which it was surrounded.

I close with some thoughts, suggested by what has been said, on the permanent importance of the Old Testament. It is important in the first place, on account of the revelation which it contains of the character of God, Who is represented in it as a personal Being, Who, though depicted under the most vivid anthropomorphic imagery, is nevertheless conceived always as purely spiritual, is never confused either with the world or with material emblems of His presence; Who possesses a definite moral character, all holy, all just, all wise; Who condescends to enter into relations of grace with His intelligent creatures; Who loves man, and will in turn be loved by him; Whose anger is aroused by sin, but Who is gracious to the repentant sinner; Who manifests Himself in His redemptive purpose to Israel, and designs in the future to manifest Himself to other nations as well; Who leads His nation step by step as with a father's hand, through joy and sorrow, through success and disappointment, through victory and defeat, to know Him better, and to learn His character more clearly.

Secondly, the Old Testament sets before us an ideal of human character; it stimulates us by many a noble example of faith and action. Of course the characters which it brings before us are not faultless; some are held up as warnings; in the case of others, it is evident, their faults are fewer and less grave than they would have been, had they lived where the purifying and mellowing influence of the religion of Israel could not have reached them. Even in the prehistoric and patriarchal ages the principal characters are so delineated as to be typically significant; they constitute examples to be either imitated or shunned. In a later age we see a man like David, endowed with high personal qualities, amiable, generous, disinterested, loyal, "a born ruler of men," in spite of the occasion of his great fall, and in spite also of

some other occasions on which he was not superior to the spirit of his age—manifesting in his demeanour and actions generally the softening influence of his religion. We see in a book like *Ruth* religion operative in a lowlier sphere, sanctifying and elevating the ordinary duties of life. We see exemplified in the prophets sincerity of purpose, uncompromising opposition to vice and sin, constant devotion to principle, firm faith in a higher power. We see, as I have already said, the devotional temper, under many different aspects, exemplified in the *Book of Psalms*. The religion of the Old Testament produced a type of character which, though it may have lacked the finer graces which the teaching and example of Christ produced, is one which we may all strive to imitate. Naturally our judgment upon individuals must be controlled by the absolute principles of conduct recognised by the Old Testament itself; nor must we forget that in some respects the circumstances of ancient Israel were different from ours, so that maxims of action beyond the pale of what is moral and spiritual, cannot be transferred immediately to ourselves: but in its predominant features human nature is the same in all ages; so that the lesson as a rule can be applied directly.

Thirdly, the Old Testament has an intimate and important bearing upon the Christian faith. As a matter of history, Judaism was the cradle of Christianity. Viewed humanly, Christianity in its origin took the form of a reaction against the paralysing influences of Rabbinism, a reaction resting primarily upon a return to the more spiritual religion of the prophets—a call of which the first note was struck by John the Baptist, “the heir of the prophets.” I am speaking of it in its initial stage: of course many fresh elements were added afterwards. But although Christianity was thus a reaction against the unspiritual developments of the later legalism, it does not need to be pointed out how deeply its roots were laid in the ancient faith of Israel, what vital doctrines it appropriated from Israel’s teaching, and took for granted; or how the long and gradual preparation of history fitted the soil for its growth. Of the elements forming the preparation in history for Christ, while some, it is true, were contributed from other quarters, those of central and material importance were supplied by the religion of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is also of importance, for us, evidentially. When all deductions which exegetical and critical honesty demands have been made, it is impossible to overlook or deny the correspondence subsisting between the anticipations and ideals of Israel and their fulfilment in Christ. It is remarkable how, while most nations placed their visions of perfection in the past and looked back sorrowfully to a golden age which had passed for ever away, the Jews uniformly look forward: how their most representative men expressed expectations which nothing in their own age satisfied; how they held out, and adhered to, ideals which

remained unrealised; how, heedless of the irony of history, they still projected the image of a changed social state; how they proclaimed the advent of a Prophet and of a King, who by the supreme graces of His person, and the superhuman qualities of His rule, should transform and regenerate human nature; how they announced confidently the future abolition of restrictions which the principles of their own religion appeared to treat as permanently valid. The prophets shadow forth a *summum bonum*, transcending experience in which the Gentiles are to participate equally with the chosen people, and which they believe is destined assuredly to be realised. And when we look more closely we perceive that distinct lines of prophecy and type converge upon Christ, and He fulfils them. In Him the ideals, flung forth with magnificent profusion upon the pages of the Old Testament, are gathered up and realised. Special predictions are indeed sometimes doubtful exegetically, sometimes capable of being otherwise explained; but there is one truth writ too large in the Bible to be obliterated or debated, that the Old Testament exhibits the development, by successive stages, of a grand redemptive purpose, and that the New Testament records its completion. In the Gospel the principles inchoate in the Old Testament are matured; in the kingdom which Christ has founded the aims and aspirations of the great teachers of Israel are satisfied and fulfilled.

### “TALITHA CUMI.”

*A Sermon to Children.*

BY THE REV. J. PATERSON, *Belgrave Presbyterian Church, London.*

“Talitha cumi.”—ST. MARK v. 41.

THESE words, though very strange words to us, were beautiful words to Mark. As perhaps you already know, there were three languages used in the country where Jesus lived. You remember how, when they crucified Him, they put above His head His accusation, written in Hebrew and in Greek and in Latin. Hebrew was the mother tongue of that country; Greek was used by the men that wrote books; and Latin was used in the Roman Law Courts. Mark is telling the story of our Saviour's life in the Greek. But many of the talks of Jesus were in Hebrew, so Mark has to put the Hebrew into Greek as he writes. Usually that was an easy enough task. When, however, he came to these two words, he felt that they lost their beauty in the Greek. For the sake of his Hebrew readers, he put down the very words Jesus used, and then he tried to tell in Greek what they meant. His difficulty was this—“Talitha” is the Hebrew word for “a little lamb,” and the Greeks did not speak about their children as lambs. But we have not the same difficulty. We do speak of children as lambs, so we can give the exact meaning of the words. In English, they mean “Little lamb, arise,” and in Scotch, “Wee lambie, get up.” Are they not beautiful words?

But they are also *loving* words. I think I know where Jesus got them.

You know that as a child He never caused His mother any needless trouble. I am sure He would lie still in His little bed till she was ready to have Him arise. And when at last she was ready to have Him arise, she would come up to His little bed, with all her heart going out to her child in fondest love. You children little know how much your parents love you. I think it would be the happiest part of His mother's day when she took her loved child by the hand to awake Him from sleep, and I think that the words she used were, "Little lamb, arise." And Jesus opened His eyes, and He looked up into the eyes of love that were looking at Him so fondly. He was quick to see things. With these words to awake Him to a mother's love, the very words became words linked with kindness. He did not want to frighten that little girl. Oh how ready we are to think of God as fond of scolding boys and girls. Were He the kind of God we often think He is, He would have said: "You bad girl, you deserved to die; but for your father's and your mother's sake, I'll bring you back to life." Oh how different our thoughts of God's ways to that "Little lamb, arise!" The same loving words that His mother used to awake Him, and that her mother used to awake her, were used by Jesus, Who is God as well as man, when He came to awake this girl of twelve. You know something of your mother's love. Jesus loves you far more than your mother loves you. He is far kinder than she can be.

But they were *words of power* also. A mother can awake you from sleep. Sometimes when you are sick and unconscious, a mother's loving voice will reach you when the voice of one who loved you less would fail. But the sleep of death is too deep for even a mother-love. One day I stood in a room beside a coffin in which lay the body of a boy of seventeen years. The friends had taken their last look. They were putting on the lid. Suddenly the mother dashed it aside, flung herself over her boy, and cried, "Robbie, Robbie, wull ye no speak tae me." All a fond mother's love went out in that cry, but the bar of the cold ear moved not. Even a mother's love failed to burst the gates of death. Her love was not divine enough to bring her child back from the land of the long sleep. Herein is the difference between a fond mother's love and God's love. His love is so strong that it bursts the gates of death.

As with the body, so with the soul. I have seen a boy turning into the ways of sin, which are the ways of death. A stranger called him back. The call was unheeded. A loved one called. Ah! then it was different. You listen to the teacher that you know loves you, and I have seen a boy dead to God. A fond teacher called. A fond mother called. A fond father called. It was all in vain. But Jesus called, and the dead soul awoke to life. He loves you with a love so divine that it bursts the gates of that death that is worse than the death of the body. What power is in a loving God's "Little lamb, arise!" And He speaks these beautiful, loving, powerful words to you to-day. He wants you to arise. You ask how high? He points you to the clouds through which Jesus has ascended, and he says, "My lambs, follow Me." Whenever I am tempted to think of God as far away from me, or cross with me, or wanting to do me harm, I flee to that story of these two strange words, and it brings me near to my Father again. Can a God who would use the words, "Little lamb, arise" (Wee lambie, get up), be unkind? Not if He's an unchanging God. But is He unchanging? Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

## PULPIT PRAYERS.

BY THE REV. S. A. TIPPLE.

THOU who givest whatsoever in true prayer we breathe, inspire us with the spirit of aspiration, giving us that prayer through which we may be strengthened to come to Thee in truth and love. Thou hast made us to express Thee, but to express Thee as we should we need to be impressed from Thee. Let us receive from on high, that we may be clothed with due patience and courage and fidelity, with the right answer to the circumstances of our lot and to the claims which our several relationships involve. Shed Thou abroad in our hearts that grace and charity that may go forth from us to some kindly use for some helpful ministry. We would be renewed in the spirit of our minds by communion with the Highest; we would put off the old man, with his lust and weakness, and put on the truer man, after the pattern of Jesus Christ our Lord. All around us now steams out a hidden life over the land, robing gradually bare hedge and naked tree with welcome verdure, so clothe Thou us outwardly from within with the beauty of goodness, with the garment of righteousness. Touch us with the ambition that tends to elevate and purify, revive in us the faith by which brave works are done, reinforce holy principle to greater influence, and command our conduct. Kindle us afresh with love, the presence of which in the heart is the pledge of truth and beauty in life. So visit us in Thy mercy and fulfil our petitions, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thou grace of God, unfailing and sure, wider than our widest wanderings, stronger than our stubbornest sin, we trust in Thee; and, counting on Thy daily ministry to us and thy final fulfilment in us, we again commit to Thy secret, invisible energy ourselves and the world. The reality art Thou of that pillar of cloud and fire which went with the Hebrew tribes through the wilderness, and left them not day nor night; and of that wondrous stricken rock from which the living water burst that followed them in ceaseless stream, and failed not to the end. And of those images of a Presence unseen conducting, protecting, guiding, with which from age to age men have strengthened and sustained their hearts; dreaming only dreams, yet dreaming withal because One was really with them Whom they knew not. We bless Thee for the sense of need and wickedness, for the feeling of mystery, for the vision of the more that we would be which constrains us to look up, and brings us to Thy feet, begetting and preserving within us the tender humility, with the wistful yearning through which Thou findest Thine access to us.

Thou art the Blessed, in Whom we are blessed. Thou openest Thine hand, and we are filled with good. Thou liftest upon us the light of Thy countenance, and we are glad. In Thee is all our peace, and from Thee also the tumult, the strife, the battle, without which there is no peace—it is of Thy giving. In Thee we triumph, and from Thee it is that we are sore vanquished and beaten, Who teachest us thus until we learn with pain how to be strong and confident.

We rejoice in the faith that we may be definitely served by unhappiness, as well as by joy, and are heavily burdened often, and afflicted because Thou art moving upon us and working in us toward our inheritance of the true and living rest.

We thank Thee for those difficulties and hindrances, the merciful meaning of which we can perceive, and the sweet fruit of which we have tasted. We thank Thee for those evils which are made visible and become intolerable to us through our inward growth and ascending, and in our earnest conflict with which, however little it may accomplish, we grow and ascend the more. We thank Thee for in so far as Thou dost mar and stain the actual for us by showing us in dream a fairer and nobler reality not yet embodied. Help us to believe not with any faith but with the faith which is obtained by overcoming the world, and which being obtained enables us again to overcome it more mightily with the faith which is born of doing good, of trying to assist in promoting the bettering of things, of seeking to be rather than to have, with the faith which grows quietly, softly upon the heart, mellowed, chastened, and deepened by experience. Help us to enjoy to the full each other's work, separated from it by no unconventional dividing hedge, by no barriers of class or party, blinded to it by no dust of controversy, by no consideration of the attention upon obtruding faults and blemishes, but quick to recognise and appreciate the measure of grace which is given to every man. For why should our eyes miss aught of beauty that blossoms before them?

And help us to be kind one to another, tender hearted, patient, gracious, generous, remembering that we men and women are alive upon the earth, that there are no other creatures around us to whom we can look for due understanding and sympathy, remembering that all we are in the same school of experience and often perplexing discipline, that for all there is some burden to be borne, some hard fight to be fought, which our kindness or lack of kindness may at any moment serve to aggravate, and that by all at times, at times when it may not be known, the touch of a brotherly hand, the touch of some human sympathy, is indeed for comfort and salvation. Teach us to cherish more as our ideal and craving, not something for ourselves, whether now or hereafter, but something by and through us, something to flow forth from us in aid of the fulness of man until thus we enter at length into the very joy of our Lord, in fellowship with Whose faith we worship Thee, the Father of all now and ever. Amen.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for May 18 : LUKE ix. 28—36. Golden Text : Verse 35.*

### THE TRANSFIGURATION.

WE have in our lesson to-day Christ's prayer and its answer. The transfiguration scene was an answer to His prayer. This does not mean that our Saviour actually prayed for the glorious shining of His face and clothes, but all the same, this was God's way of answering His prayer.

This scene took place just before Jesus quitted Galilee, and set out on His journey which had the awful cross as its end. This future of suffering and death was much in our Lord's thoughts, and, in consequence, He was

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

very much in prayer. This was always the habit of Jesus when about to face difficult circumstances, temptation, or trial. He resorted to prayer for the needed strength.

Martin Luther used to say, when unusually worried or anxious: "I have so much to do that I find I cannot get on without three hours a day of praying."

Let us not say, "I was too much troubled, too busy to find time for prayer." Remember the example which Jesus shows us.

Though this glorious transfiguration scene was intended partly for the sake of the three disciples, it was chiefly intended for Jesus as a preparation for what lay before Him in Jerusalem. In these moments of loneliness on the cross, when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," would not the memory of this transfiguration, and the voice from the cloud, "This is My beloved Son," come back upon His spirit with consolation and strength. The hours on the mount were to prepare for the sore, sad work on the plain.

We are told that our Lord's countenance was altered, and his raiment was like lightning. "As some hidden light breaks through all veils, the pent-up glory of the great 'God with us' seemed to stream through His flesh, and tinge with splendour even the skirts of His garment."

To lift up the soul to God in prayer always calms and ennobles. When Robert Hall felt perturbed, he had recourse to prayer, and used to say, "Lamb of God, calm my spirit." There is also a spiritual beauty bestowed in some degree on all God's people who pray much. You remember Moses, after being forty days in the mount with God, shone with the same kind of light as the disciples saw in their Master on the Holy Mount.

Let us more and more prize the privilege of prayer as our Saviour did. In the Yellow Country what do you think is the name of prayer! "The gift of the knees." May God give us all that gift. It is a gift. Ask God for it.

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## THE GLOWING MISSIONARY-HEART.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. RICHARD GLOVER.

*Preached in Great Queen-street Chapel, on behalf of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.*

“ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”—ROMANS ix. 1—3.

I REGRET that it falls to me to occupy this pulpit to-day, too cold of heart either to plead the cause of missions or to expound the text which presumptuously I have taken. But I pray for God's help, and I confide in you that your interpretative sympathy may take in good part, and enlarge and apply and improve every suggestion that I make. You will not be surprised that I find my text in this great Epistle. It is the Magna Charta of Christian missions. Christian missions took their great beginning, you might almost say, with the Apostle Paul. They offended at once the philosophy and the prejudice of every Jew—their philosophy, for they thought that the heathen were incapable of religion, lacking the conscience, the faculty for all that was Divine, content with the creed that sanctioned every corruption, without the aspiration that could appreciate help to anything that was higher. And as their philosophy indulged no hope about the heathen, their prejudice provoked them to resist every effort to evangelise them. The favours of God were, they thought, for them. It seemed to dispute the special election of Israel to diffuse God's mercies to those outside ; and when the Apostle preached a Gospel unaccompanied by the preaching of a law, they held that he was subverting the very foundations of morality, dispensing with the very discipline which alone could fit men to receive the Gospel, that he was disparaging and destroying the law ; that without authority he was putting it on one side, that he was placing heathenism at an advantage and investing it with a freedom which the Jew did not enjoy. Paul has to defend himself, and this Epistle is his defence. You know how he proceeds. He startles them by saying, “ There is no difference between men.” He indicates that all have sinned and, in a common need, he places his foundation for a common hope. God has concluded all under sin, Jew as well as Gentile, that He might have mercy upon all. He says that all, heathen as well as Jews, are capable of faith, that salvation is of faith, that it may be by grace, to the end that it may be sure to all the seed, the heathen as well as the Jew. He puts Christ before men, not as a second Abraham, head of Israel, but

as a second Adam, head of man. He asks, "Is He the God of the Jew only? Is He not the God of the heathen?" and answers, "Yes, He is the God of the heathen also." He shows that the election of Israel is an election for the diffusion of blessing, and not for the special enjoyment of it; that it turns to reprobation when Israel begins to obstruct; that every soul of man is embraced by the love of God, by the shadow of the Cross; that we become members of the elect, not by circumcision, but by faith. So the argument goes on. Read "Heathen" wherever it is translated "Gentile," and you will see that every line leads up to some missionary argument and impulse. I take my text from the beginning of a rider to this argument. He would show that his zeal for the heathen is not due to any indifference to his kindred. He loves them, has sorrow at heart for them, could wish himself accursed from Christ, if so be that they might be saved. Some of them will be saved. His heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. They will be grafted in again, if they continue not in unbelief. There is an Israel within Israel, and so all the true Israel will be saved. Of the argument of that rider, so pathetic, moving, marvellous, I take the first word, and take it as our text to-day: majestic in its way, the nearest approach to the pity that was embodied in Calvary that any mere heart of man has ever reached. You cannot explain it away. Unmitigated it stands there in its naked majesty and rapture of woe and pity. We marvel at it. When hope of heaven was brightest, securest, richest: a single memory, a thought of others, turns all his hope to melting pity and woe. The connection of hope with love is here beautifully illustrated. We cannot deal with this word, so full of lustrous light in all directions. The philosopher, for instance, might ask the question, What creates such love? We want love in this world. It is the biggest want. How to get it is the despair and the problem of men. This might give some hint—for his heart was once a heart barren, cruel, indifferent. What has melted that heart and changed it? What a testimony to the Christ, to the Gospel, that it can create love here, and make such a wilderness blossom as the rose! It has testimony with regard to man, to his state, and to his fate. It is a solemn thing to think that there is any class of men who can properly awaken such pity in a heart like Paul's, that there should be in any life the elements of sadness and despair that makes a sorrow like this legitimate. It is more marvellous still when you remark that St. Paul was the broadest-thoughted Christian that ever lived, and yet he has this woe and pity. We know not the dimensions of his dreams and conceptions of the Gospel. No theologian, so far as I know, has ever developed or reached them; perhaps not been able to understand them. Nobody but St. Paul has ever taken the empire of death and sin, and seen in them something like the measure of the empire of Jesus Christ: "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." What heart has had the dream in it of conquest for the Gospel like to that? He is one who looks at the Christ as the Maker, as the Sustainer, and the ultimate Home and Rest of all things—"Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things." "He must reign until all enemies are under His feet." All things are to be reconciled by Him. I expect none here has ever heard a sermon on "As in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." I have never dared to preach on that word, nor think I understood it. I only want to indicate that this

man is the broadest-hearted man that ever adored our Lord and Saviour; and yet he sees in the state and fate of men around him that which melts his heart with woe and moves him to pity. Oh, be broad, be hopeful, be full of charity! But charity does not make-believe. It heals the wounds; it does not gloss them over. Testimony to Christ, testimony about men flow forth in all directions; on human nature, its changes, the powers that will produce these changes; this word is full of radiance upon these all. I therefore cannot attempt to deal with the mass of its testimony, but I venture to ask you to come nigh to this burning bush, this Christ-like Gethsemane; and I want to occupy your thoughts with this one consideration, that love and pity, such as are expressed here, are the mark of the Christian man, are what is produced by grace in all its activities, are what we should aim at. This word is the expression of the missionary heart in its finest glow; it is the expression of feelings that should have a home in all our hearts. I therefore ask you to take two or three superficial lines of thought and consider:—

1. That love and pity like this are the mark of discipleship.
2. That they are the secret of prophetic light.
3. That they are the power of all usefulness.

May God help me to enforce these three lessons:—

1. I begin first of all with indicating that love and pity of this sort are the mark of discipleship. We want a new die for discipleship, for the image that is upon us is imperfect, and the superscription is illegible. We give and take the name of Christian lightly. It suggests to our minds chiefly something negative: freedom from coarser faults, from vulgar ambitions, from undue worldliness, enough of faith to save one's own soul, enough of religion to reach propriety and faultlessness. And where you get these things with some little kindness of heart and feeling, you take it that you have Christianity as the Saviour meant it. Albeit, God is love, and love is the fulfilling of the law, and we have the example, impulse, and requirement of a great consecration; yet we sit and think that mere proprieties of life, conventional respectability, a higher prudence, virtues which are sometimes only, as Coventry Patmore puts it, "Vices tied, like Samson's foxes, by the tails," constitute the "Christian life."

Now, I would like you to mark, brethren, that there is not a true grace of a Christian man, nor a true activity of the disciple of Christ, which does not lead to pity and love like this. Repentance leads to it, for repentance laments selfishness as the essence of its evil, and dreads relapsing into a religion which would be merely a selfishness refined; and repentance remembers its lost estate, the fearful pit and miry clay, and pities those that are still struggling in it; so repentance cherishes love and moves to pity. Faith kindles these virtues. You cannot take refuge in the heart of Christ, and build your hope upon redeeming love, and rejoice in His saving pity that stooped to Calvary, without catching some of the qualities on which you rest. Your heart softens with the warmth of that heart on which it rests, and is kindled by the pity in which it takes refuge.

As our faith leads to these qualities, decision moves to them. Except we deny ourselves we cannot be disciples. Self-renunciation, which is the beginning of discipleship, leaves the heart free to cherish love. The comforts of religion move to them. Forgiveness, and peace, and hope, and gratitude swell the heart with the question, "What shall I render?" and move it to share its mercies with those that still lack them.

All adoration of God kindles them. In the degree in which we see Him as He is, see Him in the face of Christ, see Him as He weeps over Jerusalem or groans on Calvary, in the degree in which we see the pitiful woe that sometimes fills God's heart : in that degree we are changed. All hope changes the heart and fills it with this spirit, as we see from the context of my text. Hope of earthly providence and hope of immortal heaven, both move men to Pity, and to Love. Every step you take in following Christ kindles pity, for when He leads it is not always unto green pastures and rapturous heights : it is to the haunts of misery, to the widows of Nain, to homes of grief. He would use us, borrows our hand to wipe away a tear, our voice to still a grief. Exactly in that degree in which He employs us, and we follow Him step by step, exactly in that degree do we catch the spirit in which He lived, and the compassion which is the everlasting motive and the perpetual habit of our God. So that I want you to observe that there is not a single Christian instinct, activity, relationship, employment, or grace which does not work out in love and pity.

Now that is a very solemn thing, because you see it flows at once from this, that our love and our pity measure our discipleship. How much of this sort of woe have you or I? We have that much Christianity and no more. Now I think that is solemn. I do not suggest that the Church is void of these great affections to-day. I remember that we are molehills and Paul is an Alpine height. But still are not these things conspicuous by their absence? Would any outsider say that a Christian was a man melting with love and kindled with pity? Would that be the first description of a Christian man that would be suggested to other people's minds? Have we not almost ceased to aspire to this?

We almost cherish lukewarmness, calling it wisdom, the golden mean between fanaticism on the one hand and worldliness on the other. Brethren, we worship a God of pity. He who has seen the Christ of Gethsemane and of Calvary hath seen the Father ; and we are His children and His disciples only in the degree in which pity and love like His move and melt our hearts. Let us repent, brethren, of turning our back upon the outlying world ; that we have not aimed at being even our brother's keeper, when God meant us to be our brother's brother ; which is a bigger thing. Let us own our guilt, our sin against His lost children, and the wandering souls He died for ; and let us pray God for that essential goodness which shall be an effective compassion for the salvation of men. (" Amen ! ")

2. Now turn over leaf to a second consideration. This love and this pity are the secret of all prophetic light. Paul was the great theologian of Christianity, so much so that some have treated him as if he were the maker of it and gave it its essence as well as form. (A laugh.) We know too well to accept that. But it is a recognition of the fact that somehow his luminous soul dropped crystalline utterances which phrased for all ages the fitness of the Gospel for the human heart, and expressed the contrast between it and the poorer religions of men.

Every age wants its own theology. One of the supreme needs of the Church to-day is the theologian. For you will observe that every great spiritual movement amongst men has rested upon a theology ; and we must not begin to build without a foundation. It was so with Paul's great work. Part of his great work, of course, was due to his personality ; but his message was the supreme thing ; that the one God was Father of all ; that one Christ was Saviour of all ; that by faith, possible to all, every soul

of man might live. That message was a dawn of heavenly light upon the world, and changed men's darkness to light. The Reformation rested upon a theology that swept away priestly obstructions that had clustered about men's way to God, and proclaimed Him so near and so full of love that the guiltiest might go to Him direct, and that simple faith, the entrustment of the soul to Him, was the sole condition of salvation. That creed roused Europe, and sent men by millions, like prodigals, to the Father.

The great Reformation, the great Evangelical revival, of the last century under Wesley, rested upon theology. You know how the conceptions of Christianity had degenerated in diverse directions; in this direction to Socinianism, which held that man's efforts were sufficient to save him; or to hyper-Calvinism, which on the other hand, held that man's efforts were utterly superfluous, needless, and in spite of them he might perish; two creeds, one of which tells of a Saviour for no man, and the other of a Saviour for but a few. Wesley came and preached a living Christ, God's universal love—repentance necessary, faith necessary but always saving. And thus he opened the way to the holiest by the blood of Christ.

We want a theology to-day. Each age has to frame its own theology, discover it for itself, express it for itself, apply it for itself. We want—may I say—a new theology. No new creed, but the old creed that we have had from the beginning; and yet a new creed—new in its answers to new questions, in its light on new duties, in its guidance to new opportunities and hopes. Each age has its own questions. When the dispute was whether authority lay in the Bible or in the Pope, our fathers settled that. But now we begin to ask, What is the Bible? Its inspiration, what is it? How does the voice of the Spirit blend to the voice of the Bride in it? What human, what Divine? We ask other questions about God. Was the governmental view of God into which Popery had degenerated, and which our reformers too bodily took over, the whole of God? Is He Father? What are His sorrows, His joys? What is there in the Cross of Christ besides atonement? There is much, of course. What are the points of contact and contrast between our and other creeds? Those are the questions that are being asked all around us. Now, it is of no use frowning on them. You cannot stop them by frowning on them, (Hear, hear.) I do not think you ought to stop them, if you could. "The torch of truth, the more it's shook, it shines." What we have to do is not to rebuke them, but to reply to them. (Hear, hear.) But, alas! where is the prophet and the theologian? Our churches seem to divide themselves into two classes: those who superficially repeat and those who superficially repudiate the findings of their fathers. (Laughter.) Brethren, I do not mean anything satirical, but there is an aching void for voices that will not be mere repetitions of the traditions of the past, for living men who have lived themselves into the truth, or loved themselves into the truth, turning their backs on no difficulty, sympathetic with every inquiry, commanding the confidence of those they speak to, lifting their voice with strength, and able to convey conviction and disperse doubt. We wait for the theologian—am I right? I judge you by ourselves. Many preachers: how many prophets? That is the world's want to-day. We wait for them.

I want to point out that in love and pity, such as is here expressed, you have not merely the work of the disciple, but you have the secret of prophetic light: that Paul's light was due, not to his genius, not to his

erudition, not even so much specially to heavenly effulgence that visited him, as to the fact that he had a heart of love and pity that could enter and absorb the light of God. Is it not obvious that it was so? We know God by what is kindred to Him, and by what resembles Him. It was Paul's love of man that could read God's love of man, that gazed on God till "the shadow" grew into a "Face" and the "Face" of God was seen glowing with infinite Love. He would have been in the darkness till now if his love had not permitted him to see God's love. The light is ever shining. It is the eye, the eye of the heart, that is wanted; and that he had. He looked on man, not with the cynical eye that sees only what moves men to despair of, or to despise them; but he looked with a loving heart, and could see the world in God's light; something that made man a pearl of great price in his Saviour's eyes. He could see Divine movings in them; high capacity; possibilities of change; unrest. All these Divine elements on which grace could move, and which grace could lead to light. He looked in the face of Christ, and his yearning permitted him to behold Christ's yearning, so that his love and his pity enlarged his heart, and opened it to light. He walked in the light of the Lord, and truths too grand for poorer eyes lay naked and open to his.

One of the greatest theologians of the century, Neander, took for his motto, "It is the heart that makes the theologian." And one of the greatest historians, Niebuhr, uttered some similar words: "I have said again and again, I will have no metaphysical deity, but the God of the Bible, who is heart to heart."

Brethren, the light is shining. God's Spirit leads still into all truth. We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us the wonders that He did in their days, and in the times of old; but to-day, as well as yesterday, is the day of salvation; now, not merely then, is the accepted time; and we grope in darkness in the very noonday of light, because our hearts are pitiless and our love is small.

We wait for the theologian, who with large and loving heart will gaze on the face of man and interpret the face of God; and when he comes wasting naught of the precious heritage of the ages, but bringing into bright effulgence some special gleam of truth for the age in which we live, the ever new, the never old truth of God will commend itself afresh to the hearts of men. Brethren in the ministry, pray for the heart of love. It is not culture, nor scholarship, nor science, nor history, nor the power to fit text to text, and make a mosaic of the creed; it is not that quality that will let you enter the hearts of men, and master them with the sweet authority with which the Saviour spoke. We want love and pity. God grant us a baptism of these!—"Amen"—and the prophets that we wait for will appear in our midst.

3. Now, one word more. This love and this pity are, lastly, the power of usefulness. I do not say that every Christian, but every man worthy of the name, is "Proud to be useful, scorning to be more." Usefulness is the glory of God. All our life is fading into retrospect! Its retrospect will be a horror, if it be not one of usefulness. The Church is alert to-day, to some extent. Men are aiming at usefulness of all sorts: the better housing of the poor, the speeding of the temperance cause, and of education. Enterprises that aim at informing, refining, and amusing men are afoot in all directions. Sometimes they are presumptuous, and bid the Church stand on one side and let them do her work a little better than she

manages it. Sometimes they are modest, and wish only to aid. They are always apt to be disappointing, and to find obstacles where they expected acquiescence; and to discover more difficulties than they anticipated in the way of realising the millennial bliss on earth.

We have no rebuke to give to any who seek to bless or brighten their fellow-men. God bless them and speed them! But I want you to mark where lies the secret of usefulness. It is not in what men would call the practicability of their schemes, the mere externality of their endeavours. It is not in their using charms to allure and induce men to follow them. It is not in any compromise that usefulness will be found. Usefulness attends on love and pity, and follows naught else in this world; and we have our usefulness in the degree in which we have these. You see, how they wrought with Paul; what colossal usefulness he reached; what multitudes were saved through his message; what a wide expanse he evangelised; how firmly he planted the root of truth; and how his usefulness grew from age to age until it never was so great as it is to-day. Love did it, pity did it; for love awakens no opposition or reduces it to a minimum; no reserve, resentment, suspicion. Then love charms the trust of men. Love is wise. Love aims at the root of evil, at the soul, the vital part, knows that it is easier to mend the whole than it is to mend a part. It begins at the central heart of man, and linking it to God it sets it to mend itself of every evil.

Love has patience, can bear with resentment, with delays, with failures; persists till the desire of the heart is given to it. Above all, love can pray, which is not easy, for every petition is an altar. You pray for guidance and give up your self-control, if your prayer is honest; for blessing on others and thereby promise to share your blessing, if the prayer is honest. Few people can pray. But love can pray, and its petitions wing their flight to heavenly levels and lodge themselves in the heart of God. One jot or tittle of such prayers will not pass until all are fulfilled. So love has the kingly mien of abiding usefulness. The mark of discipleship, the secret of light, it has the power of benediction. Let us seek it, not looking to right and left, nor misled by any promising easier path to the usefulness we desire to reach.

I have tried your patience. I beg you to apply these things to yourselves. Love and pity have been the secret of all great usefulness from Christ downwards. Especially I want you to mark, this morning, that they have been the secret of all missionary usefulness. From St. Paul to St. Patrick, from Boniface to Monte Corvino, from Dr. Coke and Dr. Carey to the great missionaries of to-day, it is love and pity that have been the investment of all power. That love and pity have rested largely on the churches of this denomination in the past. The missionary marvels which have been wrought by Methodists in the three generations that are gone, in the West Indies, in America, in Africa, the Islands of the Southern Sea, in India and in China make one of the most marvellous pages in that missionary history.

But your love and pity, brethren, seem to be decaying and withering away—I say “seem” for I am an outsider. Are they? Your courteous secretary has given me some figures in connection with your growth and missionary contributions during the last twenty years. As a denomination you have slightly grown in that period. You have exactly kept pace with the growth of our population, but nothing more. Our population has

increased largely in wealth. The income-tax returns have gone up 48 per cent. in that period; I suppose the wealth in a still larger degree; and I suppose that of that wealth all Nonconformist denominations have rather more than less than the usual share; for it has come chiefly to the distributors and wage-earning class, which more than other classes are with us. Fifty per cent. at least your wealth has increased in that period, and your missionary giving has increased one and a third per cent. ! If I took a shorter period it would look much worse. This year you have the lowest income that you have had for eighteen years. The state of things is this. Out of the sum from which twenty years ago a Methodist gave a shilling, he now gives eightpence to Christian Missions. There may be explanations that will mitigate the awfulness of that fact; what they are I know not. But is there not a call in such a state of things? It is serious to decline in wealth, more serious in numbers, more serious to decline in truth; but to decline in compassion and in love, oh, brethren, that is to lose the living Christ out of the heart. Is it to go on? Is Ichabod to be written on our walls?

The days in which we live are great. Never were there such open doors. Never were we so near the heathen. Never were they in such peril from the enterprises of unhallowed trade as to-day. The time is short. If the Church of Christ in this land rose up in the strength of her mercy, this generation need not pass till the world is brought to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Brethren, let us repent, all of us, of our neglect of our brethren; repent of our failure to feel the pity that is here expressed. Who is to regard the spiritual woes of men if we are not; who to look at their burden of guilt if we are not; who to lead them to the peace of God; who to appreciate their thirst after the living God, and to point them to Christ? Who is to comfort Rachel weeping for her children, by pointing to Christ's empty grave, and to the father heart of God, and to the homes of many mansions, if we do not? Oh, let us repent, and asking the forgiveness of our Father for neglecting His children, and of our Saviour for neglecting those He died to save; let us lay our hearts upon His altar; and when, getting nearer to Him, we catch His love and pity, we will go forth and find that the Gospel in our lips is the omnipotence of God unto salvation, and multitudes that now are perishing will rise to the nobility and bliss of the great salvation.

### MY LAMP.

*A Sermon to Children.*

BY THE REV. ROBERT BREWIN, *United Methodist Free Church Minister, Loughborough.*

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—PSALM cxix. 105.

THE Word of God is compared by those who received and delivered it to men to many beautiful and impressive objects, such as lie everywhere around us. Moses compared it to the dew and to the rain. He says: "My doctrines shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass" (Deut. xxxii. 2). The dew and rain are refreshing and cooling to the hot and dry ground, and life-giving to all things. Many evil books are like those prairie fires that sweep across the plains doing

untold destruction, and leaving blackness and misery everywhere behind them. The Word of God is like the dew and rain that once more restores such a wilderness into a fruitful garden, and makes "the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose." It is compared, among other things, to the purest silver (Psalm xii. 6), to an important message, to a smelting furnace, to wheat among which there is no chaff, and to a hammer such as that with which men who work in stone-quarries break the rocks in pieces (Jer. xxxii. 28, 29). It is compared to bread, which is our principal food (Matt. iv. 4), to a sharp sword with two edges, that cuts its way deep into the soul (Hebrew iv. 12), and to a clear purifying stream that, passing through the heart, leaves it white and clean (John xv. 3). In this wonderful Psalm there are several other striking comparisons which may help us to understand how precious the Word of God is. Sometimes persons who have to go about among fevers or other infectious diseases, carry sprinkled upon their clothes or hidden about them, something which will protect them from taking these disorders. God's Word hidden in the heart is thus said to keep us from the infection of sin (ver. 11). It is like a magnificent temple or palace, into which if a blind man were taken he could indeed see nothing, but where, if his eyes could be opened, he would be enchanted with its wonders and glories (ver. 18). It is compared to a sweet song full of music and gladness (ver. 54), to treasures "better than thousands of gold and silver (ver. 72)," to the beautiful fixed stars in the sky (ver. 89), to something sweeter than honey to the taste (ver. 103), to the rising of the sun which chases all darkness away (ver. 130), to a draught of cool thirst-quenching water on a hot day (ver. 131), and to hidden treasures such as were sometimes unexpectedly found in the field, turned up by the ploughshare in the course of daily toil (ver. 162.)

In the text the Word of God is compared to a lamp or lantern such as that which is carried on dark nights in country places in all lands where fixed lights are not found. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Let us now see how the Word of God may be compared to such a lamp.

First, like a lighted lantern on a dark lonely journey, it is a pleasant companion. A lamp cannot, indeed, talk to us, or even listen to our voices, but its cheerful light close by us, belonging to us, and going on continually with us, takes away our feeling of loneliness, and we feel that the common saying is quite true that "a light is pleasant company." This is much more true of the Word of God. Life has not only its sunny days, but its long dark nights in which we must go on just the same in the way that is set before us. But even in the dark nights of temptation, pain, disappointment, sickness, or bereavement, we need not travel alone, for this lamp may be ever at our sides, cheering us with its radiance. The sun is altogether too brilliant and great a light to be thought of as a companion; the moon and the stars, on those nights on which they are to be seen, are so far away and so cold-looking that we may feel very lonely, notwithstanding their shining; but the lamp we carry in our hand is so near to us, and sheds such a warm, glowing light all about us that makes us feel that we are not quite alone. Just before Dr. Moffat left South Africa to return to England, a poor woman, who had walked fifteen miles through the bush, came to the mission station at Kuruman, wishing to buy a New Testament. Mr. Moffat, in relating the story at a missionary meeting, said: "I said to her, 'My good woman, there is not a copy to be

had.' 'What,' she said, 'am I to return empty?' 'I fear you will,' I replied. 'Oh,' she said, 'I borrowed a copy once, but the owner has come and taken it away, and now I sit with my family sorrowful because we have no book to talk to us. We are far from anyone else; we are living at a cattle outpost, and we have no one to teach us but the Book. Oh,' she continued, 'go and seek a book. Oh, father! oh, mother! oh, my elder brother! do go and seek a book for me. Surely there is one to be found; don't let me go away empty.'" Mr. Moffat says: "I felt for her, and I began to feel my eyes a little watery, and I said: 'Wait a little, and I will see what I can do.' I sought here and there, and at last I found a copy. Oh! that you could have seen how her eyes brightened, and how she clasped my hands and kissed them over and over again. 'Oh! I knew you had a heart,' she said, 'I knew you had a heart'! and away she went with her book rejoicing." That poor African woman on a lonely cattle station was filled to overflowing with joy that now she possessed, not a borrowed lamp, but a precious light that was all her own. There is no real loneliness in the presence of the light of the Divine Word.

Then, again, the Word of God, like a lighted lantern, is a protection against danger. Persons who travel lonely and narrow lanes on those nights when it is quite dark, sometimes meet passing vehicles, and if they have no light with them, are in danger of being run over, but a light shows where they are, and ensures their safety. A blind man who was sitting in the street, begging, with a lamp beside him, was once asked, "Why do you have this lamp with you, seeing that you are blind?" He replied, "To keep people from falling over me." His light was his safety. It is thus with the Word of God. The shining light of the truth we love will often preserve us from the more accidental spiritual dangers and temptations of life. It will save us also in deliberately planned attacks of our spiritual enemies upon us. A light burning in a room has saved many a house from the attacks of burglars. A thief would not choose to try to rob a man who carried a lighted lamp in his hand, or to break open the lock of a house with the master's lantern shining full upon him.

When Christ was passing through His dark night of Satan's temptation in the wilderness, He thrice flashed the brilliant light of the Divine Word in the enemy's face, and the Saviour's "It is written," "It is written," "It is written," drove him vanquished from the field. In this way, we, too, may find in the Word of God our protection and safety.

But the third and principal value of a lamp is that it shows us the way, and it is in this respect especially that the truth of God is most precious to us.

One dark night not long ago I was returning home from the country, when my way led me first through the unlighted village streets, then by a little gate into a narrow path that ran through twenty-four fields, connected with each other by little gates or stiles, and then along a narrow lane with high, bushy hedgerows on either hand, to the town itself. My lantern showed me first, the entrance to the path, then the path itself, with its park-like fields, its thick, bordering woods, where, as I advanced, the great trees, one by one flashed up into the light, and the quaint stiles, and little swinging gates, overhung with autumn-tinted foliage revealed themselves one by one to my view, till the last stile brought me into the sheltered lane, and then the path ended at the lighted streets of the town. It is in this pleasant way that the Holy Scriptures show us, first, the entrance to the

path of life, then the path itself, and, at length, the end of the way, where the lamp is no longer needed, and we are at home.

It shows us the entrance to the way.

When the war between Russia and Turkey, in which France and England took so large a share, was raging in the Crimea in the year 1854, a man, employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society to distribute the Scriptures, was at the port of Toulon, in France, supplying the soldiers who were going out to the war with portions of the Word of God. One young man to whom he offered a New Testament accepted it, and then, as he thrust it into his pocket, said, with a laugh, "It will do to light my pipe with." Years passed away, and the Bible-man, or colporteur, was engaged in selling the Scriptures in a distant French village; "Come in! come in!" said an old woman, at whose door he had knocked and told his errand. "We have already a New Testament, but I wish for a Bible." And then she told how the New Testament had belonged to her son, who had been a soldier, how that he had come home wounded from the war, and had been a long time ill, and had at length died. "Oh, sir!" said the woman, "this little book was the means of his salvation; he read nothing else: and oh, sir! he was so happy." She then handed the book to the colporteur to look at: a few of the leaves had been torn out at the beginning of the precious little volume, but on the inside of the cover the young man had written with his own hand these words: "Received at Toulon (adding the date). Despised, neglected, read, believed, and found salvation."

By this wonderful lamp alone the scoffing soldier found the entrance to the way that at length had led him to heaven.

Then again, it shows us the way itself, as we travel on step by step through the lonely darkness. If an enemy has placed a rough stone in our way to make us stumble, the lamp shows us the obstruction, and we can both avoid it and remove it. If the way is very narrow, and a deep ditch is on either side of it, the lamp will show us all this and help us to keep the path. If the spring flowers and the yellowing autumn leaves border the way that is set before us, our friendly companion will light up their beauty for us, and thus speed us on our way. And if, at some meeting of the ways, we might in the darkness have turned in the wrong direction, this lamp will show us the true path, whispering kindly to us: "This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand or when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah xxx. 21).

Then, lastly, the Word of God will show us the end of the way. Once, many years ago, on a very dark night in winter, when I was driving home from the country, and the horse had more than once wandered, I called at a house-door to inquire the way. The stranger not only directed me, but pressed upon me a lighted lantern. "It is very dark," he said, "and I have twice been in the ditch to-night myself, for want of a light." I accepted his kindness, but, alas! long before I reached home the light went out and left me again in the gloom. But the Word of God is a lamp that will light us all the way to heaven, where we shall need it no more. Sometimes in the American backwoods a lighted torch of pitch-pine is carried by wayfarers instead of a lantern. One night a gentleman who had been holding service among some working people at some distance from his home, was about to return by a narrow path through the woods, when his host offered him a torch of pitch-pine to light him through the darkness. He objected, saying, "It is too small; it does not weigh more than

half a pound." "It will light you home," answered his host. He still objected "Perhaps the wind will blow it out." "It will light you home," answered the other. "But if it should rain?" the stranger still objected. "It will light you home," once more replied the host. And so it did, making the traveller glad with its presence till he came to his own door, where its work was ended.

Even so—

"This lamp through all the night  
Of life shall guide our way,  
Till we behold the clear light  
Of an eternal day."

### A PULPIT PRAYER.

BY THE REV. R. W. DALE, D.D., LL.D.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, wilt Thou reveal to us by the power of Thy Spirit the mystery and the blessedness of this hour? Is it true that we, children of the dust, may speak to Thee, the Eternal? The wonder and the glory of it transcend our thought, too often transcend our faith. How great Thou art we know not. To what greatness Thou hast destined us we know not. We decline and turn aside from the heights to which Thou dost call us. Our hearts falter; have pity upon us we entreat Thee. Thou knowest all the limitations of our present life and of our present powers. Come near to us, and make us all sure of that about which perhaps some of us doubt. We give thanks to Thee, O God, for voices that descend to us from vanished saints, and voices of men of like passions as ourselves, whose burdens were as heavy as ours, and about whom the thick darkness often gathered; who were weary and faint often as we are, but who tell us that they found God and that God found them. Thy compassions fail not, Thy mercy endureth for ever. Still Thou dost kindle the glorious sun, and still the stars, night after night, listen to Thy voice. And art Thou not as near to us in these last days as Thou wast in days long gone by when saintly souls triumphed in the knowledge of their restoration to God? And we give Thee thanks for the voices of living men and living women who have seen Thy face, who in the great hours of life have discovered that they were children of the Eternal. We give Thee thanks for sacred memories which some of us rejoice to cherish. When the heavens divide, when the glory in which Thou dwellest breaks through, how great a thing it was to discover that we all were unforgotten by Him in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways. We feel, too, that we have discovered that during years when faith was greatly agitated, and when our vision of things eternal and divine was very dim, when we doubted whether or not we were dear to the heart of God, Thou hadst not forsaken us, and in wonderful ways Thou didst lead some of us into paths which brought great and blessed surprise. We found, when we had no hope of finding Thee, blessings far surpassing all our hopes came from Thy gracious hand, even unsought. And we give Thee thanks, too, not merely when the heavens are glowing with Thine eternal splendour, when we hear for ourselves Thy voice, but on common days, when we are environed by common temptation. We have learned Thy life has sustained us in conflict with temptation and in the discharge of duties which were beyond the measure of our own force, and so not merely when we

are lifted up to the heights and abiding with God are we near to Thee. Thou dost descend from Thy heights and Thou dost abide with us, caring for us in wonderful and mysterious ways. We bless Thee and praise Thee, O God, with hearts full of exultation and unmeasured hope for the grace which Thou hast revealed to us, for our discovery of the reality of the redemption Thou hast achieved for us in Christ, and we bless Thee and praise Thee too for the grace which we know dwells in Thy heart for Thy lost children who have not found Thee yet, for all the pity and all the yearning love Thou hast for them, and for what Thou hast done for them though they know it not.

We entreat Thee, O God, to grant while we are here in Thy house, those of us for whom it is the glory of life to know Thee, and who seek Him Thou hast sent, may come to a deeper and fuller knowledge of Thee, and that brothers and sisters of ours, to whom this great gladness has not yet come, may see at last the dawn of an unhopèd for glory, and may they give true and grateful answer to whatever word of Thine shall find its way to their hearts. Hear us, we pray Thee, on behalf of any among us who have not endeavoured to live the better life, have come to despair of it. We know that Thou dost not despair of them. May they measure Thy strength and not their own against all the perils and against all the difficulties from which they have turned aside, and grant, O God, that, however faint and however discouraged any of us may be, we may turn aside from our own human weakness and rejoice Thou hast chosen us in Christ to share Thine own eternal and victorious life, and that all things are possible to those who dwell in Christ and in whom Christ dwells. Suffer us not, we pray Thee, to thwart and defeat Thy merciful thoughts and purposes in relation to us. Suffer us not to be despondent of the heavenly vision, and to count ourselves unworthy of eternal life. We beseech Thee to let Thy grace rest upon all Christian people in this great city—throughout this land. We desire to give Thee thanks again and again for the great marvels Thou hast wrought in this nation. We give Thee thanks for the courage, for the strength, for the boundless faith in God which Thou hast given to those who have led the life of the people of this country in days gone by. For the great inheritance which has descended to their children, the memory of all Thou didst achieve for their fathers, we bless Thee and give Thee praise. Now grant that in this generation they may accomplish for the generations that are to come as much as has ever been accomplished in days gone by by those in whom Thou hast revealed the exceeding greatness of Thy power. We entreat Thee, O God, to let Thy benediction rest upon the University, and as that has been a fountain of light and life from age to age in this land, let the springs flow as freely as ever. Grant, O God, that those who are preparing for the manifold forms of service there may be filled with the Holy Ghost in all provinces of truth, the lower and the diviner alike, that they may accomplish great things for their time, and that in all forms of active service they may prove worthy children of the fathers who have gone before them. Now, O God, according to Thy knowledge of us, and according to Thy great love for us, let Thy blessing rest upon us all. Absolve us, we entreat Thee; from all our sins, through Him who is the propitiation for the sin of the world. Give us courage to accept Thy peace. May we receive the power of that eternal life which Thou hast given us in Him. Hear us through Christ. Amen.

## MY BROTHER'S KEEPER.

*Outline of a Sermon*

BY THE REV. H. V. TAYLOR.

"Am I my brother's keeper?"—GEN. iv. 9.

WHY put the question in this form? Too late, Cain realised he was natural guardian of the house which he had robbed of its guest. Abel was a trust. Cain's insolent question acknowledged, while it sought to repudiate the bond. Three things involved in this acknowledgment—(1) a relationship; (2) a result; and (3) a responsibility.

I. French Communists' invented term for peculiar oneness of mankind—Solidarity, a being all in one boat, "members one of another," so that individual misery affects the whole. Solidarity, a golden chain uniting men. Some of its links:—(a) Human limitations: (1) Movement restricted. World looks very large until we peer into space. Telescope shows us we are prisoners on a speck in universe. (2) Vision continually baffled, even when aided by science. Nature tenacious of her secrets. Most powerful telescope fail to tell if our next-door neighbour in planetary system is inhabited. (3) Language fetters communion. Noblest language for communicating thought said, by Grimm, to be English. Yet how much of our deepest experiences we must leave untold! There are "thoughts too deep for tears" (Wordsworth), "Thoughts that break through language and escape" (Browning). He must be a shallow or material thinker who has expressed all he ever thought. (b) Conditions of life beyond our control. Impossible to decide into what climate, nationality, or family we shall be born. Yet how great differences produced thereby. Tyranny of environment felt by all, savage or civilised. (c) Dependence on history. World, physical, intellectual, and moral largely what the past has made it. Each new recruit called to fall into his place; to utilise forces of the past, serve institutions already founded, and obey laws with making of which he had nothing to do. (d) Life of Christ. Unites all by being the representative life. Jesus lived through all phases and experiences of life. As the Carpenter, He began at the bottom of the social ladder, touched lowest of the low. We enter no new experience without discovering that He has been there before.

II. *Solidarity of whole involves inter-dependence of members.*—Nature deals with mankind as one, and defies the individual to live self-centred. Let him play the hermit, and seek the desert. Next wind may bring disease from habitations of his fellows. One sick may affect whole community. Unsanitary state of city on banks of Ganges has brought plague to decimate Europe. Northern and Southern States go to war, cotton industry of Lancashire is paralysed. Story of Christian heroism raises spiritual circulation of mankind.

III. *Inter-dependence brings mutual responsibility.*—Men are one family, each the keeper of the other. This ideal harmony only to be realised by obedience to law of true brotherhood—self-sacrifice. Fellowship compels self-sacrifice. Through self-sacrifice we enter into a life large as humanity; we share in Christ's life and victory (Westcott, "Victory of the Cross," ii.). Sphere of this responsibility threefold: (1) Political. Generally acknowledged here: the basis of all constitutional government. A case of tyranny in India causes indignation through all Britain. (2) Social.

Theoretically acknowledged. Social customs the outgrowth of convenience of whole community. Strongest argument for temperance here. (3) Religious. Theoretically acknowledged. Can we say practically while those called Christians refuse to labour for others' spiritual welfare? A thirsty man calls for water. You give it. You believe in water; you do not believe that you believe in it. If you believe in the Water of Life, will you not give it to others? Here, as in society, thou art thy brother's keeper.

## EMPTY NETS AND SINKING BOATS.

### *Sermon Outline.*

BY THE REV. J. VINSON STEPHENS.

LUKE v. 1—11.

THE miraculous draught of fishes was not a kind of benefit performance to Peter for the ready loan of his boat. Its final end was to make fishers of the mute creatures of the sea successful fishers of men. And what is essential to make successful fishers of men is herein indelibly impressed upon the minds of Peter, James, and John at the very outset of their Apostleship, namely, empty nets in Christ's absence: sinking boats in His presence. There is as much of the Divine in the drought as in the draught of fishes. The empty nets were full of Divine purpose. And that purpose was to teach that even skilled fishermen, with the best means, in the most favourable place, and at the most opportune season, without Christ can do nothing. We may have learned, eloquent, experienced preachers, well organised institutions, splendid spheres of labour, and be most strenuous in our efforts, still, if it is all human skill and art, we shall have nothing to show at the end save empty nets. But to teach them their helplessness was insufficient. They must be taught also that, acting under Christ's instructions, the empty nets can be filled even to breaking. And that was the evidential value of the draught of fishes. To make this truth beautifully impressive, at His command, the same boats are launched again, the same men engaged, the same nets used, and the same sea dragged; but this time, instead of empty nets, they had sinking boats. The old means only wanted His blessing. When Peter brings his empty nets to the shore, Mrs. Peter should not be sent to cast them again, for she can never manage them more skilfully, and besides she is wanted to nurse her afflicted mother, who lies at home sick of a great fever. What should be done is to send him back again in the company of Jesus. Novelty must be banished from the pulpit. The Master's blessing upon the old means and method we alone require. The net at Jesus' word was let down to catch the fishers, and they were caught. For "they forsook all and followed Him." What for? To establish a kingdom which is to overturn the religions of the world. Will they do it? No, a thousand times no, if they rely upon their power, say the empty nets. But will they do it anyhow? Yes, a thousand times yes, says the great multitude of fishes; Yes, says the filled and breaking net; Yes, say the sinking boats; Yes, say the three thousand souls saved on the day of Pentecost, and the five thousand saved few days later send back the echo. Millions of Christians from all parts of the wide world say, Yes. The drought and the draught of fishes have prepared them for their mighty task. One has completely removed every human prop upon which they might be tempted to rest, the other has revealed the Divine columns ordained to uphold them in the dark nights of disappointment. The empty nets have shown them their miserable poverty and utter incompetence to achieve the mighty work, but the full nets made manifest the unsearchable riches and the infinite resources which were at their disposal at their Lord and Master's word.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for May 25: LUKE x. 1—16. Golden Text: LUKE x. 11.*

### HARVEST LABOURERS.

JESUS has a great many labourers, but in our lesson to-day we are told that He wants more. He says, "The labourers are *few*: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." Yes, though He has many servants, old and young, black and white, yet the harvest is so great that they are all too few for the task of ingathering. Thousands more must give themselves to the great work. It is not merely more *missionaries* that Jesus wants and that the world needs: it is "every Christian a missionary." Every Christian who leaves our shores for any other part of the world is required and expected by Jesus to be His missionary. If we are Christ's and keep close to Him we shall see the world with Christ's eyes, and then we shall have a deep and true sympathy for missionary work. If you wish to make a clock go quicker you do not move on the hands with your finger. That would be vain and foolish, and likely to spoil the works. No; something in the inside has to be done—the tension of the spring must be increased. So if we wish to quicken our sympathies for missionary work we must get the heart filled with the spirit of Christ.

I. The urgent need. Perhaps you have seen a missionary map all marked off into squares, each square representing one million souls. The Christians are in white squares—a little tiny piece of white at the top, and then the map darkens down into the blackness of heathenism. This diagram shows how great the harvest still is, and one's heart sinks at the sight of that blackness. Do you think that that was what Jesus Christ meant should be the world's condition nineteen hundred years after His death? Think of the need of the Jews. They are to be found in every land, and many of them are very clever, and some of them are the richest men in the world. But they do not believe in the Lord Jesus. Without Christ they are ready to perish. Think of dark Africa and China's millions, and we shall say: "The harvest truly is great." II. Help wanted. How can we help. We can pray. The late Dr. A. Somerville used to say, "I recommend the use of a prayer-book which I have found of much service. It can be had from Messrs. Keith Johnston—I mean a pocket-altar, which should be spread out like Hezekiah's letter before the Lord, and be gone over carefully from day to day, and from year to year, so that every kingdom and island should be remembered in prayer." In this way we can help the ingathering of the harvest by *prayer*. A missionary says that, not seldom during hours of exhaustion and illness, far away in heathen solitudes, he could only pray, "Lord, hear my praying friends in England;" and the thought of these prayers brought strength and comfort. How much, then, can we do by prayer? We can help on the great Harvest Home by giving of our money, but best of all by giving ourselves. He gives by far the largest contribution who gives himself or herself. Gold and silver are nothing in comparison. What have we to do for Him Who so loved us that He sent His Son to save us? "Freely ye have received, freely give."

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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## “THE WILL OF YOUR FATHER.”

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. J. G. GREENHOUGH, M.A.

*Preached in Stockwell Baptist Church on Sunday evening, April 27, 1890.*

Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”—ST. MATTHEW xviii. 14.

It comes at the close of the parable of the lost sheep. This parable is given to us in two connections. It is given by St. Luke as our Lord's answer to the Pharisees when they murmured because He received sinners and ate with them. And it is given here by St. Matthew in the train of thought which was suggested to the Saviour by the sight of a little child. And it was spoken in defence of children.

Now there seems at first sight little or nothing in common between an innocent, guileless child and a man so notorious for his evil ways that he is called by common consent a sinner. And yet in one respect they stand upon the same ground, at least, they did in the days of our Lord. They were alike despised, slighted, pushed aside as things of naught. You cannot have read the Gospel stories without learning this much at least that children in those days were held in very small consideration. Children of the poor especially were regarded as vexatious, useless encumbrances. I think we hear that word occasionally now. We see advertisements offering situations to people “without encumbrance,” I think that is the phrase. But it was very much more so in the days of the Son of Man. In those days there was none of that kindly consideration for children, no anxiety to deliver them from suffering, to fill their young lives with joy, which forms one of the most pleasant features of our own times. They were things of naught.

And in the same way men who had once lapsed into the class called sinners had no chance whatever of recovering themselves and getting into society again. Religion excommunicated them, morality passed them by with cold disdain, respectability shrank from them with a gesture of disgust. They were regarded as a sort of degraded order of beings for whom Heaven had no solicitude, for whom men need have no pity, whom all the most respectable must scrupulously avoid—they were dirt.

Thus you see the child and the sinner appealed to the Saviour's sympathies with almost equal force and drew from Him this precious announcement—that the Heavenly Father cared as much for the least and most ignorant of His children as He did for the wisest and most venerable Rabbi, as much for the most unworthy outcast, as He did for the

most scrupulous Pharisee of the synagogue. As a shepherd is anxious about his one sheep, though the ninety and nine were safe in the fold. so He Who is more than a shepherd, who is a Father, follows with pitiful eyes the throbbing heart and tearful struggling life of every member of His family, whether it be a baby abandoned by a cruel mother, or a sinner whom all the world disowns. Every soul of man is infinitely precious in the eyes of the Father.

Now that—if I read the Gospels in any right way—that was the great revelation of Jesus Christ concerning man. Sometimes it is expressed in language familiar to pastoral life, that all men everywhere are the property of one great good Shepherd. And sometimes it is expressed in words which appeal to domestic relationships, that all men everywhere are the anxious charge of a careful and loving Father. That in all the sayings of Jesus this thought is uppermost, that every single soul is dear to the heart of God; that He cannot see anyone left out in the darkness without pain; that every lost soul is a burden to Him, and every neglected one an object of peculiar pity and concern. “It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

Now let me say, first, this is a great truth, and a truth hard to receive, hard to believe, almost impossible to believe, unless we believe Jesus. It is just one of those truths which we have to take His word for, His unsupported word. For He gave no reasons for it, except His own grand authoritative “Verily I say unto you.” And if we do not think that His oft-repeated assertions of it are enough, we cannot find any evidence of it sufficient to convince us elsewhere. You know that wherever men reject Christ they put away this truth with almost scorn. It is absurd, they say, to think that God cares for every one of us. Nature is so careful of the whole, so careless of the single life. Nature thrusts the weak to the wall, that it may strengthen the race. Modern progress is one huge Juggernaut car which marches over the helpless and the fallen that it may reach its larger ends. So they say, and apart from Jesus Christ there is very much to bear out these words. Do we not see everywhere apparent waste of life, and energy, and moral power? A large portion of the children born into the world die of sheer neglect before they have reached the years in which they know good from evil. A very large proportion in this huge city, a still larger proportion in the great world of darkness beyond the seas, are the victims of the passion, folly, and cruelty, which do not care how they come or how soon they go. And a still larger proportion perhaps of those who survive this early neglect grow up physically and morally stunted, their mental faculties untrained, their notions of right and wrong miserably confused and darkened, their spiritual life unexercised. Millions of them there are who go through life almost absolutely in the dark, shut up behind dense walls of ignorance as black as prison walls, hideously precocious, full of wise wickedness from their earliest days, and so handicapped both by their moral inheritance and their evil surroundings that they seem predestined to be beaten in the race, and to have no chance whatever of escaping perdition.

It seems indeed as if, in the natural order of things, looking away from the revelation of Christ, as if the way of salvation had been made purposely hard for those who have once set out on the downward track and gone far wrong in it; as if God or nature had weighted them with heavy chains, making the climb upward heavy and dragging and burdensome,

and well nigh impossible. You know the more a man sins, the less power he has to do right, the lower his moral fall. Nature helps the good to continue good. It seems to hang a millstone round the neck of the evil, and to hold them down in the place to which they have fallen.

These things, then, and a great many other things, seem to give an apparent denial to the thought that God holds every single life dear, that His love goes after every lost one as the shepherd goes after his wandering sheep, and that He does not willingly let the least perish. These things taken by themselves point rather to the conclusion that a favoured few here and there are singled out for a lavish love and for special Providence, while the rest are left to run wild like city vagrants, and to fall out at last, when their poor lives are spent, utterly unregarded and forgotten.

And then, again, do not you yourselves sometimes find it difficult to believe that God cares for you, and loves infinitely each one of you? that He interests Himself singly and individually in each one of you, and cannot bear to see you in pain or in moral danger without a sort of aching of heart? It is very difficult sometimes to believe that He feels towards each one of us the same sort of feeling which a mother has towards each child. We are such tiny drops in the ocean of life, such infinitesimal units in the countless myriads of souls. We never walk through the crowds of this city without feeling we are of such small importance in the world, so easily dispensed with when we have played our little part, so soon forgotten, except by the one or two dear ones that are bound to us by peculiar ties of kinship and affection. There are always so many ready to take the place that we leave vacant, and to march heedlessly on without a thought of those whom they leave behind. And, moreover, we seem to depend so much upon ourselves, each one in the crowd jostling and fighting his way as if he had nothing but his own wits and strength to save him from being crushed to the wall. There are so few outward and visible signs of a Providence that has its arms around us, of a love that watches over and aids our movements, and we are so much at the mercy of changes, and accidents, and things over which we have no control, it is not surprising if sometimes, with all our faith, we feel a sort of faltering helplessness, a trembling distrust, a conscious unbelief, as if it were a presumption to think that we are of so much consequence in God's eyes, as if the preservation of our single life and its salvation could not be of very great consequence to Him. And so, my brethren, it is not only what we call the outcasts and the heathen and the neglected ones of the race, but we also, the more privileged and the better cared-for, that need to be assured by some strong word of authority mightier than nature, mightier than all experience, mightier than the force of our own trembling hearts, that God cherishes each human life, and that it is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of His little ones should perish.

Now, this is what the Saviour teaches us from first to last. It was the truth which He gave forth with all His authority, which He would never permit to be challenged, which He talked about as if it were rank atheism to call it in question, as if it were implied in every thought of God, and as if the words "Heavenly Father" would be a mockery if that were not true. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them is forgotten." It ran through all His teaching; it was the key-note of all His parables; it was the truth underlying all His miracles, that each one

was an infinite care to God ; that the lonely and forgotten unit, lost sight of in the tramp and rush of the passing multitude, the one with all its passions, woes, guilts, and repentances, was an object which enlisted Heaven's tenderest interest and His own unfathomable love. His ministry was intended throughout to be a demonstration of that. Oh, you remember how, when the multitude of sick and maimed and weary people gathered about His feet, instead of healing them by one word and in the mass, He went about with infinite tenderness and laid His hand on everyone—everyone. That ministry of His was just a picture of Heaven's solicitude—that ministry which grasped the whole of humanity in its saving thought, and had room for one little child in its arms—that ministry which grieved for the miseries of the whole race, and had tears for the solitary widow and immeasurable pity for the individual leper—which looked on the whole world with the compassion of God, while it nursed the single wounded and bruised outcast with the tenderness of a mother.

That it was which makes the Lord Jesus so infinitely dear to us. He reveals God's deepest heart to us in His own tender defence of the units, in His tearful pleading for the lost, and lonely, and forgotten ones. We feel that all this is a message to us as well as to the heathen, a beam of light coming down from God's face upon our faces, and lighting them up with an infinite hope. For we are all of infinite value to ourselves. Each soul among us is a very world full of thought, and hope, and passions, and fears ; each life among us one of romance and tragedy intermingled. Everyone of us, no matter of what moral weight and character—be we the vulgarest of the race, or the most refined and cultured—is of unspeakable consequence to ourselves, and we want to be assured that we are as much in the sight of God as we are in our own sight. It is one of the things for which we come together to worship, to be assured again of this. We do not come altogether for that : we come to think of God in His larger relationship, as the Ruler of the universe and of all nations, and the Head of His Church, and the Saviour and Father of all men. But if our religion only brought God nearer to us in those larger relationships, it would be somewhat cold and frigid, without pathos and tenderness. No, it is the longing to hide our own particular weariness, and weakness, and cares under the great rock of His love. That is what makes religion so sweet to us, and therefore do we fling ourselves on the Christ of God, whose word alone assures us of the Divine Fatherhood, of One to whom we can tell all the secrets to which other ears are deaf, who follows us with unwearied watchfulness, and who willeth not that any one of us should perish.

You, my dear brethren—all of you—you at least can have little doubt that the great Father has tenderly willed your salvation. Whatever we may say of the great multitudes who have had little or no knowledge of His truth granted to them, with you, at least, there can be no question that the great Shepherd has patiently and tenderly sought to bring home His sheep. I heard a poor collier say the other day—I met him in the railway train—he said : "What have I to care for God? He has never done anything for me. I was sent to the coal-pit when I was seven years old. Nobody ever taught me about God, and I knew nothing but hardship, and labour, and pain. Why should I care for Him?" And I could not help feeling that there was some reason in the words on those lips. But such

words on your lips would be blasphemy. You cannot say, "What is it to God whether I go in the wrong way or walk in the way of salvation? What cares He whether my life has its face turned towards Him or goes down into the darkness?" Not one of us can honestly believe that the good Father is indifferent to what becomes of us, because of this, a thousand voices join with the words of Christ in seeking to assure and convince us that our salvation is eagerly sought and desired by the great Shepherd of souls. Have we not been beset, behind and before, by His influences all our lives? Have we not been told since the days of childhood of a Christ who loved us with an everlasting love, and who, on a certain green hill far away, died in agony such as no other has ever known, that He might win our love and redeem us unto Himself? Have we not been visited every day of our lives by the Holy Spirit of warning and of promise? We have never done wrong without a twinge of conscience, never done right without some sense of the Divine approval. A thousand agencies have been at work in our lives, to lift our thoughts upward and to keep our path straight.

We sometimes talk about the difficulty of living the Christian life, about the greatness of its temptations, its hardships, about all that defeats and cripples our poor endeavours. But, my brethren, far more be the things for us than the things against us. Think of all the noble examples that have been set before you, of all the memories of love and purity which stimulate you, of all the great and noble thoughts which have been conveyed to you by teachers, pastors, parents, and books; think how nature even, in all its quiet grandeur, continually exhorts us to shun immoral excitement and cleave to that which is beautiful and true; think how all the relationships of life, husband and wife, brother and sister, parent and child, hedge us off from the seductions of the world, and stimulate us to the religious and the pure life; think how the very sorrows of life drive us to trust in the Eternal Lover; and think how the sad funeral procession daily reminds us of earthly vanities, and renews our aspirations after things unseen.

Oh, there can be no doubt that the all-loving Father has cared for you and left nothing untried that might win you from the ways of sin, and keep you clinging for safety to the Saviour's feet.

And if any of you perish, if any of you perish, as it may be, alas! it may be, notwithstanding all this tender love and fatherly solicitude—for God cannot compel a man to be saved, He can only give him all loving help towards that end—if any of you fall into sin and go down impenitent into the darkness, it will grieve Him, but you cannot lay it to His charge. You know your lives at least are an everlasting proof that it is not the will of your Father that one of His little ones should perish.

And even when we look out upon those who are far away off in the darkness, the most benighted and the most forlorn of the human race, there are not wanting altogether proofs that God has not been so forgetful of them as the first indications go to show. There is not a nation or tribe anywhere in the world which was not at some time or other visited with gleams of light, instructed to believe in a grand supernatural and a good providence, and taught some of the ways of human brotherhood and pure morality. It was God's will that this should be done; it was God's will that sages and prophets should appear among them, enlightening for them some ways of truth; but it was not God's will that they should lose

this light as they have done ; that they should be degraded as they have been ; that they should have reduced their religion to utterly foul immoral superstitions as they have done ; that they should convert the purest truths into immorality. That was man's doing. It was not the will of the Heavenly Father.

A thousand things are put down to God's will which are man's wicked doings ; and it is blasphemy to call it God's will when men pollute and defile and destroy the sweetest of His gifts. It is not God's will that children should be neglected—allowed to die. Has He not planted in the human heart the very instincts of fatherhood and motherhood which should have prevented all that ? It is not God's will that sinners should be cast out, left alone, forsaken ; it is man's hard, selfish, cruel nature that does that. It is not God's will that a wealthy and cultured society should live in luxury and splendour, careless of the squalor and misery that reek in crowded dens within a few hundred yards of their mansions. That is man's selfishness and not God's ordering. The voice of the Eternal is always reminding us that we are our brothers' keepers, and that what we do to the least of these we are doing unto Him.

And, above all things, it is not God's will that a few elect people should constitute His Church and regale themselves with His love and promises every Sabbath day, while sheep outside are perishing, unloved, untaught, and unsought. His word to each disciple is, "If thou lovest Me, feed My sheep ; as I have sought thee, go thou and seek them." Many, many are perishing ; but the Father is always charging us not to let them perish. It is the selfishness of man, the heedlessness of the rich, the brutality of the strong, the very indifference of the Church which Cain-like recognises no obligations of brotherhood—these are making men perish ; these are the things which are defeating God's purpose. But over and above all this comes the Word of Jesus which assures us that God wishes to save all, which bids the Church be alive to its sacred commission, and requires all men to whom much has been given to share in the Redeemer's anxiety.

Oh, my brethren, remember why all that care of which I spoke has been bestowed on you. Remember what is the meaning of your election, as you call it, of the truth and light and grace entrusted to you, and which have made you inheritors of all the promises. Not for yourself alone were these gifts bestowed. God uses us as we with torches do, not light them for ourselves. God begins by being exclusive that He may finally include all. The sunlight illumines the mountain tops before it reaches the vales below. He fills the Church with His glory that all nations may come and walk in it. God hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to men. Every saved soul is a living witness of God's desire to save others ; a living proof that it is not His will that any one of His children should perish.

#### PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

O THOU most merciful God, our Father in Jesus Christ, Who art greater than all our thoughts, we thank Thee that Thou hast taught us to believe that a little child often understands Thee better than the wise and prudent, and that those who have most of the child's spirit will come nearest.

to Thee in Thy kingdom. We beseech Thee to give us to-night a child's faith, a child's simplicity of purpose, some of a child's purity, a child's joyous sense of a father's love and a father's pity, that we may worship Thee as we ought, and, as we worship Thee, rejoice.

Let our first word in Thy presence be one of praise for Thy great mercy to us, for all the gifts of Thine which come each day, morning and evening ever fresh and new; for the joy of human love, the care of parents, the society of friends, the faces of little children, the pure delights of home; for strength and help given to us each day for each day's duties; for the means of grace and for the hope of glory. Especially do we thank Thee now as at all times for the grace conferred upon us in Jesus Christ Thy Son, that Thou hast delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into His kingdom, through Whom we have redemption by His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. We thank Thee for the memory of Him Who sojourned among men that He might bring heaven down to earth and make poor human nature the partaker of the Divine life. We bless Thee for the memory of those Sabbath evenings long time ago when He gathered the multitude about His feet and went among them touching their every soreness, wound, fainting heart, disease and want, and giving healing to each and all. Oh, may that scene repeat itself in the experience of those who bow before Thee now. Help us to bring to Thee our needs, our cares, our burdens, our sicknesses and sorrows, our sins and guilts, and feel that the touch of Jesus Christ the Divine one removes and heals them and gives us perfect deliverance.

We beseech Thee our heavenly Father to grant Thy benediction to every one before Thee, that sort of blessing which in Thine infinite wisdom Thou seest is most needed. Let the aged and the weary find rest in Thine eternal love. Let young men and maidens see Thee in all Thy beauty, and make vows of service to Thee. Let those who are bowed down with the many burdens and cares of daily life have underneath and around about them the Everlasting Arms. Let the little children hear the voice of Jesus, and feel His arms compassing them about as children did in the days long ago. May those who are in doubt and fear, perplexed about religious life and its temptations and difficulties have all needed strength given to persevere and to hope.

If any have come to Thee after a day of labour spent in the name of Jesus, perhaps with hearts a little faint and discouraged, do Thou restore their hopes, deepening their faith and making them once more assured of Thy good promises. Let those who have hesitated to confess themselves disciples of Jesus Christ have their last lingering reluctance removed, and joyfully acknowledge at last they are truly and wholly His. Let all Thy people who acknowledge Thy name, and call themselves Thy holy and elect people, be stimulated to more constant endeavour in Thy service, and be filled with the pitying solitudes of Jesus Christ concerning the world which lieth in wickedness.

We beseech Thee to have mercy upon this great city, with its multitudes of people who fear Thee not, who have no joy in Thy promises, no part in Thy service, and no share in our immortal hopes. Make the churches of this great city more active and earnest in every saving work, and show Thy people, who sometimes are almost in despair as to means and methods and agencies, some surer and more effective way of saving

all this darkness, and bringing it into the light of Christ, and making this city a city of the great King.

Have mercy upon the outlying world of sin, the world far away, which has never heard of the cross of Jesus and of the Father's pitying love. Sustain the hands and the hearts of those who have gone out into this darkness with the lamp of life in their hands. When they think themselves forgotten of those who have sent them forth, help them ever to be assured that they are environed at all times, and give Thy people at home a profounder sympathy with this work and its agents abroad. Deepen and purify our missionary zeal, sanctify our every saving purpose, and make all Thy people burdened with responsibility which the trust that Thou hast committed to them imposes.

Be present at all the meetings which shall be held for the furtherance of missionary work. Let all who assemble there be enriched with the sense of Thy presence, and lightened with the light of the Holy Ghost, and consecrate afresh to the great work whereto Thou has sent Thy churches forth.

Hear us as we pray that Thy work may ever abound within this sanctuary, that Thy servant who leads this people in holy thoughts and holy efforts, and seeks to save the unconverted, may be upheld by Thee in all his public and private endeavours, made himself an example of all righteousness, unity, sanctity, and self-forgetfulness, and be blessed abundantly in his appeals to the people. Be pleased to hear us as we ask that all troubled, anxious, sorrowing spirits may know the way to find peace and balm in Thy consolations and love; that every house of sorrow be visited to-night with some tokens of Thy pity and good comfort; that all who have been bereaved may find in Thee the everlasting Friend. Let Thy Fatherhood be manifested everywhere to each sorrowing child, and in Thy pity and Thy grace bless us and keep us above and beyond all our asking: and forgive our many sins through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

## THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD.

*Notes of a Sermon*

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR DODS, D.D.

*Preached in Queen's Cross Free Church, Aberdeen.*

ST. JOHN i. 1—14.

IN this brief introduction to his Gospel, John summarised its contents and gave an abstract of the history he was about to relate in detail. That the Eternal Word, in whom was the life of all things, became flesh and was manifested among men; that some ignored, while others recognised Him—this was what John desired to exhibit in his Gospel, and this was what he summarily stated in that compact and pregnant introductory passage. He briefly described a Being, Whom he named "the Word"; he explained the connection of this Being with God and with created things; he told how He came to the world and dwelt among men, and remarked upon the reception He met with. The Gospel unfolded what was summed up in these propositions, and narrated in detail the history of the manifestation

of the Incarnate Word to men and of their reception or rejection of His Person. John introduced us to a being whom he spoke of as "the Word." He used the term without apology, as if it were already familiar to his readers, and yet he added a brief explanation of it, as if possibly they might attach to it ideas incompatible with his own. He used it without apology, because the Jewish teachers had already given it circulation. They were accustomed, when they paraphrased the Old Testament in order to render it more intelligible to the people, to substitute the expression "Word of Jehovah" for the name of God, whenever the Scriptures represented God as appearing and acting in the world. Long before John wrote, the title "Word" was used to designate the Divine Being through Whom the unseen God acted upon the world and manifested Himself to men. The Word of God was to a Jewish mind God revealing Himself. But even beyond Jewish circles of thought the expression would easily be understood. At all times thoughtful men had keenly felt the difficulty of aiming at any certain and definite knowledge of God. The most rudimentary definition of God, by declaring Him to be a spirit, at once and for ever dissipated the hope that we could ever see Him with the bodily eye. This depressed and disturbed the soul. Other objects which invited our thought and feeling we had an easy communion with. It was indeed the unseen and the intangible spirit of our friends which we chiefly valued and not the outward appearance. But as we only reached and knew and held fellowship with our friends through the bodily features with which they were familiar and the words that struck upon their ear and the actions they performed, so did they long for some such familiar and convincing knowledge of God. They put out their hand, but they could not touch Him. Nowhere in this world could they see Him more than they saw Him here and now. If they passed to other worlds there too He was concealed from their sight, inhabiting no body, occupying no place. Job was not alone in his painful and baffling search after God. Many said with him: "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand that I cannot see Him." In various ways men had sought to alleviate the difficulty of mentally approaching an infinite, invisible, incomprehensible God. One theory which was frequently advanced by philosophers was not altogether incompatible with the ideas suggested by John in his prologue. This theory was accustomed, though with no great definiteness, to bridge the abyss between the eternal, invisible God and His material works, by interposing some middle being or beings who might mediate between the unknown and the known. This link between God and the creature which seemed to make God and His relation to material things more intelligible was sometimes spoken of as the Word or Wisdom of God, the *logos*. This seemed an appropriate name by which to designate that through which God made Himself known, and by which He came into relations with things and persons not Himself. Very vague indeed was the conception formed even of this intermediary Being. But of this term, "the Word," and of the ideas that centered in it, John took advantage to proclaim the eternal and divine nature of Christ. As Paul took advantage of the altar to the unknown God, and declared to the Athenians Him whom they ignorantly worshipped, so did John fill

with definite and important meaning the word which Hebrew and Greek thinkers had alike vaguely used. The title itself was full of significance. The word of a man was that by which he uttered himself, by which he put himself in communication with other persons and dealt with them; his word was his character in expression. Similarly the Word of God was God's power, intelligence, and will in expression; not dominant in potential only, but in active exercise. God's Word was His will, going forth with creative energy and communicating life from God, the source of life and being. "Without Him was not any thing made which was made." He was prior to all created things, and Himself with God and God. He was God coming into relation with other things, revealing Himself, manifesting Himself, communicating Himself. The world was not itself God; things created were not God, but the intelligence and will that brought them into being, and that pervaded and guided them, these were God. And between the works they saw, and the God who was past finding out, there was the Word, one who from eternity had been with God, the medium of the first utterance of God's mind, and the first forth-putting of His power as close to the inmost nature of God and as truly uttering that nature as our word was close to and uttered our thought, capable of being used by no one besides, but by ourselves only. It was apparent then why John chose this title to designate Christ's pre-existent life. No other title brought out so clearly the identification of Christ with God, and the function of Christ to reveal God. But perhaps the chief reason why John chose this title was that they might know that the same being who manifested God in creation revealed Him now in humanity. He wished to bring the incarnation into line with creation, and to show them that this greatest manifestation of God was not an abrupt departure from previous methods, but was the culminating expression of methods and principles which had from eternity and throughout governed God's activity. Jesus Christ, who revealed the Father in human personality, was the same who had always been expressing the Father's will and giving it effect in the creation and government of all things. All that God had ever done external to Himself was to be found in the universe, partly visible and known to us. In man, creation at last became intelligent, self-conscious, endowed with will. In man, creation met and understood its Creator. Man was the last and fullest expression of God's thought, in whom he was first found a creature in whom He, the personal God, could reveal Himself, in whom the highest personal qualities could be distinctly seen. The great incident in the history of the "Word of God" to which John here directed our attention was that "He became flesh and dwelt among us." That Being whose pre-existence and divinity John had been insisting upon became man, not ceasing to be what He was before, but taking into connection with Himself that which He had not before. He was still the Creator of all, the One Who stood as the source of all life, but now He possessed a human nature as well, and in this human nature He personally lived. What we had in Christ was God furnishing Himself with a human nature in and through which He as truly lived and worked as in and through His divine nature. This was what gave efficacy to all that He did for us, that it was divine action. It was thus that Christ was the revealer of God, manifesting and declaring God to us, not only by what He said, but far more by what He is and does. It might assist us to clear our thoughts about the Incarnation if we

considered what it was that differentiated Christ from the best of men. It was quite conceivable that God should so sway a man's will and purify his character that from his first day to his last he should do nothing but good. It was quite conceivable that a man should throughout his whole life be in perfect harmony with God, and should thoroughly discharge his whole duty. In such a case we should no doubt see a revelation of God's character, and we should understand more fully than before what God meant man to be. An ideal man might have been created; God's ideal of man might have been realised, and still we should have had no Incarnation. Through Christ's life on earth all of God that could be revealed through human nature was revealed. The character of God was revealed; and it was His character more than anything else about Him we needed to know. The lessons of the Incarnation were obvious. First, from it we were to take our ideal of God. In the Incarnation we saw what God had actually done. This God, Whom we had often shunned, and felt to be in our way, and an obstacle whom we had suspected of tyranny, had through compassion and sympathy with us broken through all impossibilities, and contrived to take the sinner's place. All this He did, not for the sake of showing us how much better a thing the divine nature is than the human, but because His nature impelled Him to do it, because He could not bear to be solitary in His blessedness, to know in Himself the joy of holiness and love, while His creatures were missing this joy and making themselves incapable of all good. Our first thought of God then must ever be that which the Incarnation suggested, that the God with whom alone, and in all things, we had to do was not one who was alienated from us or who had no sympathy with us, but that He was one who sacrificed Himself for us, who made all things but justice and right bend to serve us, who forgave our misapprehensions, our coldness, our unspeakable folly, and made common cause with us in all that concerned our welfare. Look at the God we had in Christ; our judge becoming our atoning victim, our God becoming our father, the infinite one coming with all His helpfulness into the most intimate relations with us, and say whether this was not a God to whom we could trust ourselves and whom we could love and serve. If this were the real nature of God, if we might always expect such faithfulness and help from God, if to be God were to be all this, as full of love in the future as He had shown Himself in the past, then might not existence yet be that perfect joy our instincts craved, and toward which we were slowly and doubtfully finding our way through all the darkness and strains and shocks that were needed to sift what was spiritual in us from what was unworthy. The second lesson the Incarnation taught regarded our own duty. Look steadily at the Incarnation, at the love which made Christ take our place and identify Himself with us, consider the new breath of life that this one act had breathed into human life, ennobling the world and showing us how deep and lovely were the possibilities that lay in human nature, and new thoughts of our own conduct would lay hold of our mind. As Christ's love became incarnate, not spending itself in any one great display apart from the needs of men, but manifesting itself in all the routine and incident of a human life, so must our love derived from Him be incarnated, not spent in one display, but animating our whole life in the flesh and finding expression for itself in all that our earthly condition brought us into contact with. Our chance of doing good in the world

depended upon this. We must learn to bear one another's burdens; and the Incarnation showed us that we could do so only so far as we identified ourselves with others and lived for them. This was the guide to help we could give. If anything could reclaim the lowest class in our population, it was by men of godly life living among them—not living among them in comforts unattainable by them, but living in all points as they lived, save that they lived without sin. The poor were not the only class that needed help; it was our dependence on money as the medium of charity that had begotten that feeling. It was easy to give money, and so we discharged our obligation, and felt as if we had done all. It was not money that even the poorest had the most need of; and it was not money at all but sympathy which all classes needed—that true sympathy which gave us insight into their condition and prompted us to bear their burdens whatever these were. There were many men on earth who were hindrances to better men, who could not manage their own affairs or play their own part, but were continually entangled and in difficulties. They were a drag on society, requiring the help of more serviceable men, and preventing such men from enjoying the fruit of their own labour. There were again men who were not of our kind, men whose tastes were not ours. Then there were men who seemed pursued by misfortune, and men who by their own sin kept themselves continually in the mire. There were, in short, various classes of persons with whom we were day by day tempted to have no more to do whatever; we were exasperated by the discomfort they occasioned us, the anxiety and vexation and expenditure of time, feeling, and labour constantly renewed so long as we were in connection with them. Why should we be held down by unworthy people, why should we have the ease and joy taken out of our life by the ceaseless demands made upon us by wicked, careless, incapable, ungrateful people? Why must we still be patient, still postponing our own interest to theirs? Simply because this was the method by which the salvation of the world went on, and because we felt that the love we depended upon and believed in as the salvation of the world, we must ourselves endeavour to show. Recognising how Christ had humbled Himself to bear the burden of shame and misery we had laid upon Him, we could not refuse to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

## THE FIVE GREAT POWERS OF LIFE.

*A Sermon to Children.*

BY THE REV. J. C. CARRICK.

“And when the Lord saw her He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.”—ST. LUKE vii. 13.

ON one of the slopes of Mount Hermon stands a little village at this moment as I speak. It is just like a hundred of the other hamlets of the Holy Land, and reposes on a steep hillside, with its white walls, square roofs, and palm and olive groves. But it has a wonderful interest for us to-day, for there Christ brought a young man back from the dead. Christ in His life-time raised three different people from the dead, and each of them was in a different state of decay from the other. Jairus' little daughter was newly dead; the widow of Nain's only son was on his way

to the grave ; Lazarus had been buried three days and was corrupt. And yet Jesus Christ, the Lord and Giver of Life, in whose hands are the keys of death and the unseen, raised them all, to show that He had really power over death in all its different stages. And then, you remember, how He Himself rose from the dead, and the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre for ever ; so that we who love Jesus can now very well exclaim, " O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? "

Nain, then, is the name of that sweet little village of Galilee, and the name signifies " The lovely "—a sweet green hillside, and far beyond the snowy crown of Mount Hermon.

A poor widow had an only son there, a young man, and he took ill and died. The whole village mourned with her, and accompanied her, according to the Eastern custom, men and women, to the grave, and they were just on their way, and the funeral procession was going down the hill to the little God's acre, where the rude forefathers of the hamlet slept, to lay the young dust alongside of his father's ashes (for he had died some time before), when Jesus met the mourners and stopped them. He felt very sorry indeed for the poor widow's tears, because he was her only son. " And when the Lord saw her He had compassion on her, and said under her, Weep not." And He touched the bier on which the dead boy was lying, and he rose up living, and Jesus delivered him back again to his mother, who received him with a joy too deep now for tears.

Now, my dear children, in this beautiful story which deserves to be written in letters of gold, what I am going to call " The Five Great Powers of Life " were all brought into action, and I am going, God helping me, to say a word on each of them. These five great powers are :—The power (1) of death, (2) of love, (3) of tears, (4) of prayer, and (5) of Christ.

I. *The Power of Death.*—This poor woman had been robbed by death first of her husband, and now her only son was ruthlessly carried off. Her heart was completely emptied. All that was left of life's beautiful dream was a handful of dust in a coffin hid—a coffin under the daisies. Though Nain was called " The Lovely," yet its loveliness was no charm against the king of terrors." Beauty will not scare him from his awful work. " Ah," cried John Knox to the fair Court ladies, " you are very beautiful and very happy ; but fie on that knave Death who will yet have you all." Her son was only a boy, yet his youth was no charm against death. You perhaps are thinking as I speak, " Oh, I'm young, and there are plenty of happy days in store for me ; all will be bright and happy." Ah, but if you look at the graves in the churchyard, you will find many shorter and smaller than you are. It is appointed unto *all men* once to die.

In the beautiful old Abbey of Melrose, in Scotland, there is an inscription on a grave—several hundred years old—which tells us what a power death has over us dust and ashes :—

" Earth goeth *on* the earth  
Glistening like gold ;  
Earth goeth *to* the earth  
Sooner than it wold (= would) ;  
Earth buildeth on the earth  
Castles and towers ;  
Earth says to the earth,  
' All shall be ours ! ' "

II. *The Power of Love.*—The poor widow of Nain wept bitterly because

she loved her son deeply. He had all her heart. There was but one life divided between them, and under the daisy-starred grave to which they were hastening all her hopes were to be buried.

What will love not do? It is the greatest thing in the world. It is the greatest thing even in God, for God is love.

One day a London clergyman was standing on the pavement of a crowded street. The carriages were rolling past, and he saw a little ragged girl carrying her brother, a little younger than herself, across the muddy causeway. And she struggled hard to bring him over, and at last succeeded. And the clergyman, whose kind eyes had been watching her, said to her, "Isn't he heavy to carry, my dear?" "Oh, no, sir," was her answer; "*he's my brother.*" Light is the burden that love lays on. If we really love people, we'll do everything and anything for them.

III. *The Power of Tears.*—Jesus saw the widow weeping, and He had compassion on her, and said, "Weep not." We all know something of the power of tears. Perhaps at school you see that sometimes, when a boy who has not learned his lesson, begins to cry, and makes the master sorry for him, so that he lets him off. And when you see your father or your mother crying, how very sorry you feel for them. You put your arms round their necks and say, "Mother, dear, what can I do for you? Don't cry." Try, my dear children, and never give your parents sorrow. Remember that if they weep, it is not for nothing. Old eyes do not shed tears easily. Let their tears move you; and if you have been doing wrong, just go up to them at once, and say, "I am sorry for what I have done, and, God helping me, I will do it no more." A mother, who once lost her dear son, put on his tombstone nothing but his name, and this touching sentence: "He never caused his mother a tear!"

Do you know that God once wept for you? In the garden of Gethsemane the Son of God shed tears all night, because of your sins and mine. Jesus died literally of a *broken heart*, and when the soldiers pierced His side the tears came streaming out with the blood. And do you know that when you or I do wrong there are tears *even in heaven* because of it? There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and all the bells of glory are set ringing when the prodigal son comes home. But if he stays away in the far-off country, and forgets his Father and his Father's hearth, that hearth is wet with bitter tear-drops. God says in the Old Testament: "But, if ye will be disobedient, Mine eye shall run down with tears." "Jesus wept." Look up to-day, dear children, at the tear-stained face of the Man of sorrows, who was acquainted with grief, and dry His tears by doing His will and loving Himself.

IV. *The Power of Prayer.*—Many were the prayers which that poor woman raised during these few sorrowful days of sickness and death, that God would spare her boy to her. And God at last answered her, and restored her son to her bosom. Do you know this, that prayer is one of the greatest powers of life? Prayer moves the Hand that moves the universe: you have only to pull the rope, and heaven's great bell rings. When you are in a difficulty look up and cry, "God help me." The Father will not shut His ears to His little child's cry. "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Even a little child's tap at the door of heaven is heard, and the doors of paradise unroll, and the everlasting gates lift up their heads.

You have all heard of the "Cunard" line of deep-sea steamers, sailing to America and other places. Well, it is one of the most gigantic and successful business enterprises in the world; and do you know how it all began. Samuel Cunard was a poor boy, and when he got on, and married, and started a few ships, Mrs. Cunard spent the whole of each day, when a steamer sailed, in prayer to God for its safety and for the success of the line. Her prayer has been abundantly answered. And if you pray earnestly—as if you really meant it—like the importunate widow who would take no refusal from Christ, God will answer you too. "*Whatsoever ye ask in faith, believing, ye shall receive.*"

V. *The Power of Christ.*—This is the greatest of all the powers of life. "All power," said Jesus, after His resurrection from the dead, "is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." Most of these powers avail only for earth; but the power of Jesus extends over both worlds—the seen and the unseen. He showed that power by raising the dead boy and by causing the widow's heart to sing for joy.

Do you, my dear children, know anything of the power of Christ? He is strong to save, "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." Only He could atone for our sins and unlock heaven's gate. Give yourself into His kind keeping just now, and He will raise you out of the grave of sin, which is a far worse grave than the grave of death. Trust all to Him, and He will carry you through life with all its toils and moils, its changes and chances, its ups and downs, past death and into eternity, in perfect security and happiness, for "He gathereth the lambs with His arm and carrieth them in His bosom." "Without Me, ye can do nothing."

A good lady who a few years ago lost her two babes by death, sang thus about them and about Jesus, in whose keeping they are safe; for what we call death is only when one of Christ's sheep wanders over the brow of the hill and is lost to our view, though Jesus is still watching over it on the *sunshiny* side of the hill, as He did when it wandered on the *shadowy* side:—

“ Two buds plucked from the tree,  
 Two birdies flown from the nest :  
 Two little darlings snatched  
 From a fond mother's breast :  
 Two little snow-white lambs  
 Gone from the sheltering fold :  
 Two little narrow graves  
 Down in the churchyard cold !  
 Two little drooping flowers  
 Growing in purer air,—  
 Blooming fragrant and bright  
 In the kind Gardener's care :  
 Two little tender birds  
 Flown far from fear and harm :  
 Two little snow-white lambs  
 On the good Shepherd's arm.  
 Two little angels more  
 Singing with voices sweet,  
 Flinging their crowns of gold  
 Down at the Saviour's feet :  
 Free from all earthly care,  
 Pure from all earthly stain :  
 O who could wish them back  
 In this drear world again ? ”

"Suffer little children to come unto Me, and *forbid* them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "And none shall pluck them out of my Father's hand."

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for June 1: ST. LUKE x. 25—37.*

### THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

THE ten commandments of God had been gathered up by our Lord Jesus into two, and these two commandments are, "Love God your Father in heaven," "Love everybody on earth." They are very short and very simple. Now, to-day's lesson is a little story which Jesus told to explain to us the second of these commandments. It does not say anything about the first, though the first was the more important. It was about the second of these that this learned Jewish lawyer raised a question, and it was, "Who am I to consider my neighbour?"

It was often our Lord's custom to answer questions by telling a parable or story. Jesus did not make His lessons as dry as possible, but as pleasant and interesting as possible. This tale might have been true, but this we do not know. There is only one road between the great town of Jerusalem and the very important town of Jericho (as it was then). There was a great deal of traffic and coming and going between these two towns, because there was no other road. There is no village nor houses now on the road, and probably there never was. But there is the ruin of an inn about the middle of the road, built doubtless for the accommodation of passengers. Well, this road goes down an uncommonly rugged descent into a glen, and brigands and thieves of all sorts could find pillage and safety in this sort of place. Thus it was a most likely place for the scene of such a story as this.

You see the reason why these clergymen—these Levitès—passed the poor man. They were afraid of their own limbs and property. They knew that the brigands who had attacked this poor fellow could not be far off, and so they got off as fast as possible. Now, the lesson which our Lord wishes us to draw from this story is that we ought not to shut out from our compassion and sympathy and kindness any needy person. When we find anyone in need, then we ought to hear a call from God to act a kindly, brotherly part towards that person, no matter who he is.

At that time people only cared for people of their own race and of their own religion. They thought if they showed them kindness they had done all that could be expected of them. The Jews disliked the Samaritans very much, and the wonderful thing about this story was that a Samaritan should show such kindness to a poor Jew.

The lesson is that we are not to say of anyone, "He is not of us," but if he is in trouble he has a claim on us. His sorrow is the claim.

Men are all brothers, that is what Jesus tells us. All have the same Father, the same Saviour. Jesus is our good Samaritan, who came from heaven to feed us, and save us, and bring us back to God, and make us fit for heaven.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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## THE LIVING CHRIST.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. C. A. BERRY,

*Preached in Westminster Chapel, on Sunday Evening, May 18, 1890.*

“Fear not; I am the first and the last and the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”—REV. i. 17, 18.

THIS sublime Apocalypse is the climax of Revelation. It carries us forward from narrative to prophecy, from facts to truths, from present conditions to permanent issues. It crowns the story of redemptive agencies with a vision of redemptive achievements. It is a book of completions, of finishing touches, of final results. It takes up the broken threads of history and weaves them into the fabric of eternity. It turns our gaze on what has been and is around us, to what is and shall be before us. Above all, it advances our thought from the Christ of history to the Christ of eternity. It translates for us the Man of Sorrows into the crowned and conquering Lord of a supreme spiritual empire. There is much in this book that is enigmatic, a magnificence of martial imagery to which we have no satisfactory key, vast hieroglyphic prophecies whose rosetta-stone has not yet been seen. But in its broad purpose the book is sufficiently lucid and luminous. Leaving out of account the mere accidental time-order in which the books were written, and estimating them according to their spiritual results and relations, it may be said that what the Acts of the Apostles is to the Gospel by Luke, the Apocalypse is to the Gospel of John. With this difference, that while Luke's supplement continues the story of Christ's work within the Church militant on earth, John's supplement lifts us up to a vision of the enthroned Redeemer, unveils the glory and the supremacy of our risen Lord, reveals to us the continuous enthusiasm and the certain triumph of redeeming grace, and carries us forward to its climax, the mastery of that omnipotent love which has achieved dominion over all worlds and principalities and powers. Without such a book as the Book of Revelation the religion of Jesus Christ would have lacked its crowning assurance, and the history of Christ its adequate interpretation. What is going on in the invisible above is essential to the understanding of what is going on in the visible around. Only as we get a glimpse of the years can we understand the methods of grace. The vision of Christ in His glory alone completes and justifies the history of Christ in His humiliation. This waybook of our

faith could not stop with the record of a Christ crucified, nor yet with the record of an ascending Christ. The evangelical narratives, complete as narratives, surely needed some supplement which should link their central figure to every land and age, which should reveal where Christ now is, and what the character of His redeeming supremacy.

It is true, indeed, that the Church received memorable and significant answers to these necessities that Pentecostal Day, when the Spirit of Christ swept men into the vigour of a superhuman life, in that fiery baptism which transfused the weakness of earthly souls into the contagious might of conquering spirits, which translated the fishermen of Galilee into the leaders and teachers of a new humanity. In that fiery baptism we have historic evidence of our Master's word that He would continue to be with and in the men who worked for Him. But something more than that historic Pentecost was needed to support the coming ages in confidence and faith and service. That Pentecostal baptism, it is true, repeats itself upon every soul which seeks to win the higher life, and adds its witness to every newborn heart of the living presence and power of its Lord. But times come in this world of tangible and persistent evil when what we inwardly feel is crushed by what we outwardly see, when the testimony of the spirit within us is rudely bruised by collision with inflexible facts around us. It does not follow on that account that the spiritual sense of Christ's indwelling presence is not after all the surest and the best foundation for our hope in Him, but it does follow that what we inwardly feel needs to have some correspondence and attestation in what we outwardly see, and that our sense of Christ's gracious indwelling power requires to be justified by some vision of His living supremacy. In a word, the Apocalypse, the Book of Revelation, is essential as the verifier of experience.

For deep and clear as may be our inward experience of Christ, we cannot quite escape the tyranny of our eyes. We see too much and too little. Too much, because too little. With an awful precision we see the ravages of sin, the desolating frenzy of passion, the wild, blind conflict of eccentric life, the hungry eagerness of graves which close over hopes unrealised, over lives whose record is weariness and whose end is vanity. The sight is sometimes overwhelming, and the heart cries out in pain. Ay, but with all our seeing we see too little. Like Elisha's servant on the hill of Dothan, we see only just enough to blind us to sights more blessed and reassuring. Sin and strife and death are assuredly here, and here they must remain while man's freedom is crowned with evil and the processes of discipline are as yet unfulfilled. But with our unbaptized vision we do not see the large arena on which God is working out His gracious purposes, we do not know how these vast and appalling forces of sin are in the grip and under the dominance of a triumphant Redeemer, We do not see where and how and to what decree the conquering grace of Christ cleaves its way to the very heart of the conflict, and robs the devil of his spoil in the very hour of his seeming victory. It requires the Apocalypse to show us the wide empire and mastership of Christ. Only by insight can eyesight be regulated and guided, and in the goodness of His grace God has given us that better sight. He has torn aside the veil, and has shown us that above and around this death-smitten world stretches a kingdom strong and bright and peaceful, whose King is Master of all worlds and powers; in whose hands are the keys of death and of Hades;

round whose throne gather the blessed ones who sing the dual and eternal song, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain," "hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

This text of mine is Christ's new introduction of Himself to the Church militant, an introduction of Himself from above to His disciples left below. It is the revelation of Himself in His lordship, clothed with the authority and resource of spiritual empire. On His head are many crowns, in His hands are the keys of mastery, to His service yields all God's powers. But I want you to note that right in the centre of this shining vision the old familiar Christ of the Gospels is made clearly discernible. Not only does He introduce Himself as the living one with the keys, but as the one who became dead, the one therefore who lived and moved within the range of men's observation. Christ was not content to show Himself in His glory, endowed with the splendour of Divine power. He was careful to claim His place on the field of history, to reaffirm His identity as the Son of Man, to revive the facts of His incarnate life, and to link what He is in heaven to what He was on earth. The human brow is visible through the Divine halo. The hand that grasps the sceptre bears the nail-marks of the tragedy. His eyes—albeit that John saw them as flaming fires—recall the tear-drops which fell at Bethany and over Jerusalem. And it is the Christ Himself that throws into promise these lineaments of His humanity. He permits us to look at His crown, but while as yet we turn to look at it He lifts before us the vision of His cross, He unveils for us the splendours of His throne, ay, and He bids us to look at the steps which led up to it, and at the inscriptions which they bear, and the heavenly writing spells Bethlehem, Nazareth, Gethsemane, Calvary, Olivet.

Now, the fact that our Lord, at the very moment of His triumphant revelation, should bring into prominence the historic aspects of His life, so that we cannot see His glory apart from His humiliation, is surely fraught with meanings both tender and instructive. It gives fresh affirmation to the kinship between God and man, it lifts human life out of the contracted sphere of nature and sets it in the light of eternity. It asserts lowliness and loftiness in new and striking relations, it identifies fidelity with felicity and service with satisfaction. It sheds down upon us the light of promise and encouragement amid our doubts and struggles.

But it is not upon any one of these suggestions that I want to fix your thought to-night. Our interest just now centres upon this self-revelation of Christ, upon the emphasis with which He declares the two aspects of His Christhood. He is still the Christ of history who died, even though He sits enthroned as the Christ of eternity who lives. He is the Christ of eternity who lives while yet He cherishes His life as the Christ of history when He served and sacrificed. And to me there seems great significance in this twofold Christhood. It re-emphasises the historic basis of our religion, even while it carries our thought upward to its spiritual characteristic. It points us back over the groundwork of our faith to the life, the teachings, the death, and the resurrection of the Incarnate Son, even while it lifts our hearts over the crown of their religious life to the Christ who is glorified and triumphant.

Now, my friends, that is a point of very great importance, which indicates and guards us against two opposite dangers which in turn imperil the life of Christian faith—the danger, on the one hand, of a dreamy spiritualism

detached from all dependence upon the historic aspects of revelation, and the danger, on the other hand, of resting too much and too long on the mere narrative of the Gospel, and failing to grasp the living, spiritual relationship which Christ fulfils with His church. This text, I say, recalls us to the record of the gracious life of Him that liveth and was dead. It reminds us that every spiritual truth and hope in the Gospel finds its root in some revealing fact, that our relations with God and with eternity are determined, first of all, by a life that was visibly lived, by a death which was visibly died in our midst and in our behalf. Why should Christ introduce the reference to His death in such a place, at such a moment, in such a connection, if it were not to emphasise again from above the vital relation between the death He died and the life which each of us may live in Him? I am not here to discuss theories to-day. I have no more disposition than fitness for such a task, even if this were the time and place. But there is to me a solemnity about this reference to His death while He sat on the throne of life which intensifies the significance of the Cross and of its place in God's ministry of redemption, for I am reminded by that circumstance of another circumstance in history—the night in which He was betrayed, when, with pathos, matchless love, and tenderness, He called the men He loved and trusted into an upper room apart, and there did constitute that simple unsacramentarian supper, that festival, that eucharist of thanksgiving which henceforth was to be maintained in memory of His death, the only ceremony Christ committed to His church—simple beautiful, and pathetic, but the only one is the one that commemorated the death He died for men. And I hear Him from above, from the realms of life and victory, reminding His own that He was the One who became dead. And that death of His passed from the mere region of martyr-heroism into a significant and solemn ministry of reconciliation.

My brethren, there lies the foundation of our new life in Christ. There is the starting point of our discipleship and of our new life in Him. There, at the foot of the Cross where he died for men, the Cross which is the only power that can teach us penitence, the only place to which we can repair for the renewal of our humility, the stirring of our gratitude and our hope, the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, apart from any theory of it, taken as a central fact in the unfolding of God in history, the Cross of Christ, the historic verity we call the Cross of Christ, has been the great compelling force and inspiration in the life of the Church, in the missionary enthusiasm of consecration. And to the Cross we must go to learn penitence, to find God, to sound the depth and to scale the height of God's infinite compassion. Our faith begins in fact and in history, and the summing up of it in history is the death He died.

But there are other reasons why we should get us back into history for the renewal and increase of our faith. The historic Christ, who lived, spake, worked, died, and rose again in our midst, is our ultimate ground of verification for the great spiritual truths and hopes which inspire and quicken us to-day. We are asked to believe that it is possible for us to be just and to believe in lofty and generous thoughts of God and man which to-day happily fill the Church—we are told we can believe these apart from history; we can accept them as sentiments kindled in us by the direct operation of the Spirit of God. There is a truth in the assertion, but only a half truth. For in the last analysis of things my faith in these

high truths about God and about man run back for verification to the life God lived amongst us, and the sacrifice which He wrought in our behalf. I have a body as well as a brain, a brain as well as a heart, and a religion which is going to command my whole nature must appeal to me by its evidences and inspirations along every channel of my nature. Men tell me that God is love. They speak the words sometimes very glibly, and they ask me to believe that God is love. My friends, there are many grounds to-day for doubt and difficulty and scepticism—many apparent grounds; but there is no ground of scepticism that masters me, and for an hour now and again so masters me as to command me; no ground of scepticism equal to the assertion that God is love. I cannot believe it. You can, you talk so glibly. I cannot believe it; it makes a sceptic of me. Why should He love man? How can He love man? Look at the gods that have come to be developed from man's own consciousness. They are the reflection of man's thought of God—very strong, and very passionate, and very cruel. How can He love me? My heart longs to believe it; but there is something in me, born out of my sin, which makes me doubt, and turns me to scepticism. I cannot believe it until God proves it up to the hilt, and proves it by an appeal to all the considerations, and all the instincts, and all the lines of evidence that can reach me down here in the darkness. I cannot believe it till God comes Himself, and is manifest in the flesh, not needing an argument to prove His divinity, but living out and shining out His divinity in Christ Jesus. And when I meet Him there, in history, living my life, bearing my burdens, and for my sake dying the death, I say—that is godlike, that is divine. He who could ever think the thought of an incarnation, not to say who could fulfil it, shall be my God; and I believe Him when He says—I am love, touched with the feeling of your infirmities, and ready and mighty to save. Yes, the historic Christ is the ultimate ground of faith that God loves man.

So, too, of the resurrection of the dead, that great Gospel of glad tidings to breaking hearts. Oh, what joy comes to the heart that believes it, oh what darkness and despair to the mind that loses grip of it, or even sight of it. I stand here or kneel in the chamber where lie the cold, stiff remains of what had been my life, my love, in this world my all. I speak, and there is no response. Bitter tears flow, the calm, cold stillness is unmoved. I go out under the noontide sky and it shines as if in mockery of my pain, and I go out at silent night and the stars look down with a cold and distant benignity, careless that my heart is breaking. I get me back and I look at the cold and stiff Thing, and I say, if a man die, shall he live again? And the Thing answers, No. And my brain, under the tyranny of the Thing, echoes, "No." How shall I know, when you come in and tell me that man shall rise and live again, how shall I believe you, what evidence have you got? You have argued it from your nature; but, perhaps you are mistaken, how shall I believe so as to find joy in my faith unless I can go and stand by the tomb where Christ was and was not, where He had been, but where no power of death or hell could hold Him? Until you take me, in my doubt and fear, along with Thomas to put my hand in the nail print, and in His side that was pierced. Then, with doubting Thomas, I too forget even the shame of my doubt in the glow and gladness of my finding my Lord and my God. And the Thing I put away from me, and the soul I

loved I commune with still, having a nearer and dearer friendship than when the flesh separated us.

Yes, my friends, the historic Christ is, after all, the foundation basis of our beliefs and hopes, and this text calls us back to think of Him so and to renew our faith upon that solid foundation.

But—but the text tells us we must not stop there, that the Christ of history is only the beginning, that the Cross of Christ is only the finger-post that Christ is yonder and lives, that Christ is here inside and lives, and that the faith of Christ bids us turn from distant history when we have built upon it to find Christ here and now, a living presence in our own hearts and in the world. The grand and fatal blunder of evangelical theology is that it stops with the Cross of Calvary, stops before Christ. It forgets that He rose again and lives, it forgets that while by His death we are reconciled to God, it is by His life that we are saved. It forgets, or is only beginning now adequately to remember, that while our great structure of faith rests upon solid foundations on the earth, it builds and caps its towers away up in the heavens. It will not do for you and me to stand on the slopes of Olivet gazing up at the departing Christ, or our conception of Christ, and of His Gospel, and our character, experience, and hope will suffer disastrous impoverishment. The men of Galilee had all the facts of Christ's life, and after the resurrection they had some appreciation of their meaning and scope. But they had no adequate Gospel, they had no large and compelling Christian life until the Christ of eternity revealed Himself unto them.

Although Christ's last words to His disciples were, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth, go ye out and preach," He immediately checked Himself and said, "Not yet, not yet, tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." And that power was the vision of Christ, that Pentecostal baptism of the risen Lord, that personal experience of Christ's return and indwelling.

Nay, my friends, our religious life and faith are not complete, our religious experience is far from vigorous until we grasp the other side of that vision which shines in the text, which shows that Christ lives in His disciples to-day, speaks with them, walks with them, works with them, until we realise that He is the living Lord, exercising a gracious authority over His own. In a discourse of very great power delivered a year or two ago before the Wesleyan Missionary Society, a discourse as profound in its exposition as it was searching in its appeals, Dr. Dale called attention to the higher aspects of Christian belief and experience, and seriously affirmed that much of our modern knowledge of Christ is a knowledge of Him after the flesh, a Christ who was and is not, a Christ outside, not inside and alive. Dr. Dale would be the first to admit that his caution is capable of over emphasis. But we also surely must agree with him that there is that danger, to think of Christ as a reminiscence of the past, and lose grasp of Him as a living and redemptive power. There are two senses in the New Testament in which men are said to know Christ, and they may be set forth by illustrations of each drawn from the narrative. Nicodemus said, "Master, we know—we know that Thou art come from God; we know because—": there was logical observation, logical conclusion, an irresistible process of reasoning leading to an irresistible result. "We know that Thou art a Master, because—": that was his knowledge of

Christ, and it came to nought. Paul said, "I know Whom I have believed," not I know in whom I have believed; still less, I know in what I have believed. "I know," says he, "Whom I have believed." Beforetime it had been his one ambition to know Him, and the power of His resurrection. Even when historically and academically he knew Him perfectly, his prayer still was, "Oh that I may know Him in the power of His resurrection." That brings us to the second and higher aspects of Christian knowledge, knowledge internal and spiritual, of a living and reigning Christ.

What is your knowledge of Christ, my friend? Is it of a Christ historic and academic, or a Christ whom you have taken into the most sacred secrecy of fellowship, and made yours, so that you can say, "I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me." That is Christian life, that is Christian knowledge, that has in it all the potencies of Christian power and fulfilment. Everybody knows Christ historically, at least in this land, and very little comes of it except criticism and compliment. The man who can compliment Christ is a long way off Him. The man who gets nearest to Him would dry up at the roots of his tongue if he tried to speak a compliment. Love must then be master. Have you got so near to Christ? Let Him come so near to you that you cannot compliment Him, that you can only say, I love Thee, I trust Thee, my Lord, my God, take me, use me, use me in life, use me in death, but so use me that Thy grace may be perfected in me, and through me Thy kingdom may be hastened. Amen.

#### PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, without whose inspiration our minds are barren and our hearts are cold, grant us the overshadowing of Thy Holy Spirit, and lift us into the realisation and into the enjoyment of this place and of this service. We are come together to worship Thee, and by our worship to get nearer to Thee in exaltation of thought and of sentiment. We would climb for an hour to heights of the soul, above the mists, above the smoke and noise of this world of life about us, we would get to the heights where sight is translated into insight, and where the things unseen become the things most real and most precious. Let no dark thought of evil come between us and Thee. Let no unworthy thought or unchaste desire point us down to the earth and the earthly. Let no vague and vain consciousness of the things around us come as a thick veil between our spirits and Thine. Help us to come to Thee with all the powers of brain and heart, and flesh, and spirit, and will blended and harmonised in beautiful submission, that we may hold fellowship with Thee and Thy Son Jesus Christ, and catch the light that shines from above, and feel the thrill of that endless life which Thou hast revealed to us in Thy Son.

We give Thee thanks to-night for Thy Gospel to men, Thy message of glad tidings to the people Thou hast made. We joyfully believe that Thou hast made the world, not to wreck it but to save and sanctify it; that Thou hast made man, not to make him and destroy, but to discipline and to save and to grow. We read Thy Word with great delight when it speaks of Thee as entering into our life and bearing our burdens and carrying our sins. We bless Thee that Thou hast made it clear to us that Thou art not a God afar off, but living down here in the very centre of our life and

strife, sharing with us the joys and tears of our time and discipline. We bless Thee especially for the gift of Jesus Christ to men, for the revelation He has given of Thee to us. For the revelation He has given of us to ourselves we bless Thee, for His life in the matchlessness of its beauty and grace, for that childhood which has sanctified childhood in every land and age, for that youth of obedient sonship in the household that has thrown the sanctity of a new meaning about the duties of home and the holiness of a new spirit about the loves of the fireside, for His days of busy working by which we have learned all the compassion and tenderness of our God, and for the days of more wondrous speaking by which we have been instructed in the mystery of the Divine grace and purpose. We bless Thee for that life which was the pattern and measure of life for all of us, and we bless Thee for His death and for all the mystery of love unspeakable which gathers about the cross of Calvary. Help us to gather there, in the place where the thick darkness was, in the place where the light now is and ever more shall be, the light of that love which was stronger than sin, and of that grace which was mightier than death. Give us grace to bend before that cross till the spirit of the Crucified pass into us, and it become to us not a thing of the past, but a living symbol of the sacrifice, the measure of our death with Christ and the measure of our resurrection with Him.

But we bless Thee, O God, that we are not called to rest in the cross of Christ, that Thou dost lead our thought from the cross to the crown, from the death to the life, from the Saviour Who was a sacrifice to the Saviour Who is a King. We bless Thee for the assurance that He is not dead, that He is risen, that He lives for evermore, the Divine Kinsman, touched with the feeling of our infirmity, and clothed with all power to love and to heal. Oh, let the matchlessness of that thought get hold of us to-night, that our Brother, who wore and who wears our flesh, who has entered into our temptations and known the bitterness and hardship of our lot, is a Brother with all power, who has the keys and the will to use them, and the compassion to use them tenderly. We bless Thee for the vision of the risen, triumphant Christ, and for the assurance we gather from the vision of Him on His throne that all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues are within the scope and sweep of His gracious purpose, and that yet there shall rise from all the nations and kindreds of the earth the song, "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

In the faith of that Gospel are we gathered here to-night. Hear us as we pray for the enjoyment of all its blessings. Grant us the forgiveness of sins in the name and for the sake of Him who died that sin might be destroyed. Grant us the gift of the Holy Ghost, promised to all who look for Him after the Master's ascension. Give to us that peace which was granted of old to the disciples, which stilled their unrest and put to silence their doubts and griefs and fears. Speak to us, O Christ, Thou living Presence, as Thou didst speak to them; but speak in words of bigger meaning and deeper peace. Still our hearts, we pray Thee; fill us with the calm which leads to strength, and with the strength which breaks forth into service.

If there be any in this house to-night without the personal indwelling of the Spirit, indifferent and worldly, with brain and heart barred against the coming in of Christ, O Christ, reveal Thyself in grace and tenderness, that

the doors be unbarred, and the long-imprisoned soul step out to meet and greet Thee, and to bid Thee welcome into residence.

If there be those who have been Thine and have loved Thee, whose love has cooled, amid the chills of earth and amid the doubts and trials of life, kindle afresh a brighter flame of pious and devoted affection. Do Thou more than restore the first and lost love, make them to have new power and peace in the heart.

If there be any in this house who have loved and are loving Thee, whose lives are consecrated, with time and talent and goods to the service of men for Thy sake, God bless them, feed them, refresh them with water from the river of life, make them glad with the wine of Thy pleasure, put a song in their hearts to-night which shall inspire them to more and better service in days to come, and grant that they who give may get more than they give, and that the paradox of the Master may be learned by us His followers, how by dying to live, how by squandering to increase, how by spending to multiply.

Breathe Thy Spirit now upon us, O Christ, we beseech Thee, take us into the innermost sanctuary of Thy thought and fellowship to-night, and when we go hence may be it carrying with us a song in the heart.

We beseech Thee to hear the prayers in which we have joined this day. Bless the thoughts commended unto this congregation in the earlier service of the day respecting Thy work amongst the nations across the sea by Thy servants whose lives are given to the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching of men. Bless, we pray Thee, all efforts to spread the knowledge which brings freedom, freedom which leads to full emancipation. Send out Thy light and truth to the ends of the earth, and let that kingdom come of which we all sing and pray, when He shall reign whose right it is from the river unto the ends of the earth. We ask it in His name. Amen.

## CHORAZIN AND BETHSAIDA.

*A Sermon*

BY THE REV. FRANCIS WAYLAND.

*Preached in the Chapel of Brown University, U.S.A.*

“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.”—ST. LUKE x. 13—15.

“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.”—ST. MATTHEW xi. 23, 24.

THERE is a wide distinction everywhere made, but not so universally expressed, between the wrong of an act and the guilt of the actor. When two men perform the same act, we do not look upon them as by necessity equally deserving of punishment. A father and a child may be both detected in a robbery. The act is the same in both. So far as this alone is concerned, we can make no distinction between them. And yet, every

man who hears of such a case, will at once make a distinction. He will say the parent had more knowledge ; he was more perfectly instructed in the nature of his duty ; he knew the consequences of his action ; he acted in opposition to clearer light and stronger and more emphatic motives. The child was too young to appreciate the consequences of his action. He had never enjoyed any opportunities for moral cultivation ; but his conscience, on the contrary, had been stupefied by witnessing from infancy nothing but deeds of dishonesty. He has not yet become hardened in guilt, and he may by proper cultivation be reclaimed and become a virtuous citizen. We should all be painfully surprised if both of these persons were adjudged to the same punishment.

All this is the dictate of the common sense of humanity. It teaches us that we can never decide upon the actual guilt, or even virtue, of a human being by simply reciting what he has done. We must go farther than this, and ask under what spiritual conditions his acts have been performed. We inquire what have been his opportunities of knowing his duty ? What have been his advantages for moral cultivation ? What obstacles had he overcome in arriving at his present attainments in virtue ? What moral motives has he resisted in perpetrating the crimes of which he is guilty ? It is obvious that without a due consideration of all these particulars, we can form no correct opinion of his desert, either of reward or punishment.

An Indian on our Western plains has lost a brother in battle with a neighbouring tribe. There was no unfairness in the fight ; it was death according to the acknowledged laws of barbarian warfare. But the deed must be avenged. He follows upon the track of his enemy by day and by night. He lies in ambush on the outskirts of his village, until at last he gluts his revenge in the blood of his foe, and returns in triumph to his home, bearing aloft the gory scalp, the hideous trophy of his accursed prowess. The deed is detestable. We hate it with a perfect hatred. Yet that man might come among us, and as his stately form attracts the attention of every beholder, we rather pity than abhor him. We think what might have been made of such a nature, if it had been in youth subjected to better influences, and imbued with the principles of the Gospel. But suppose that a similar deed had been done among us, under the full light of Christian civilisation. Suppose a man, well known and honorably connected, who from his youth had been taught the precepts of Jesus, had, for lust of gold or to gratify revenge, allured an acquaintance to some secluded spot, and brutally slain and mangled him. At the perpetration of such a crime, society stands aghast, and the murderer is consigned by the voice of universal humanity to ignominious death. Yet, if we look at these two acts themselves, we can discover scarcely a shade of difference between them. The only difference arises from the character of the actors. The one had never enjoyed any opportunity for obtaining a knowledge of his duty ; the other had, from his infancy, been blessed with all the means of moral culture springing from advanced and intelligent Christian civilisation.

You all perceive, then, that we estimate guilt and desert of punishment, not by the magnitude of the crime committed, but by comparing the crime with the means of moral cultivation enjoyed by him who commits it. Hence, of two men committing the same act, the one may be deserving of more condign punishment than the other ; nay, more, the one may have been guilty of fewer overt acts, in themselves culpable, and yet may be

deserving of more condign punishment than he who had more frequently violated moral law.

And herein we see that the principle of judgment which I have attempted to illustrate must decide our moral character in our relations to eternity as well as to time. We are thus taught that in deciding upon our desert of reward and punishment at the bar of God, we are bound to inquire, not only what have we done, and what have we not done, but what are the circumstances under which we have acted? What is the degree of light which we have enjoyed, and to which we have willingly blinded ourselves? What have been the monitions of conscience which we have resisted and at last suppressed? And what have been the teachings of the Holy Spirit, to which we have been insensible and disobedient? These are the questions which it becomes us to ask, if we would form a correct estimate of our character as it will appear in the light of God's countenance, when we and all men stand at His bar in judgment.

All this seems very reasonable, and it is surprising that it is not more frequently adopted as the rule of our judgments in matters of religion. We always apply this principle in forming our opinion respecting the dealings of man with man; but we rarely make use of it in forming our opinions respecting our dealings with God. Hence it is, that this doctrine is so frequently inculcated in the Holy Scriptures, and specially in the New Testament. Thus says the Apostle Paul, "They that have sinned without law shall perish without law, they that have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law." Our Saviour says, "He that knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit sins worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required." In the text, a practical illustration of this rule of moral judgment is given. Capernaum, like most of the cities of that period, was doubtless a wicked place; but we have not, that I know of, any reason to suppose that its overt acts were vicious by way of eminence. It had, however, enjoyed more than most other cities in Judea the personal teachings of the blessed Saviour. Sodom is always held up in the Bible as a city of notorious depravity, of most odious and detestable vices. It had, so far as we know, enjoyed the teachings of no other person than Lot. It was, however, so depraved that it was destroyed by fire from heaven.

If, now, these two cities had existed at the same time, and one of us had walked through their streets, how great to us would have seemed the contrast between them. In Sodom, by day and by night, he would have heard the roar of revelry and the shout of blasphemy. Vice in its most disgusting forms would have been seen exhibiting itself without either disguise or concealment. Robbery or murder would have been so common as scarcely to attract attention. Escaping from the sight of such infamous pollution we should have expected that the judgments of God would sweep from the earth a city that had become so emphatically a disgrace to our common nature.

Suppose that leaving so horrid a locality, we pursued our journey northward along the valley of the Jordan and by the shore of the Sea of Galilee, until we arrived at Capernaum. How different the spectacle. On every

side we should see in great numbers the ministers of the sanctuary. The Priests and the Levites in their sacred robes would meet us at every turn. The scribes and the doctors of the law would be heard at the corners of the streets, explaining the precepts of Moses, while the people with profound reverence were bowing before them, or else following them with the cry of "Rabbi, Rabbi." The synagogues on the seventh day are filled with worshippers chanting the songs of David, or reciting the precepts of the Law given on Mount Sinai. Here would be seen the burly priest, with professional gravity receiving from the poor gardener his little tithe of mint, anise and cumin; or, then, you might hear them praying vociferously in the house of the widow. Every citizen wears on his head a staring phylactery, and the fringes on the garments of each are broad and conspicuous. As we looked upon all these things we should surely say, "The temples of the Lord, the temples of the Lord, are these." Many a thought would spring up within us touching the value of religious instruction and the effect produced upon man, even in this life, by the teachings of a true religion. We might almost be inclined to ask whether amidst so much apparent piety there could be any vice, whether all were not equally dead to the world and alive only to the realities of religion. Were we to preach to them we should probably address them as very generally if not universally pious; for to preach to them of the terrors of the last day, and the danger of eternal condemnation would seem superfluous if not insulting.

Such is the judgment of man. How different the judgment of God. He who uttered the words of the text had long abode in Capernaum, and had seen all of which we have spoken and very much more. He saw right through all this system of external observance. He knew exactly what each man did, and He knew what each left undone. He knew perfectly the degree of light which had shone upon every man's conscience. He had gone through their streets teaching and working miracles, until every one knew His person and understood His doctrines, and the offer of eternal life which He came to make known to them. He knew when and how and where each of them had rejected it. He saw that all this plenitude of religious observances was poured out from hearts utterly opposed to the government and law of that God whom they seemed so devotedly to serve. And he also equally well knew the crimes of Sodom since He Himself had come down to execute judgment upon that city so justly doomed to destruction. He also knew the moral darkness which brooded over the souls of these sinners. He knew perfectly how strongly they resisted the teachings of conscience, and how deaf an ear they turned to the remonstrances, very imperfect though they were, of the Patriarch Lot. With all these facts full in his view, he utters the sentence of the text: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for, if the mighty works that have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But, I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." Thus our Lord emphatically declares that at the Day of Judgment the quiet, respectable, church-going citizens of Capernaum would sink under a more awful condemnation than that which befell the cities of the plain, who for their infamous vices were swept away from the face of the earth, and are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Nor is the reason of this judgment difficult to discover. The essential element of our guiltiness lies in our temper of heart to God. Our sins against man are many, and ever deserving of punishment. But in the sight of God, their desert of punishment depends most of all on this, that they are transgressors of His law and manifestations of our rebellion against Him. "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned." The more clearly He reveals Himself to us, the more perfect the exhibition of His law, and the more resplendent the manifestation of His perfections to us, the more decisive must be our rejection of His authority, if we disobey Him. If He has taken pains to remove every obstacle to our return, if He, putting aside the claims of stern justice, has condescended to seek after us, and in infinite mercy to offer to us reconciliation, if He has opened wide the door of escape from the consequences of sin, and has opened as wide the door of eternal life, and, then, we still hold out in sullen intractable rebellion, we commit the greatest crime that can be committed by a creature, and we sink under the most solemn condemnation that can be uttered by the Judge of the whole earth.

By these principles we estimate the comparative condition of these two cities. The inhabitants of the one, though wallowing in vice, had but very imperfect knowledge of the character of God or of the students of His laws. They were, therefore, not hardened in guilt by the rejection of any special manifestation of moral light. Had God revealed Himself to them as a Saviour they would even have repented, like Nineveh, in sack-cloth and ashes, and have embraced the offer of salvation. To the others all this was made known. The Son of God had taught them the will of His Father. He had revealed to them the consequences of sin. He had called upon them to take His yoke upon them. He had offered to them pardon and eternal life through the sacrifice of Himself. But they deliberately rejected every offer of salvation. They deliberately preferred the gratification of their own passions to the love of God and to all that God could bestow. Knowing what they did, and why they did it, they made their choice, and it found them in eternal opposition to God. They, therefore, were numbered with the more incorrigible offenders, and for them was reserved a doom to which the doom of Sodom would be comparatively a blessing.

We are passing through our probation as were the citizens of Capernaum. We must stand at the bar of judgment just as really as they, and must be subjected to the same rule of decision. If we, like them, are exalted to heaven; if God has given us great moral illumination; if we act in view of His revealed perfections, our condemnation, if we are lost, must be as awfully signal. If it be more tolerable for Sodom than for Capernaum, what place must be reserved for us if we reject the offer of salvation made through the death of the Son of God?

We, ourselves, week after week, attend the services of the sanctuary. We are guilty of no gross vice, and stand aloof from the exhibition of it in others. We believe that the Bible is true, and that it contains the only revelation of the way in which we may be saved. We go further. We look abroad, and our sympathies are awakened by the condition of the heathen. It shocks us to hear of rational beings bowing down to obscene carvings of wood and of stone; of mothers casting their first-born into the jaws of alligators; of children putting to death their parents; of men

like ourselves slaying and devouring each other with more than brutal ferocity. We bless God that we live in a land of intellectual light and moral cultivation. We think with complacency (and it is a just complacency) of the schools and colleges of America, of the pulpit that week by week dispenses to us its portion of instruction; of the Bibles that are scattered broadcast over our land; of the piety, prayers, and sufferings of the pilgrims, through whom there has descended to us so rich an inheritance of blessings. We cannot bear to enjoy so rich a variety of blessings without desiring to extend them to our fellow-men. We unite with others in sending to those benighted men the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which we believe to be the only cure for all their evils.

Again, as we pass along our streets, we see many an object whose condition cannot but move to pity the soul of the philanthropist. The drunkard, ragged and bloated, falls helpless on the side-walk, and is carried off to sober himself in the watch-house. The brothel is crowded with immortal souls who are abandoned of hope, both in this life and in the life to come, whose feet already take fast hold on hell. Our jails and penitentiaries, though year after year enlarged, are still filled with men, and even with boys, who have cast off all fear both of God and of man, and whose chosen vocation it is to prey upon property and life. Of them it may with emphasis be said, destruction and misery are in their paths, and the way of peace have they not known. We pity these also. We see that an effort should be made to prevent men from falling into such courses, or to reclaim them after they have fallen. We thank God that we are not such men. We bless the care of our parents, who in childhood taught us our duty, and who, by their example, led us to the practice of virtue.

Now, all this also is well. It is right that such scenes should thus impress us. It were well if they impressed us not only to feel, but to act for the good of those that are perishing. But this is not now the question before us. If both they and we continue in our present state, and thus enter upon the rewards of eternity, will they or we encounter the more awful condemnation? Many of these miserable men and women from infancy have heard the name of God spoken only in oaths. Many of them were taught by their parents to lie and steal as acts of commendable skill. Many of them have known the efficacy of law in no other manner than as it inflicted on them its punishments. Scarcely one of them has ever heard intelligently, except in a prison, the story of our atoning Saviour, or a sanctifying Spirit. None of them have ever been taught to keep the Sabbath. What moral impulses have they resisted? What God have they defied? What Saviour have they rejected? What Holy Spirit have they resisted? A deep of moral darkness has overspread them from infancy, even in the midst of a Christian career.

But how has it been with you? A pious mother taught you to pray ere yet you could render yourself intelligible to any ear but hers. You have read the Word of God from early childhood. It has been explained to you by parents, and friends, and teachers, ever since you can remember. You know the story of the Cross, and have heard how "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But, more than this, you have been at various times convicted of sin. The Holy Spirit has visited you, and has set all these truths vividly before your soul. The

voice has sounded in your ears, "Unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Yet, with all this light, you have chosen the pleasures of sin, and have said unto God, "Depart from me, for I desire not a knowledge of Thy ways." You thus deliberately choose to be the enemy of God for ever. Can there be a greater crime than this? Can it be committed under greater moral light than you have enjoyed? Can any sinner of our race, then, sink under a more awful condemnation than you? Better would it have been for us to have lived in Sodom, better in Capernaum, better to have been an outcast in our prisons, than under all these accumulated means of grace, to be at last cast off for ever from the presence of the Lamb.

How solemn, then, must be the conditions of our probation! How specially solemn the conditions of the probations of everyone of us here present. On the face of the earth, I do not believe that an assembly can be found who have enjoyed better means for knowing our duty, or who have been favoured with stronger motives, or more effective persuasions to its performance. What more could God have done for us than He has done? If, then, all these means fail, and we are at last among the lost, must not our condemnation be awful beyond comparison?

## SANCTIFIED WITH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

### *Outline of a Sermon.*

BY THE REV. THOMAS M. REES.

"Jesus sanctified the people with His own blood."—HEB. xiii. 12.

I. THIS Epistle was written to stay the faith of those who staggered under the reproach of Christ, wondering whether, after all, the new faith was better than the old. The key-word of the epistle is the word "better." The new covenant is, all through, in Christ, "better" than the old. The parallelisms and contrasts, characteristic of the epistle, illustrated in verses 11 and 12.

II. Jesus set aside the past reverently in fulfilling it. The spirit of the true reformer is filial towards the past. Reverence and reform are twin handmaidens of the Lord. For the past is not childish, is not arbitrary. God is in history, and seeks to apply its teaching to the present through men of reform who are reverent, *e.g.*, the Old Testament is more zealously studied to-day for the sake of a better understanding of the New. And they who know their Bible best, do with more skill and resolution grapple with present problems of every kind. Jesus bored patiently through the letter of the past to its spirit. The intensity of His understanding of it rose in His teaching to the height of contrast, *not as the scribes*. The contrast was in deed as well as in word. Unlike Pharisees, what burdens He imposed He himself bore. Further: the high priest, with blood of bull or goat, entered the holy place—Jesus with "His own blood." He who takes his life in his hand to his task satisfies all claims. That is the standard of sacrifice under the new and better covenant.

III. There is a deeper meaning still in the text, "Jesus sanctified the people with His own blood." They who were sinners became true worshippers through His blood. "Ye who some times were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." This is a more gracious truth than that of example. For when the example of Christ was done for

us what it may, and when in its clear white light we see our sin, then we long to know if God will accept us sinners as worshippers, and to this shrill cry of the bared soul the text answers that, the blood of Christ makes the comers thereunto perfect. With all the plainness with which the Bible tells us of our sin, and of the love of God to us, it tells us that for Jesus' sake the Father seeks us to worship Him.

*Review.*—Christ went all lengths in sympathy with the law. Out of His reverent attention to the types and shadows of the old covenant has come the new and better. The true spirit of reform is one of reverence. The sincere reformer is one who takes his life in his hand to his task. But, beyond this, we learn that Jesus, with His own blood, makes of sinners a worshipping people. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

### SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for June 8: ST. LUKE xi. 1—13. Golden Text: LUKE xi. 9.*  
PRAYER.

WHEN you grow up you will wish to learn some language. Some of you are learning French, or German, or Latin now. Why do people like to learn another language than their own? Because it helps them to speak to different kinds of men. The languages we learn at school teach us to talk to men. But what about talking to God? There is but one language for that, and everybody can learn it—it is the language of Prayer. Whenever we really pray we talk to God in His own language. And when we learn to speak to Him we learn to understand what He says when He speaks to us.

There are two kinds of prayer—the prayer we *say* only, and the prayer we *feel*. Isn't there a prayer you learnt from your mother? Sometimes you say it without thinking, and if you are asked if you had prayed you have to think a little, and even then you are not quite sure. That is only saying a prayer, it isn't praying. We do not really pray unless we really talk to Jesus, and feel what we are saying. Every day have a little prayer for yourself. It will do you more good than you think. Sometimes you find everybody cross with you, and things go wrong at school, and you are unhappy. I will tell you the reason—you have been forgetting to pray.

There was a part of America that was very unhealthy. Most people one time or other took ill, and trembled from head to foot with the ague. A wise doctor came once to that district, and he told the people to get a little water plant and cultivate it, and soon the people would be cured. Most of the folks laughed, but one farmer got the little plant and cultivated it in ponds near his house, and in a few seasons the sickness had gone from that farm. The little plant took hold of the bad air and sweetened it, and then sent it out pure. It was always at this work.

And prayer is like that—once we plant it it sweetens and blesses everything. Have a little kneeling spot of your own. Dr. Maclaren has asked, "Is there any place in any of our rooms where there is a little bit of carpet worn white by our knees?" Jesus will know your kneeling spot and meet you there. Learn, then, the language of prayer.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## THE INSPIRATION OF SELECTION.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. H. P. LIDDON, D.D.

*Preached before the University at St. Mary's, Oxford, on Whit-Sunday.*

“He shall glorify Me ; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.”—ST. JOHN xvi. 14.

THIS is the heart of the promise which our Saviour made to His disciples, when, with the feelings of bewilderment and desolation that were natural at the time they were gathered round Him in the supper-room. The day, they felt was near when they would no longer see and hear, at any rate as heretofore, the wise and gracious Friend Who had taught, and was teaching, them so much that was best worth knowing. And He did not directly combat or relieve the sad anticipation. Nay, He told them frankly that He was leaving them ; that in a little while they would not see Him, because He was going to the Father. But His place, He said, would be taken by Another who would not disappoint them ; but Who would only arrive when He had Himself departed. “If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” And what was this Envoy and Successor to achieve when He did come ? He was, no doubt, to change the hearts and minds of those who were outside the sacred fold. He was to “convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” But He was also to do a yet greater service for the orphaned Church. “When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceeded from the Father, He shall testify of Me.” . . . “He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.” . . . “He shall glorify Me ; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine ; therefore said I that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.”

That this promise would be kept became clear to the Apostles on that solemn occasion, the anniversary of which the Church observes to-day. When the crucified and risen Lord had ascended into heaven there was an interval of hushed and awful expectation before the promised Comforter came down. And when He came, essential Spirit though He was, He condescendingly came in such guise that the senses of men should apprehend His approach. He came as a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind ; His arrival was portrayed in tongues like as of fire, which

rested upon the Apostles ; it was followed by such sudden endowment of a band of Galilean peasants with a gift of speech in various dialects as to astonish a mixed multitude of men who represented almost every race and district between the Tiber and the Euphrates. These were but outward signs, marking the advent of a supernatural power : this was the birthday of the Church of Christ. As our Lord Jesus Christ Himself had been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, so the society, which was to perpetuate among men His mind and His life, sprang from a kindred union between the Eternal Spirit, and a sample—sufficiently poor and unrepresentative it might have seemed, yet still a sample—of our common humanity ; and thus the little community, hallowed and invigorated from on high, entered on the career which has already lasted for nearly nineteen centuries, and which will end only with the close of time.

I. We have to consider, first of all, that particular account of the work of the Holy Spirit which our Lord here sets before us—"He shall glorify Me." The prediction belongs to that class of His sayings which only admits of moral justification if the speaker is indeed more than man. Natural modesty and good taste, not to speak of distinctively Christian virtues, would make such language impossible in the mouth of any honest and humble man who knew himself to be no more than man, and was conscious of the failure and weakness which in every merely human life must so largely outweigh any solid claims to glory or renown. And our Lord's words cannot be understood to foretell any gradual accumulation and wreathing of titles or doctrines round His person, by the devotional or speculative activity of a later time—if, in fact, He had no exact right to that which they implied. No being, whether divine or human, is really glorified by having anything ascribed to him which is not his. The Cæsars were not glorified ; they were only made ridiculous, as the wiser of them saw, by official or popular apotheosis. In proportion to a man's perception of the truth of things, and the directness and integrity of his moral nature, is his dislike of any exaggerated praise. And when we give glory to God we do not and cannot add to that which already belongs to Him ; we only make a place in our own hearts, and, it may be, in the hearts of others, for some more adequate apprehension than as yet exists of what He is and what is His due.

When, then, our Lord said that the Spirit of Truth would glorify Him, He meant only that the Spirit of Truth would enable men to do justice to the real character of His life and person. And there were then, as generally, causes enough at work to make such assistance needful. There were the passions of powerful classes, which made up the great majority of His countrymen, and which were bent on nothing less than casting out His very name as evil. There was the ordinary decay of memory, which would in a few years overtake His most intimate companions. And there was the more perilous activity of fancy, which might substitute for the preservation and exhibition of facts the fictions, or at least the decorative embellishments, of theory or enthusiasm.

A great deal is said about the power and endurance of posthumous influence ; but after all how little can a man generally reckon on it ! It is, in ordinary human experience, out of a man's keeping ; it takes its own course, or the course which events prescribe for it. It falls into the hands of some clever adventurer and is manipulated for his own purposes ; or it

is of a kind to discover unsuspected ingredients, any one of which in its exaggeration may give it a fatally false turn ; or it is crowded out of its due place by more vigorous and self-asserting competitors for public favour ; or it shows early symptoms of being in a decline, and presently dies of exhaustion. A posthumous influence ! It is wedded to a philosophy like that of Socrates, which may presently break up into two or more contending schools of thought ; or it is embodied in a political inheritance, like that of Alexander, which may be distributed among three or four successors, whose jealous rivalries are fatal to its permanent integrity ; or it is a literary or artistic tradition, which in the mere act of passing into other keeping is transformed or dissolved through contact with new and powerful minds. A posthumous influence ! It must, alas ! be made over to the care of others ; whether they be foes or friends ; whether children or disciples. The biography of a modern philosopher has taught us that friends may not always be its safest guardians ; Marcus Aurelius lived long enough to discover what weight would be attached to his meditations when the Cæsar Commodus would alone represent the Antonines on the throne of the world ; and history has again and again shown how disciples may pay compliments to a departed master, while they set aside his clearest and most emphatic instructions. And thus the Preacher might seem in one mood of his thought to express the sombre reality—"Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool so it happeneth even to me ; and why was I then more wise ? Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever : seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. . . . Yea ! I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool ? . . . This also is vanity."\*

That, therefore, which must strike us in the words of our Lord is His conscious superiority to the fate which may be commonly expected to befall the influence of a man's character or teaching after death. He had put His life and work into such sort of keeping that it would be unaffected by the varying moods of human minds and the incalculable contingencies of human circumstances. And how would the promised Guardian of Christ's glory set about His work ?

First of all, by exerting a transforming, purifying, invigorating influence upon human characters.

No merely natural account can be given of the change which is observable in the Apostles between the eve of the Crucifixion and the morrow of Pentecost. The perplexed, doubting, timid, half-suspicious, gloomy peasants, who misunderstand their Master's words and shrink from His side in the hour of danger, have been transformed into men conscious of being the trustees of a supernatural creed, and more than willing—aye, joyful—at any moment to attest its truth with their lives. And in the great Apostle, whose experience was so different from that of the eleven, a profound transformation of character, as well as of purpose, is no less observable. As he preached the faith which once he destroyed men recognised, he says, a Higher Power that had wrought the change—"They glorified God in Me."†

\* Eccles. ii. 15—19.

† Galatians i. 24.

And in after years, as we know from the genuine Acts of the Martyrs, the Holy Spirit gave glory to the unseen Christ, by displaying again and again before the eyes of the heathen the courage, and patience, and meekness, and dignity of His suffering servants. Nor is it otherwise at the present day. There are lines, well known to some to you, which describe at least one actual, and probably a not uncommon, experience :—

“I saw Thee once, and naught discerned  
From stranger to admire ;  
A serious aspect, but it burned  
With no unearthly fire.

Again I saw, and I confessed  
Thy speech was rare and high ;  
And yet it vexed my burdened heart,  
And scared—I knew not why.

I saw once more, and awestruck gazed  
On face and form and air ;  
God’s living glory round thee blazed  
A saint—a saint was there.”\*

And the glory of our Lord was further promoted when the Holy Spirit organised a visible body—the Christian Church. The Church was not an afterthought, founded by men, who, finding that they thought and felt alike, combined to form an association which could enable them the better to work together, and might secure weight and currency for their convictions. The Church already existed as a home of souls on the day of Pentecost. And for a believer to belong to it was a matter of necessity, not of propriety or choice. And apart from its faith, its life, its perpetual, scarcely observed, but incessant and resistless expansion, nothing is more wonderful in the early ages than its coherence. It is less remarkable that the Church was not crushed to death by relentless persecutions than that she was not tempted to make terms with the pagan Syncretism which was especially in vogue, for instance, in the second and third quarters of the third century. From Elagabalus down to Aurelian a constant series of efforts were made to induce the Church to mingle her creed and life with one or another of the conglomerate forms of decaying paganism. So cleverly were the sacraments and rites of Christianity reproduced at one period by the priests of Mithra, that St. Augustine, referring to it, could, almost humorously, exclaim, “Mithra Christianus est.” But it was all to no purpose. A few Gnostics might yield to the spell. The great Catholic body would have nothing to do with it, though refusal meant a renewal of persecution. The truth was that the business of the Church, informed by the Holy Spirit, was to uphold in undiminished lustre the unshared, unapproachable glory of the Redeemer ; and her separate existence witnessed to it in the ratio of the dangers, whether of violence or seduction, to which she was exposed. The question how she still came to be there could only be answered in the minds of thoughtful men by reference to the unique Person of her Lord. She was there to proclaim His glory.

For this witness of the Church was not that of a voiceless or inert body. She spoke through great saints and writers whose words commanded the attention of the world ; she spoke through assemblies which, before the division of East and West, represented, either by delegation or by subse-

\* *Lyra Apost.*

quent consent, the whole of the company to which the promise had been made in the supper-room. Can we fail to see the hand of Providence in this—that before the separations had taken place which suspended the action of the collective Church, every question had been asked and answered that could bear upon the personal glory of the Redeemer; from the truth of His Divinity down to the separate reality of His human Will? In those days of eager speculation, and sincere, if not always instructed belief, there was, indeed, many a wave of unhallowed passion surging round the eternal truths at stake; but the informing, presiding, chastening Spirit rode the storm, and not many a thoughtful man, it may be supposed, who begins by believing that Christ's words are true, can trace the action of the Church in the great Conciliar period without feeling himself in the presence of a Power, the law of Whose action is revealed in the promise—"He shall glorify Me."

Thirdly, and especially, the glorification of the ascended Christ was achieved by the creation of a new sacred literature; the Books of the Canon of the New Testament. The Church is indeed historically older than the New Testament; but the New Testament is the supreme work of the Holy Spirit when glorifying Christ in the Church. Pentecost had not long passed when a group of biographers and letter-writers appeared upon the scene of Christendom, each retaining whatever was characteristic and individual in expression and style, yet so controlled by a unifying and illuminating Power as to combine harmoniously in the setting forth many sides of a single truth. There were, indeed, among the first teachers of the Church minds so divergent by temper and genius, that had all, indeed, depended upon merely human influences, had there been no supernatural bond of unity, they would assuredly have parted into irreconcilable factions. As it is, nothing is more discernible than the controlling and modifying action of God the Holy Spirit in the New Testament writings.

St. Matthew and St. Luke enable us to observe how St. Mark and St. John are only recording differing aspects of a single life: the sermons and discourses reported in the Acts, and the First Epistle of St. Peter, discover the point of unity between the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians on the one side, and the Epistle of St. James on the other. The Eternal Spirit presides like the leader of a great choir over instruments and voices of the most various compass; and while each contributes something which no other can give, all are duly subordinated to a Single Will, directed to a supreme end. Look through the Apostolic writings and say whether there be any one motive in them so constant or so powerful as the giving His due place and honour in the thoughts and lives of men to our Lord and Saviour. Each Evangelist glorifies one aspect of His life; whether it be His fulfilment of prophecy, or His true humanity, or His redemptive mission and work, or His pre-existent and personal Divinity. Each writer of Epistles, or each group of Epistles, sets forth some one truth which shall add to our apprehension of Him; whether it be His example of patience, as in St. Peter, or His lessons of love, as in St. John, or His perfect law of liberty, as in St. James, or His Second Coming, or His justification of the sinner through faith in His Blood, or the transcendent qualities and ordered structure of His mystical Body the Church, as in St. Paul. Whatever else may be divergent in the Apostolic writings, this is the note of

their underlying unity of aim : everywhere we trace in them the fulfilment of the promise, "He shall glorify Me."

II. This leads us to consider the method employed by the promised Comforter : "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it into you."

Here let us remark that our Lord does not sanction any of those conceptions of the work of the Holy Spirit which treat it as something independent of His own. The Spirit is not the author of a new dispensation : He perpetuates, explains, expands the teaching and work of Jesus Christ : "He shall not speak of Himself," "He shall take of Mine." Therefore is He called, in the Apostolic writings, not only the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of Christ ; since it is Christ's mind and teaching—aye, and Christ's renewed human nature, which He conveys to the souls of men.

(a) If, then, we examine the three great departments of the Holy Spirit's work in the inverse order to that followed just now, let us observe, first, how He takes of the things of Christ and exhibits them to the Church in the New Testament writings. The first five books of the New Testament are biographical or historical. Popular language often assumes that inspiration must always create ; but if this were true there could be no such thing as inspired history. If history be the faithful record of facts, the function of inspiration in history must be limited to the grouping of facts, to the assigning to certain facts a relative prominence, above all to the selection out of a large number of facts of those facts which illustrate a particular aspect of higher truth. Popular language is wont to speak disparagingly of the copyist or the reporter, but the inspiring Spirit did not by any means abhor the work of the reporter or copyist ; His inspiration consisted often enough in guidance to select from a large field those materials which would best illustrate the truth He had in view, and to exhibit them in such wise as to secure this object most effectively.

This faculty of judicious selection is higher and rarer than may be at first supposed. To select wisely out of an embarrassingly large assortment of facts and thoughts requires a combination of penetration and resolve, in order to perceive what is really worth preserving, and to resist the seductions of what is not. Without this gift one writer will bury his true purpose beneath a mass of ill-selected and undigested details ; while another will not exhibit details sufficient to give his subject the body and outline which it demands. Sometimes books even of high excellence in other respects, and which have laid the world under such great obligations, as, for instance, the "Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius," may give us reason to regret that their authors have not used more freely certain sources of knowledge which must have been before them, or that they have not touched some matters on which they are discursive with a lighter hand. They may have many merits. But they lack the inspiration of selection.

Now, contrast with this the work of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Gospels. The supernatural is always haunted by its counterfeit ; but the Holy Spirit at once swept aside a mass of legends such as are handed down to us in a somewhat later shape by the New Testament apocryphal literature. Nay more, He took only some of the true words and acts of Christ. Christians might well believe that no acts or words of the Son of God during His earthly life could have been without high

import of some kind. But they were not all equally useful for the specific purposes of the several Evangelists. Each Gospel bears traces of being a selection from a larger assortment of materials; the last says expressly that "there are many other things which Jesus did,"\* and which the Evangelist had not recorded. Each writer having clearly before him that aspect of the life of Jesus which it was his task to illustrate—whether Messianic, or human, or redemptive, or Divine—traverses with this object the stores of his own memory, or the recitals and reports of other eye-witnesses, and records just so much as is needed for his purpose. Each fulfils the prediction, "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

The same principle of selection, although it is differently applied, meets us in the Apostolic Epistles. A phrase of Jesus becomes in the hands of an Apostle the warrant of a doctrine, which is thus seen to have been always latent in it. The title "Son of Man," for instance, reappears in St. Paul as the "Second Adam," the ideal Representative of mankind, Whose work is placed in vivid contrast with that of the first father of our race. A word about "giving His life a ransom for many," or "My Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins," warrants St. Paul and St. John in teaching a propitiatory atonement which wins for sinners pardon and peace. A self-proclamation not less observable in the Synoptists than in St. John, constantly repeated and so unlimited in its scope that if it were not rendered necessary by the facts of the Speaker's consciousness, it would be fatal to those moral qualities which win the love and respect of men, issues in the great passages of St. Paul on the Divinity of Christ which thus takes its place as the cardinal truth of the Christian creed. These are but samples of the manner in which the Spirit took of the words of Christ, and showed their full meaning to the Church in the Apostolic Letters.

Nor was this method of selection from and interpretation of existing materials a new procedure of the Spirit in the apostolic age. He then did what He had done in ages before the Incarnation. As we say in the Creed, He spake by the prophets; and the prophets in the sense of the Creed are not only members of the particular order which was endowed with a supernatural faculty for interpreting the Divine will, whether at the passing moment or in the more or less remote future, but also the leading rulers, statesmen, and historians who were intrusted with the guidance of the people of revelation. And the records of their work, as the authors of the historical books tell us, were largely compiled out of documents already in existence. One historian borrows from another—nay, even one prophet from another; while the Spirit takes now and again from the conglomerate mass of early traditions or records those fragments which had on them the mint-mark of the Eternal Word, and shows them in a new and inspired combination to His ancient people.

And thus we are led to notice a feature common both to the Old and the New Testaments—the startling presence of what may at first sight appear to be foreign elements in the Sacred Book. The early history of Genesis may suggest traditions which had belonged to ancient pagan peoples living in the great Mesopotamian plain; the original text of its early genealogies may lie buried, as a distinguished Oxford scholar has suggested, † at Kirjath Sepher, or elsewhere, in brick libraries as yet un-

\* St. John xxi. 25.

† Professor Sayce.

examined; the sacred utensils and buildings of Israel, though consecrated to the worship of the Alone Eternal, may have been shaped more or less upon Egyptian models; its later literature may betray affinities—however we explain them—with Persian forms of thought. Nay, the sacred tongue itself, which was selected to be the vehicle of that earlier revelation, was not, as was once supposed, unique; it was spoken, like Greek, by neighbouring pagans as well, and, as in the Moabite Stone, it sometimes heralded the praise of pagan deities. These and such like facts have been pointed to as showing that the Jewish revelation did not come from God in any but a merely naturalistic sense. What they really show is that the inspiration which dictated its worship and its sacred records was largely an inspiration of selection.

In like manner the New Testament presents us with facts supplementary to the Old Testament narrative, and often only derived from later Jewish traditions. Such are the prophecy of Enoch; the double call of Abraham from Ur, as from Haran; the hope that sustained Abraham in offering Isaac; the names of the Egyptian magicians; the motive of Moses for leaving the Court of Pharaoh, and Egypt; the exclamation of Moses at Sinai; the rock that followed the Israelites in the desert; the prayer of Elijah for rain.

Again, St. Paul employs Rabbinical arguments and modes of exegesis; and he quotes heathen authors not to refute, but to endorse them.

In instances like these, too, the words are fulfilled, "He shall take of Mine." For the Speaker in the supper-room is none other than the Eternal Word Who is announced in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel. "His" are not only the sayings and acts of the Incarnate Christ, but whatever is true in the earlier history and thought of our race. Inspired men, like Melchizedek and Balaam and Job, were discoverable beyond the fence of race with which the Divine Wisdom had guarded His earlier Revelation; and indeed, in all ages, here and there, in the desert wastes of heathendom there are to be met with patches of spiritual beauty; flowers which alike by creation and by culture are His, Who nevertheless ever had in the world only one garden for the human soul, and Who did make Israel His people and Jacob His inheritance, before in the last days He spoke by His Son.

One work of the Holy Spirit is to collect these outlying and—may I say it?—less regular creations of the Divine Mind; it is to disinter the gems that lie hidden beneath the accumulated soil of ages; it is to bring to a focus the rays of light scattered throughout heathendom, and to exhibit their place in the true Self-revelation of God.

For if the Holy Spirit thus selects materials from imperfect or false systems, He does not thereby sanction these systems as a whole, or even imply that those portions of them which He does not employ are after the mind of God. The quotation from the book of Enoch does not prove that the whole of that composition is inspired. The traces of Egyptian influence in the Mosaic ritual and legislation do not imply wholesale approval of the Egyptian theology. The prologue of St. John does not commit the Apostle of Love to a general sanction of the speculations of Philo. Rabbinical arguments which may be found here and there in St. Paul's epistles do not mean that all other reasonings current in the Rabbinical schools are valid or even legitimate. An adoption of the

particular Jewish tradition about the rock that followed the Israelites in the desert does not commit the Apostle to an approval of all the legendary stories that were already current in the Israel of his day. To quote a line from Epimenides, or Aratus, or Menander did not imply that every fragment of these writers had the sanction of Apostolic authority. The inspiration of selection sanctions that which it selects, and nothing beyond.

(β) There is now unhappily little time for tracing the selective method of the Holy Spirit in the organisation and creeds of the Church. Even if it could be shown that in the Apostolic age the presbyterate was certainly modelled upon Jewish and the Episcopate on Gentile precedents, this would not of itself affect the question of their necessity to the true form and life of the Christian society. But the selective action of the Spirit is especially observable in the Church's use of ancient philosophy. The varying phases of that attitude were determined by the capacity of this or that school to furnish materials that in a given set of circumstances would assist the supreme work of the Spirit among men. In one century Platonism was distrusted, as a solvent dangerous to Christian belief; in another it was laid under contributions by Christian writers, and even furnished terminology to the Catholic creed. Early fathers may ban Aristotle; yet he is subsequently preferred to Plato, as not venturing upon topics as to which nothing can be known certainly without a revelation. The Church is led to reject such a symbol as the Homooousion at one while for reasons which are perfectly compatible with her adoption of it at another. The subject is too large to be more than hinted at. In this field too the Spirit is constantly choosing whatever has really come from the word and wisdom of the Father, and can be, at a given time and place, made serviceable to the interests of His people.

As we follow the Holy Spirit in this department of His work, we may venture without presumption to observe that His action is limited by His own Attributes. He is the Spirit of Truth, not only because it is the truth which He teaches, but also because He Himself is true. Therefore He cannot contradict Himself. If, for instance, He really through the Sixth Council pronounced Honorius to be a heretic, He cannot in our day have pronounced Honorius by implication to be infallible. Nor can He take into His service literary fictions which trifle with the law and the sense of truth. If it could really be shown that the addresses ascribed to Moses in Deuteronomy were the composition of a writer of the age of Josiah, who desired to secure for later legal decisions or institutions the countenance of the great lawgiver; or—that speeches attributed to David in the Book of Chronicles were never uttered by the real David at all, but only represent the opinion of a sacerdotal scribe after the Exile as to what David, if properly instructed, would or should have said; or—that passages in Daniel which claim to be predictions of still future events are really a history of events which the writer had himself witnessed, and are thrown into a predictive form, in order to invigorate national enthusiasm at a critical moment by the spectacle of the imaginary fulfilment of a fictitious prophecy; or—that the discourses of our Lord reported by St. John are not the *ipsissima verba* of the same Son of Man Who speaks in the Synoptic Gospels, but only the voice of some Christian of the second century, or earlier, who thought has been steeped in the Platonised Judaism of

Alexandria,—or, perhaps, of the Apostle of Love, who, however, could not distinguish clearly between his own and his Divine Master's words; or—that the sermons of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Acts resemble each other too closely to have been really uttered by those Apostles, and only represent a literary effort to produce ecclesiastical harmony in the sub-Apostolic age; or that the pastoral Epistles of St. Paul, although expressly claiming to be his work, were in fact composed when the struggle with Gnosticism had obliged the Church to create a more elaborate organisation, and are largely due to an endeavour to procure for this organisation the sanction of the great Apostle's name:—if, I say, these and other suchlike theories which might be mentioned could be shown to be based on fact, it surely would be shown at the same time that the Holy Spirit could not have inspired the writings in question. He is not responsible for speeches which cultivated pagans like Thucydides or Tacitus could naturally and without scruple put into the mouths of their heroes. Those great writers had no more the divine law of truth upon their hearts and consciences than they had the divine laws of love or purity; and nothing depends upon the historical worth of those fictitious speeches of theirs beyond the degree and quality of literary entertainment which we at this day may or may not derive from them. It is quite otherwise when we pass within the sacred precincts of the canon of Scripture. If the Holy Spirit is in any degree concerned in the production of its contents we may at least be sure that language is not used in it to create a false impression, and that that which claims, on the face of it, to be history is not really fiction in an historical guise. The Book of Truth cannot belie either the laws of truth or the Spirit and Source of truth.

(γ) Once more, observe how the Holy Spirit gradually builds up or develops the Christian character. He takes of Christ's teaching and example, and shows it in its attractive beauty to the Christian conscience. This work of His is always going forward in those who will. As we pass through life, the Holy Spirit, while endowing us through sacramental channels with the new Humanity of the Redeemer, discovers to us more and more the splendour and import of His Person and work. We have learnt, or think that we have learnt, something of truth, and we are suddenly startled at the deeper meanings of the Parable of the Sower. We have succeeded to an estate, or we have won academical honours, and we learn the import of the Parable of the Talents. Our thoughts have been led to dwell on the great problems of capital and labour, wealth and poverty, which are so prominent in the modern world, and we see a new significance in the history of Dives and Lazarus, and in the precept given to the rich young man. We have been brought up to measure the worth of men by some class or artificial prejudice, and the position assigned to the Good Samaritan, though we have read about his going down to Jericho all our lives, flashes at a certain moment upon our thoughts as an overwhelming discovery. We have come to suppose that spiritual liberty implies the rejection of all outward authority, and the Holy Spirit reminds us of the words about even the Scribes and Pharisees who sit in Moses' seat. We have wandered, it may be, from the path on which in earlier and happier years our feet had been set to go, and we find guidance and consolation as nowhere else in the Story of the Prodigal Son. We are getting on in life, and mapping out, with ambitious confidence, a future

which, God perhaps knows, will never be ours ; and we are brought to our senses by the record of the man who would pull down his barns and build greater on the eve of the very night on which his soul was required of him. And all through life, and assuredly not less as life is drawing towards its close, the great doctrines of Redemption and Grace are brought home with new power and clearness to the hearts and consciences of those who will. These are lessons which may make Pentecost a perpetual reality, and bridge over the interval between the most prosaic of lives and companionship with That incomparable Life which was lived nineteen centuries ago on the shores of the sea of Galilee.

And our Lord's words furnish us with a decisive criterion of the exact worth of dominant influences around us, of currents of thought which, now and again, would sweep us imperiously along with them, of the temper of our own time, of the *Zeitgeist*. It is natural to us to think that the days in which we live are wiser and better than any before, and that in throwing our thoughts without restraint into the main currents of the hour we are doing the best we can with our short span of life. And yet we might observe that many a past generation has cherished this notion of an absolute value attaching to the thought and temper of its day, while we, as we look back on it, with the aid of a larger experience, can see that it was the victim of an illusory enthusiasm. When we analyse the ingredients that go to make up the spirit of the time, of any one phase of time, and when we observe that, notwithstanding its stout assertions of a right to rule, it melts away before our very eyes like the fashions of a lady's dress, into shapes and moods which contradict, with equal self-confidence, its former self, we may hesitate before we listen to it as if it were a prophet, or make a fetish of it, as though it had within it a concealed divinity. The spirit of any generation may have, must have, in it some elements to recommend it ; but assuredly it has also other and very different elements, and the question is whence do they come, and whither are they drifting? All that is moving, interesting, exciting in the world of ideas, in the successive conceptions of the meaning and purpose of life that flit across the mental sky, is not necessarily from, nor does it necessarily tend towards, the Source of good. The mere movement of the ages does not in itself imply a progress from lower to higher truth, from darkness to light ; movement is possible in more directions than one. "Brethren," exclaims an Apostle to some of his flock, to whom every claimant for speculative sympathy seems to have been welcome, "brethren, believe not every spirit ; but try the spirits whether they are of God. . . . Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God ; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."\*

The test of the true worth of the spirit of our day—of the spirit which rules our own thoughts and lives—is the saying, "He shall glorify Me." All that wins for the Divine Redeemer more room in the thoughts and hearts of men ; all that secures for Him the homage of obedient and disciplined wills ; all that draws from the teachings of the past and the examples of the present new motives for doing Him the honour which is His eternal due, may be safely presumed to come from a Source higher than any in this passing world, and to have in it the promise of lasting happiness and peace. And, for the rest—

"Sunt multa facis illita quae luce purgentur Tuâ,  
Tu vera Lux coelestium vultu sereno illumina."

## A PULPIT PRAYER.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

LORD, teach us how to pray. We know not how to pray, or what to pray for as we ought, but Thy Spirit can attune our hearts and teach us holy words. We would be like the Saviour, firm, gentle, courageous, compassionate, pure, yet sympathising with those who are struggling towards perfectness and often failing in the tremendous process. Take away from us the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and fill us with the righteousness of Christ, Who knew no sin. May He work in us the miracle of perfectness here, or yonder in the land of the sun. This is our confidence in Him, that He will not leave His workmanship until it is without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, a glorious church worthy of the Lamb. Thou knowest what our life is; what a struggle, what a failure. Thou knowest its occasional sense of victory. Thou knowest its great sadness. In all these experiences may we have no trust in ourselves. May we have perfect, living trust in the Son of God. Help us to be sons of God. Thou hast surrounded us with innumerable and ever-precious privileges. May we not be as Capernaum, thrust down to hell. May we have understanding of the time and know what Israel ought to do. May we rise to every occasion, and discharge every responsibility in the fear and love of God. We know the truth; may we do it always. May a voice be heard continually in our hearts saying, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Forbid that we should be the creators of our own perdition. May we live wisely and well all the twelve hours of the working day. Amen.

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The Bible is not a book of information about the Being of God. It gives very little information about the heavenly state. We might even wish to know a little more than we do about the heavenly world. We believe angels are permitted to pay us a visit, but they do not ask us to go and see them!

Scripture portraits are faithfully outlined; its stories of men's lives, short, simple, and suggestive.

There is immense wealth and facility for spiritual education in this ancient and manifold book. Many departments in knowledge would be irreclaimable wildernesses but for the Bible.

Of all books in the world the Scriptures evince the greatest natural human fulness, and the greatest saintly fulness. And yet, further, the very matter of their contents is self-evidencing, not only as to ordinary methods, but as to their super-ordinary communications.

In the Bible we have the central line of the world's history. It is a book that from beginning to end contends for righteousness. And it is made glorious by the illuminating centrality of the Great Person, Jesus Christ.

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Yes, and Christ has so drawn men that they have wished to be lifted up to share his sufferings, if only they may share His triumph.

## THE BURNING BUSH.

*Outline of a Sermon*

BY THE REV. J. ANDERSON WATT.

## EXODUS iii.

I. *The Gospel of the Burning Bush.*—(1) A type of Christ's wondrous Person. He is God and man, having two distinct natures in one person. A "tender plant," a "root out of a dry ground," but in Him dwells "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (2) A pre-figuration of Christ's sufferings. Fire envelops the bush. Earth and hell concentrate their evil forces upon the Blessed Lord. Even heaven shuts its doors of sympathy. "My God, my God!" (3) A picture of the resistance and persistence of Christ. Fire assails bush in vain. Christ's foes combine to thwart Him in vain. He bursts bars of death; shivers gates of grave; vanquishes all and survives; and rising to heaven is crowned as a conqueror. (4) A mirror of the history of Christ's Church on earth. By power not her own, the Church navigated like ship through storms of ages. Persecution and trial burned fierce and hot. But "Nec tamen consumebatur."

II. *The Mystery of the Burning Bush.*—All mystery, but reaches climax in "I am that I am." The unpronounceable name is to effect redemption of people. (1) The first mysterious note in "I am that I am" is eternity. (a) But the Eternal becomes an "infant of days." The unborn "I am" is born in Bethlehem. (b) Why this greatest of miracles? That man might be saved. Sin atoned for. The God must be a kinsman. (2) The second note of mystery in "I am that I am" is unchangeableness. (a) Change is characteristic of all terrestrial things. The *sal requiem* of our race is "We all do fade." (b) Jesus as God is unchangeable in all His attributes, e.g., power, holiness, love.

III. *The Mission of the Burning Bush.*—(1) A human ministry and Divine salvation. God needs Moses. "I will send thee." God needs men. So literally that He became man. So few workers! Wanted a million missionaries! Fireside, outside, platform, pulpit, &c. (2) A human ministry but God-called. Education, scholarship, &c., good, but not everything. World is full of preachers. Two men go into a church to preach. Apparently no difference, but there is a difference. It lies in energy by which message is delivered, whether impulse of Holy Ghost or "false fire." God's ministers must be God-appointed and do God's work in God's name. (3) The nature of the Church's commission. Church sent into world to hold lamp of truth. This is her commission. She is the "apostle," or one sent for this end. Her duty is to take authoritative name of Jesus and hold it up. "I, if I be lifted up," &c. (4) The principle of the Church's commission. The principle is identification. "I am come down." God did not *speak* down, did not utter thunderous fiat from heaven to let people go. Did not *send* down. Does not expect men to reach up to Him. God's religion is God coming down. Jesus came down to the people. Moses did not erect a pulpit and say "Come." He *went* to his countrymen. We, too, must go down—ascertain wants of the people. Workers must go out from pews to workhouses, drawing-rooms, slums, lanes, testifying for Christ. "Go down!"

## THE GREATEST QUESTION IN THE WORLD.

*Outline of a Sermon.*

BY REV. D. FOULKES ROBERTS.

"What shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?"—ST. MATTHEW xxvii. 22.

WE have learned that "the greatest *thing* in the world" is love. In the text we discover the greatest *question*. What more frequently asked by those who bear the burdens and responsibilities of life than "What shall I do?" And of all subjects, earthly or heavenly, that occasion the inquiry, which so important as the action we should take with regard to the world's Saviour? Three questions found in Matthew's Gospel are: "What *think* ye of Christ?" "Whom *say* ye that I am?" and "What shall I *do* with Jesus?"

(1) The first was evoked by the *unbelief* of the Pharisees. Not indifferent to His claims, they reasoned in their hearts, and resisted Christ. They lacked unbiased thought and righteous judgment. On this depended their acceptance of Him.

(2) The second appealed to the *timidity* of the disciples. The Pharisees openly denied His authority, and said He was a deceiver. The public talked about Him freely, but mistook Him for someone else. The disciples, with all their advantages, must have known Him better. Was it not time for them to speak out, with no uncertain sound, in favour of His claims?

(3) The third arose from *indecision of character*. Pilate believed that Jesus was just and faultless, and declared his convictions to the clamouring crowd. His duty was clear; but policy was consulted. His conscience told him to do the right, regardless of consequences; but (1) *fear of the people*, because they threatened to accuse him unto Cæsar; and (2) *self-interest*, caused him to waver.

These questions are not out of date: they are applicable to the men of to-day. The truth involved in them may be stated thus: "Now abideth thought, speech, action, these three; but the greatest of these is action."

I. *Thought*.—A good creed is not to be ignored. Can you, with all your heart, love and serve an unseen Christ, except you believe (1) that He died for you, and rose again; and (2) that He is now able to forgive and save? Is it not true to-day, (3) that he loveth much to whom much is forgiven? and (2) that he serves Him best who loves Him most? On men's thoughts or conceptions of Christ depends, in the first instance, their acceptance of Him as their Saviour and King.

II. *Speech*.—Secret disciples, who hold that a public profession is not necessary to salvation, quote Nicodemus as their pattern. But why imitate him in one act, and not in others? (1) At first, tis true, he came to Jesus secretly. (2) Afterward he defended Him publicly, in the midst of His enemies. (3) Finally, at considerable expense, he showed his faithfulness when all the world had deserted Him. Moreover, to us is revealed the solemn truth, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me," &c., and "Whosoever shall confess Me before men," &c. Do not the error, superstition, and practical denial of Christ's authority which prevail, call for clear testimony from all "His witnesses"?

III. *Action*.—Practical decision for Christ. (1) A yielding of the heart and life to His control. (2) Consecration to His service. Salvation, not by the faith which is alone, but by the "faith which worketh by love." Do the right, whoever oppose. Do His bidding, whatever the results. Follow Him, even to the cross, if need be.

IV. *The greatest of these is Action*.—The loftiest thoughts and the loudest profession not enough. You may believe and confess, with the ardour of a Peter, that Jesus is "the Son of the living God;" and even preach, with the power of a Paul, the acceptability of the saying that "Jesus came to save sinners;" and yet, after all, yourself be a castaway. The young man who had kept all the commandments was not far from the Kingdom; but, like Demas afterward, he loved the present world, and fell short of salvation. Thousands, like Pilate,

have lost their souls through fear and self-interest, even though they have talked with Jesus. "There is a road to hell from the gate of heaven!"

What are *you* going to do with Jesus? Whether young, or middle-aged, or advanced in years, you have already decided questions which affect your future welfare in this life. Have you decided what you shall do with *Jesus*?—the greatest question in the world.

## THE CHRISTIAN NAME.

*Notes of a Sermon.*

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MORTON, B.D.

"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."—ACTS xi. 26.

THESE words have more than a merely historical interest. In one short sentence we have a more powerful witness to the deep earnestness and purity of early Christian life than we have in long paragraphs of glowing eulogy.

This notice suggests four questions: (1) To *what* was the name Christian first given? To a society? To a system of doctrine? To individual persons? The disciples were called Christians. The phrases "Christian society," "Christian thought," while justifiable, are not scriptural. We are here brought face to face with the truth that true religion begins not in becoming connected with a Christian society, but in a personal attitude towards Christ.

(2) *Who* gave rise to the name Christian? Did the Antioch disciples call themselves Christians? They were called Christians. Agrippa and St. Peter use the word Christian in such a way as to indicate that it was a contemptuous term, in short, a nickname. This points to either a Jewish or pagan origin for the name. It is unlikely, however, that Jews would have given the Christians a Greek nickname. Besides, it is unlikely that the Jews would have coined a contemptuous epithet out of what was only the Greek form of an almost ineffable word—Messiah. The name must therefore have been given by Pagans. So let us, emulating the Antioch disciples, seek to get men of the world to call us Christians, if it be only in nickname.

(3) *Why* was the name Christian given? There were many features of Christian faith and practice which were in striking contrast with the faith and practice of other religions. Christianity brought a new and loftier morality. Its moral maxims were reducible to one general principle.—"Love is the fulfilling of the law." It brought a new and simple ritual, which contrasted powerfully on the one hand with the complicated ritual of Judaism, on the other with the gaudy pageantry of heathen temples. Any of these salient features of Christianity might have suggested a name to the pagans by which to call the Antioch disciples. Again, although Aristotle and Zeno had founded schools of thought, the followers of these great thinkers were not called Zenoists and Aristotelians. Precedent was overlooked, because the pagans recognised at the most cursory glance that Jesus Christ was the centre of these disciples' doctrine, and the source of their highest life. So prominent was Christ in their hymns (*cf.* Pliny's letter to Trajan), in their sermons, that the heathen were constrained to call them Christians. So let us make Christ supreme in our doctrine and in our hearts. Let Christ be so prominent in our lives that intelligent men, although they had never heard of the name of Christ, would call us Christians.

(4) *Where* was this name given? Not far away from the corruption and temptations of pagan life, but in the very heart of them. They were not called Christians in some desert, or in some cloister, but in the great Syrian city, which was notorious for being the home of every vice, and also for the cold culture of many of its inhabitants. Let us also approve ourselves Christians, not only in the quiet shady retreats of life, but also in the eyes of all men. It is only as our religion becomes the guiding power of the whole life that our influence for good will be widely felt. The names of these Christians were

soon forgotten. The influence of the lives of these Antioch Christians continued to live in the martyr spirit of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, in Chrysostom, whose great power first came to the light in this town, in the Antioch school of interpretation, whose scriptural exposition was simple and heart-touching, and contrasted powerfully with the mysticism of the school of Alexandria.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for June 15: ST. LUKE XII. 13—21. Golden text: ST. LUKE 12.15.*

### THE RICH FOOL.

THE love of accumulation is a strong master-passion of the human mind. Perhaps there is no child living who has not felt the power of its fascination. It is such a delight to heap up, to collect things. Whatever it be that you are heaping up, there are two things I can tell you about your store. One thing is that the store of things becomes dear to you, just the very possessing it, makes you love it. You remember what Jesus said: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" and the second thing is that the larger the store you are heaping up, the more you will desire to add to it. In to-day's lesson Jesus gives us a picture of a man who had this passion for accumulation, and he had set his heart on his earthly treasures and he wanted to heap up more. This man's neighbours would probably have called him a good man of business very careful and prudent. But God's estimate of the man was "Thou fool." Why was it that there was such a difference in these two estimates of the rich man, why was this wise, sensible, prudent man of business denounced by God as a fool?

Notice first that Jesus does not tell us of any very evil things he did; of any commandments he had broken. But Jesus warns us not only against sins of commission which we all recognise as sins, but against sins of omission. These sins, one of which we are warned against in the parable, are more deadly and dangerous than the others. The sins of commission are like the dangerous rocks on some coast, marked by the lighthouse beacon that warn us that many a noble ship has been driven on them by storms to destruction. But the sins of omission are rather like the hidden sandbanks beneath the cruel silent tide when no warning flash tells of ruin and destruction near. What is the fault of the man that we might call prudent, but that God calls a fool? Just these two things—he did not remember the existence of a higher life than that which we live here. And another mistake was that he had accumulated all these riches for himself—he thought he was the possessor, not the steward.

He thought he could feed his soul on his fruit and his wheat: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." There is a hunger and a thirst that only God can satisfy. He has given us the bread and the water of life to satisfy this spiritual hunger and thirst. Then this rich man shut himself up with his goods calling them his own. God is the proprietor of all we have, and He will take account whether it has been used selfishly, or for Him, and His poor, His sick, His children, His Church, His world.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## THE BRANDS OF THE LORD JESUS.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. A. GOODRICH, D.D.

*Preached in Westminster Chapel on Sunday evening, May 4, 1890, on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society.*

"Henceforth let no man trouble me. For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Or as the Revised Version reads it: "From henceforth let no man trouble me. For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"; or, "I bear branded in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."—GALATIANS vi. 17.

IN the time of the Apostle Paul, pagans devoted to some deity and attached to his temple were often branded. Among the Galatians, to whom our epistle was written, there were many persons so branded; for throughout Galatia the worship of Cybele was very prevalent and enthusiastic. Referring to these brands of devoted service to some god, Paul in our text says: "I, Paul, am devoted absolutely to Christ for ever and altogether. I serve Him irrevocably. I am His; I bear in my body His brands." These bodily brands or marks were plainly the scars which his being stoned and frequently scourged had left upon him, as also his worn and broken expression, the result of his labours more abundant and of his varied suffering for Christ. As these sufferings were the effects of his devotedness, so the marks they left on his body were the evidences or brands of his devotedness. "Henceforth," he says, "let no man annoy me or trouble me by casting doubts on my sincerity, or on my devotedness, or upon my apostleship, for of these I bear full proof in bearing thus in my body the marks or brands of the Lord Jesus."

Observe now: first, that all devoted service brands the person devoted, not visibly, it may be, not on his body as in Paul's case, but none the less really, and to the discerning none the less visibly. The student, for example, devoted to Plato or Aristotle, to Locke or Kant, to Haeckel or Spencer, will in the whole type and tone of his thinking bear the marks of his master. His intellectual body will bear their brand, quite cognisant by the initiated. So in music, the artist devoted to Handel, or Mendelssohn, or Wagner, or any other great master, or the artist devoted to Raphael, or Correggio, or Titian, will in his artistic life bear the marks of his master. A judge in these spheres will discern branded into their respective works the brand of their respective master. Perhaps this is more true of the sphere of literature. Be devoted to any great master of

prose, and you will bear his mark, be it Home, or Johnson, or Addison, or Carlyle. But more true still is this of the moral life. Here is a man, let us say, devoted to the temple of Mammon, serving there night and day. His restless spirit, his keen, hungry eye, his eager, hurried strife for the goal, his talk—ever in some form exhibit him as branded with the marks of Mammon. That stiff, lofty indifference, that contemptuous disregard of others, that unquestioning assumption of the best in everything, in that other man, show him to be branded with the marks of pride. The conceit of self, the eagerness for the notice of others, the sensitiveness to the opinion of others, the constant looking all about to see if people are not admiring him; what he does, what he says, how he dresses to court attention—all evidence that he is branded with the marks of vanity. So that bloated face, that furtive eye, those feverish lips, that hard, defiant bearing, the company he keeps, the language he uses, evidence that that other man is branded with the marks of sensuality.

When, then, we rise into the supreme spiritual sphere, that of enthusiastic devotedness to the Lord Jesus, when we become whole-hearted priests in that great temple of Christ, it is not strange that we receive in our very spirit, in our mind, and in our body, the brand of that service.

“I bear in my body the brands of the Lord Jesus.” What, then, are these marks of the Lord Jesus, or these brands, attesting that we thus belong to Him?

The first we mention is that of moral earnestness. In the early morning I suppose most of us have at some time or other listened to the waking up of the great city to work and life. How deliberately earnest it is in beginning its work. The thin stream of its work at first gently murmurs on the slumbering air, receiving as the hours wear on from all directions additional streamlets. It becomes ere long a deep, broad, rushing river of hard pulsating work, filling the spectator, who stands as it were on its banks, with amazement at its force and fulness. Ah, whither is that rush of work all going? What is it all doing? How much of it issues in vanity and vexation of spirit? How much of it issues in contentment and well-being? Yes, we Britishers are an earnest people, we think hard, we work hard. I look into the faces of men as they are going about their work in our cities, and read in their set, resolute lives, “I will do it. I must reach it, live or die.” Do what? reach what? That is the question. Earnestness is a noble quality, but to be a mark of our being in the service of our Lord Jesus our earnestness must be penetrated and interpenetrated with moral feeling and spiritual purpose. The settled purpose in our soul must be, “I will do God’s will.” This strong, struggling, ambitious life we as a people inherit, we each of us must seize with masterful hand and say, “Go to worldly success if you will, push right through to the front if you will; but whether you get to the front or not, you shall not forget God or injure your neighbour. You may fail; you shall not do wrong.” A soul, brethren, thus morally earnest, will be vexed enough with its own and with other people’s faults, it will often before God with sorrow have to cry, “God be merciful to me, I am weak, the world strong,” but this moral earnestness is a mark or a brand of the Lord Jesus. From this how different the giddy, frivolous life of many. Flippancy is not a mark of the Lord Jesus. Whose mark is it?

Where there is such moral earnestness there will appear sooner or later

spiritual faith, which is the second mark of the Lord Jesus. A frivolous age is ever an age of scepticism; an earnest age is ever an age of faith. All history, I believe, supports this. Take one example from English history—the Puritan period and the Restoration period. The Restoration period was destitute of moral earnestness; like its unkingly king, Charles II., it lived in vanity and died jesting. No serious effort was made in that age in the legislature for the benefit of the country. Low sports and a wretched drama marked it. Its frivolity issued in the decay of faith. It gave birth to philosophers like Hobbs, and to poets like Butler. On the other hand, the age of the Puritans was characterised by moral earnestness, a terrible earnestness against superstition in religion, wrongs in government, and vices in life; an earnestness which in its intensity degenerated in some into gloominess. Connected, however, with that moral earnestness was spiritual faith. Men then believed with all their heart. That age of faith because of earnestness produced poets like Milton, divines like Howe, and patriots like Hampden, Pym, and Cromwell. As with the age, so with the individual. The flippant and frivolous do not need faith. At most, a little shallow scepticism suffices with them. They attempt nothing that taxes their higher nature. They can speculate, but they cannot believe. Some tell us that the lack of faith springs frequently or always from strength of intellect. No. It springs from the lack of moral earnestness. The morally earnest must believe, or his earnestness perishes. He must believe in the right, in its authority, in its ultimate triumph, or he could not be earnest to secure the right for himself and for others. The strong desire for the good must constrain him to pray for its attainment, which involves faith in the personality of the Father, in His accessibility and responsibility. His sense of failure and sin will move the earnest man to ask, "Is there forgiveness with God? If so, how?" He will therefore be open to receive God's message of forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. His yearning for the perfect will suggest to him there must be a world beyond this mound of failures where the good will be satisfied by God, and where the Divine aspiration which God hath breathed into the soul shall meet its complete fulfilment. The morally earnest may reject this theological theory or even that theology, but it must believe. It cannot exist without faith. Faith, therefore, ever is where the morally earnest is. But the flippant, irreverent spirit can do without faith; nay, it could not be, save on a basis of unbelief.

Born now of such spiritual faith, comes next, as the third mark of the Lord Jesus made upon the spirit, that of charity or love. I say, Christian charity is the third mark of the Lord Jesus. There is in the Chapel of the Virgin at Padua a significant fresco by Giotto of "Charity." The modern conception of Charity is, I think, that of a woman not very strong in her physique bearing an infant in her arms, and surrounded by two or three children. Giotto's representation of charity is also that of a woman, but the woman he takes as representing charity is of finer, stronger, and more intellectual mould than the woman made to represent our modern charity. This figure holds in her right hand a great bowl full of food and flowers, which would tire most women and some men to hold a minute or two. The other hand stretches upward to receive a human heart, which one of God's angels is extending towards her. Her face is large and open, serenely content. She stands upon bags of gold, and other bags lie

thick about her feet. A master conception this of Christian charity. Take one or two of its features. She stands on bags of gold. She does not kick them away in contempt, she is not looking down upon them with jealous watchful eye. Her eyes are directed elsewhere. Gold under the feet—that, brethren is the proper place for gold. Possess the gold; you cannot do much good of a certain kind without it; possess the gold, but have it under your feet, not on the back bearing you down from uprightness, not in the heart cankering it. A good ground gold makes in this world to stand upon. Giotto's charity has it there in abundance. She, however, does not think her duty discharged by giving a few pieces of her abundant gold. She seems to have used it to purchase food and flowers. That food and flowers she holds in her hand. What did the artist mean by that? He meant that love's great work is the gift of simple and beautiful services, which satisfy and gladden human hearts pining for love. These, rather than gifts of gold—though the gold in its place and time is necessary—these are the characteristic deeds of Christian charity; these deeds enrich society more than gifts of gold. Giotto was profoundly right. That human heart, given of God's angel, which Giotto's charity with supreme blessedness receives, teaches that the highest reward, and the reward which alone can satisfy love, is the human heart given purely as from heaven, and that ever is given to wise, noble charity. Such is charity, then, conceived under the full inspiration of Christ. It differs a little from our modern conception of charity—that of a somewhat weak woman with several children about her. We must not slight our modern charity looking after the children, for the pyramid of society rests upon the child. But we must never forget that the charity which is specifically Christian—the charity which bears manifestly on it the mark of the Lord Jesus—is the charity which dispenses the food and the flowers, which adds abundantly the gifts and services, which satisfies, and which gladdens human love. It is not simply looking after this form of what we in modern language call charity, so much as it is giving unto the great masses of mankind at this present the liberal food which should duly nourish them by giving unto them that leisure which shall enable them to surround their lives with that which answers to the flowers—namely, that which shall beautify, gladden, and re-create. It is more leisure for recreation and for culture, more liberality as to that which brings the maintenance of life in health and strength, that the charity—Christian charity—of this day has to accomplish. They, therefore, who out of a Christian heart, seek in this day to ameliorate the conditions of the masses, to sanitize the houses of the people, to give them a fair chance for liberal food and due leisure for recreation and culture, are doing the work which marks them with the marks of the Lord Jesus. For the Lord Jesus in His day went about doing good, and such good as met the physical needs, as well as the spiritual needs, of the people.

These works, then, of the Lord Jesus which we have mentioned, namely, moral earnestness, spiritual faith, Christian charity, are marks pre-eminently upon the spirit of a person. They are not very visible, at least not so visible, for example, as the scars on Paul's face from the stoning, or the seams on his back from the scourging. But these scars had not been on Paul's body had not Paul had within marks on his spirit.

If these marks be on our spirit, we may be assured there will be also

branded on the whole body of our external life marks of the Lord Jesus. Our estate, for example, will bear the marks of the Lord Jesus. A part of it will be given directly to the Lord's work in the world. Our cash-box will have its marks in certain gifts. Our little ledger will have an entry for religious and benevolent expenditure. Our time will bear its marks of the Lord Jesus. It will not all be given to business and pleasure, and an hour or two on the Sabbath, when we think we can do nothing better, grudgingly given to church. Our Sabbath mornings, too, will not be spent in idleness, and our afternoons and evenings in visiting. Each day also will bear its marks in having had some portion of it devoted to prayer. Does our time bear the Lord's mark? It is for some of our time that the Lord to many of us is loudly calling. Our business will bear the mark of the Lord Jesus. His mark will be on the stuff we sell and the goods we manufacture. That mark, though not quite understood, will be soon known in the market as the guarantee of sound work and fair measure. Our speech and spirit will bear His mark. Guile will not be found in our mouth, a lie will not stain our lips, vileness will not disfigure our speech, nor malignity darken our spirit. His mark will be there—truth and righteousness is that mark, in our spirit and in our life, and in our very body literally will the Lord's mark appear.

Francis of Assissi bore, the legend tells us, the *stigmata* of the Lord's crucifixion on his hands and feet as proof of his devotedness to and communion with the Lord. This legend, as also the legend of the Scarlet Letter, rests upon the truth that the spirit from within powerfully affects the body. We have seen faces which at one time bore the brand of the vices gradually become changed under the transforming power of Christ within. Lines of wrath and hate gave place to those of content and love. The bloated flesh of the vices sinks away into the purer, firmer form of health. On others we have seen the Lord's mark more plainly—the erect form, the fearless movement, the pure eye, the open brow, the lip so firm and free, knowing nothing of hesitation in good or concealment in truth, the far-away look, the supersensuous tone, the holy light, the face suggestive of Stephen's, which shone like an angel, plainly saying, "I bear in my body the marks of my entire devotedness to the Lord Jesus." Yes; if our spirit be marked, the whole body of our being bear the marks also of our devotedness and service to Christ.

Now if I have not proved thus far in pointing out what are really the marks of the Lord Jesus, you will see how different they are from what mere popular thought affirms them to be. Passion and prejudice, narrowness of view and bitterness of spirit, self-complacency and self-assertion, the lack of a keen sense of honesty and veracity, these are marked with the marks of the Lord Jesus some would have the temerity to affirm, or here and there a bad specimen of those calling themselves Christians do affirm. On the contrary, moral earnestness, spiritual faith, noble charity on the spirit are the marks of the Lord Jesus, showing themselves in marking all the outer parts of the body in some such way as we have indicated. To be, brethren, thus branded with the marks of the Lord Jesus, fire must fall upon us from heaven; the consecrating iron, heated hot, maybe, in fiery trial or burning experience, must touch us; ay, rest on and press into our quivering, shrinking flesh. There must be a complete devotedness to God in Christ that comes only through fire from heaven in some form.

It is painful work, this branding, but it is worth the pain. So branded our religion becomes as no chalk mark, which the afflictions of life may rub off, no mere adhesive stamp, which a little rather rough weather may wash off. The mark is burned into us so that whether we live we live unto the Lord, or whether we die we die unto the Lord; so that whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's: we bear in our body, soul, and spirit the brand of the Lord Jesus.

I should like to point out very briefly how such devotedness to the Lord Jesus in our case, as in the case of the Apostle Paul, delivers us from trouble. "Let no man trouble me," he says in our text, "for I bear in my body the brands of the Lord Jesus. It is idle to attempt to trouble me, for I will not be troubled, I cannot be troubled." To many Christians everything is a trouble and anyone can trouble. They have no fine, strong, independent life. They cannot say, "I know what I think and what I believe, and what I must and will do, for I am in the leading of God." They are not certain and determined. They are troubled. Criticism or remark, they say, troubles them, diverts and irritates them. Everything, indeed, is a trouble to them, and anything can trouble them. Doubts can trouble them, temptations can trouble them, the world's contempt or scorn troubles them. They are full of troubles. To pray is a trouble, to read the Scriptures is a trouble, to attend their church is a trouble, to give a subscription to God's work is a trouble.

Oh, brethren, if we had anything like the spirit of Paul towards our blessed Lord and Master, we should be able to say to the world, and to self, and to everything, "Let no man trouble me, for I bear the brand of the Lord Jesus. I will not be troubled, you cannot trouble me, I am settled and firm, entirely and absolutely devoted. It is waste of time to attempt to trouble. Leave me alone and save your trouble, for whatever you may say or do or be, on this I am determined, to serve the Lord Jesus."

This evening you are to have an opportunity of contributing to the funds of the British and Foreign Bible Society. I am quite certain if you have within you anything approaching the spirit of entire devotedness unto the Lord Jesus Christ which our text has brought before us, you will consider this no trouble. This British and Foreign Bible Society deserves well of every soul that is anxious for the good of man and the glory of God. If we ourselves have tasted of this Word, and know how precious it is, we can but have one feeling, the desire that others also may taste of it. I am informed that our British and Foreign Bible Society distributes annually four millions of copies or portions of the Bible, and that through its instrumentality we have at this present day nearly three hundred translations of this Bible into the languages of the earth. That is to say, there are nearly three hundred languages which have the Scriptures in their own tongue, and that now every great language—and by every great language is meant every language that is spoken by some ten millions of people—in every great language of the world the whole Bible is translated. Of course, there are many—I may say hundreds, I believe it is equal to thousands—there are many hundreds of languages in which the Bible is not yet translated. There is therefore ample scope for the work of the Bible Society. I appeal, therefore, to those of you who know something of the preciousness of the Bible, and appreciate somewhat the work of the Society, to contribute

freely unto the funds. I hear that by a stress of work they have gone this year some thousands over their ordinary expenditure. It is therefore the more needful that collections such as this should not only come up to, but go beyond, what they have been in previous years. The collection will now be taken.

## PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

O LORD God Almighty, we draw nigh to Thee, confessing our unworthiness and sin. It is not that we have fallen into the open, flagrant sin, or that we have brought upon ourselves disgrace and dishonour in the eyes of men. Our burden is, that our moral and spiritual man is so weak, that the good we would we do not, and we would not do that which we do. Our burden is, that we are so blind to the sense of Thy presence, and so irresponsive to the touches of Thy Spirit. Our sense of sin rises in the way we so often prefer ourselves before Thee, our God, and guide us our way by the maxims of this world, rather than by the convictions of conscience and the inspirations of Thy Spirit. Forgive us, O God, in this fundamental wrong. Forgive us in this our heart having strayed from Thee; this sin of our ways not being right before Thee. Touch us with a deeper sense yet of the sinfulness of this, and may our penitence for it be increasingly sincere; and may our faith in Thy forgiveness, and our faith in the incoming of Thy Spirit, become larger and yet larger. We pray Thee, holy Father, that Thou wilt quicken and strengthen us in all understanding of Thy holy Word and will. Deliver us from darkness of man, from prejudice and passion, which may interfere with our receiving Thy truth, as well as doing Thy will. Help us day by day to overcome temptations which fall to us, and faithfully to fulfil the duties of our common life. In our homes give us grace to be kindly and affectionate one to another. In our business help us to be faithful, diligent, and honest, in all our intercourse one with another. Give unto us the charity which is kind and suffereth long. As citizens, may we be faithful to our opportunities to bring our civic and national life into harmony with Thy holy will. As members of society, help us with wisdom which is from above to see what should be done in our social life to heal the many wounds and to bind up the many running sores that now so weaken the social body. We give Thee thanks, good Lord, for all Thy goodness and mercy to usward. We thank Thee especially for Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for all that He has revealed to us concerning Thyself—for all that He has wrought for us; and we more especially this evening give Thee thanks for the gift of Thy holy Book. We thank Thee that through the long line of the past Thou has raised up from time to time holy men, and inspired them by Thy Spirit so that they have lived the life and written the Word which we have now for our instruction. We thank Thee for the marvellous way in which Thou hast, by Thy providence and grace, given unto us this holy Book, and preserved it amid the wrecks of time unto this present. We bless Thee for all the manifest marks in this Book that it is from Thee. We rejoice in the great company who, in the study of this holy Book, have found spiritual life and strong consolation. We bless Thee that the Word is the seed which, taken into the heart of man, brings forth the fruit of eternal life. We thank Thee for all the sanctifying truth of Thy Word; for all its great and exceeding precious promises; for all its

faithful and terrible warnings. But, most of all, we thank Thee that Thou hast in this holy Word set a place for Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that He is the light and glory of this holy Book, and we bless Thee that Thou hast so clearly set Him in this Book that we, gazing upon Him therein, are convinced that not only He is from Thee, but that the Book, which thus records Him, must be also from Thee. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst bless the British and Foreign Bible Society, granting unto its directors grace and wisdom from above to guide its affairs with discretion and to success; giving also unto the varied agents of the Society faithfulness to fulfil the duties which devolve upon them. May they be wise, and earnest, and successful, not only in advocating the claims of this holy Book and of this Society, but also in communicating the truths of that Book when such opportunity presents itself to those to whom they speak. Be with us, we beseech Thee, this evening, and, with every worshipping assembly, granting the presence of Thy Holy Spirit to quicken and to bless. For Christ's sake do Thou hear us, and unto Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be everlasting praise. AMEN.

### SONS OF ELI, YET SONS OF BELIAL.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

*Preached in the City Temple, London, on Sunday evening, May 11, 1890.*

“The sons of Eli were sons of Belial.”—I SAMUEL ii. 12.

LET us see if we can remember these words: “The sons of Eli were sons of Belial.” That would seem to be impossible. Eli was a holy man. Eli was a priest. Eli was not intellectually a strong man, but morally he was righteous and faithful up to a very high degree. He was not much of a ruler at home, still he was substantially a good man. Belial represents corruption, darkness, the devil, the unholy genius of the universe, anything that indicates selfishness, baseness, corruption. Now read the text, “The sons of Eli, the holy priest, were sons of Belial, the bad spirit, the evil genius.”

We are always coming upon these conflicts, ironies, impossibilities. There is no smooth reading in history. For miles the river flows calmly and brightly, and is almost the willing mirror of the green beauty all around, and the blue on high; then suddenly it plunges over some great rocks, and becomes not a river, but a cataract. For a long time a man lives a sober, honest, and good sort of life, and the day after to-morrow you will hear that he has gone to the devil. What has he done? All kinds of things that are wrong. Statistically he may only have done one thing, but that one thing may be so pregnant and inclusive as to hold in it a whole hell. There are some one things we could not have done but for a process that means long plotting, deep conspiracy, many a secret interview with our spiritual foe; and we have lighted our mental candle at the torch of his baleful genius. Our suggestions are not all our own. We can carry a good deal of evil. Men do not like to hear of this. They would rather hear music and see pictures, and be taken out at summer noontide and be shown all the celestial blue, and all the apocalypse of

light-charged clouds. At the same time there is the fact, solemn, tragical, tremendous, that the sons of a good man may be bad men, and that good men themselves may be surprised or insidiously led into the deepest, gravest evils. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." Only as we live and move and have our being in God can we realise all our privileges, and turn them into solid and beneficent character. What becomes of the doctrine of spiritual heredity? There may be something in physical descent, and there ought to be a good deal in spiritual descent. Eli ought not to have had sons. Bad people ought never to come out of good homes. Their so doing involves so much, and implicates so many people, and throws suspicion upon so many circumstances and processes, unworthy and humiliating suspicion. The danger is that Eli himself may be charged with responsibility. It is so difficult for an ill-judging and prejudiced human nature to distinguish between cause and effect. How apt we are to say because a man is bad, his father must have been bad. We are more apt to say that, perhaps, than to say the contrary, namely, this youth must surely be good, his father was such an honest man. There is a good deal of evil in us in this direction, always willing to find out wickedness, always prepared to suggest hypocrisy, seldom inclined to think and feel the best about children that have come out of sweet homes. Yet we ought so to act towards them as to suggest to their own minds that we are simply bewildered and confounded by certain things we have seen in them, which contrast so vividly and terribly with what we expected from them. Do not suppose that you will be good men because your father was a good man, or your mother a good woman. You may upset the whole process of heredity, you may create a point of departure in your own development. It lies within the power, but not within the right of every man to say, "From the date of my birth there shall be black blood in our family, I will live the downward life, I will make hospitality in the house for evil spirits," so easy is it to destroy, so tempting is it to make bad fame.

But we see this not only religiously in the distinctive sense of that term: we see this inversion and perversion of heredity along all the lines of life, and in all the spheres of human experience. A civilised man, a son of civilisation, may be one of the most barbarous men upon the face of the earth; it does not come within the power of a savage to be so barbarous as a civilised man can be. Let us beware how we talk about savages, and barbarians, and people who are not civilised, and the like. I would again lay down the thought, which cannot now be discussed and illustrated at large, that civilisation has in its power, by the very necessity of its being civilisation, to go deeper than ever poor ignorant barbarism could do. Barbarism has not the intelligence, has not the faculty, has not the instruments. There is no fall so tremendous as the fall from heaven. How foolish we are, therefore, in this discrimination of character when we fall back from the poor savage, and hold concert and fellowship with the perverted son of civilisation, the man who knows all that art can do, and yet serves the very spirit of baseness. There are atheisms of that kind in great abundance in the world, men who know music and never listen to it except it is hired to do the devil's work, men who are critics in art, and yet care nothing for it except the figure shall suggest the devil—not openly, overtly, and vulgarly, but shall have about it some twist and

colour and suggestion pointing downward towards all evil indulgence and interdicted delight. "The sons of Eli were sons of Belial." The corresponding sentence in the lower levels of history is, "The sons of civilisation are sons of barbarism."

So we might proceed to further illustration and say, "The sons of education are sons of the greatest ignorance." Some day we shall understand the meaning of the word education better. It is not a word to be limited to letters and to the knowledge of what has happened in the world. It is a word which ought to apply to the soul, to its development, its fruition, its continual uplifting towards the highest ideal, yea, to the very Deity Himself. Who can be so ignorant as a soul who has given himself up to the service of evil? It is not ignorance of the base and vulgar type that can be excused on the ground of want of privilege and want of opportunity, but it is that peculiar ignorance which, having the light, hides it; which, knowing the right, does the wrong. Who commits the crime of the world? Men of great intelligence unbalanced by great moral integrity. There is a sense in which ignorance may conduce to crime. That is crime of the most diluted sort compared to the crime that is possible to an educated or intelligent man who is about to use the instrument of intelligence for doing the work of evil. Such men ought to be punished tenfold more than the poor waifs and strays who never had any chance in life, who never had one really long happy summer day in all their experience. When you find a so-called gentleman doing wrong, let him feel what it is to be in penal servitude. Education is an element in his condemnation. We must not treat poor, miserable, homeless ignorance and crime as if they were the most dangerous quality. It is the man who knows better and can do better, and will not do it, that is the pest of society.

Sometimes we may say, "the sons of refinement are the sons of vulgarity." There is a refinement which is only external; there is a refinement of form and of conventionality and of habit and of custom. There are men who will lie whilst they are smiling; there are men who can indulge their worst passions even when they are apparently indulging their highest aspirations. To laugh at the want of refinement in others who have never had an opportunity of being refined is the cruellest and the basest vulgarity. Refinement of the highest quality is patient, hopeful, sympathetic. The Divine refinement sees beauty where the eyes of selfishness and worldliness can only see features and elements to mock and to laugh at. Say, is there any refinement so vulgar as the refinement which gives itself up to work all manner of evil criticism with greediness and with diabolical delight in the torture and humiliation of others?

The whole point is this, that our heredity may be broken in upon, our ancestral privileges may be thrown away; sons of Eli may be sons of Belial. We hold nothing by right of ancestry. That has been the curse of history, so far. The whole spirit of feudalism is a spirit of wickedness, because a spirit of selfishness. We ought to hold nothing by right of ancestry. Every man should hold his property by right of labour, by right of honest moral conquest. Whatever you have, young man, take it at the spear point. What was given you is nothing; but what God has enabled you to get with your own bow and arrow, that is wealth. You can appreciate it, you can value it; you know what it cost you. But when riches and honour and all kinds of shallow delight have been thrust upon

you as if by right, why, you become wanton and unruly, lustful and suicidal. Whatever we have in the way of moral character we hold, not because our fathers and mothers were good, but as the result of our own good conduct under the grace and blessing of God. You cannot hand down a good character to others. You can set up a great reputation for goodness, and that ought to be a suggestion and a stimulus and a direction and a comfort, but you cannot hand on your character as you hand on your acres or your pounds sterling. Whatever we have we can only have by right of labour, thought, watchfulness, and conducting the whole economy of life in the spirit of stewardship.

Oh, he is poor, so poor that words fail to describe his pauperism, who has nothing but what has been left him; and he never would have had it, if the people could have taken it away with them. But having to unload it somewhere, they unloaded it at his feet. That is not life, that is not character, that is not greatness—whatever you learned yourselves, whatever you mastered. Your father could not give to you his knowledge even of the alphabet. Every man has to conquer the alphabet as if no other man had ever conquered it before. Why not amplify that idea and carry it throughout the whole scheme of character, and see how we are called upon to work for what we have, and not to depend upon ancestral blessings and privileges. If we, however, receive these in the right spirit, we can turn them into advantages. They need not be burdens. They can be so received as to perpetuate noble memories, they can be so received as to be used as accessories to strength already in possession. But to the man who has not learned to conquer life on his own account under the inspiration and blessing of God, all gifts become more or less burdensome, and of the nature of encumbrances and hindrances in the way of progress.

Do not, then, say: "My father was good, my mother was good, therefore I need not take any interest in these matters myself; part of the virtue is laid up for me. I may draw upon it by and by." All that reasoning is vicious, false, spiritually destructive. A double damnation is theirs who have great advantages to begin with, and who do not rise to the nobleness and greatness of their opportunities. What some men have to begin with! How much they have! Such roomy houses, such libraries, such kindness and love on the part of their parents and friends; they are born to all manner of social advantages so-called—where are they to-day? How dare some men look back to their beginnings and compare those beginnings with what they are to-day? Their fathers were great or good, their homes were loveliness itself, the walls were alive with eloquent colour, and all the air was charged with the music of birds and young lives of many kinds. They had great opportunities for learning at school. They were sent to the best academies; no bill of costs was regarded as too high in discharge of their educational responsibilities. Where are they to-day? Did they not begin with too much? Were they not overburdened? I have seen boys who have been the round of the Continent of Europe before they were thirteen. That is inflicting a tremendous disadvantage upon any boy—to give him all that can be given just as he is opening his teens. Rather keep him to the plough, keep him to labour, keep him to service, teach him that life is not a joke, or a dream, or a scented delight. Teach him that life is a service, a discipline, a probation, an education; and then, as the years come and go, give him larger and larger advantages, because

his capacity is increased, and his sense of appreciation, and his sense of gratitude.

Possibly some of you may have begun too well. You are not altogether to be blamed for it. I have men, applicants for bounty now, whose fathers were worth a hundred thousand pounds. There are men in London to-day on the tramcars who came from houses such as I never saw until I was probably more than five and twenty years of age. There are men who have wasted a whole inheritance of ancestral repute for wisdom and greatness. Yet I cannot altogether blame them. The parental Eli cannot wholly escape responsibility. They had too much. Things came too easily. Easy come, easy go, is a motto which experience has tested and endorsed. It would have been better for some men if they had begun lower down with harder fare and more work to do.

And with how little have some other men begun, and yet look at them to-day. How is this? They have been faithful, they have been honest, they have recognised the spirit of stewardship and have answered it. God knows all this and will judge accordingly. We must judge men by comparison and not by absolute position and result. What were the men at the beginning? What was their struggle? How high was the hill they had to climb before they ever got a breath of fresh air? How long were they confined to some dingy position where they never heard a bird uncaged sing in the morning? How difficult it was for them to pick up a little learning. They picked up a little at night school. I have been told by some of them that they learned to write with a skewer in the sand that was spread upon the school table, and yet I have seen them rise to wealth, which is nothing; to intelligence, which is much; and to spiritual influence, which is best of all.

Do not, therefore, on the one hand, presume upon your parentage, and say, "My father was good and therefore I cannot be bad"; and do not, on the other hand, be discouraged, and say, "I came from so low a beginning that it is impossible for me to do anything." There is nothing impossible to courage, to faith, to reverence, to prayer. I would, therefore, cheer those to whom life has been a hard lot so far. There is nothing impossible to you if you be in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then you are living a harmonic life—living musically, living sympathetically. Then you march with the stars, you are in the course of the Divine development of history. At the judgment how many will be first whom we thought last, and how many will be last whom we thought first! The miracles of society we have not yet fully discovered. There is, it may be, many a boy that is here who is a great miracle in the sight of God. It does not appear so to us, because we do not know all the origins, all the beginnings, and all the difficulty. But at the last God will identify him and crown him.

Work in the spirit of hopefulness, therefore. The way up has been very difficult to some of you, because you have no sooner got an inch above ground than some cruel foot was set upon you and crushed you back again. Still hope in God. There is no day so long that it will not close, there is no darkness so dense that God cannot pierce it with shafts of light; and in the long run you may be all the better for your weakness, and sorrow, and difficulty, and struggle. God knows it all. Do not trouble to explain yourselves or to defend yourselves. Keep to your work, go on faithfully,

sturdily, solemnly, and lovingly and courageously, and at the end you shall have light enough.

God is judge. What are you pampered ones going to do? You had better give it all up and start afresh. What are you discontented ones going to do? It is long since you saw a new book. You have read the first pages of many books at the booksellers' windows, and sometimes have said, "Oh if that page would only turn over! What is there on the other side of it?" We have read a first page to-night. Perhaps to-morrow the bookseller will make a mistake in setting it up, and we shall read overleaf. One of the greatest Latin scholars in the century learned what little Latin he did under a public lamp. He could not afford a candle at home, and so he went to read by a parochial lamp. If you want to be good, and true, and great, you can be it all in some degree. Do not sit there repining, and whining, and moaning; but rise, do the little that lies within reach, and no man can tell what a harvest may come out of one handful of corn. Sow the corn, and the fruit of it may shake like Lebanon.

## COMPROMISE WITH EVIL.

*Outline of a Sermon.*

BY THE REV. ISAAC O. STALBERG.

"And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands to deliver him to his father again."—GEN. xxxvii. 22.

WE are often told to study men. Those with whom we stand shoulder to shoulder; but those also who ever live in the pages of history—sacred and secular. Reuben thus comes within the range of our investigation—a man of varied passions—surging life and throbbing heart. Into that heart and life we can look through the window of our text.

I. *Our first impulse is to admire Reuben.* Reuben's part is dark. The ill-odour of his act with Bilhah hovers about him, &c. Because a man is wrong on one point, must we brand him a demon—counting him beyond redemption? Generally some good can be seen—there are pearly teeth in the jaw of the dead dog. (1) Because of his dutiful affection—thinking of the old father. Something worthy of admiration "to deliver him to his father again." Reuben heard of the plot against "the dreamer," but neither consented nor approved—rather revolted. (2) Because of his brotherly regard—thinking of the youth—"lay no hand upon him." Pitying Joseph—resolves to stand between him and his brethren. (3) Because of his beautiful integrity—thinking of the act—"shed no blood." We reach a lofty position, when we hate sin because it is sin, &c.

II. *Our next impulse is to sympathise with Reuben.* Much in Reuben we do not like, shall we condemn? Human to denounce, Divine to sympathise. (1) Because of the difficulty of his position. Task—curb his brethren's hatred. Difficult work. Such men have often been bound with fetters and chains; but the chains have been "plucked asunder"—"the fetters broken in pieces." (2) Because we find him in a minority. Nine to one when nine friends are behind us applauding—all is easy. When we stand alone looking upon nine antagonistic, fiendish faces—How then? (3)

Because in his heart there is good intention. He meant well—"That he might rid him out of their hands." Don't idolise, but recognise good intention.

*Our third impulse is to accept the warning he presents.* Reuben is a beacon. He lacked backbone, force, outspokenness. He was a trimmer—running with the hare and holding with the hounds. (1) Compromise with evil is dangerous and brings its own reward. Failing to rescue Joseph, Reuben, with his brethren, hides behind a lie. A lie may flap on the lips—may flash from the eye—or may be acted till a man becomes a goliath falsehood (v. 32.) (2) Bold reproof of sin, even if fruitless, is not only desirable, but right. Connivance cannot be countenanced but at our peril. Reuben winked at sin instead of reproofing it—"Put him into this pit." Reprove plainly, but wisely. (3) God is not deceived, neither is self, though our fellows may be blinded. The hypocrite screened himself, then rose up to comfort his father (v. 35). Conscience was not hoodwinked. Before God he was unmasked.

Stand decidedly, uncompromisingly, gladly for right and truth, for God and Christ.

### A CHILDLIKE MAN.

"Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."—1 COR. xiv. 20.

"A CHILDLIKE man," about the highest commendation. Yet something in childhood to be avoided. "In malice," all evil dispositions, be babes; but "in understanding" men. "Understanding" = not possession of knowledge, nor the intellectual faculty, but what is embraced under the name *character*. It denotes the best qualities of mind and heart, solidity of judgment, depth of emotion, firm grasp of principle, disciplined strength and tenacity of righteous purpose.

I. We are taught to cherish a wise thoughtfulness as against an unthinking inexperience. A child's inexperience is a great drawback, unfitting it for the hard facts of life. It has to outgrow that. Many who are mature enough in years have all a child's immaturity of thought and experience, and thus are dreaming of the impossible, like a child crying for the moon. Socrates (Plato's "Phædo") bids us have "lullabies wherewith to sing to rest the child in the soul." The grown-up man, who may think that he has long since put away childish things, has a child in his soul, and the child too often rules the man, and dictates his desires, hopes, and plans. Hence, what longings for what cannot be; what expectations which no clear, sound reasonableness would ever entertain. What is it to put pleasure in the place of duty, to think of life as before all things a sphere for enjoyment? Is not that to act like a child, to whom to live means only to eat and drink, to play and sleep? What is it to think that you can do your own sweet will, and yet stand approved of God—to think that you can choose any path you like, and yet find yourself at the end at the right destination? Is there in that a child's wayward thoughtlessness, or a man's wise, pondering reflectiveness?

II. Taught to cultivate firmness and stability as against fickleness.

Children usually fickle, inconstant, and wanting in stability. Arises in part from what is a beautiful feature of child nature—impressibility, openness to outward influence. A danger here—need for safeguarding. Else mind and heart at the mercy of any, even the worst, influences. Must have fixedness of purpose in holding to the good, and refusing to let it go until we are sure of something better. Paul's words to the Ephesians (iv. 13, 14) helpful here—"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about," &c. Decision, settled conviction necessary. The mind tossed and driven like a boat beaten of the wind, the prey of every influence, the sport of every new attraction, has not got beyond the weakness of childhood. Must therefore overcome fickle impulsiveness, which makes a man be "everything by turns, and nothing long." There must, indeed, be growth in knowledge and experience, and consequent change of opinion and conduct, for a healthy mind must grow. Yet one's mental and moral nature not all in a fluid condition, in watery instability; there must be in it some crystallised convictions. Good for many had they more of a child's impressibility. Power of receiving impressions from the outer world of nature and thought and life is among the most precious gifts a man can have—the responsiveness of heart that rises to greet the beauty and grandeur of God's works, and that feels the subduing influence of anything sublime or pathetic. But with a child's tender susceptibility must be combined a man's firm adherence to truth and principle. Mere openness to impression will only cause you to describe circles as outward influences blow upon you; but fixed principle will carry you, not "about," but forward, ever nearer the appointed goal.

III. Taught to have deep, comprehensive views of Christian life, as against shallowness and narrowness. A child grasps only the elementary notions of things. Christians not to remain at this stage, but to have a growing ability to appreciate the "deep things of God." The elements, "first principles," of Christian truth, all-important and ever necessary. But must not be content with learning the alphabet. Cannot live always on food that suits childhood. Should be able to digest the "strong meat" that suits those of full age (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2). So, then, as to *doctrine*, we should have a spiritual faculty of growing power to estimate the magnitude and grandeur of Gospel truth. As to *duty*, two things—aim and motive. (a) Aim. Must put away shallow and contracted views. You have to follow and copy Christ. Is it a manly or a childish understanding to imagine that is done sufficiently well by renouncing a few evil practices, and performing a few good deeds with more or less regularity? (b) Motive. Why are you not a worldling? Is it simply because an ungodly life would put you in eternal danger? Not a high motive; only such as a child might have. A prize is offered for good conduct; the child thinks of the prize, the good conduct is secondary. You follow Christ. Is it because He promises salvation and heaven's glory? or is it because you find a rare joy, a very heaven, in doing so?

H. C.

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If thou hast found, O young man, that the foe is strong, that old Adam is too strong for young zeal, remember the Spirit of God is the very nerve of human nature. No private valour is hidden from the eye of the great Commander.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for June 22 : ST. LUKE xii. 22—34. Golden text : LUKE xii. 30.*

### DAISIES AND BUTTERCUPS.

ALL around us now—the roadsides and fields and hills are beautiful with daisies and buttercups. In Palestine the variety of flowers that grow wild is very great. The climate is much varied in that little country, and someone has said that it is a little world of itself, since we find there trees and flowers which commonly grow only in widely separated parts of the world. Christ, when He looked over the fields covered with beautiful wild flowers—perhaps with scarlet anemones or Hulêh lilies—said, “Consider the lilies of the field.” Were He among us He would probably have said, “Consider the daisies and buttercups of the field.” Jesus wished the wild flowers to teach a lesson to His hearers.

I. The great lesson Christ wished to teach was, Trust in God. He said, “Take no anxious thought for the morrow.” Anxiety must be a sin very deep in the heart. A large portion of the Sermon on the Mount is directed against anxiety. This anxious care has been likened to a sort of south-east wind of the soul, that does not bring rain, but chills everything. The meaning of Jesus’ word translated “thought” is a restless, carking care. The word had this meaning long ago, and we read in a history book that “Queen Catherine died of thought.” It is against such thought that Jesus warns His disciples. Why should you fear and be anxious? God, He says, cares for the flowers—He gives them beauty—He sends on them rain and sunshine, and He will take care of His dear children.

II. The daisies and buttercups teach us a lesson of humility. One sin into which a great many are very apt to fall is pride of dress. Some people worry and fret to get money for make-believe flowers, for a hat or a bonnet, so as to outshine their neighbours. Think of the wild flowers. They out-do Solomon in all his glory, but they do not worry and fret over dress. God provides their clothing. How lovely, and yet how simple it is!

III. The daisies and buttercups tell us that we soon must die. The flowers soon fade. Just as surely we are fading. We are not like the oaks and pines that last for hundreds of years. We are just like these daisies, staying only a little while on the earth. The glory of man is as the flower of the field. But you know there is such a thing as transplanting a flower. When the right time comes God does this with His flowers, He transplants them to the better land. Then God’s flowers will shine with a beauty they have never had in this poor cold world. May we be so filled with Christ’s beauty here below, that if death comes and takes us away, it may be said of us, “It is another flower transplanted to God’s other garden.”

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\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

# *The British Weekly Pulpit*

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JUNE 20, 1890

ONE PENNY.

## A SERVICE AT CAMBERWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

*Conducted by*

THE REV. PRINCIPAL DYKES, D.D.,

*On Sunday, June 8, 1890 (Hospital Sunday), and completely reported.*

### OPENING PRAYER.

O LORD God Almighty, Who dwellest in the heavens, Whom we are not worthy to approach, most humbly we come to the seat of Thy majesty, beseeching Thee to meet with Thine unworthy servants, and to accept our worship. Though Thou be high, yet hast Thou respect unto the lowly. Have respect unto us also, O most merciful Saviour. This is the day which Thou hast made. Assist us to be glad and rejoice in it, and shed down upon us Thy Holy Spirit, that with praise we may laud Thy name, may receive with meekness Thy Word of truth, offer unto Thee sincere petitions, and rest with confidence upon all Thy promises, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### HYMN 216.

“God reveals His presence :  
Come, let us adore Him,  
And with awe appear before Him.  
God is in His temple,” &c.

### PRAYER.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of glory, who art filling heaven and earth with Thy majesty, and before whom the blessed angels bow, give unto us, the lowly children of earth, deep reverence and godly fear when we come thus before Thine immediate presence. Father, we are not worthy to lift up our eyes to Thy pure heaven, for we are the stained and evil children of this sinful world, born of an unclean race, with unclean and evil hearts, not having purged ourselves from our sins as we ought to have done.

Father, we come before Thee this morning with the voice of contrition and confession, acknowledging that we have broken Thy holy law and grieved Thy blessed Spirit, that we have neither walked according to the light of our own righteousness nor according to the light of Thy revealed word. Thy fatherly Majesty we have not revered ; the love of the Son

Who died for us we have not welcomed and praised as we should ; the grace of the indwelling Spirit we have not reverently followed. O our Father, we confess that we have sinned against Thee in every relation of life—in the home, in the market-place, in the church, in the state. We have done evil in Thy sight, seeking our own way, and not Thine ; our pleasure, and not Thy glory. Our Father, who hast called us to be children, how little reverence have we paid to Thee, how little obedience ! We confess our sins this day. The memory of them is grievous to us. Help us, we beseech Thee, with a genuine contrition of heart to acknowledge them, and spread them out before Thee, in the name of the great High Priest and sin-bearing sacrifice for men.

With him Thou art ready to dwell who is of a humble and contrite heart. Give unto us now present the contrite spirit, we entreat Thee, and dwell with us, come to us, purge the inward part of each of us to become a temple clean for Thy dwelling place, and do Thou shed abroad within us, we entreat Thee, through the sacrifice and blood of Jesus, the peace of reconciliation. Give us acceptance and pardon, say unto each of us that our sins are forgiven us, and may we with a new sense of reconciliation as redeemed of the Lord address ourselves to the services of this morning. Let our songs come through purged lips, our prayers from forgiven hearts. Let us hear Thy word as those who are in fellowship with Thee, who know the Father's voice. Let us follow the Good Shepherd as those who are His sheep indeed. Speak, Lord, this day, and Thy servants will hear.

And now unto God the Father, Who loved us with an infinite love, and spared not His Son ; and unto the blessed Son, the adorable sacrifice for sin ; and to the Holy Spirit Who administers the grace that we need, and sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts—to this one holy, holy, holy God be glory, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

#### FIRST LESSON.

Genesis i. 24, to ii. 3.

#### CHANT.

Psalm ciii., verses 1 to 13 (Scotch version.)

#### SECOND LESSON.

St. Matthew viii. 1—17.

#### CHILDREN'S HYMN (459).

" Oh, what can little hands do  
To please the King of Heaven," &c.

#### PRAYER.

Infinite and mighty God, in Whom and through Whom and for Whom we and all things exist, out of whose fulness this whole universe hath proceeded, we magnify Thee and praise Thy holy name this morning with cheerful voice, because Thou art love, and ever out from Thy love Thou art sending blessings and life and gladness upon all creation. We praise Thee for our being, that Thou hast made us men, and for all the lovingkindness we have tasted since we came upon this earth. We praise Thee for Thy goodness to our fathers before us, and to the land of our dwelling. We

magnify Thee and bless Thee that Thou hast given unto us homes and parents and friendships, and the means of growth in knowledge and virtue, surrounding our life with so many sweet things, and making it gladsome and beautiful in Thyself. We bless Thee, our Father, for the happy summer days that we have seen, and that Thou hast made the revolutions of the years thus to minister to the welfare of us and of all mankind, feeding us with fruitful seasons and their fruits. O our Father, we praise Thee again this morning for this summer day, and for the gladsome light, and for the rest Thou hast sent upon the toiling millions of this great city.

We praise Thee for Thy thoughtful kindness to all mankind, and though we have deserved nothing at Thy hand, but have been ungrateful, disobedient, provoking Thee by our waywardness and selfishness, and lovelessness, how patient hast Thou been with us, how unwearied in Thy bounty, how unstinted in Thy generosity. Out from Thy full hand have blessings upon blessings flowed to us and to all men. Goodness and mercy have followed us. We have had a cup that ran over. We have been crowned with the lovingkindness of the Lord. Praise the Lord, O our souls, and magnify His mercy.

We beseech Thee, O God, that Thou wouldst enable us to receive at Thy hand better gifts than these, even the gift of a pardoned spirit, the gift of a grateful and contented heart. Give us to know the Giver, and to rejoice in Him more than in the gifts. Give us to be one with Thyself through Jesus, the Way unto the Father. Give us to come near with our burdens, our confessions, our weariness, our regrets, our self-condemnation. Help us to pour out all that is within our souls into Thy bosom. Help us to lay the head that is aching and weary with the world's warfare and life's bitterness and disappointment down upon the infinite bosom of the unceasing love, the love that wearies not, the love that reproaches not, the love that is ever faithful, ever true.

We pray, O great Father of our spirits, Who hast revealed Thyself to us in Christ as so pitiful, so tender, so generous, so forgiving, that we may all of us take fresh hope and courage this day from Thy house, from Thy word, from Thy footstool. Away with us may we carry, each of us, a new sense of courage, a new inspiration to duty, a new resolution to bear all we have to bear in life, and do all we can in life.

And we pray, Father, that it may please Thee this morning to remember especially any among us who are especially burdened, who have left cares at home, who have brought cares with them, anxieties about business, about families, about themselves. O God, do Thou be pleased to draw nearer where Thou seest heavy hearts before Thee. Lift on them the light of Thy countenance. Where Thou knowest that there are thoughtless ones, going on ignorant of the shadow that lies a little way before them on the path, prepare them. Where Thou seest absorbed and anxious ones, burdening themselves by taking too firm a grip of this world's goods, Lord, disengage these clinging fingers ere it be too late, and lift the heavy eyes that seek the ground to see the crown of immortal life.

We thank Thee that the best of Thy gifts are the freest and the cheapest, that Thou hast not only so much to give but givest to all men liberally of the best, upbraiding none. Give us contentment of heart, give us peace of conscience, give us purity of motive, give us nobleness of aim, give us the treasures that shall endure, that are not of the world's giving nor of the

world's taking ; Thy peace, O God, give us through Jesus Christ this day. And while we pray for ourselves, Father, we humbly beseech Thee to remember the multitudes around us who are wandering in their folly away from Thee. Have pity on those whose hearts are bewildered by the attractions of the world, by its fascination, by the scene that passes, and forget Thee in the midst of the many things Thou hast made around them. Forgive them, O Father, and draw them with a secret voice within their hearts to Thyself this day, that they may come unto Thee and be satisfied. We pray Thee, O God, to have mercy on those who have come into sorrow, need, distress, or any trouble in this life, who, in their passage through these years along the dim and changeful pathway of this life, have fallen into dark and evil places. We pray Thee, O God, that Thou wouldst stretch out Thy hand and pluck from the heart the rooted sorrow ; that Thou wouldst be pleased to lay Thine ear close to the lips that sigh and moan for the grief they cannot tell ; that Thou wilt come to-day to the sick man's couch, that Thou wilt still the fever and assuage the thirst.

O Thou Who art the pitiful and the condescending friend of the needy and the suffering, put it into our hearts and the hearts of all Thy friends this day on earth to be good neighbours to all sufferers. Have compassion on the sick, we beseech Thee, on the sick in hospitals and the sick in the home, and help those that tenderly minister to their necessities, giving them patience and gentleness and the very spirit of Jesus Christ, to minister withal. And we pray that Thou wilt accept the offerings of Thy people this day throughout London, and bless these great institutions of Christian philanthropy for which we give, that they may be more and more kept from abuse, that they may be more and more put to their blessed and rightful use, that they may be more and more a witness to the charity that Thou hast kindled in a myriad hearts, for Jesus' sake.

Lord, we beseech Thee to remember men. Thou hast given Thy Son to be a man. Oh, have compassion on all who wear His likeness the wide world over. Spread Thy kingdom wherever there are men to be brought within it. Bless all who seek the good of their fellow-men, especially all who seek to bring them the highest and the best good, which is the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

And we pray Thee to bless this flock. Lord, strengthen Thy servant their pastor, the elders associated with him in the oversight, those who manage its affairs, the Sunday-school teachers, those who labour in mission work, all connected with the congregation, the fathers and mothers, and little children. Be gracious to all of them. Be in their homes. O God, do Thou bless parental instruction, and sanctify the discipline of household experience.

Hear us for all our brethren of the church, O God, for our fellow Christians of every name, for Thy kingdom throughout the wide world. Hasten the coming of Jesus Christ, fill the earth with the knowledge of His Cross, and passion of His glory, and ascension, and may the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of God, and the earth be brought nearer, nearer, nearer to Thee, Thou fount of life, Thou light of men.

Hear us, O God, in these our prayers. What we fail to ask fail not Thou to give. Remember not our sins against us ; remember the multitude of Thy mercies, O our Father. For we sum up all these, and all our desires in the great words Thy Son hath taught us :

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN 520.

“Thine arm, O Lord, in days of old,  
Was strong to heal and save,” &c.

PRAYER.

O God, Who hast given Thy Word for the illumining of our hearts, send now Thy quickening and enlightening Spirit, that we may understand the truth, and that it may work within our hearts obedience to Thy will, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON.

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR OF THE BODY.

“He is the Saviour of the body.”—EPHESIANS V. 23.

A fair argument in favour of the truth of revelation may be founded on the completeness with which it exhibits every side of truth—overstating nothing, overlooking nothing. Error, as you know, is nearly always the exaggeration of a truth, or the sacrifice, at least, of one aspect of the truth to another. Even the wisest thinkers can rarely hold the balance even between extremes, and human systems in their recoil against excess in one direction run often in the opposite. It is a merit of Holy Scripture, a merit which I think attests the Divine influence over its growth and formation, that while it puts each side of a truth, it does justice to all its sides all round, and with marvellous sobriety builds up a full orb'd whole of doctrine in symmetrical completeness. If I were required to illustrate this balance in the teaching of the Gospel, I should fetch not the least of my examples from the manner in which it deals with the body, with the material, physical side of man. For this is a crucial point in every system of religion, in every system of religious philosophy, or even of morals. Even to-day I am not sure that we may not test the various schools of opinion which are claiming to instruct us on the highest of all questions, by this: What place do they assign to the bodily part of man? It is so easy, on the one side, to make too much of the physical life, to regard ourselves as essentially a growth of nature, immersed in the animal life of the globe, dominated wholly by its conditions, and fitted, therefore, to share, we may presume, in its destinies. It is, on the other hand, so natural for a religion which, being a religion, must protest against this materialistic teaching, that men are like the beasts that perish—it is so like religion in making that protest to go to the other

extreme, and to overlook our close connection with the physical life of the globe; so to be ashamed of it, so to place man's highest hope in a stern subjection to his fleshly desires. And between these two extremes it seems to me as if the pendulum of human thought, and of practice too, had never ceased to oscillate since first men began to speculate upon their own position upon this earth. And he who knows best the vagaries and excesses that have prevailed on this subject, will be best able to admire the perfect poise of Scriptural teaching. He will know how difficult it is to put due honour upon the human body without overlooking the supreme claims of the human spirit; how difficult it is to give due attention to the wants of the flesh without pampering the flesh, and, on the other hand, to save it from degrading pollution without sacrificing its legitimate rights; how to make it the cared-for servant of the spirit, but neither its master nor its slave.

This is not the place I think in which to enter upon a detailed description of these propositions which I have thrown out for your consideration. And yet I may remind you on what soil it was and amid what surroundings that this Scripture doctrine on the subject grew up, this marvellously well poised and reasonable doctrine. It grew up on Asiatic soil, and in Asia men may be said to have incessantly swung betwixt the most extreme positions on this subject, between the bestial idolatry of their own physical nature and a frantic effort to rid themselves of their physical part altogether. Recollect, I pray you, how the nature-worship of Asia in the midst of which the Hebrews lived—the worship of the fecund earth and the sun that quickens it, spring out of a too keen sense of man's participation in the animal, of that animal life of nature that we see for ever propagating and renewing itself endlessly. Think, I pray you, of what obscene objects of adoration and what shameless forms of worship this exaggeration of the physical life thus produced, till outraged decency itself revolted against worship, and the very land was ready to vomit out its inhabitants. Now, would it have been at all surprising, when the children of Israel were planted among a people that were seething with the conception of man and his relation to nature—would it have been surprising if, in their grim fight against such abominations, bound at all risks to inculcate a purer morality and a more spiritual faith, the Hebrew prophets had done like all other great teachers and reformers would, swung right off to the opposite extreme, preaching the evil of man, the inherent evil of the flesh, and summoned men to an ascetic contempt for all kind of animal enjoyment, if they would be pure and holy men, winning the favour of the gods? So have done the powerful religious philosophies of India. They have striven to save men, they have been ascetic, and their aim has been, not to provide a saviour for the body, but to save man from his body, and restore him to the pure realm of spirit. Thus it was with the dualism of Zoroaster, the

transmigration of Brahminism, the Nirvana of Buddha, the old sects of the Essenes, the Gnostics, the Manichæans, and other forms of religious thought that have sprung out of the home of religions, the far East.

In marked contrast to all these stands the teaching of Moses first and of all his successors, recommending to the people of God a temperate enjoyment of all His gifts, telling them that all God has made is good, basing—actually basing religion on the family institution—and promising temporal well-being as the reward for purity and sobriety. Remember how fierce was Israel's fight for existence in a world entirely given up to the vilest indulgence of the senses, and wonder that Israel was never tempted, not once, to deny the Divine origin, the dignity, the rights of man as a physical creature. No Jew ever planted his conception of holiness in mortification of the body, not so long as Judaism remained under Divine influences. In that opening page of Genesis which we read we have the twofold origin of man distinctly taught. But the part of him taken from the earth, on which he is bound to thus maintain an animal system, is not a whit less the good creation of God than is the inbreathed soul which allies him with the Divine. And the last page of Revelation, if you turn to it, will show you man in his ideal future, finally restored to a blissful state that transcends his primitive paradise. But the grave and the sea have first given up their corpses, and they who walk the streets of the heavenly city are re-embodied men, although from their eyes every tear has been wiped away. And so you see that from the first page of this book to the last there is not a word to place salvation of man with any neglecting or despairing of his body, any more than there is to encourage base indulgence of it. But He Who is its author and its subject is One, He is as much the Saviour of the body as He is the Saviour of the soul.

Now when you come to look more closely on this chaste and balanced teaching of Scripture on the material side of man, you very soon discover that it centres, all of it, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the facts of His life. The position taken up with this subject in the Old Testament was an intended preparation of man for the fact of the Incarnation. To the Oriental, who has trained man to regard his body as a prison-house for his soul, his birth into this world as a misfortune, and escape from matter his only salvation—I say, to such an Oriental it is one of the greatest stumbling-blocks to be found in Christianity, one of the great hindrances to its acceptance with thoughtful and philosophic minds, that it opens with this message, "The eternal Word became flesh." And, had the Hebrews been left to the ideas elsewhere prevalent in Asia, no field would have been prepared on which an incarnation of God had been possible or credible. But the teaching of Genesis, to which ever after the book of revelation remained faithful, had indoctrinated that one

people at all events in these truths, which were to be the seed-bed from which our holy religion of the Incarnation springs—that the physical world is God's creature ; that it is all good ; that man is its crown and flower on his physical side, the image of God ; that it is essential to our completeness that we should be vitally enlinked on one side, the material nature with the physical, provides that basis on which man is to assert his proper spiritual dignity, and rule in the name of God ; that the service, the worship, the blessedness which are man's perfection are only possible while he remains the child and viceroy of God on this material globe, linking by his wondrous compound being the lower creation to God, the highest of all ; that therefore to be lodged here, a spark of the Divine in clay, is not a discredit to it, since He who inhabits eternity, Whose name is holy, will not disdain to dwell with men upon the earth, inhabiting the humble and the contrite, who tremble at His word.

Now all this beautiful and gracious teaching was singularly in accord with what science has come nowadays to tell us about man's close relationship to nature and the lower animals. The legitimate cope-stone was this, that the very Son of God Himself was born on earth to be the Son of man. The whole series of awful events which began with the annunciation to the blessed Virgin was a practical vindication of the truth that matter is good, not evil ; that man's material constitution is not a contemptible thing, a thing to be ashamed of and get rid of, but is a worthy vehicle for the very noblest, the very purest type of spiritual life. That was a holy thing that was born of the Virgin's womb. It was human nature redeemed indeed from its stains, restored to its innocence, and become thereby fit shrine for Deity ; although on its physical side it was feeble with the feebleness of a wailing babe. Can any despise infancy after that, or think meanly of human nature ? The eternal Father Whom we picture as surrounded by pure spirits, the eternal Father looked down, well pleased, not only on the infant in the cradle, on the handicraftsman of Nazareth, on the itinerant preacher of Galilee, on the agonised petitioner of Gethsemane, on the martyr at Golgotha, to show that poverty is not despicable ; no, nor toil ; no, nor tears, nor strong cries in need, nor body that sweats, though it be bloody sweat, nor pangs of dying anguish. O rare endorsement of man's humiliation ! O sweet sufficiency of the Son of God ! which forbids us to think meanly of any sufferer, or to grow ashamed of human nature, even in its utmost extremity and helplessness and despair. Brethren, there are mean essentials to human life. They come out at birth-beds, and at sick-beds, and death-beds. Those who have had much experience in severe disease know very well that the sick-bed speaks as impressively of man's humiliation as of his capacity to endure. But I say that even in humiliation of the body, when it is at its lowest, there is

no disgrace, not anything unworthy of Him Who made us men. No. Think reverently and tenderly even of the dead by the memory of that pale and livid corpse from which women's hands washed the bloodstains away. Let no man be irreverent to the dead, not even a dead foe or a malefactor. Let him be mutilated or insulted no more. Pay pious rites to the worst, whose image Jesus bore that sad eve when in His tomb they laid Him, draped in white linen. For remember how still that senseless clay—mere clod of earth you call it—remained very part and parcel of the eternal Son of God, not by Him forsaken amidst death's slumbers in the darksome tomb, but to be by Him resumed, by Him transformed. It is not in His incarnation only, or in His birth and death, that I learn from Jesus the inherent honourableness of the body, the dignity of it as the seat of a divine life. I learn it in His resumption of that slain body and redemption of it when He ascended far above all heaven. I learn it in the personal union of even this fickle and material humanity of ours with the Lord of all creation. I learn it in the strange and unknown metamorphosis which passed over His flesh to adapt it to celestial conditions. I learn it in the descent of the Holy Ghost to rest upon the heads of redeemed men, and dwell within them, making their bodies temples. I learn it in the promise of the final resurrection of the dead. An awful series, as I said, of Christian facts, instinct from first to last with this startling thought—"He is the Saviour of the body."

Yes. He saves it. He does not destroy it. He saves it by making it the organ of the highest life—His own life the organ through which God lived on earth once, in heaven now—saves it by restoring to it its divineness, its honour, transforming it to a spiritual body.

So much, then, of Christ's position and the teaching of His holy religion upon the physical side of humanity. Now this marked respect shown for the physical side of our constitution, that side in which we are so strangely and so closely linked with the lower animal, in the redemptive work of God, that marked respect of the body has worked most widely and most fruitfully in Christianity. It would take me a great deal too far this morning from my immediate scope, were I to show you how by clothing the human body in sanctity it has worked more effectually than the old ascetic systems in favour of sobriety and sexual purity. In fact, the Gospel may have been said to constitute a new virtue, the virtue, if I might dare to coin the phrase, of bodily holiness, in that just and reverent use of one's own and other people's bodies as the redeemed members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost, which is quite familiar to the Christian religion, and is a direct outcome of the Christian teaching I have been insisting on. By the very honour which it has put upon the flesh, making us members of His flesh and bones, the Son of God has claimed these organs and

these instincts of our animal frames for Himself and for His holy service, redeeming them from being prostituted into the instruments of unhallowed pleasure or of hurtful excess. Glorify God in your body. "Whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God."

But leaving for the present with this suggestion only this important department in the practical saving of the body, both the hour and the occasion warn me to point out to you rather the bearing of Christianity upon our treatment of physical suffering. Now the two false extremes between which I have said our religion holds the balance, I mean the extreme of bodily indulgence on the one side, and the extreme asceticism or the neglecting of the body on the other, are neither of them friendly to the victims of disease and pain. Take the error of over-estimating the flesh as an organ of enjoyment, a means by which we may please ourselves, and something therefore to be pampered and indulged. That leads of course to the sin of sensual excess, the sin beneath which the ancient pagan civilisation rotted away, beneath which Moslem civilisation is rotting to-day before all men's eyes, the sin of our own wealthy and luxurious age as of all wealthy and luxurious ages, firstborn child of materialistic philosophy, which re-appears as a practical heathenism in the so-called Christendom of our time. Now all such animalism among persons of prosperous or easy life tends swiftly and certainly to a heartless indifference to the sufferings of other people. This selfish liberty, the pampering of the body, shows itself in a peculiarly ignoble shape, and its work is to blunt the sensibility to actual pain, to dry up the springs of human charity, and render the self-indulgent man indifferent to his poor brother, and incapable of denying himself for his brother's sake. There is no fact in morals better attested than this, that sensuality and cruelty are twins. Such pampering of the body is the vice of no particular class. I am not aiming at those that are rich, for the rich do often live in habits of personal simplicity and even abstemiousness, notwithstanding the display that society expects of them, in habits of personal simplicity and abstemiousness which put to shame the too frequent wastefulness and the occasional excess of many among the poor. But among every section of the public it is not to the self-indulgent that our charities are in the habit of looking for support. It is to the temperate, to those who, living in careful avoidance of waste and dissipation, have kept their bodies clean, their affections pure, their tastes simple, their sympathies healthy, and, having learned how to put constraint upon themselves with a manly self-control, have the more to spend in prudently relieving the wants of others.

But, on the opposite side, it is not found that the ascetic neglect of the body, the habit of despising its wants, does in the long run foster a generous attitude towards other people. Perhaps it is scarcely worth while taking up time with this extreme, because

it has all but died out in modern days. We scarcely know what the thing means. But the usual experience has been that he who thinks it well to court pain as a discipline, or to mortify his flesh as the seat of sinful inclination, is apt in the nature of things to grow as pitiless to other people as he has learned to be severe upon himself.

From both these foes to a human and tender charity—from the cruel self-indulgence of animalism on the one side, and a hard, stern effort after the subjugation of the flesh on the other, Christ has saved us. By teaching us the true place and honour of the human body as an organ of the spirit, essential to the complete development of our being, He has recognised it as a part of His mission and of ours, therefore, to save the body—to save it from its evils, to save it from its sufferings.

And for this every sufferer owes Jesus Christ thanks. Now, it is not a thing to be taken easily for granted that it should be so. For it might have been supposed that a religion so spiritual as the Gospel—a religion which sets out by proclaiming the soul to be of quite infinite and unspeakable value, and which calls for every man in tones so rigorous to deny himself, to crucify the flesh, to renounce everything for the kingdom of heaven's sake, to count this world nothing that he may win heaven—that such a religion would have set small store by the mere passing afflictions incidental to our mortal pilgrimage, and would not have turned aside or gone out of its way to care for the ills and aches to which humanity is heir. And certainly there have been many who take up only a portion of its teaching, turn with impatience from the petty anxieties of time, bidding us to care nothing for these things, and prepare ourselves for those overwhelming ills of God's eternal damnation, and the death which dieth not and which threatens sinners in eternity. But that is an exaggeration. I have shown you how the Christian Gospel has been delivered from such one-sidedness. Through the incarnation of God, and through His ascension in a true body, and His sitting in glory in a true body, our physical nature has been associated with Deity and crowned with honour; and through the residence within of the Holy Ghost, the very body is turned into a temple and grows sacred. The bodies of the saints are included in the salvation of Christ. The bodies of the saints are to be raised in the likeness of His celestial glory. Therefore we cannot be indifferent to physical pain or malady, or decrepitude, or mutilation, as though these were evils not to be accounted of, beneath the consideration of immortals who were preparing themselves for judgment. Rather, Jesus by His example on earth has taught us how to look at them. He went about as a physician, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease, that we might understand, brethren—oh, do understand it this day—how much God Almighty Who made us man cares for the body. What pity possesses Him for

the feeble, wasted, aching, fevered flesh, and how He toils on for ever in His blessed office of a healer. The doctors tell you they can do nothing but make fair room and scope for that which they call the *vis medicatrix naturæ*. What is that *vis medicatrix* but God, the one true Healer on whose footsteps we should wait?

In these footprints of God let us deem it our honour to walk to-day, brethren, in His own noble humanity. Jesus is bidding you and me associate ourselves with Him to-day. He gives us an opportunity and a call to be for once His assistants, through our liberality, His assistants in the Christ-like work that goes on week in week out, in every London hospital or dispensary, the work of mitigating suffering and disorder in those feeble frames in which God has fashioned us so tenderly, which Christ in lowliness condescended to wear, which He has redeemed from the power of evil, which He is going to transfigure into spiritual bodies, incorruptible, deathless, and full of glory.

Brethren, have I made out a case? Are you satisfied that the numerous and noble medical charities of the metropolis, for which we are making our yearly offering, do deserve, not only our support as men, but our special support as Christian men; that they are the practical utterance, in a language which the dullest can understand, of that compassionate care for man as man which brought down the Son of God a Saviour upon earth; that they are a continual preaching, in a language which goes out into all the world, of the truths of our most holy religion; that they are repeating and carrying forward in the very outward form and fashion of it, as well as in its spirit, the services Jesus Christ did to humanity when He went about Palestine; that they are each one of them a living commentary to us of Christ's membership in our common bodily nature, in the fact that we have a Divine head over our race; that He has redeemed our flesh from every evil thing; that He has risen again in blessedness, a pledge of our resurrection to come; that He is in His glorified humanity the hope of every man, a commentary in brief on these rare words which might properly enough be inscribed in characters of light over every ward in all our hospitals—"He is the Saviour of the body"?

#### PRAYER.

Our merciful Father, Who hast done so much for us in soul and body, Who art so careful and so pitiful of these frail tabernacles of the dust, we humbly beseech Thee now to give us human sympathy and childlike charity, that we may give of our substance as Thy stewards for the relief of Thy suffering ones, giving freely as Thou hast prospered us. And let the offering find acceptance with Thee for His dear sake Who also is man and in His flesh suffered for us the just for the unjust. Amen.

#### OFFERTORY.

## HYMN 534.

“ Lord, let mercy now attend us,  
As we leave Thy holy place,” &c.

## BENEDICTION.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all for ever. Amen.]

## HOUSE BUILDING.

“ Every one therefore which heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall thereof.”—MATT. vii. 24—27.

Our Lord concludes his sermon on the Mount with a series of contrasted pictures : two gates, two ways, two trees, and two houses. In the application of His sermon He does two startling things :—(1) He makes a fit claim for His message. (2) He makes a great division among His hearers.

I. Two builders. Both are conscious of one need. Both are working to one end. Both are successful in their endeavours.

II. Two foundations. One is rock, suggesting strength, solidity, permanence. Christ says that His teaching is rock. The other is sand. Unsubstantial, yielding, shifting. All that is antagonistic to or negligent of the principles underlying Christ's teaching is sand.

III. Two houses. Every man builds his house. Deeds, words, thoughts, principles. The house which each man builds he must inhabit. The differences in men's houses are sometimes invisible. Men build with diverse purposes. One man builds a shop, another a study, one a theatre, another a temple.

IV. One storm. Certain, impartial, terrible.

V. Two results. The house on the sand becomes folly's monument of ruins. The house on the rock remains as wisdom's abiding refuge.

VI. Two examples. These are of universal application, necessary, present.

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And in standing against these, Christ stood aside from the world, aside from its ordinary and specious proposals, aside from careers that would have led to natural wealth and glory.

What was Christ's method? It was this : to stand utterly against falsehood—the falsehood of the common people, the falsehood of the rich ; against covetousness ; against hypocrisy ; to stand as a wall of fire that not only protects what is behind, but consumes what would approach.

## A SPECIAL PRAYER MEETING.

*Outline Sermon*

BY THE REV. J. VINSON STEPHENS.

THIS incident is called the Transfiguration, but it is only a prayer-meeting accompanied by great success. "And He took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray." Every prayer-meeting should be a place of transfiguration. If, "as we pray, the fashion of our countenance do not alter," then there is no sincerity in the heart (Isaiah xxix. 13).

I. *The peculiarities of this strange prayer-meeting.*—(1) It was held in the night. The night is often upon us when the sun shines beautifully above; and there is no night so dark as the mid-day night—when it is dark at noon. But as the night helped to make Christ's transfiguration on the mountain more lustrous, so does the darkness which shrouds our heavens help in the hour of prayer to make God's glory more impressively beautiful. (2) It was held "on a high mountain." Many in these days would suggest to hold it at its foot. Most assuredly they would not climb a high mountain to hold a prayer-meeting. God's blessings are set on high. They can never be easily gotten. But the higher the mount of difficulty which man ascends, the higher will God's glory be on its summit. (3) Another peculiar feature in this strange prayer-meeting is that half the congregation were sleeping. "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep." And, as usual, those who ought to be most interested were asleep. Sleepy Christians always commit blunders when they wake. Their best course is to hold their peace when they have shut their eyes, "for they wist not what to say." How foolishly will they speak: "Let us make three tabernacles!" Did Peter attempt it? No, for he consulted his Master, saying unto Him, "Lord, if Thou wilt"; and no sooner had he consulted Christ than the absurd suggestion vanished away. Many of our foolish notions become living deeds to grieve and torment us, for the simple reason that we neglect consulting our Lord and Master.

II. *The defects of this prayer-meeting.*—(1) Its exclusiveness. Only the three favoured ones were present; the other nine were in sore distress, struggling with an unclean spirit down in the valley. Christ now can be present with all His people. His presence with the few does not exclude the many. (2) Its secrecy. They were charged to tell the vision to no man. That was hard. Not so now.

III. *The influence of this prayer-meeting.*—It was two-fold. As He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered. That is the primary effect of prayer. And on the next day He rebuked the unclean spirit out of a child. And that is the secondary effect of prayer. Two transfigurations follow every prayer. One takes place on the mount with God; the other in the valley, as the prayer intermingles with men on the next day with a remnant of the Divine glory still retained in his face. And by the work done on the next day the world estimates how near God man has been on the previous night.

IV. *The advice given in this strange prayer-meeting.*—"Hear ye Him." He speaks with authority. His message is precious. And what He speaks is of vital interest to the hearer.

## SEEKING KNOWLEDGE.

*Outline Sermon*

BY HUGH CLARACH.

“Master, where dwellest Thou?”—ST. JOHN i. 38. “Lord, who is it”—ST. JOHN xiii. 25. “It is the Lord.”—ST. JOHN xxi. 7.

THESE short texts are valuable pebbles of truth on the shore of the sea of Revelation—one here, one there, and one far away. Let us collect them together, and examine them in the light of one another. They were dropped there by the same mind. They are the only sayings of John recorded by himself. John was not a speech-making Apostle. He was an attentive listener and close thinker, but not a frequent speaker. But very likely he spoke oftener than it is reported. He was not like the preachers of the modern Church, anxious to have his sermons reported. He faithfully reported Christ; but he was willing to be not reported himself. Inspiration made him humble, desiring to hide himself and his sayings, but he was constrained by the same force to report these three sayings of his own. They are of paramount importance.

The first was spoken at the commencement of Christ's public life, the second at the end, and the third at the beginning of his resurrection life. The first is concerned about Christ's abode; the second, about Christ's followers; and the third, about Christ himself. The first is the question of an anxious inquirer; the second, question of a confidential disciple; and the third, the declaration of a ripe Christian recognising his Lord in trying circumstances. They mark the development of the influence of Christ on the beloved disciple, and the progress of the disciple's faith in his Lord.

I. The beloved disciple seeking more knowledge of his Lord. “Where dwellest Thou?” Similar question was asked by Solomon when consecrating the Temple: “Will God indeed dwell *with man* upon earth?” John's question implies that Solomon's question is answered: “Where dwellest Thou?” He does dwell, the question now is where. Progress in the inquiry of faith.

Christ's answer, “Come and see”; that is the address of Christ. He dwells wherever He is seen, and wherever a sinner comes to Him. He is not confined to a locality.

II. The beloved disciple, on behalf of the Church, seeking knowledge about the Church. Describe circumstances. Only the nearest to Christ could ask, “Who is it, Lord?” John was confident that Christ knew who was the traitor. It is a mark of greatness in a man to be able to discover an enemy in a friend's garb. *Illus.*—Generals discovering traitors; Stanley and rebels in Africa.

Christ reveals this secret when He is prayed by one that He loves. The best Christians are to take charge of the discipline of the Church. They possess the secrets of Christ.

III. The beloved disciple's power of recognising his Lord. Describe circumstances. Progress in the development of faith from “Where dwellest Thou?” to “It is the Lord.”

The disciples could not recognise Christ of His resurrection by his appearance. They were making mistakes continually. So here. John recognised Him by His voice and deed. Christ was about to withdraw in His bodily appearance. He is to be known henceforth to the Church by His voice (or word) and His deeds.

H. C'

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for June 29 : Review of the Quarter's Lessons.*

### THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THESE words of the Lord's own prayer are the prayer, the request of a Son of God. It is as sons, as children, that we are to obey Jesus and utter this prayer. "Our Father" we are to say at the first word, with confidence, with a feeling that He loves us, with a feeling that we may be very frank with Him, and with the knowledge that we shall be listened to. You know not whether your Father will grant your request or not. He will grant it if it be right.

When you say at the side of your little bed "Our Father" is not Jesus there beside you? Oh yes, you are never alone in prayer; you have always one companion in prayer, and this is the blessed Jesus who prayed for us, and prays with us, and who taught us to pray. We go to God in Jesus' company. It is in His name we come. Remember God is your Father for Jesus' sake.

Notice that if we pray as Jesus would have us to do, we come to God as sons who care more for the Father's interests than for our own.

There is a great deal of selfish praying—just asking for ourselves. Jesus' prayers are not selfish. He says not "Forgive us our sins," but first He says "Hallowed be Thy name." May Thy name be kept holy by all. Three different times He prays that the Father's wishes may be accomplished, and the Father's name honoured before He even begins to speak about His own affairs. If we would pray aright we must ask first for those things for which Jesus asked.

Another thing about this prayer is, that if we pray as Jesus would have us to do, it must be with the most entire submission in our hearts to the will of God. We are to say, "Let this thing be, only if it be good for me, only if it is good in Thy sight."

Then if we come to God as His sons, to pray aright we must feel that we depend upon His goodness for everything; that in Him is gathered up all we need in this world and the next—all we need for our bodies and for our souls. Jesus does not say, "Come once and ask for all." He says we are to ask for "daily bread."

We are not to ask for to-morrow's bread, or next year's, but just what we need now. No more. It is daily asking for necessities—no more. There is no encouragement to ask for more than is necessary for this life. Ask for to-morrow's bread, and you will not get it. It is continual dependence on God. Keep on, always depending, always asking in the spirit of a little child who feels its needs just now, with no store and no goodness of its own. This is the spirit of the Lord's own prayer.

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\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

# *The British Weekly Pulpit*

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JUNE 27, 1890

ONE PENNY.

WITH CHRIST.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. DR. ANTLIFF.

*Preached at the Primitive Methodist Conference, in memory of the late  
Rev. Joseph Toulson.*

“To depart, and to be with Christ . . . is far better.”—PHIL. i. 23.

THE Apostle was a prisoner when he wrote these words. He knew not whether he would be liberated or martyred, but that uncertainty caused him no anxiety. He was more concerned about the advance of Christianity than about his own welfare. He counted not his life dear unto him, that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. Should they liberate him, he would preach Christ, and extend His kingdom: to him to live was Christ. Should they martyr him, his death would provoke so much inquiry that Christianity would be advanced thereby: the blood of the martyr would be the seed of the Church. Being assured that Christ would be magnified in his body, whether by life or death, he cared but little by which means the end should be secured. He was in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better; but to abide in the flesh was more needful for the Philippians. He would not be able to make a choice whether to live or to die. He was like a man around whom a rope has been loosely entwined, and persons are pulling at each end. The more they pull, the more tightly they hold him. “I am in a strait betwixt two. To depart, and to be with Christ is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”

In the words that we have selected and submitted for brief consideration, being with Christ in heaven is compared with living for Christ on earth, and pronounced to be “far better.” But underlying this comparison are two assumed facts. In the first place, the Apostle assumes that death is not the end of our being, but a change of our abode; and, in the second place, he assumes that when Christians die they depart hence to be with Christ.

The Apostle assumes in these words that death is not the destruction of our consciousness, but a change in the conditions of our existence. We still live, but live in other circumstances. We depart hence to another abode. This doctrine of a life beyond this has been accepted throughout the ages, and by most nations. The philosophic and poetic ancients of Europe peopled their Elysium and Tartarus with human spirits retaining

all their earthly recollections. Socrates delighted himself with the conviction that he would after death converse with Orpheus, Musæus, Hesiod, and Homer. Cicero rejoiced in the prospect of meeting with Cato in the assembly of the great and good. The less cultured and civilised inhabitants of China and India cherished the conviction that they would survive their bodies and exist elsewhere. In the islands of the Pacific the people, while still heathen, believed that they would follow their departed friends, and rejoin them in another state of being. On the western prairies the Indians believed that they would live after death in some beautiful region beyond the setting sun. In the wilds of the Dark Continent, the fetish worshipper suffered decapitation that he might accompany his chieftain and serve him in the spirit-world. And throughout Christendom this conviction has universally prevailed—that our souls are distinct and separable from our bodies, and will survive them, and exist apart. This doctrine was better understood by God's ancient and chosen people than by surrounding nations ; but the full revelation of it was reserved till these last days—this final dispensation, when the curtains were drawn back, and life and immortality brought to light through the Gospel. Our Saviour, in one of His discourses, lifted the curtain a little, and revealed to human gaze men whose conditions in this world had been widely different, but were more widely different in the world beyond. When surrounded by a multitude who, in their eagerness to hear Him, pressed forward and trod upon one another, He said, "Fear not them which kill the body, and after they have done that, have no more that they can do ; but rather fear Him who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." In response to the appeal of the penitent malefactor, He said, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The inspired Apostles taught that we should be absent from the body—that we should depart. The doctrine of a life beyond the present accords both with reason and revelation.

But the writer of our text further assumes that when Christians die, they depart hence to be with Christ. But where is Christ? According to the Apostles' Creed, He ascended on high—"ascended into heaven"—where He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." This doctrine has been accepted by the churches, and accords with the testimony of our Saviour and His Apostles. He told His disciples that He would go to their Father ; that in His Father's house were many mansions ; that He would go and prepare a place for His people. The Apostle, in one of the lessons we have heard to-night (1 Thess. iv.), reminded us that God will bring with Him those that sleep in Jesus ; and the teaching of the Saviour, and the assumption in our text, is that when believers die they go to be with Christ. They do not sink into a state of unconsciousness, and slumber in their crumbling tabernacles—they depart. They do not enter and linger in some intermediate and purgatorial state ; but they depart to be with Christ. Absent from the body, present with the Lord ! "Having a desire to part, and to be with Christ." Jesus said to the dying malefactor, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." They were both about to leave their bodies hanging on the crosses ; but they were going away, and the promise of the Redeemer to that penitent offender was, "Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

But to be with Christ is better—"far better." The Apostle was a man of like passions and infirmities with ourselves. Doubtless, he would some-

times feel sadness stealing over his spirit ; but he was not accustomed to condemn the world in which he lived, and complain of his material and social surroundings. He did not affirm that there was nothing in this world worth living for. He felt that to live for the advantage of his brethren was so great a privilege that he would willingly forego, for a time, the enjoyments of heaven, that he might render help to the Church on earth. But to depart and be with Christ, to serve in the higher sphere, is better than to serve down here. Better surroundings, better employments, better companions, better duration. To be with Christ is far better than being here, because the surroundings will be better there than here. On this side of the river there are beautiful growths ; but in the land of Canaan there are finer. There is much that is beautiful and much that operates powerfully and pleasingly in this life ; but, accepting the language of the inspired penman, we conclude that our surroundings hereafter will be better far than our conditions here. Our employments will be better. In the service of our Lord, and in the work of the Church, we find much of our purest, our most exquisite happiness. We linger upon the past. There are blessed memories of work done, of good realised, and of the Divine presence felt ; but to be with Christ and serve in His upper sanctuary, and engage in the higher ministries of heaven, will be better than the best services in which we are permitted to engage down here. Our companions will be better. We have friends, noble-hearted friends, here, but the best of men are but men at the best, and there is some admixture of evil to be found in the best society in which we move here ; but yonder all will have been washed and made white in the blood of Lamb. Every garment will be stainless ; every heart will be pure ; every man will be a brother ; there will be none to disturb. We can scarcely avoid lingering to think of the loved ones with whom we took sweet counsel and walked to the house of God in company while they were here. They have gone forward. They were good, they awakened our admiration, they secured our affection while they were here. They are better yonder, and when we rejoin them we shall find them improved. We shall not only have the fellowship of those whom we have known, but of all those of whom "the world was not worthy," men whose biographies we have in the sacred books, and multitudes besides. They are awaiting our arrival in that better state. And those "ministering spirits," who have manifested so much interest in human welfare, will be our associates—our more intimate associates—hereafter. And, best of all, we shall see Him "Whom, having not seen, we love ; and in Whom, although we see Him not, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Then our conditions will be enduring. The happiness we realise on earth is transient. In the sanctuary, and in the active service of our God, we realise something of heaven down here : but we soon go forth, and the chilling, adverse influences of the world operate upon us again, and we soon feel that we are still surrounded by adversaries, and must engage in conflict. But yonder our enjoyment will be everlasting, and our employment, fitted to our conditions, will never weary nor exhaust ; but in perpetual joyful strain we shall admire and serve our God. To depart and be with Christ is better, far better !

But who will be with Christ when they depart hence ? When our Saviour lifted the veil a little, and enabled men to look beyond the grave,

they saw two men who had lived together on earth, but who were widely separated yonder, and their conditions had been reversed. The poor man was no longer full of sores and waiting for a little bread, but reclining on Abraham's bosom. The rich man was no longer clad in purple and faring sumptuously every day, but in burning torments, piteously appealing for a little help. But their conditions were unalterable, they could not pass from one side to the other. When men die they depart hence, but whither? We shall die, we shall depart from these material surroundings, but whither shall we go? Shall we depart to be with Christ? Or shall we depart to everlasting misery? The Apostle, in that portion of Scripture from which we have selected our text, gives his own experience: "To me to live is Christ." If I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I know not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ. The Apostle had been a sinner—a great sinner; but not immoral, not a drunkard, not a libertine. Before his conversion to Christianity, he was intensely religious according to his convictions, but sincerity was not enough. A man may be sincere and wrong. Saul of Tarsus verily thought that he ought to do many things against Jesus of Nazareth. He was as sincere before he became a Christian as after, and probably as zealous, for he made havoc of the Church. But convinced of his error, and wishful to be right, he sought Divine direction, and obtained it; and, having been instructed, he trusted in Christ. He said, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." He obtained mercy, and became an earnest worker in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Once converted, he needed converting no more. He was "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." "By the grace of God, I am what I am." "And His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; for I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." His life became consecrated thoroughly to the Lord Jesus Christ. He could say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "To me to live is Christ." And that man could rejoice in the hope of being with Christ after death. Is our experience like his? Is there any resemblance between our experience and his? Have we realised our need of pardon? Have we committed ourselves to Him who died for us and lives for us? Have we consecrated ourselves to the service of Christ? Are we experimentally and practically religious? Are we real believers—true Christians? Can we say, "If I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour?" If so, we may cherish the conviction expressed in our text, that to depart and be with Christ is far better.

In this service we can scarcely avoid reverting to our beloved brother (the Rev. J. Toulson), who was often with us at our annual gatherings, and who occupied the chief seat in our last Conference, and by his wise conduct and humble spirit increased our admiration and affection for him. He was born again of the Spirit in the first month of the year 1839, while he was still a very young man. Immediately he joined our society, and was never severed from it till called to join our fathers on the other side the river. In 1842 he was called into the ministry of our churches, and laboured in word and doctrine nearly forty-eight years. He was in labours more abundant than many; he was rich in religious experience; he was

evangelical in doctrine ; he was earnest and persevering in his ministry, ever seeking the salvation of souls and the edification of the churches ; he was a wise and kind administrator, and was successful in his great life-work. When I became more intimately acquainted with him, over twenty years ago, I formed the opinion that he was one of the most successful, if not the most useful, minister we then had in the South of England. He laboured in different parts of the Connexion ; but much time was spent in the metropolis, where he did much to extend Primitive Methodism, to erect chapels, form churches, and save men. His conduct in his official capacities we all admire ; and as the years passed away, and we became more thoroughly acquainted with him, we admired him more and more, and glorified God in him. He was on his way to fulfil his Sabbath engagements in the Eastern Counties when he was suddenly stricken down in the streets of London. He passed away from the streets of our crowded metropolis to the streets of the metropolis in the heavens, the New Jerusalem. His sudden removal from us, through affliction, should also be instructive. How short is life ! How uncertain our stay on earth ! Who can tell which of us will next be called way ? Who can tell in what circumstances we shall be found when summoned to appear in the world of spirits ? Let us determine that whatever may be our work, whatever the sphere of our activity, we will live a holy life, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by a godly conversation, do all the good that we possibly can, and prepare for the life that is to come. A few brief years, or it may be a few brief months, and our opportunity for service here will be gone, our work done, and we shall pass away. One by one our fathers have left us. How few there are remaining with us who attended the last Conference held in this town ! How few who will be present at this Conference will remain to take part in the next that may be held here ! Oh, let us try to realise the shortness of life ! What are all our interests, all our pleasures, all our sorrows ? They will soon be in the past. We are getting through them. We shall get through this life, and into the next ; but never through that. Let us take care that we have a personal experience resembling that of the writer of our text, resembling that of the dear brother who has just been taken from us. Let our religion be experimental. Let it not be a mere creed, or a mere morality ; but a life, and a power. Let us live to good purpose—serve God with all our powers ; and then whensoever we hence depart, we shall depart in peace, to be for ever with the Lord.

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Well may it be said that " His name is above every name." Yet are there not many men capable of admirable fervours in practical and intellectual life, who are asking now, What is Christianity to me, and how in this day is the Gospel for real salvation ? We reply, Is this for ever-venerated name as a sun, clearly the Lord of all luminaries ; or is it only as a wonderful comet, that is disappearing from our sky and will soon retire altogether ?

He was rewarded for His work in the doing it ; as part of His immediate pay, rewarded in the smiles of the happy, in the love-gifts of the grateful, in the earnest looks of the listeners, in the ready hands of the distributors, and in the as ready foot of the messenger, who went out to sing, " The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

## THE HECKMONDWIKE LECTURE.

THE annual services in connection with the 128th celebration of the "Heckmondwike Lecture" have been held in the Congregational Churches of that town. The United Independent College at Bradford owes its origin to Heckmondwike. At the close of the session distinguished divines were invited to address the students and their friends. On the removal of the college the churches continued the fixture, and for over a century and a quarter it has known no lapse. This year the unique festival was successful beyond any of recent years. The first service was held on Tuesday evening in Westgate Chapel, when sermons were preached by the Revs. J. N. Knight, of Birmingham, and J. B. Meharry, of London. The chapel was crowded. Below we give brief reports of the sermons:—

## THE REV. J. N. KNIGHT.

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."—GEN. xxviii. 20—22.

This vow was occasioned by a dream, which in its turn had been occasioned by the circumstances of Jacob's life and his natural surroundings. Jacob was in a state of terror and fear of Esau, and it was therefore natural for him to desire to make of the stones a natural staircase, a ladder of flight. How natural it was for him, when afraid of the vengeance of his brother and of his fellow men, to desire that on that ladder others than denizens of the earth might ascend and descend. He saw that the only way of escaping and securing the true friendship of those he had wronged was to link himself with God and celestial society. He recognised that the only way to get on in life was to seek the blessing of God, and be closed at once with the covenant made with him. He realised for the first time the divine personality of God, and here the preacher appealed to his hearers, asking if God had so revealed Himself to them that their whole life was swayed by that conviction, or were they breathing the name of God and quoting the articles of their faith glibly without having any direct decisive conviction that God was with them and that He was the rewarder of them that seek Him? Was there ever a time when the Church needed so much to realise the personality of God? The members of the church were feeling the need of a more vivid realisation of the personality of God. Despite the criticisms of many, most assuredly there was a hungering after God, a yearning after Him; and men who could not be sure about the authenticity of the record, who were not sure that the miracles were sufficient for their faith, were testing their conclusions and saying: "If the record be true Christ lives and Christ loves, and I may make my direct appeal to Him independently of all other sources." It was their privilege to make that personal appeal, to seek the inner chamber and there bow before the great Unseen. In every whirlwind there was a point of absolute rest, and, if God invited them to enter the whirlwind, it was in order that they may find that point. The knowledge of God in Christ should give them

courage for public and private duty. They were cowards till they had seen God in Christ—afraid of themselves and their surroundings, and of the times in which they lived. It was only under the inspiration of conviction that they were enabled to fulfil His will and to do daily the work He had given them. He next referred to Jacob's dedication of the place to God, and said the stones were consecrated in order that every other place on earth might be consecrated. The Holy Land was holy so that Ireland, Scotland, England, and every other land might be holy also. Having spoken of the beauty of a consecrated commercial life, he passed on to notice Jacob's vow to give one-tenth of all he had to God, and said this was not sufficient for the Christian dispensation. Viewed in the light of the New Testament, it meant that they must give all to God. In conclusion, he urged his hearers to dedicate their personality, their places, and their property to Him.

THE REV. J. B. MEHARRY.

"A man which told me all the things that ever I did : is not this the Christ?"  
—ST. JOHN iv. 29.

Mr. Meharry prefaced his text by remarking that it was to a woman they were indebted for the right method of finding Christ. A great deal of Christian doctrine, he went on to say, depended upon the angle at which men's minds struck it, just as the brilliance and hues of a diamond depended upon the angle at which it was struck by the light. No man in God's universe could read the Scripture for him (the speaker), neither could he read it for any other man. Reverting more particularly to his text, which was the expression of a woman, he asked if that congregation had ever reflected how much womanhood owed to Christ, or what honour had been paid to woman by the incarnation. Christ hurled defiance at the laws of His day, and once and for all put his foot down on the despicable law which gave woman a second place to man. He was going to discuss that evening the subject the woman mentioned in the text—the right method for discovering the Christ and the right faculty whereby to discover Him. Allow him to point out the title which the Master bore in the text. He thought he never bore a title without an object. In both the definite and the indefinite title he (the speaker) thought he saw a heavenly design. In the Old Testament they were acquainted with many Christs, but he loved to think of Jesus Christ as the one to whom alone the title of the Christ was applicable. It was very remarkable that He distinctly told this woman He was the Christ, and it was equally notorious that she never said so to her fellow creatures. Conscience told this woman that He to whom she had spoken was the Christ, and nothing else could tell a man that. He was speaking now of the Christ in his saving capacity, not of the Jesus Christ of history. He knew of no way by which a man could assure Himself that Jesus Christ was the Christ, if he did not do it with his conscience. On this point conscience was the only faculty which could speak with authority. Reason may confirm, but conscience alone could affirm. If he was correct in what he had already said, they would be prepared for his next proposition—that the discovery of Christ as the Christ by the conscience was the only philosophic method. As an illustration he pointed out that all branches of science depended on some particular faculty of the mind, and said that just in the same way religion demanded

that conscience should be given to foster it. Only the man who made his inquiry after Christ a matter of conscience ever found Him. The moral condition of a man had much more to do with it than some of them were disposed to own. A man without morality had crippled and dwarfed his intellect. One of the greatest reasons why young men should be virtuous and pure was for the sake of their intellects. If they came to the consideration of this question feeling that there was sin in their heart, it must first of all be rooted out. None who ever sought Christ in the way he had stated failed. He knew there were saucy intellects and proud minds which had failed in their search, but they did not take the right method or cultivate the right faculty. They were often asked how it was that so many of their scientific men were not on the side of Christ. For his own part he had never uttered a word against them. He feared nothing from science. When the day came round that religion was afraid of science, then religion ought to hang her head; but that day had not come yet. Instead of declaiming against scientific men, let them thank them for their labours, though they did not agree with their conclusions. He believed that eventually the conclusions of science would bring glory to the Lord. He believed that the day would come when the clash of tongues should cease and science and religion would walk hand in hand for the good of the human race. While urging them to search as he had advised, he had no wish to dissuade them from satisfying themselves as to the historical part; but if a man wanted truly to grasp the Christ he must realise that Christ had revealed Himself to him first by exposing his sins and then covering them with perfect righteousness. In conclusion he urged them to begin with the heart and not with the head. If they brought their sins to Christ, His gracious word of mercy and blessing would scatter their fears and fill their souls with eternal light.

THE REV. J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D.

“The heavens declare the glory of God,” &c.—PSALM xix.

This psalm might be divided into two parts—nature and the Bible; but its object was one, its purpose was spiritual. The glory of God in nature was presented as a symbol of Divine glory in revelation. The parallel between nature and revelation would therefore be his theme. It was a characteristic of the Bible, which stamped it as not being the outcome of mere human intelligence, that it not only did not get out of date, but it positively came into date. The psalm was not only as true to-day as when it was written, but it was true in a fuller, larger, and more obvious sense. The world moved on, leaving the products of its intellect and genius behind, mostly to be swallowed up in oblivion, but some few never to be submerged—monuments reared too high for the waters of forgetfulness. But while even earth's greatest ones were left behind, instead of moving from the Bible they seemed to move into it. He was now referring to the great spiritual teaching of the Bible, which he said was as far in advance of the nineteenth century as it was of the first. The first suggestion he wished to make to them was if revelation be like nature it would bear the marks not of manufacture, but of growth. Some good people were terribly afraid of this thought, especially if development be the word used instead of growth, or worse still the more formidable term evolution. The sug-

gestion that different parts required different treatment was often received with terror, but it was one of the marks which proved that it was from God, and should be hailed with the greatest delight. Revelation was not a mere treatise, but a history of God's dealings with men for thousands of years. It was full, not of logic, but of light. If revelation be like nature, it would exhibit endless variety on the surface, but there would be a wondrous harmony underlying the whole. There was a marvellous unity of purpose in the Bible which became apparent to those who studied it as a whole. Such was the unity of purpose and the marvellous development of thought in the Bible that to those who had followed it out it was no mere matter of faith, but as plain as day, and as certain as anything possibly could be that those records were not the mere spontaneous productions of different men in different ages. It was not all a beautiful garden. There were rugged mountains as well as smiling valleys. It contained things both ugly and repulsive, for which there would have been no necessity if it had been the work of man. There was much that was wild and sad in the history it gave; but how could it be otherwise if it were true? From the first God had prepared the way for the coming of His Son, and the setting up of a reign of peace. It was not the darkness of the book, but the light which was the characteristic. The most frightful chapters in Judges were no worse than similar chapters in the history of the nations of the ancient world; but side by side with the darkness there was always the dawning light. This it was which always distinguished Divine revelation from mere human history. After speaking of the infinite suggestiveness of the Word of God as the great cause of maintaining the freshness of revelation, he went on to say there was a sad lack of faith on the part of those who thought the Bible could not speak for itself. It spoke in such a variety of ways that a man could walk in the light without being able to pass any examination in the different theories. He afterwards enlarged upon the Psalmist's descent from the wide scope of the heavens to the closest personal application, and showed how it was possible for men to live in as black a state of darkness as if they shut themselves up in a cave. The end, however, would be death. But let God be revealed to the soul, as He was manifested in the history of redemption, and in the life, the death, and the resurrection of His Son, and immediately the heavens were opened, and the soul passed out of darkness into marvellous light.

THE REV. CHARLES GARRETT.

"We love Him because He first loved us."—1 ST. JOHN iv. 19.

These words, the preacher said, were the household words of the family of heaven and earth. It was the point of unity. When they talked of the kingdom of heaven they quarrelled, but when they talked about the King they were in perfect agreement. In those few words they had the whole philosophy of religion. Instead of beginning at the beginning he would begin at the end and finish at the beginning. God "first loved us." Love never originated in man. His message to them was that God first loved them, and His love flowed forward to them. They had here the whole nature of religion. There had been controversies in the newspapers as to what religion was. He replied that it was love, and if they desired to know whether they were Christians, all they had to do was to ask them-

selves whether they loved Christ. There were plenty of people who were ready to fight for the Church and for sects, and even to get drunk for them, but that did not constitute religion. They must have a personal love for the personal Saviour. This love must not only be personal, but voluntary. The preacher dwelt at length on this head of his discourse, and gave many simple and beautiful illustrations of his meaning. Love, he said, was always a gift. They could not buy it. The rich man might buy service and flattery, and get as much of that as he liked to pay for. But he could not demand or enforce love. People loved that which was precious to them, and that which of itself was not precious to the heart could command no love. John Bright had said that force was no remedy. This was true in the matter of love. A man might threaten to blow his brains out if he did not give him his love, but he would only make him dislike the man the more, for we could only love that which had lovable qualities. God used no force, but He stooped and asked for the love of the human race, and, thank God, He had won many of them. Moreover, this love was powerful. There was no power like it. It was the mightiest power in the universe, and it was Divine. The love in their hearts was the same in its nature as the love of God. As the dewdrop was composed of the self-same elements as the water in the leaping cataract, so did their love partake of the essence of the boundless love of God. Further, love was restraining in its influence, winning from evil all those who possessed it. And further, it was an impelling love in the direction of righteousness. Let the Church be filled with it, and they would no longer need to talk about the lack of support to their missionary enterprises, or the leanness of their resources necessary for carrying on the Christian work. The world was waiting for the Church, and the Church had all the resources necessary to fulfil the pressing needs of the world. There was wealth enough, learning enough, and influence enough to satisfy the spiritual requirements of the world, but all these, to make them effective, needed the endowment of the love of Christ. Then only would they be effectually operative. The world was crying come over and help us, and the only thing the Church needed to make her capable and responsive was the love of Christ in the heart. Lastly, the preacher said this love would prepare them for heaven. He had been thinking while he had sat there where were those who had taken part in the lecture anniversaries of the past. If they had possessed the love of God they were with Him. But there was no need for the whip. God delighted to show His love, and he asked all to come to Him. The preacher concluded with a very effective appeal to the congregation to consecrate themselves and share the joys of that freedom and love which the Great Father was anxious to bestow.

THE REV. W. J. DAWSON.

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance.”—1 COR. xiv. 10.

That which was unintelligible to one, the preacher said, might be intelligible to another, for of necessity an educated man might and would understand words which to an illiterate person would be unintelligible. When they said a certain speaker was unintelligible, it did not follow because he was not understood by them that he was unintelligible to others;

that because his teaching was obnoxious to them, it was to everyone ; and that, because in their judgment he was not called upon to preach, he had therefore no message to man. What the text pointed out was breadth of view, and breadth of sympathy. There was nothing in the world without meaning, and if a voice meant nothing to them they might be sure that there were others to whom the message would appeal. There were two ideas of Church life which were always more or less in conflict, and to the one-sided these ideas seemed irreconcilably opposite. What possible reconciliation could be found between the quiet worshipper who sought the sanctuary for its peace, and the busy, eager, Christian worker to whom the sanctuary was simply a focus of intense activity, and a place where strenuous labour found its centre and encouragement? To the one-sided man there was no reconciliation in these cases. The cloistral Christian saw only in the one case a type of fussy zeal, and in turn the cloistral Christian was looked upon as an idler. The one prayed little and worked much ; the other worked little and prayed much. The one recognised the other, not by his qualities, but by his defects, and thus they became one-sided, each being the victim of his own miserable egotism, and incapable of understanding any other type of Christianity than that which he himself represented. Both, however, were needed, and the one could not do without the other. Each voice had its own signification, and they could rejoice that all had only Christ to preach. What they had to recollect was that Christ was not for man, but for men ; not for a race, but for races ; not for a nation, but for the world ; and though the message of God might be but a confused and grating voice to one, perhaps it rang out full and clear to another. That which a man believed profoundly he could not help impressing upon others. By many, however, to have a sound faith was held to be higher than being good, and a right creed took the place of a right life. The old order continually changed, and when they departed from the old forms of speech and uttered their message in fresh, living language, then because it was fresh and not stereotyped, because the ancient platitudes had given place to new fire and thought, instead of counting it God's mercy that man rises and could not be content with old forms, they turned upon and rended them. Some men refused to believe in a God of variety, who fulfilled Himself in many ways ; they clung to a God of uniformity, who only fulfilled Himself in one way. Then from one-sidedness there came rancour, and the spirit of God was lost in contentions about religion, and men wasted over forms of faith a force that should go for the cleansing of the human heart, and the conversion of the world. It was not the theological dress that took a man to heaven, but the heart and the life. He did not say new teachers might not become intolerant, for many a man seeking to become broad only succeeded in becoming narrow ; but new teaching sprang out of the variety of human nature itself. The whole truth was neither in their creed nor in his, no more than the sun was his because it happened to shine in at his window. Just as men got one-sided views of doctrine, so they got one-sided views of life. They narrowed life down until it became one-roomed, with no space, no air, and no outlet ; and such men's lives reminded him of nothing so much as the celebrated symphony where one by one the instruments ceased and the players went out silently, until at length but one was left amid the darkness, and on the otherwise empty stage. There were those who stood upon the pillar of their solitary

dogmas and judgments, but it was the crowd who were right, and they who were wrong. They should not see how miserable they could be and make others, but how happy they could be, and how happy they could make others. He looked back to the early days of the Gospel, and he heard the voices of the singers at the feast, and he thought of Galilee, where his Master sat, not turning rivers into blood, but water into wine, for the joy and sociality of men. To take the least possible interest in life was to reject the education that God had provided, and so far from showing superior piety, it reflected an ungladdened heart. Some of them would presently turn away perhaps from the smoke and grime and the heated traffic of cities, for the first touch of summer was already upon us; and when they did so let them remember that there was an eternal God waiting to commune with them. Speaking a word in conclusion to young men, he urged them to profitably occupy their leisure time. No one could deny that we were on the brink of a great social change, for the air vibrated with it. There were two sorts of socialism—the socialism of the Devil and the socialism of Jesus Christ. The creed of the first was that there was no God, and that Christianity was an exploded faith; but the second was capable of solving every difficulty before us, and they might depend upon it that if men could not get the socialism of Christ they would get the socialism of the Devil. If they as churches could not Christianise their socialism, they could at least socialise their Christianity. Let the Church so fit itself to grapple with the common needs of a common everyday world that it might be to the Church that all men should look for guidance instead of to the atheist lecturer.

## THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH AND THE PROPHECY OF CHRIST.

BY THE REV. GEORGE ADAM SMITH, M.A.

WE take the following from a sermon by the Rev. George Adam Smith, M.A., in the July number of the *Expository Times* :—

As he returned from Jerusalem, he continued to read, and reading lighted on a passage, which, however full of those truths which we have supposed to have drawn him to Jerusalem, pointed beyond all that he had found there in the temple or in its system of worship. This passage was the confession of God's people, standing over against not only God Himself, but His Servant, with respect to whom the confession was particularly made. It placed all the people on one side in trespass and guilt, this Servant alone on the other in absolute holiness. It owned that, though holy, He made the people's sins His conscience and His burden. He travailed in agony for them. Thus in two respects the servant was like God Himself: He knew no sin; and He made His people's sin His concern and His agony. But the confession also declared that the servant was to be in place of all those sacrifices for the putting away of sin, which the living God, in His concern for men's sins, had instituted. His life was to be a guilt-offering. And so by laying it down in death should He pass to be the people's champion and ruler. *Of whom*, said the Ethiopian to the teacher God had sent him in his difficulty, *of whom did the prophet write this, of himself or of another?*

*Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.* Preached unto Him Jesus! It was, of course, a history he told him. He told him how there had lately appeared within the experience of men, One who was the counterpart of the confession of God's people in this Scripture: One Who did give Himself out for the Servant of the Lord: One Who did know Himself to be on one side and all men on the other: One Who did feel that He lay under a commission from God to make the sins of the people His conscience and His cross. Jesus was holy and sinless, and was so accredited of men. Like God's own love, His love was urgent with them for righteousness and truth. With God's own passion, He sorrowed for their sins and bent Himself to bear on His heart their misery and their shame. In all points He was that living God Whom the Old Testament revealed—that living God in His holiness, His love, His passion.

We cannot wonder that one who had already come so far to worship Jehovah, proving by the length of his pilgrimage and the obstacles he overcame, how well he knew Jehovah's character and will, should recognise Jehovah and Jehovah's purpose in Jesus Christ, and be willing to be baptized into Christ's name.

## THE LIFE AND PRINCIPLE OF THOUGHT.

*Notes of a Sermon*

BY THE REV. DR. PATTON,

*Preached at the 143rd annual "Commencement" at Princeton University.*

"For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."—2 COR. iii. 6.

THOUGHT is the mind protest against materialism. We need no other. Language is thought's portrait, the print of thought's finger. It is easy to see, therefore, why the study of language as distinguished from literature should occupy such a high place in the academic curriculum. You may learn much psychology from the Greek preposition. If we must have less grammar, let us have more literalism. Let us read Milton as we love to read him. Give us the story of Achilles in the pages of Derby and Bryant, if we must choose between an English translation and a few outraged pages of the Greek original. Remember that the thought is more than the word, that the word is but a symbol, a suggestion of the thought, and barely its equivalent. There are times when we must not only judge what a man intends to say by what he says, but what he says by what he obviously meant to say. "Haeret in litera, haeret in cortice." There is too little classical study of the purely literary kind among us. We either know as specialists and know little else, or we know materially nothing. It is hard to unite the functions of the general and the special scholar. I say nothing regarding letters which is not true of science also; for the facts which a man of science handles are only the letters with which he is trying to spell out the thought embodied in them. But so long as he is simply engaged with facts, he is employed in business no better than solving Chinese puzzles. It is when he hits upon some key to nature's cipher, it is when he is using his facts in verification of a hypothesis, which stands for thought, that he is doing work worthy of scientific fame. Otherwise he is only a census taker in the kingdom of nature, a cataloguer in the library

of truth, writing titles and reading the back of books. Let not the humanist, however, speak to the disparagement of science. Behind the mass of disorganised material there is a thought, an idea, a generalisation. Back of the syllable of science, and waiting only for the spirit of reverence for its enjoyment, lies fellowship with God. We must study to get the spirit of the Bible, must understand the languages in which it is written, but must be broad in our consideration of it. We must look at it as it is written, as it was conceived. When I find men treating metaphor as fact, reading poetry as they would construe an act of Congress, seeking a spiritual sense in any commonplace expression, missing the point of a parable, I feel that Matthew Arnold was right in reminding us that the Bible is literature. But we should also remember the historical conditions under which it was written.

When men say that they insist that the Bible be taught without doctrine, I reply that the doctrines of the Bible are often more important than much of the Bible itself. There are men who stand in our pulpits and preach on the patience of Job and the moral courage of Daniel, who find material for sentimental sermons in the season, and entertaining sermons in the serial folios of the day, and practical sermons on the importance of sleep or the need of restraining the imagination, but who are silent respecting the tremendous fact of sin and the dogmatic significance of atoning blood. I do not say that such men are handling the Word of God deceitfully, for I am willing to have them plead guilty, if they prefer, of literary incapacity and an unscholastic stupidity that prevents them from seeing that the bleeding Christ is the central fact of Scripture. Let me beg of you to heed the lesson of the text. Cultivate discrimination, seize upon master thoughts, get hold of the big end of all questions, rest your opinions in broad and deep rational foundations.

I turn now to another distinction suggested by the text. It is difficult to resist the feeling that there was in Paul's mind the contrast between the rigid fixity of the letter on one hand, and the plastic spontaneity of the spirit on the other. *Litera scripta manet.* We have the fixed and the variable—unbending law and changing life. The history of society, of religious opinion, is to a large extent the history of these factors in relation to each other. We formulate our faith in creed statements, and after a century or two find that the church and creed are not in exact accord. There is nothing to wonder at. It is the same old question of the letter and the spirit. The science of ethics is becoming the science of what is, rather than what ought to be, and if a doctrine of right succeeds at all, it is the doctrine that whatever is is right. In the name of reason, I protest against this tendency in thought. I refuse to abdicate under the terrorism of popular sentiment. Historic movement, as well as the actions of individuals, must be judged by fixed principles. We cannot eliminate doctrines because we do not like them, nor can we insert new ones ourselves because popular clamour calls for them. What is written is written, but it will read with different emphasis in different periods, and will be interpreted in the light of the burning questions of these periods, and will be brought into relation with science and philosophy. But remember that if the letter without the life is dead, the life needs the letter to give law to its movement. Do not hastily assume that every great movement is an inspired movement. I

have no faith in the inspiration of large masses of men. The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life. Outward rule and inward principle are the two great agencies that operate on human conduct as they stand contrasted in the text. The world, says Mr. Lecky, is governed by its ideals. It is what we love that we do well. I sometimes think that life is made more burdensome than necessary by the usual multiplication of rules. We make wrong-doing difficult and so think we make men moral, and undoubtedly much of the world's morality is of this sort. We must protect the organism and at the same time labour for the good of the individual. We must bend the reed, if necessary break it, in order to save the man.

## ENDURING TRIAL.

*Outline Sermon.*

BY REV. DR. R. WHYTE, EDINBURGH.

“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”—JEREMIAH xii. 5.

THIS is Jehovah's answer to Jeremiah's complaint of the severity and inequality of His judgment. General idea is, if we cannot endure a light trial in God's service, how shall we endure the greater trials almost certain to overtake us? The argument applies:—

I. *To the increasing cares and responsibilities of life.*—If religion is a weariness in youth when care sits lightly on the brow, and you have plenty of time on your hands, how is it likely to be more favourably regarded when life's stream has become a broad-breasted river, brimful of serious care, and often overflowing its banks like Jordan? when in the race with Time your step is ever getting less elastic, and that of Time more swift and strong, learn young, learn fair. “Remember now thy Creator,” &c.

II. *To the strengthening of evil habits.*—Our sins are at first like slow pedestrians, but ere long they strike out with the energy of a horseman. If then you thrust religion aside while your passions are not altogether beyond control, how will you be able to attend to it when they have waxed strong, and are galloping with you as in some mad steeple-chase to perdition? Tennyson speaks of one

“That all in later, sadder age begins  
To war against ill uses of a life,  
But these from all his life arise and cry,  
‘Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down.’”

III. *To the world's opposition.*—Persecution must come in one form or another. Look well to your foundations. See what your religion is worth, and how far it carries you in these comparatively peaceful times; for, if you cannot endure a jibe, how could you face a gibbet?

IV. *To affliction.*—(1) If you cannot bear the every-day evils of life, ordinary couriers of Providence, how could you contend with the strong horses He holds in reserve for special times and purposes—as the black, red, and pale horses of prophecy? (2) If you neglect religion in health, folly to presume that you will be better able to attend to it sincerely and thoroughly in sickness?

V. *To death.*—The rider that will overtake us all—the Jordan all must cross. Is that a time for calm, collected thought, for undoing work of a lifetime, when shivering on its brink or agonising in midst of its flows Christ has severed it with His pierced feet. Follow Him.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for July 6: LUKE xiii. 10—17. Golden Text: MATT. xii. 12.*

### THE HYPOCRITE AND THE SUFFERING WOMAN.

YOU can scarcely understand how terrible a burden the Sabbath had become under the teaching of the Jewish Rabbis. God intended His Sabbath to be a rest and a blessing to men's bodies and souls. But the Pharisees had made a great many rules about it which God had never made. Jesus wanted to teach them what it was that His Father really required. But the Pharisees did not wish to be taught, and nothing made them so angry with our blessed Lord as to see that He did not approve of their foolish, burdensome Sabbath laws.

Some of their laws were : that no fire must be lit, no food cooked, no sick healed on the Sabbath ; that no tailor must have a needle about him on Sabbath ; that insects must not be killed on that day ; and there were a great many others besides. The Pharisees were very hard upon those who did not keep their rules. In to-day's lesson, Jesus loosed a poor suffering woman from her illness on the Sabbath. She had curvature of the spine, and had been bowed together for eighteen years. The ruler of the synagogue was very angry, because this work of love and mercy was done on the Sabbath. Jesus severely reproved this man, and called him a hypocrite—that is a man who was acting a part. He was disguising secret enmity under a pretence of zeal for the right keeping of the Sabbath. This ruler was not a bit glad that the poor woman was cured. He thought nothing of the wonderful miracle that Jesus wrought, but he was furious because Jesus had not followed the foolish rules about the Sabbath. Let us remember some things that God has told us about the Sabbath day.

(1) It is not our own, but must be held sacred to God : "Ye shall reverence My Sabbath."

(2) We are commanded to keep it : "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

(3) It is a day given for our own profit, when we get free of every-day cares and occupations, and have time for God.

(4) It is given to use for the good of others (Is. lviii. 3—8).

(5) The keeping of this day will bring with it a blessing (Is. lvi. 2).

The settlers of New England revered the Sabbath day, and they looked upon Saturday as preparation day. The Lord's Day should be looked forward to, and a well-spent Saturday evening will contribute to a good Sunday. Some Christian families lay aside secular music about eight o'clock in favour of hymn singing. John Bunyan tells us that Christian and Hopeful spent their Saturday night in prayer and praise, and on the morrow they were delivered out of Doubting Castle.

Sunday is the golden clasp that binds the volume of the week.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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JULY 4, 1890.

ONE PENNY.

## THE PILOT OF THE GALILEAN LAKE.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. JOHN MCNEILL.

*Preached in Exeter Hall, London, on Sunday afternoon, June 1.*

ST. MARK IV. 35—41.

Ay, that is a remarkable man! I feel inclined to ask at the outset, do you know Him? What manner of man is this, that even those peculiarly wild irresponsible elements, the wind and the sea, obey Him? The wind ceases, the sea, like a dog, crouches and lies at His feet. What manner of man is this? I wonder if He is living still. Is this man anywhere about? for if we could only get to know Him and get hold of Him what a vast advantage it would be for one's daily life.

According to a great deal of good prose and poetry, according to actual fact and experience, life is a voyage; life is a journey in a vessel over these seas of time and sin, and very often life means stormy days and still more troubled nights. What a vast advantage it would be if for one's voyage of life he could get hold of this Man Whom even the winds and the sea obey.

Well, the Gospel is just this, you know—that this Man still lives, that He still goes about both sea and shore. Wherever you are you may have Him. Whatever your trial and danger may be He is within hail. He will come to you, He will stay by you, He will give you peace in your heart that the world cannot give, that the world cannot take away, that no storm, not even the last, can possibly disturb if you will only let Him come to you and stay by you.

Now let us see how that is illustrated for us—shall I say the disciples of to-day? for He wants us to be His learners, His disciples—as it was illustrated to the disciples of the first day. “Let us pass over,” He said, “to the other side.” Do not forget that. We shall come to that in a little. Always listen. It is not a chance word that He said. He knew that storm was coming, He knew that there was to be this blow, He knew the storm of fear and panic that the outward storm would raise within their breasts. And knowing all that was coming He said, “Let us go to the other side.” And they should not have forgotten it to their very

sailing order to set the boat's head by this compass—this point of the compass, "the other side," and if they had only remembered for a little Who He was it would have calmed their fears in the midst of the storm. They forgot their Shipmaster, Who He was, and the sailing orders He had given. "The other side"—let us remember.

"And when He had sent away the multitude they took Him even as He was in the ship; and there were also with Him other little ships." I would like to rest a minute on that expression: "They took Him even as He was." It is meant just to bring Christ near to us. He had been doing a hard day's work. From morning to evening He had been toiling and moiling without ceasing for the best interests of man, for their bodies and for their souls, and at the close of a busy, restless day, in one sense He showed Himself to be just the same heavenly, homely Saviour as He had been all through it. He went with them in a boat to the other side just as He was. He did not stand on ceremony. He is not a Saviour who needs a great deal of attention. If He had, He would not have got it. He is easy to put up with. Fancy some of us ministers, when we go off on a day's evangelising we expect—and many times get what we expect—after our day's work is done. It happened to myself last summer. I had a busy day evangelising great crowds of people. At the close of that busy day I did not go and stay with some of the poor people who had been listening to us in the open air. No, there was a magnificent carriage and a pair of magnificent horses waiting for me, and at the close of my work they took me and I sank down into the luxuriance of cushions and rugs, and I don't know what all, was whirled away along a magnificent avenue to a magnificent house, where I got the best that love and wealth could pile upon the board. Well, I don't say that you should not do that to us. I believe we deserve it, but I do say that if we don't get that kind of treatment we should take it calmly, for our Master did. Here was Jesus, and at the close of a splendid day's work nobody whirled Him away in a carriage. He stepped on to a smelling old fishing boat, and He tottered along to the stern, and subsided down somewhere in the stern-sheets, and almost quicker than I am talking He was fast asleep; and somebody put the steersman's cushion below His blessed head, and whatever they had for a tarpaulin was flung over Him, and He fell fast asleep. What a wonderful Saviour He is. My friend, it means this, that He will come to you if you ask Him. You cannot be too poor for this Jesus, you cannot be too lowly for this Jesus. Do not hold yourself aloof and say, "He may come to the wealthy, He may come to the great, He may come to the noble, those who seem to be able to treat Him as He should be treated." He will come and live with you in your lodging. He will live with you up in your attic near the stars, or down in the sunk flat.

It is all the same to Him. You can take Him as He is, and He will take you as you are. He is a homely Saviour just because He is so truly heavenly. Whatever the servant may be, that is the Master. They took Him even as He was, and He went even as He was, after a hard day's work, when He deserved the very best, the best attention that earth could have given. He stepped on board that old boat, and, as I have said, tottered along to the stern, laid Himself down and stretched Himself as you would do, and fell fast asleep. He may be, and He is—He is divine; when the storm blows we will find that He is as divine as Godhead can make Him. But at this point He is as human as we are ourselves.

“And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship so that it was now full.” I like that. Do not run over that. “There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the vessel so that it was now full.” Another quotation says that it was beginning to sink, and they were in jeopardy. Now I like all that because we have a kind of notion, have we not? that remembering Who was on board this boat—the Son of God Who is equal with God, Who holds the winds in His fists and the waters in the hollow of His hand—that although the storm arose, and although the waves beat, that vessel should have lived a kind of charmed, magical existence, should have been as dry as though she had been on fairy seas, as though there had been no storm. We ought to have read, we somehow expect—we ought to have read something like this: “The winds went shrieking through the rigging, and the sails were blown from the ropes, and the waves raised their crested heads and dashed themselves against her both bow and stern, but the vessel in which Christ and His disciples were rode over the waves and never shipped a drop.” We have a notion of that kind. Now I am glad that the vessel did ship a drop—that she shipped heavily both bow and stern—and was likely to go under, because it is far more hopeful to me. If it had been so as I have described, you could not have got the same teaching out of it. My friend, we are apt to make a mistake. Your position and mine is this: We have made common cause with Jesus, we have got to know what manner of man He is, that He is the God-man in human flesh; we believe in Him, we have called on Him, we have brought Him on board, we have given all things into His hands; He is shipmaster, and we are only deck hands, and not nearly so good ones as we might be. But we are sometimes disappointed. We somehow expect that a Christian ought to live a magical kind of existence, that troubles and worries and frets that come to other people ought not to come to us. Now let us have all that blown out of us by the kindly storm that is blowing in our subject, for that is all nonsense. Do not expect calmness and peace for evermore because you have come to Christ. Do not expect that your life from the moment

of your conversion will be run along the lines of a three-volume novel, especially at the end of it, when he got married to her and they lived happily ever after. Life is not a three-volume novel. That may do for the story books, but it is not your life and mine. Why, with many of us our troubles only begin when we become Christians. We never had such ups and downs as we have got now—buffeted, persecuted, afflicted, troubled from morning till night, emptied from vessel to vessel, just seeming to be torn in pieces, having far less of a kind of satisfaction and tranquillity than we used to have. Now don't misunderstand the situation, as I am often saying. Expect trouble. While you are here you must have tribulation, and just because the world is the world it is expect that the worst storms will blow round about the boat in which Christ is sailing. If you are a Christian look out for squalls, only don't be troubled by the surliest and the blackest of them. Be wakeful, be vigilant; don't snap your thumbs and indulge in recklessness and bravado, but don't despair; don't fling up your hands and fly out against both God and man. Not a hair of your head shall perish, so in patience possess your souls. You are identified with Him and He cannot sink, neither can you. "Because I live ye shall live also." God cannot go down in the *State of Florida*, as a little boy reminded his mother. She was crying and sighing, for she had left her husband in that vessel, and her little boy brought her to her senses. "Mamma," he said, "did God go down in the *State of Florida*?" That brought her round. No, no, neither did she, therefore she was as safe—she was where she always was, with Him. Our dead are there, I trust. Living or dying we are with Him, therefore for ever safe.

But while they had all that to support them they felt the wind, they saw the waves—on came those great breakers. It is very easy to talk about it on a nice quiet summer afternoon, sitting in Exeter Hall. It was a little different then, when it was wild and bleak with the lightnings gleaming and the winds shrieking, and the cold waters breaking over them. So I am speaking to some soul to-day who is getting good out of this. Some of you people are not much troubled, and you are hardly in sympathy with the subject. But there is somebody sitting beside you, and it is music to his or her heart. For they are in trouble. No small tempest lies upon them. They came in just in blackness and darkness and misery, and already—already your soul is beginning to brighten, beginning to grip the Christ, and you are beginning to feel that Christ is with you, and that there is no fear, that you are not to despair. Greater is He that is for you than all this turmoil and stress that seems to be against you.

Then, what did they do? "He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, 'Master, carest Thou not that we perish?'" Now look, there He was lying in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a

pillow, and they rushed upon Him and wakened Him, and said, "Don't you care that we perish?" Now see how foolish that was. Remember what I said before. He had said, "We are going to the other side." That should have been enough. When He says "the other side," all the winds that ever raged could not prevent them from reaching that destination. So, my believing brother, although you may be trembling; my sister, although you may be shaking, Christ has said to you the moment He stepped on board your vessel: "To the other side we are going; we will cross the sea; we will not founder—to the other side, to the Fair Havens, to the eternal shore." And we are bound to be there. Not all that ever came out of the gates of hell can prevent the carrying out of His sailing orders, Whom winds and seas are bound to obey. For a little there may be tossing and heaving and head winds. That is only meant to test us, to try us—to deepen our faith, not to destroy it. This is a poor, poor story; when He had said that and lay down asleep, they came and rushed upon Him.

Now, I want you to notice the sleeping Saviour. Even Jesus sleeping would have saved them if they would have let Him, if they had only just calmly rested on this—His presence, sleeping or waking. His presence either in some big display of His power, or in the absence of any display of His power; the fact that He is with us, that is our safety. Blow, winds; spout, hurricanes; but Christ's presence is our safety. We are unsinkable—although we are not unwettable we are unsinkable when He is there, and the most the storm can do is to wet our skins; He will not allow the cold waters to go into our souls and make us shiver there. What they ought to have done was this—they ought to have gathered round about His sleeping face, and they ought to have got strength as they gazed upon Him. And Peter and John ought to have encouraged the rest, and said, "Look at Him, look at Him, who dare disturb Him? Look at Him, and by our presence there let us encourage ourselves. As long as that face is untroubled our hearts shall be untroubled. Time enough for us to rise and cry, and tear our hair, and beat our breasts, when He shows the first quiver of alarm." And that would never be. His very name is peace, He is our peace, and they would have gotten salvation by just gathering round about Him and devouring Him with their eyes and feeding their hearts by the sight of that tranquil, sleeping face. Ay, they should have let Him lie. It was sheer unbelief. Your little faith never looks well in the Bible. It may be partly excusable, but always in the light of God's presence, and God's promise, and God's power, it looks feeble, and witless, and childless. There He was sleeping, and they ought to have let Him lie. They ought to have gathered round Him, and said, "He is sleeping because of a good conscience; He is sleeping because before He laid Himself down He resigned Himself into

the arms of His Almighty Father ; and while He sleeps our hearts shall go to sleep also as regards fear and despair. I charge you by the roes and the hinds of the field that ye stir not up nor wake this Christ until He please." God's left hand was under His head, and His right arm did embrace Him, that is why He slept. My friend, if you are sleepless at night, and troubled during the day, maybe this is the reason, and maybe the explanation is here : How can you bear to sleep at night, young fellow, if you creep into a Christless bed and lay your head upon a Christless pillow ? It is vain for you to sleep and rest in peace. No drugs, no opiates, will ever give you a sound sleep—the sleep of the heart, the sleep of the soul, the deep, blissful, undisturbed peace that comes where Christ is, where Christ's presence is, where Christ is trusted, where His promise is believed and rested on. Ah, let us bring Christ into our hearts and into our lives, and commit everything into His hands, and we may sing our souls to sleep. Rest your souls upon Christ, and He will give you peace. Take things a little easier. As Christ would say to His disciples, so say I to you. There is no need to be rushing upon Him in this fashion. It is not your faith, it is your unbelief, that is urging you to rouse Him. If you had more faith you would let Him lie. You would find, as I said before, in His very presence the fact that He lives and loves. Let us take it literally and physically for our rest to-night. My friend, if you want a good, sound sleep to-night, in the midst of London's din and whirl and turmoil, take Christ into your heart. Do not doubt, but believe Him ; commit your sins, your sorrows, your business, your shop, your work, your want of work, your children—take them all into His great big bosom, and yourself at the end of them, and lie down, and you will get rest—you will get peace.

Of all the thoughts of God that are  
 Borne onward into souls afar  
 Along the Psalmist's music deep,  
 Now tell me if there any is,  
 For gift and grace, surpassing this :  
 "He giveth His beloved sleep" ?

It is a gift from Christ, my friend, and you may enjoy it to-night. Do not slip away into bed to-night without trying this plan of a night's sleep. Close the day with Him, and lie down with Him ; make His promise and His power the bed on which you stretch yourself all your length, and you will sleep there. Now may this ring into your ear, and when you would go to bed to-night like a brute, may this appeal fetch you back and send you to rest like a believer. I remember when we were children in Scotland—children in Scotland, even well-to-do children, in the summer time, do not wear boots and stockings—we ran about bare-foot, and thus the feet were hardened. People say it tells upon the size of our feet ; I don't know, but at any rate, that is the practice. All

along, from the month of April until the month of September, Scotch children—even children of high degree—many times run about barefooted. It is a glorious institution, but there is a little trouble. I remember when night-time came of course there is a little ceremony—it is more than a ceremony, the washing of the children's feet before they lie down. And I knew a lad who used to look at his feet and convince himself they were clean and there was no need to wash them—it was so cold to put them into the water—and he would creep away into his bunk, only to have his father come after him and haul him out again and get his feet washed. My friends, do you see the point? Is it possible that any of you go and lie down at night unwashed? Do you lie down at night without a prayer, without a word said to God, without a single confession of sin or one single request for Heaven's pardon and Heaven's peace? Be ashamed of yourself to go to bed like a dog among its straw! For God's sake and your own cease such blank atheism and infidelity! Christ is our example everywhere, and there He is a grand example in the midst of trouble and trial and turmoil. Don't be looking ahead, and don't be casting up troubles for yourself, and don't cross the bridge before you come to it; but lie down there and sleep, and leave God to look after His own universe. Believe me, London will not go to the dogs or the devil if you sleep. It will walk alone without you, and get on first rate: nothing will burn or boil over if you take a sound sleep. He did it, so may we.

But look at their prayer, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" Oh what an unbelieving cry—almost blasphemy. "Dost Thou not care?" Now that is what unbelief is. How many hearts here think that, only you would not just put it that way, because there is no actual storm, and you are not in an actual boat on an actual lake. But does not God sometimes see it in our hearts. O God, dost Thou not care for me? With all that Thou art, and all that Thou hast said, and all that Thou hast promised, and all that Thou hast led me to expect here, with the great yawning gulf before me and everything riding roughshod over me, it sometimes comes to that. The disciples thought it had come to that—"Dost Thou not care?" Get up. Does it look well? No, you say, it looks hideous, it looks ugly, it looks as ugly in you, my friend, as it did here. Your unfaithfulness and mine have just the same senseless, ugly look. They should have come and gathered round Him and said, "So long as He does not waken, it is all right; the boat never was built that could sink along with Him, the storm was never brewed that could send Him to the bottom; and if we should get to the bottom, we will walk along the bottom and get to shore that way." It is bound to come right, anyway. No, my friends, all is not lost, and you ought not to go and say, "God, dost Thou not care that I perish?" And may be in the heart of

some young fellow here, there is a great storm of lust and passion, tearing through your flesh and tearing through your soul, and your body is like to go to pieces, body and soul like to be swallowed up in the awful sea of London's iniquity, and sometimes you could almost stand, could not you, and say, "God has forgotten me. God has gone to sleep and left me to stand outside in the city of night, God has shut me out of His regard." My friend, it is not true. You will not perish. If you are trusting in Him ever so little, there shall not a hair of your head perish. Therefore, trust Him more, and no matter how great may be the storm that whistles through your rigging, just say where you sit, "The preacher's right. I am going to trust Jesus Christ, He will see me through. Sin, the world, devil and the flesh are making a tremendous assault upon me, and they have done me a lot of damage. This rope is blown away, and this other timber being sprung a leak, and I am terribly water-logged. I am not at all sound, but I hail the great Pilot of the awful maze. O Christ, I hail Thee. I see Thee walking on the seas. Man ahoy!" Call for Him. Do not perish for lack of a cry, and He will come to you, and He will board your boat, and He will rescue. He will tread the waves into stiffness beneath His feet, and you and He shall be at the land whither you go. Do not fear, brother. Trust Him, sister. Trust Him young or old, rich or poor, especially if you are like to go to pieces. Trust Him, and you will not go to pieces. You will be saved—you will be saved to-day. Your crazy bark is whirling like a nutshell in the sea, but ask Him to be your Saviour, and He will, and according as you trust Him so will be your peace. According to your faith in Him shall be the peace or dispeace of your heart.

"And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Time's up. I want to ask a question. That was a miracle; do you believe it? That is what the Lord asked me before I began to preach. Before I began to preach this subject the Lord whispered in my ear, and said, "Preacher, you are living in the far end of the nineteenth century." "Yes, my Master. What of that?" Then said my Master, "The nineteenth century says that natural law would be interfered with, that when a storm begins to blow it blows out, and when a boat gets full of water it sinks, and drowns the people, and there is no power anywhere to still the tempest and to rescue perishing men. Now," said my Master before I preached it, "preacher," He said to me, "before beginning to preach that miracle, that story of My supernatural self and My supernatural power, do you believe it?" That is the point. Just as well to ask it broad out, "Do you believe it? Do you believe that there is a Being living who can say to the wild, irresponsible wind, 'Peace, be still,' who can say to these ruffian billows, curling their crests down to swamp you, 'Be still'?"

Do you believe it? Well, there are many whose names are great in science who do not believe it and other miracles like it. They talk about "the Gadarean pig affair." Do you believe it? What is the use of standing here and pronouncing the benediction, and letting you off to talk about my sermon and how I got on? That is not the point. Do you believe it? Do you know Him? Have you believed Him? Have you called Him in? That is the point. If He lives, do you know where He lives? Do you know how to get Him for all that He is worth? That is the point. Now some of us know Him. "What manner of Man is this?" We can answer that as the disciples at a later day answered it: "He is the Lord Jesus, the God of heaven and earth, who died for our sins upon the cross, who braved that tempest, and all other tempests are but summer compared with that. He has carried us through that storm of darkness on Calvary, and He will carry us through all others." What manner of Man is it? He is the God-Man, Jehovah. David saw Him in spirit centuries before, when he sang the Psalm, "O Lord God of Hosts, who is like unto Thee, or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves arise Thou stillest them." He is our peace in life, or death, or judgment, or eternity—our peace. Some time ago, on the north-east coast of Scotland, a vessel was overtaken by the night and the storm. She was in danger of being driven on a spit of land there on the lee shore. It was seemingly impossible to weather that spit of land. She must be caught on the rock there. All hope had gone. The master of the vessel was up upon the top, and as he kicked off his sea boots a tear started into his eye as he thought of the brief battle with the waves, the drowning, the sadness that would be in the little town inland when his battered corpse was taken to his widow and his orphan child. But just before the vessel would strike, this old story struck upon his mind, and he thought he would give it a trial. He went down into his cabin, and he was heard crying above the darkness and the storm to this Pilot of the Galilean lake, "O Lord, give us two points, only two points, and we will weather, we will clear." He came up on deck. As he prayed so it happened. The wind had shifted two points. That was all that was needed. You may account for it; scientists may say it was going to shift anyway. That is very feeble. The wind shifted two points. It was all they needed. The boat cleared the spit of land, and soon she rose and fell on the open sea. I believe that. Do you believe this Christ? Do you believe that He has all power, that He is able to calm the sea every day? I believe more than that. I believe that if the prayer had not been heard, if the boat had struck, and if that captain had been drowned, he would only have found the moment his spirit left his water-logged boat he would have found that his prayer had been

answered exceeding abundantly above all that he could ask or think. His soul would have entered into a peace compared with which the peace of a sunlit air or a moonlit sea is a poor symbol and figure indeed. And as for the wife and child, there is nothing that God is better acquainted with than looking after a widow and her children, is there? There would have been no loss, take it any way you please. Commit things into His hands, and then good-bye to fear. "Fear not, I am with thee." When thou walkest through the floods, and the great storms come, in life, or death, or judgment, or eternity, make common cause with Him, and then His destiny is your destiny, for ever and for ever. May the Lord strengthen us by this portion of His own Word. Amen.

### PULPIT PRAYERS.

BY THE REV. DR. CLIFFORD.

#### OPENING PRAYER.

O GOD, Thou art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. Help us that we may worship Thee in the beauty of holiness, that there may be perfect accord between our spirit and Thine. Cleanse, we beseech Thee, the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Spirit, that our service may be truly inward, a service of faith and hope, affection and penitence, of yearning, and of aspiration. Let the outgoings of our soul be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Our life is a continual cry unto Thee. Thou art our soul's true refuge. 'Tis as Thou dost give us Thy strength and quicken us by Thy power, and we become partakers of Thy nature, that our life has worth in it, beauty, nobleness, and serviceableness. Come, then, we beseech Thee, O God, to each one of us. Be not strange to any heart. Let us know Thee, and be so perfectly sure of Thee that our life shall be steadfast with Thy calm and heroic with Thy patience. Hear us, O God! Help us that our worship in all its parts may be of the heart, an acceptable service because inspired by Thyself, and made full of the reality which comes from Thy indwelling. We look for this. We gather together so that we may help one another in realising this blessedness. Be Thou gracious to us, and all will be well.

Amen.

#### PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

OUR Father, Thou hast made known to us that Thy glory is our delight. It is a good thing for us to do honour to Thee. Thou hast heard the voice of our supplication, Thou hast granted unto us the satisfaction of our purest and best desires, and thereby hast created in Thyself a faith that is unshakable, a hope that can never be put out. We give Thee thanks, our Father, because Thou dost bring us into Thy presence: sustained by this expectation and confidence, we rejoice that we are not groping after Thee, if haply we may find Thee, but that in us there is the full assurance of understanding, the full assurance of faith that Thou art, and that Thou art the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Thee. Thou hast made us, and Thou wilt not disappoint us. Thou hast made us to attain to Thine image and likeness, and Thou wilt not be frustrated in Thy great and

glorious purpose, but throughout the ages Thou wilt work at it as Thou hast been working in the past; and though the vessel has dropped again and again out of the Potter's hands, yet Thou hast picked it up, and put it once more to the wheel. Thou art still working, and shalt fashion humanity, so that on it shall be chased all the figures of Thine own beauty and loveliness, and in which shall dwell the essence of Thine own Spirit. Help us, our Father, that, rejoicing in that blessed anticipation, we may be steadfast, immovable, doing the work Thou hast put close to our hand with a confidence that never falters, and with a heroism that never fails before the foe. We give Thee thanks, our God, because Thou dost renew our faith, Thou restorest our soul, Thou leadest us in the paths of righteousness for Thy name's sake, because it is a delight to Thee to see men in righteous paths; and Thou hast no greater joy than in reclaiming the fallen, in setting men on their feet again, with their faces Godward and their hearts full of the great hope. We thank Thee for all the renewals we have experienced. Verily our conflicts between ourselves and our world often damp our ardour and make our zeal to cool, and fill us now and again with despair: but Thou dost come to us in our darkness and gloom, and make even the mockings of our friends and enemies to become helps into Thy presence, and impulses to seek the sight of Thy redeeming, Thy glorious, Thy uplifting countenance. Our Father, we bless Thee that art so good to us. O that we were more grateful, that our hearts were truer in their beat, that there were in us a greater trust in Thyself, and truer consecration to Thy service, assured that the righteous man shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands must become stronger and stronger. O God, speak to doubting and dejected men here this morning the word that is new faith, the word that is new life. Thou listenest to us in our dejection, Thou comest to us when we are on the top of our mounts of transfiguration, Thou wouldst be with us always, not only in the sunnier moods of our life, but in the cold winter of our discontent. Help us, that we may not, by our want of confidence in Thee and Thy redeeming purpose, banish Thee from our hearts, but may give Thee such free access to our souls that there shall be no place in us for anything that is devilish. O God, wilt Thou reward the work that we offer to Thee this day in other hearts yet, and make our labour to be fruitful in other souls? Thou hast put into us the passion of the Cross. Thou hast made Christ's inner yearning for the redemption of mankind our own. We adore Thee for this greatest gift. Thou hast helped us to arm ourselves with His mind, and our deep desire is that Thy kingdom may come, that our fellow-men may know Thee and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent, so that they may know Thee, that they may through Him know more of Thee, Thy character and purpose concerning them. Lord God, give free course to our message and to our life; let it enter the heart that needs it; give it, we beseech Thee, such potency Divine as that it shall be felt to come with the demonstration of the Spirit, and therefore with the power that saves. We thank Thee that Thou dost give unto us Thy Son Jesus Christ, that He is with us to-day as in all the past, and that we may be as sure of Him as Paul was. Wilt Thou accomplish this in any heart that has misgiving and doubt to-day? O divinest Preacher, preach Thou. O Thou, whose Word is Light, always Light, O let Thy Word have full play upon any heart and mind that has doubting and misgiving concerning Thee, so that the rest which Thou offerest to those who sincerely seek Thee may be obtained,

and that strength, without which life cannot be thoroughly and nobly lived, may now come.

Remember the desolate : be Thou their companion. Sit Thou by the bedside of the weary and sad-hearted. Minister Thou of Thy sweet consolation to those in acutest pain. Let hearts that are bereft of earth's joys find the cup of Thy benediction fuller than ever. May those who are wayward and wilful, and will not surrender themselves to Thine authority, see how blessed it is to accept the highest and the best ruling of life, and what peace, what power, what heavenliness, come to such as are in Thy kingdom and Thy kingdom in them.

Remember, we beseech Thee, those who utter no prayer for themselves, whose thoughts about God, if ever they come to them, come as something strange, and perplexing, and irritating, to be got rid of as soon as possible. Father, we beseech Thee, help, so that everywhere man may welcome no thought with so much heartiness as the thought of his God, his Father in heaven revealed in Jesus Christ. O hasten the day when all evil and misleading and mischievous conceptions of Thy character and work shall be banished from our earth, and when nothing but the light which shines from the face of Jesus Christ, and which is in accord therewith, shall beam through the eyes of man into his inmost soul.

We beg this for the sake of lost men, and in the name of Him who came to be the Redeemer of the whole human race. Amen.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER.

O God, our God, the God of our fathers, who didst speak unto men in times past by prophets, who has spoken unto us in these later days by the clear, strong, helpful words of Jesus Christ, speak now ! speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth ! Thou didst speak to Samuel, speak to us, to any heart that is saying, O that I knew where I might find Him, O that I might be sure of Jesus Christ, and thus be sure of God. Father, Thou art our Teacher, we open heart and mind to Thee. Give us Thy blessing : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

There is no possible harmony for a man till there is union between him and the Lord God. The great heaven will be like a vast orchestra—many instruments, and of various kinds, but one great harmony.

God has made all things in the communion of reciprocal use ; all things help one another. It is so with "spirits made perfect ;" were it so here, there would be a commonwealth of happiness.

"They crucified the Son of God afresh." And so it is that if any one is doing what Christ did, and the people around are all ill-treating him, they are crucifying afresh the Son of God.

Has not Christ been thus crucified ever since the world began ; crucified when Isaiah was sawn asunder ; crucified in London to-day ; crucified all the world over ?

Do we ask, What kind of a world is this ? The answer is, It crucified Christ ?

The crucifixion of Christ is a grand expression of two things : the deadly opposedness of sin to goodness ; and of God's love to the uttermost.

## PRAISEWORTHY DISCONTENT.

*Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. ALBERT LEE.

"These all died in faith," &amp;c.—HEB. xi. 13—16.

AN unambitious world an undesirable spectacle, e.g., the African Central States, &c. The mischief of indifference to this world's affairs. Still more to things of godliness.

I. *There is a praiseworthy discontent.*—A sin to be spiritual, mental, or moral lotus-eaters. Instances of what the world owes to a right discontent: improvements in science, &c., &c. No impiety to attempt to better our lot. Bad to be a spiritual "hanger-on." Noble mission of ambition. Caution: not to scowl on world and want to be away.

II. *The true Christian ambition.*—Perfect, like Christ. Therefore to go through this world to better country.

III. *What will the better country be?*—(1) A place of completion of unfinished earthly work. "The New Jerusalem will absorb all that was excellent and heaven-like in the Old." There we reach our best—perfected in Christ. (2) There we regain all that was lost by fall.

IV. *The spirit needed in looking forward.*—(1) Discontent with shortcomings. (2) Discontent to merely gain entrance. Think of an artist of first-rate ability content with mediocrity. (3) Spirit of courage. Courage wanted here for business, &c., especially for Christian fight. "And I must fight, if I would conquer."

## FRAGMENTS.

*Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. W. SEWARD.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."—ST. JOHN vi. 12.

WORTHY of Son of God? (John i. 3; Heb. i. 2, 3), of Christ? of "unsearchable riches?" able to feed 5,000? Yes! For two poles of Creative Providence:—limitless supply—impossibility of waste. Shuddering dread of loss makes Him Saviour. Spirit of His whole work, "Gather up," &c. His words, vital principles. Then, gather up—(1) Fragments of time and powers for service. (2) Of Divine Image in own souls and others. (3) Of own Church's agencies and influence. (4) Of Bread of Life.

I. (a) *Time.*—Increasing, inexorable demands of material side of life, leave time fragmentary. But He accepted widow's mite. Encourages even the most aged to consecrate remainder. (b) Powers, dwarfed by great givers, preachers, workers; societies, "forward movements," &c. But Christ, and world, need ever-present eyes, hearts, tongues, hands, good Samaritans, anointing Magdalens, expounding Philips.

II. *Of Divine Image.*—(a) In own souls. Evidenced by will, purpose, achievement, love, indignation at wickedness, sympathies with right, truth, beauty, goodness. Soul hunger, instinct of sonship, "I will arise,"

&c. (Cf. iii. 3 with text.) (*b*) In others. Scathing world. All with histories, yearnings, struggles, failures. Some backsliders, doubters, many sick of sin, all needing help, example. Some will never be gathered, probably, if not by ourselves. Would be better workers than we, *e.g.*, comparison of Peter and Andrew.

III. *Church Agencies.*—On the one hand, proportion of non-attendants and lukewarm hearers to faithful few on the other. "Free lances." Are individual time and talents. Fragments, Church will "gather them up," discover, develop, afford field.

IV. *Of Bread of Life.*—Comment briefly on verses 27, 33, 35, 38—40, 56, 57.

## MAKING LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

### *Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. R. BREWIN.

"But they made light of it, and went their ways."—ST. MATT. xxii. 5.

IN the parable from which these words are taken, we have a very pleasant picture of the Gospel of Christ. It is compared to a Royal Marriage Festival, not to: (*a*) A funeral, where the real sorrow of the few overshadows all with gloom. (*b*) A famine, where possibly some food, but scarce. *Illus.*—Long voyage; last biscuits served out. Besieged city: poor family; thin slices. (*c*) A common meal, with merely plain and sufficient food. But to: (1) A feast: food rich, various, and more than abundant. (2) A marriage feast. Christ gives joy as well as satisfaction. Christ at Cana of Galilee. (3) A royal marriage feast; "a certain king," difference in food, servants, company, accessories—music, &c., cost. Caligula's great banquet. Coronation of English sovereigns. (4) For us. Crowd round doors of banqueting hall. No invitation to enter. We are all invited. (5) It is ready, see Prov. ix. 1, 2. London banquet. Hundreds assembled. Caterer had forgotten the day; nothing ready. No disappointment here. Notwithstanding all this great provision, however—

Proposition I.—Many persons to whom the Gospel invitation is sent make light of it, and go their ways. Even to-day. Who are they? (1) Those who will not listen to the message (Matt. xiii. 15). Letters returned, "Refused." Ancient steel armour in Tower. Arrows of truth blunted; sword of the Spirit glances off. Inattentive hearers. (2) Those who hear the Gospel with attention, and then treat it as though they had not heard it. "Is it nothing to you?" An Indian heard Gospel thirteen times. Cut notch in tree. Self-reproach. "Not yet saved." If twenty-one years old, have had three years of sabbaths, 42 six years. (3) Those who promise to come, but never come, see Matt. xxi. 28—31. "I go, sir, but went not": some hearers' lives one life-long promise—broken. (4) Those who make excuses for their absence; an excuse is a polite lie. God is not deceived. They said they could not come; He wrote (ver. 3) "They would not come." You do not want to come. (5) Those who intend to fill themselves with the pleasures of sin first, and come to Christ last of all. Felix: Lord convert me, but not

now. All these persons make light of Christ, and of His great salvation. Are we among them?

Proposition II.—To make light of Christ and of His salvation is unwise, unkind, and unsafe. (1) It is unwise; are the blessings of salvation worthless; are they not of infinite value; is Christ a friend to be refused, despised; is there any other way of salvation? (2) It is unkind; has Christ thus made light of you? Ye know the grace, &c. A prodigal son robs his employers £5,000. To save him, his father sells all he has, becomes poor to pay the debt. Is such self-sacrifice a thing to be made light of? Love of Christ. (3) It is unsafe, Heb. iii. 3; no other name. Conclusion. What will you do? Message waits. Will you come in?

## CHRIST OUR LIFE.

### *Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. P. MEARNS.

“To me to live is Christ.”—PHIL. i. 21.

PAUL looked at both worlds. On his way to Damascus, the Lord appointed his mission. Suddenly his eyes were opened to see the littleness of time and the greatness of eternity; and from that time his whole soul was bent on the accomplishment of his mission. Christ’s will must rule. “What wilt Thou have me to do?”

I. *Christ is the source of our life.*—John (i. 4) said, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” We are quickened by his grace—instrument His Word and Spirit.

II. *The support of our life.*—“I live,” said Paul, “and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me.” He is the vine from which the vital sap circulates to all the branches. He who drinks of water from Christ shall never thirst.

III. *The rule of our life.*—Good men set example, not perfect. Jesus said, “I have set example, do as I have done.” Holiness is attractive in His life, as even unrenewed men own His life a moral wonder in a sinful world. We are sanctified by the Spirit, but Jesus is our pattern. By His atonement He opened the way to life, and by His example He has shown us the Divine attributes which we are to imitate, if we would enter into holy happiness. Run, “looking to Jesus.”

IV. *The motive of our life.*—Jesus said, “I, if lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” The cross moves as nothing else does. It has stirred the depths of emotion in the human heart, and has moved even feeble women to daring and self-denial.

V. *Christ is the aim of our life.*—We yield to the motive, and make His honour and advancement of his cause our aim. Not rapture of hour—record of life. Praise by lives—a daily psalm. Do all in His name.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for July 13: LUKE xiv. 15—24. Golden Text: LUKE xiv. 15.*

### THE GREAT SUPPER.

JESUS was in a Pharisee's house, and it was the Sabbath Day, when He told this parable. He tells them that a certain man—(God Himself)—made a great supper. The great supper was the offer of salvation through Christ; and the servants who were to bid men come in to supper were apostles and now ministers. Their message was: "Come, for all things are now ready." All the invited guests with one consent began to make excuses. These excuses were very untrue and foolish. Two of the men made their worldly possessions an excuse. One made his wife the excuse. The real reason was, they were indifferent about this great supper. All these people refused the offer of salvation; they put the world first of all. Then the parable tells how the host sent out to the hedges and highways for the poor and the maimed and the blind, so that He might have guests. They accepted the invitation. This means that the general Gospel invitation came first to the Jews, because they were God's chosen people; and when they refused to accept it, it was preached to the Gentiles. Do you think people have done with making excuses to our Lord's invitation. The Lord has invited every one of us to come to His supper. His attitude is continually one of invitation. "Come, come, for all things are now ready." There is nothing lacking that any hungry, thirsty soul can need. But how often does His kind invitation meet with excuses. Some children think that if they became Christians it would make them gloomy, and they would have to give up all life's pleasures. So they give that as their excuse. But it is a false one, for none is so happy as a Christian. There is no true, lasting happiness at all away from God.

Another excuse is that at some other time this invitation will be accepted, but not just now. Mr. Moody tells us that when he was a boy he thought he would put off being a Christian till he came to die. He thought if he had consumption, or some lingering disease, he would have plenty of time to become one, and in the meantime he would enjoy the best of the pleasures of the world. But, he says, that was one of the devil's lies. Make not delay in accepting salvation. Another excuse is that "time is precious, and we have no time to spare." But to accept this invitation is more important than anything else in the world. What has to be done with all the excuses is to bundle them up and label them "Satan's lies." If you want an excuse, Satan will always find one ready for you. But do not make light of God's loving invitation, but hasten to accept it.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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## THE ARROW OF THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE.

*A Sermon by*

THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF RIPON.

“And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria.”—2 KINGS xiii 17.

ELISHA was a prophet, and as a prophet there fell to him the duty, as it has been the duty of prophets in all ages, of witnessing to the Divine order. And he might bear witness to that order either by prophetic utterances or by the stronger and wider utterances of a life lived according to that order, and this I think is pre-eminently one of the characteristics of Elisha's life, that he is a constant witness to the people of his age, that it is possible for man to live a life animated by and under the government of that lived by Divine order. But there is a natural result to all this. Any man who witnesses to a higher order of life than those around him becomes a test to his contemporaries. You cannot meet with a man, for example, who lives up to a higher order than your own, without feeling a consciousness of shame; as you meet with him his very life seems to rebuke the low level of your own; “I feel ashamed of myself when I meet him.” That is to say it is in the very nature of lives so lived to put other men's lives to the test. This, I think, is the interest of the scene before us. Elisha is seen as a prophet now passing away, but as a prophet exercising his functions to the last, teaching and testing the new generation. It is perfectly true, of course, that the scene has an interest and picturesqueness of its own. It is always interesting to watch the point at which the old and the new meet—the old generation coming into contact with the new, like the meeting of the morning of the new day with the evening of the old; east and west are mingling their breath, but the question arises whether this mingling will bring about the dawning of a new day. How does the old appear in the light of the new? It is the new and the old day meeting, but it is more: it is like a planet seen when it crosses the face of the sun, bright in itself when seen against the dark, but now when tested by the brilliant light of the sunshine, appearing itself to be dark.

We have a picture of the old generation in contact with the new. In it we see the old testing the new, and the old also teaching the new. What about the test? It is always interesting to watch the

attitude with which the new confronts the old. It is a hard thing for a young life to feel that the energy of life and its new throbbing thought is a thing that is to be cast away, out of deference to what seems to be the somewhat fossilised opinions of those who are passing away, but for that reason it is a grand thing still to see that young life is capable of fastening itself on to the old. It is never good when a man believes that he starts his own life *de novo*. It is perfectly true, as has been said by one who has been the leader of a certain kind of thought, that the new generation must always be treated as independent, coming in fresh, and by no means the prisoner of the past. Of course, there is truth in that. Every man must in one sense measure his existence from the hour of his birth, but no man is wise and no man will fulfil his function in the world, and the highest destiny which is possible for him, unless he believes that his life is the outgrowth of the past. Continuity is, after all, to be preserved; and as continuity is to be preserved it is so because the true law of all progress is the law, not of added increments, but of growth of living things that make progress, growing from stage to stage; growth is the protection and preservation of vitality. Therefore, it is never well when we see the new shaking itself too quickly from the old, and failing to view with reverence the law of life and growth, for this is a law which we can understand. Science teaches us in the slow growth of all things around us that we must hold by continuity with the past. It is the same also, I think, with nations as it is with individuals. For it is wise that the growth of races, and the growth of nations should have their days and their years, bound each to each by a kind of natural piety. In that light the fifth commandment comes to have a deep significance. It is no passing homage of a few acts of reverence and honour done to parents, but the spirit of the commandment reminds us that we cannot really outwork the full measure of our strength, but in proportion as we gather into ourselves the powers of the past, and enter upon our own life with reverence to it.

This comes before us in the scene, and, if you were to measure the hopes of Joash's life from the attitude which he holds towards the old man, I think you will say that everything promises well. Here is one in whose heart and mind the instinct of hero-worship is very strong. When he comes into the old man's presence, it is not simply a frail, dying man he sees before him, but he reads behind that frail form all the history and heroisms of the past. Elisha is to him the man whose energy has quickened the hopes of Israel, rescued her from defeat, and driven back her foes. Behind him he sees far more than the mere life that is passing away; he sees energy which, if it can be preserved, would be the salvation of Israel, and therefore he breaks out in the utterance, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

This man, then, you will say, is not a man who is likely to enter upon his duties in life, and recklessly and hastily destroy all memory of the past. His instinct of hero-worship is strong enough to enable him to preserve the continuous life of the people, and gently to nourish it into new vigour. But the old prophet was not satisfied. He knows very well that some of the highest instincts of life may proceed from faulty sentiments within. This thing, this hero-worship, for instance, glorious and good when it means a door of entering in with reverence into the past deeds of great men, may of itself be a mere sentiment. Joash's pride may be born of a

kind of nebulous sentiment towards great men and their works, or it may be that it springs out of a weakness which shrinks from its own personal responsibility, and would fain keep Elisha with him to save him the trouble of asserting himself; or it might spring from cowardice, as that a man should be willing enough to admire, but not willing enough to act; or it might spring from something deeper still, from a total absence of all power of spiritual insight, as that he was relying upon Elisha and saw not the heavenly light and the heavenly power of which Elisha was the manifestation, and therefore the misgiving is in the heart of Elisha, and he would fain test this young man's ardour and would see of what metal he was; in his hand was the full direction of the destinies of Israel, and he would put him to the test. And the scene is the test. When the cry has gone from Joash's lips, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horse-men thereof!" the old prophet waives aside all compliment, and bids him "seize the bow and arrow, to open the window, the foes lie to the eastward; to grasp the bow and let fly the arrow"; and you know what happened. After letting fly the arrow of the Lord's deliverance from the open window eastward towards Syria, he was to prove his metal by striking upon the ground. Having struck thrice, he stayed with a hesitating self-consciousness, waiting for some gesture or fresh directions from the prophet, and the old man was wroth. He had applied the test, and the king had failed to bear it, and he saw weakness written there.

But you may be tempted to say, that is hard, what a trifling thing this that a man should take up a single incident in a room, and make it the test of a man's life and character, and try to forecast his destiny by what he had done with it. Nay, nay, but surely you will agree with me that trifles do test character, nothing is a greater mistake than to suppose that a thing is little because it is little in its circumstances. Things are very seldom little, because nearly all our actions, and nearly all our conduct is a signification of character, and small things test, because it is not experience, not knowledge which is being tested, but just this, character. You may see a man's character by the way he walks down the street, by the manner of his answering a question, by his way of commenting on a picture. There is something which is bringing the character to the test, and we hear and see that these do reveal a man's character, for what was it that was brought out? There are two things which the old prophet knew well were absolutely essential as characteristics and qualifications, if Joash was to fulfil the high destiny which was before him. There was waiting for him a great and glorious work. Israel's condition was one of distress; the enemy had thrust back the frontiers of the kingdom, the army had been reduced at the imperious command of the foe; everything pointed to this, the weakening of Israel's forces. The prophetic guidance which Elisha was thrusting upon Joash was to confront the difficulties and out-work the kingdom's salvation, and two things were absolutely necessary. There mingles in all great men's characters who are capable of achieving high things two elements—the one prosaic, the other poetic. If a man has not the prosaic element of determination to do everything thoroughly down to the minutest details, all his imagination will wither in his hand. He needs to have another thing, a certain poetical disposition, the gift of a divinely-wrought imagination, that sees that his work is a glorious one, that does not treat it as though it were commonplace, but watches beyond the work he has to do

and sees the splendid significance of its import. In the general history of the world, in acts and purposes, these two things have always mingled. In really the highest of men, in the world's great men, you can see a spirit of thoroughness, for that after all may be tested by the most earthly considerations. Trifles are trifles, but they may test a man's thoroughness. "What have you done to your statue since I saw it last?" said one to Michael Angelo. "I have given a fuller curve to this limb, greater flexibility to the mouth, and greater fire to the eye," was the reply. "But these are trifles," said the other; "Trifles they are," was the old man's answer; "but in trifles lie perfection, and perfection is no trifle." It is the spirit of thoroughness in going down to the minutest detail which gives a man the power of bringing his work to this perfection. "You have finished your work," said one to Gibson; "No, I shall work two months more upon it." Two months more was the sculptor's answer. It lies upon the surface of things that a man cannot achieve practical work unless he has the prosaic instinct that does not shrink from the drudgery of it. This Joash has not. Is there thoroughness in this man who draws the bow feebly thrice, and looks round for instruction. But he lacks more; he lacks the glorious power of imagination; he does not see what his work means; he does not realise all that the old prophet has put before him. A man who can only look at his life and see only its dry details from day to day, and see no glory, no sanctity, no divinity in it will never do work with that high spirit which carries him by the very rapture of its intensity through the world. Like Thorwaldsen, forgetful of his night's rest because he is absorbed in the glory which is glowing not merely before his imagination, but his imagination working itself out in this form; like Newton, forgetful of his food in the thrill of delight with which he watches the unfolding of the problems before him; there is always a touch of this rapture, or, to put it more truly, this spirituality about great men's works.

This Joash had not. Conspicuously he failed here, for do you not mark, there never could have been a moment in a man's life when circumstances were more calculated to stimulate this high imagination, and to draw him into a rapturous thought of the glorious work he had to do. Death was at his side. There is a solemnity about death at all times, and it was death looking out from those eyes that had made the foes of Israel to quail before. And so, here, with the old hero taking the strong healthy hands of the king into his pale trembling ones, and selecting him there in the hour of death for that glorious work, what young mind would not have taken fire at the thought that he was selected to carry on a work which was so great and so noble? But more than that, patriot at heart, he felt that the kingdom was in strait; her frontiers were pushed back, her resources had been attenuated. But now, as the prophet consecrates him to the work of deliverance, there will surely rush upon him the vision of his work, and fill him full of a kind of strong rapture and interest in it. But more; here the old man touches the true divine thought, and he tells that in his hand—in Joash's, not Elisha's—there is an arrow which carries victory with it, the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. And as these words fall upon his ears, there will rise up before his imagination, the glories that were still possible to Israel. "The Lord's deliverance"—this God who lifted Israel in His arms and carried Him out of Egypt, this God who struck a way through the Red Sea for His chosen; who lifted high the Shekinah before

the eyes of the people in the wilderness, who broke down the strong walls of Jericho, who enabled David to overcome Goliath with the sling and the stone, and encompassed His prophet Elijah with the flaming chariots of His heavenly protection, inspired with terror and put to flight the Syrians, or darkened their eyes and set them as captives in the streets of Samaria against their will—this God is to be my God with me at this moment. He must have had a feeble imagination who did not feel that he was driven into a high and rapturous vision of the work that lay before him, and who, oblivious of the circumstances around him, grasped the arrow and smote it upon the ground as though his foes were at his feet, not pausing till the voice that bade him smite called to him to stay. But there was no rapture in that man's character, no power of investing his work with a splendid and spiritual-born imagination, and, therefore, the old man was wroth. Self-consciousness, a weak dependence upon others, the eye askance to see how far he may go, a feebleness within the mind, are his, and no power of living by the power of individual heroism and individual devotion. Such is the test, and he failed. Every hour of our life is tested like this. The test was not merely a test, remember, which ended its significance in the prophet's dying chamber, it is the forecast of his life. There was a certain self-restraint, a certain decorous energy, shall I say, about Joash. But he never attained to the dignity of kingly greatness; he was never to be written among the large men of Israel; only a kind of second-rate power breathed through him. His life was tested, and the drama of it forewritten from that scene of rehearsal, and there comes a time to all of us when we are so tested, when we are brought face to face and in close contact with some spiritual powers, some glowing imagination which rises out of the past glorious deeds of others, which bring us to the test. You have all felt it. Pardon me if I say you cannot come into this city, instinct with so many memories of the past, and not feel that your imagination is stirred, and that you see it peopled with the glorious men of old, that you hear, as it were, from these very stones, of those who were in their day the chariots of our Israel and the horsemen thereof. If so, this very place and its memories and associations is putting your power to the test; here, where perchance the feet of Dante have trod, where honest Latimer glorified God in flames, where Keble and Ker have sung their songs, where Arnold and Mozley have lectured; here, you might see there are visions for your eyes, voices for your ears, and if you have seen these things, and felt in the hour when you are called upon to enter into contact with them, that your heart has taken fire with a glowing imagination, has set before you that grand past that you all have been inclined to cry, "the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof," then you too have been brought to the test, and your character here is being tested and out of it may be written largely the forecast of your life. The chamber wherein inspirations come and high imaginations are born, is the testing chamber to everyone. You may say, as men do say, well, trifles again; may not a man fail in the rehearsal who may do well when the real life of activity comes? He may do so, but I beg you to remember that Macready set himself against all such opinions as that. "You are wrong," he said to the actors, "if you fail in rehearsal, you will hardly do well when the play night comes." You are tested in rehearsal here. The sword may snap when it is tested at Woolwich. I think you would not have liked to have trusted such a sword in the day of

battle. A place like this where every wall and every stone speaks of those who are gone is calling you to the test, the test whether your admiration of the great and good which is undoubtedly there is the admiration of sentiment, or the admiration of imitation. I can imagine that some may like to decorate their rooms with the busts of heroes, and doubtless the portrait of warrior and saint look well upon the walls, but unless he hears their voices calling him to act, unless the old prophet's power comes, and makes him seize the bow and arrow, with energy and glorious imitation, I think their voices and their faces have called and looked in vain. Would you not rather be Philistines, who knew no power of response to such voices as these, than a mere æsthetic admirer of past heroisms, without having the spirit and energy to follow in the way in which they led? For, believe me, the saints would start out of their graves and reproach you if you only gave them the homage of your tears, and did not rise up at their bidding, and seize whatever was at hand and, let fly against the foes, the real sins, the vices of a real world.

But the prophet is not merely one to test, but also one to teach. It is an easy thing, perhaps, for us to look with a certain amount of interest upon the point of contact between the old and the new. It is a great thing to see the spirit of hero-worship, reverence, regard, and admiration on the part of the young generation for the old. It is also something to watch what is the attitude of the old towards the young. How does the old generation look towards the coming one, for it is a very hard thing, I take it, to grow old gracefully, and none altogether welcome those who must occupy their seats and discharge their duties when they are gone. It is so easy, and so tempting also, to treat the young generation with cynical remarks and disparaging comparisons, and to damp their young ardour by telling them that the new generation have not got either the persistency or the power of the old. It is so easy to make a merit of our past services, and to throw contempt upon the efforts of the young. There is nothing of that sort in Elisha's reception of Joash. There is the deepest and strongest sympathy. He enters with interest into the new duties and responsibilities of those who are left behind, though he will never see these things. His heart, his God-stirred heart, his patriot heart is alive to the duties and responsibilities which are falling upon Joash. He does not treat Joash to a grumble or a snarl at the world he is leaving. He does not thrust his withered hand under the pillow and bring out some MS. of memoirs which are instinct with cynical and disappointed egotism, but he rather turns with warmest sympathy and interest to the young Joash. "Take arrows." What memories are strong in his mind? You cannot understand his teaching, you cannot understand his interest in Joash, unless you remember that the words with which he greeted him are just the words to stir up a thousand memories and associations of the past. His sympathy is revealed in the fact that these words he now hears are the words with which he once addressed Elijah; to hear them again wakened his sympathy; he knew what it was to come face to face with the day when the man that he had looked upon as the champion and saviour of Israel was about to be taken away. He knew the blank despair with which he was tempted to contemplate the departure of Elijah, and he, too, had said: There is passed from us to-day the chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof. Therefore, when he hears the young man come to him

with the cry he uttered in his young days, his heart is aglow with sympathy. His is no vanity which is pleased with being so treated as the defender of Israel, he has nothing like the mere vanity of old age in his mind, but he has this: "How shall I teach this young man the lessons which I learned after I had gone through the like experience, and had felt the dark despair come upon my heart?"

He teaches him, and what is the lesson he teaches? It is this simple one, to realise himself and to realise God. If you will have it so, I will put it in the other form—realise your life and your power, his life and power in God. There are only three important things, and the way in which you bring these into contact will be the way in which your life will be marked and measured—one is yourself, another is the world with its duties, the third is God overhead. The world has to be faced. Face it as a man, and as a man conscious of your responsibility. Take up arrows, and shoot against the foe that lies before you; but as man, show that man's strength is only perfected in consciousness of your God. How does he teach him that? He teaches him the duty of becoming conscious of himself by simply ignoring the cry, "Thou art the chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof," and saying in effect, "Take arrows," do not regret the past, do not mourn over those who are gone, be like a man, set to your work and grasp these arrows, think no more of flowers which are fading, but of duties which are coming. Take arrows, and think of the God who can make all your efforts strong, for the power of God which rested upon me is in your hand; though I be a prophet and you a warrior king, this arrow which is in your hand, this arrow which I consecrate to Him, shall be to you the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. Realise God, realise yourself with your duty, and your duties towards the world. Realise God as the Power with which those duties shall be fulfilled." That, after all, is the simple lesson of almost the whole of religion. I open the Bible, and I find it there. What is it that this writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells me? He tells me the power with which men obtained victories, and achieved exploits in the world was this, the faith which had the insight to understand that God was with them, and faith that had also the activity of personal energy and personal self-assertion. The heroes of faith, as we know from the glory-roll, in the 12th of Hebrews were men of insight; they endured as seeing Him who is invisible, they were men of action and obedience, they went out, not knowing whither they went, they scorned death, and obeyed God. The man that can see God in his life, and do duty in God's strength, is the man who has laid hold of the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and that man is strong. What says our Master Himself? If ye abide in Me, if your hearts are open to the heavenly vision, and My words abide in you, you realise the active duties of life, and a life which is a life of obedience and faith is also a life of power. Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done. And in doing that, the prophet sets before him these two things, the insight to see the power of God, and action to discharge the duties of life, and in doing that he lays his hand upon two errors which tremble in the heart of Joash. These are two mistakes we are constantly tempted to make. We believe the world will be regenerated by a resuscitation of the past, or we fondly hope it may be regenerated by the development of novelties in the future. Both are mistakes. If your instinct is what I would call an antiquarian instinct, you

often stand and look regretfully upon the past, and say as Joash did.—Oh that these men who were the chariots of Israel and horsemen thereof were alive with us to-day. Would—so we fondly cry—would that when men's minds are upset that we had something like the mother-wit of a Paley, would that we had the profundity and the observing genius of a Butler, would that we had the splendid piety and marvellous eloquence of men like Lancelot Andrews and Jeremy Taylor. We are always standing in the chamber of death, and wishing that these heroes were back again. We believe somehow that the resuscitation of the past would be the regeneration of the present. It is a mistake. Elisha waives the man away from that thought. It is not in heroes, but in God—for no man was heroic in his age. We call them heroes, we look back as we understand the circumstances; they were but men and women struggling in the contest and winning even in the very feelings of despair. Why, what was it that one of our own prophets told us? What is wanted to make a hero is not a great soul, but simply a God-begotten soul that is true to its own origin.

That is what Elisha is teaching him. Do not mourn and regret over the past, live in the present, seize your duties, don't wish for the prophets to be back again, but be yourself prophetic in the way you face life; don't ask that other men shall come back and do the work God has put into your hands to do, but do it yourself. There is no victory, no regeneration of the present in the mere resuscitation of the past, for the world is regenerated not by the things either of the past, or present, or future, but by the things which are neither past, present, nor future, but all of these, because it is only regenerated by things which are eternal. Therefore he waives him away from the thought also that the world can be regenerated by some novelty within the future. How does he do that? If you look you will see that the two lessons which he teaches, the realising of self and the realising of God, are exactly the lessons which he himself learnt in the day when he was baptized in the vision of God for his ministry. The condition by which he was told he would be called to a prophet's office was this,—If thou hast the power of insight thou shalt be a prophet, if thou seest Me and the vision of flaming chariots that surround Me, then it shall be so, and a double portion of My spirit shall fall upon thee. And when he came to the Jordan, he asserted himself by smiting the waters into action. These two things were borne into his memory, the key of insight which is the consciousness of God, and the key of power which is the assertion of self in action. And here was the old man on his death-bed communicating to the young man of the new generation the old things that he had learnt at the outset. Nothing comes to alter the eternal laws or the eternal principles of life. It is a fond thing when we imagine that discoveries that will appeal to the intellect will come and regenerate the life and heart of human kind. I do not believe it. You never transcend the past and commonplace things of life. The mathematician never goes beyond the axioms which he learnt in the first book of Euclid, and neither do men ever go beyond the simple things which lie at the plot of all life—whether the life of a Moses, or the life of a Socrates, or the life of the present day—I mean the sweet laws of love and sympathy, and friendship and kindness. These are eternal things, because they flourish with beauty over every age and every generation of mankind. And therefore it is true also with moral and spiritual things. You cannot transcend the ten con-

mandments. Do as you will with your theology, you will hardly get beyond the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments. These things will abide, and they are powers. This consciousness of God which we grasp when we understand our creed, and this duty towards the world, and towards ourselves—the duty of being something and doing something in the world which we grasp when we understand the ten commandments, these remain and these abide with us, and it is in the vigorous living up to what we possess in the present that we shall be able best to regenerate that present, for by thus doing you bring the eternal to bear upon the present crises and the present difficulties of life. So sang those men who understood, who were gifted with the power of insight:—

As the bird trims her to the gale,  
So I trim myself to the storm of time ;  
I man the rudder and reef the sail,  
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime.

That is his lesson, that the power of life lies in grasping the eternal realities, not in a vague and vagrant way whimpering over departed and past glories, nor in an indolent way, looking for new revelations and deliverance from some unknown source.

What then is the lesson to be drawn? I think it is this, that we often live in sore straits because we will forget God. If our minds grow confused, if often the things which seem to be most sacred, are stripped and reft of their power, is it not because we have allowed the power to go out of them? You look at these things as if they were dying Elishas, and you cry for chariots and horsemen. But remember the power of God alone can make them life to your souls. You look at the churches and say they are disintegrating and dissolving about us. And so they may. They may dissolve and disintegrate to the man who merely looks upon them from the point of view of what I shall call history, but to the man who looks upon them from the vital side, and sees eternal elements in them, these things will live; you must bring God into all these things, or they will not live. And therefore it is that His curse goes out even against the most sacred things, because we have erected them into substitutes for Himself. The brazen serpent was the symbol of deliverance till the day came when they made it a substitute for God, then it was taken and bruised under foot, and called but a thing of brass. The heroes and the saints of old, and all those who in their past work or writings have left us glorious legacies, were great, but you and I must remember that the power which made them great was God's Spirit which was within.

Therefore, let me leave this last word with you. When men say, and say perhaps in a tone which provokes an echo in your own heart, "Your creeds are dead, your churches are dying, and your social order is passing away," my answer is, "Yes, your creeds may be dead to the man who cannot see, as I have said, God's light streaming through it; they are dead to the man who treats it as a thing to be cavilled at or criticised, or a man who degrades it to the level of a fetish." It is dead, but to the man who sees God in it, it lives, for creeds are methinks like windows, only good when the light of heaven is passing through them. And if you say your churches are dying, I say they may be dying to those who have no power of insight, but to those who see one moving amidst the candlesticks they know that they may yet live and burn with a quenchless flame. If you say your social

order is disintegrating and withering, I say it may be so to those who cannot see how over the chaos of all time the divine Spirit moves to bring forth fresh order and new life.

Therefore unto your hands to-day, as I speak these final words, I would fain give the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. The God who made Moses and Elisha strong is your God also. "I believe in God the Father"—this is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. The creeds which nourished the heart of St. Paul, of St. Athanasius, of St. Augustine and St. Bernard are with us to-day, and there is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance to men who can use them aright. The same Spirit which breathed into the hearts of men and made them strong, who unfolded, for instance, to John the glorious vision of the future and the triumphs of the Church, and the establishment of the Divine order, the Spirit which unfolded to John Bunyan the progress of the pilgrim and his rest in the heavenly city, the Spirit which gave sanctity to the lives of Bishop Jackson and Bishop Wordsworth, and by its indwelling power transformed the life of Gordon into a splendid poem of the nineteenth century, is with us to-day. This is the arrow of the Lord's deliverance; take it in your hands, no more let idle regrets enter into your minds, throw open the window, let in all light, face the foe, let fly the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and behold, though the foes may be gathering never so darkly, there in the East-ward, behind all, you will be able to see the streaks coming down of God's ampler and more glorious day, seen only by those who grasp the arrow of the Lord's deliverance.

#### ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

*Sunday, July 13, 1890.*

THE GREAT SUPPER.

ST. LUKE XIV. 15—24.

"A GREAT SUPPER."—To understand the ideas and arrangements of an Oriental feast, such as is here described, we must banish altogether any notions derived from a Western entertainment. A feast in the East is really a public, not a private and social, gathering. It is rarely given, excepting on some special occasion, such as a marriage, or the birth of a son, or at the conclusion of the harvest or the vintage. It is quite distinct from the entertainment of strangers or friends, when a kid or a lamb suffices for the feast, and the host waits on his guests, as Abraham did when he received the angels at Mamre. On the greater occasion, when a calf or a bullock is to be slain, the number of the guests is very large, since the whole of the food must be consumed on the day when the animal is killed, the Orientals never attempting to keep any flesh over night. Preparations are made some days in advance, and the coming feast is announced to the whole neighbourhood. The Arab or the Syrian to-day strictly observes the Mosaic injunction, "Thou shalt not . . . shut thine hand from thy poor brother," and takes care to feed the hungry.

\* From the *American Sunday School Times*.

"HE SENT FORTH HIS SERVANT."—No distinction of social rank is regarded in the invitations; but very marked distinctions are made in the relative position of the guests when they arrive, and the placing of them in their proper places is one of the most important duties of the host. The intending guests having been apprised, some days before, of the coming feast, servants are again sent, on the morning of the day, to remind those who have been invited; and the omission of this second summons would be a grievous breach of etiquette, equivalent to a cancelling of the previous more general invitation. To refuse the second summons would be an insult, which among the Arab tribes is equivalent to a declaration of war. I may give an illustration of this feeling. I had been travelling under the escort of the Adwan, and, arriving at the frontier of their territory, had to pass to the Beni Sakk'r, with whom I was already on very friendly terms. A portion of their tribe was encamped very near the boundary line. The Adwan declined to cross, but sent me alone to their old rivals, with whom they were then on terms which may be called an armed neutrality. They sent with me a sheep, which I was told was for my own use only. The sheikh of the Beni Sakk'r, when he saw it, quietly observed, "I shall kill this sheep, and bid the Adwan feast with us to-night. If they do not come, they wish for war, and they shall soon have it." A messenger was accordingly despatched at once, and a second at nightfall. Happily, peaceful counsels prevailed, and the old foes feasted together in my honour.

"GO . . . INTO . . . HIGHWAYS AND HEDGES, AND CONSTRAIN THEM."—At such a feast nothing could be more dishonouring than that the place of entertainment should not be filled. Hence the summons was sent out into the streets and lanes of the city, and then into the highways and hedges, to those who, having no settled home, wanderers and outcasts, could not have previously received an invitation. These would, of course, be provided, on entering, with an upper garment, or white cloak, which would conceal their rags, and enable them to present themselves without humiliation. The provision of an upper garment for each guest is now rarely practised. I only once met with an instance, and that was at a Jewish wedding feast in Hebron, where the father of the bride, a wealthy man, supplied a cloak to each guest as he passed the threshold. We accepted one, to conceal the peculiarity of our European costume, but the better dressed friends simply expressed their thanks and passed on.

The most powerful things are invisible things. Many believe in a cannon which they can see; but they do not believe in a principle which is ten thousand times more powerful than a cannon. They cannot believe in the spirit of being crucified; of doing good with no immediate prospect of getting gain.

The world is one, and every atom is a kinsman to every other atom. Every plant has its diversities in unity. Every rock has a lesson about itself; and it has a lesson about the structure of the globe.

"Whom resist steadfast in the faith." Though there were no devil, this we know, evil is; and it is in you and in me. And it is a dastardly, proud, and cruel spirit; yes, evil is real and deadly. But let us rejoice that in our fight against evil we have a Champion in the fight through whom we may overcome.

## THE ASCENSION.

## Outline Sermon.

BY THE REV. H. J. FOSTER, LIVERPOOL.

“And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”—ACTS i. 9.

(1) SEEN *from heaven*, what a spectacle (Ps. xxiv.). Seen *from earth*, how quietly done. “That the finish of the most important episode of earth’s history, the sojourn of God incarnate.”

(2) *Apostles, in their teaching, make as little of the Ascension; Resurrection—almost everything.* Why? Because, as in our life “in Christ,” character of new life fixed at resurrection. Heavenly, “on its way to God,” from that point. Then change of residence a very little matter.

(3) *Visible departure*, not vanishing, or simple non-return after last visit. Why? To make vivid all truths dependent on His presence in heaven, e.g.:—

(a) Heaven real and interesting. Cf. An Indian town, mere name before; but real and interesting now that elder brother gone to live there.

(b) Man may enter heaven, where God-Man led way. (c) Pledge of His return, for us. (d) High priest seen to pass within the veil. (e) Gift of Spirit.

## PATCHES.

## Outline Sermon.

BY THE REV. W. H. RICHARDS, FARNHAM, SURREY.

“No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.”—MARK ii. 21.

INTRODUCTION.—By this homely illustration Christ teaches a great truth as to the purpose of His coming, and the nature of His religion. He came, not to patch up, but to re-create. This truth applies:—

I. *To those who would patch up the old system of the law, with the new moral truth in the Gospel:—*(1) *The Pharisees, &c., in Christ’s time* would gladly have done this. But new truth, as new life, must create its own new forms and channels. (2) *In Paul’s time* his Galatian converts were tempted to make this mistake. (3) *In our time*, Roman Catholics, Ritualists, and all who trust partly in forms and ceremonies, and partly in Christ.

II. *To those who would patch up systems of human philosophy or of heathen religion, by incorporating some of Christ’s teaching.*

III. *To those who would patch up humanity, by means of improved social arrangements.*

IV. *To those who are seeking to find salvation through patching up their own righteousness.* (1) Those who try to improve their reputation, remaining at heart as bad as ever. (2) Those who depend on self-improvement. (3) Those who expect Christ to improve them, not to regenerate them. (4) Those who try to improve themselves first, intending to come to Christ afterwards.

## PULPIT PRAYERS.

BY THE REV. DR. JOHN PULSFORD.

O GOD, the Father of our spirits—not the Creator, the Father, for Thou hast begotten our spirits, our spirits are offspring of Thy Spirit, and the children should know the Father, and, because they are children, they are capable of knowing Him; for, being from Him, He is in their spirits, the intelligence and the life of their spirits—O God, our Father, Thou hast been fearfully hidden and disguised and caricatured by men who only think of Thee through their sins and unworthinesses, as though we judged of the sun when the sun is all hidden and the light only comes struggling through dark and angry clouds. O Lord, it is joy to us that Thou hast revealed Thyself, which Moses did not do, nor the prophets, for they were not able. There was too much of the lurid sun-cloud about their souls to know Thee or to see Thee. Only Thy Son, Thy perfect Son, in our nature, Jesus Christ—He has brought Thee out to view, and the clouds are gone and the darkness is gone. We are round about Thee, and we see Thy face in beauty, and we feel Thy love, and Thou art become to us our utmost attraction, and, lo! by attracting us Thou changest us. We put off our own follies, we get ashamed of ourselves in our natural condition with a real shame. We are able to loathe ourselves because of the beauty, and the glory, and the excellency of Thy divine humanity, which must also be our humanity, if we are to stand before Thee and live in Thy house for ever. O God, now, now, we call Thee beautiful and blessed; now we enter into familiarity with Thee, in and through Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ. O God, we thank Thee that the mystery of Thy love moves through everything, that it moves through our frailties, that it moves through our sun-clouds, and because the mystery of Thy life comes playing upon us. Through our sins and unworthinesses we become contrite. It is not our doing, it is God's doing. We repent—it is God's doing. And we come before God our Father and confess ourselves that we are ashamed in ourselves, but that we long to put on His beauty as it is in Jesus Christ. O Lord, when Thy love comes raging into the centre of our souls through our unworthiness, let us welcome it, let us co-operate with it, and let us long that it may linger with us and abide with us. For it is only by abiding that the structure of our souls is changed and we are qualified and prepared for the vision of the Lord's glory. O Lord, receive the thanksgivings, the loves, the tender affections of Thy children before Thee for all Thy goodness towards them in their houses! We thank Thee, O Lord God, for permitting us so far to be like Thee as to become parents ourselves. These are our most precious lessons, what Thou teachest us when we become mothers, when we become fathers; for through our own affections to our children, although we are evil, we learn somewhat of what Thou art to Thy children—all Thy children; and mothers learn when they find that their hearts cannot be drawn from the son when he is guilty, and that she would detest the idea of anyone supposing her mercy needs to be bought and paid for—she learns what God is to the guilty, how that He cannot withdraw His heart. Oh let the guilty everywhere, wherever they are, on board hulks, in prisons, in gaols, especially in lonely places—oh let the knowledge of Thine unchanged love come to

them, that Thy love may break their hearts and bring them home, bring them home; home to God, home to the Father, that runs to meet the returning one, and fills His house with joy and rejoicing that His lost are found, that His dead are alive. Glory be to God, glory be to Jesus, glory to the everlasting Spirit, world without end. Amen.

(2) BY THE REV. PRINCIPAL CAVE, D.D.

We bless Thy name, O Lord our God, that Thou hast spoken to us by the words of the prophets. We bless Thee for these oracles that are now on record. We would have praised Thee, if it had been our lot in the ancient time to hear the great men whom Thou didst move by Thy Spirit. But we bless Thee, oh how much more, that it has been our lot to listen to the words of the Son, and that we know in these days this revelation that Thou hast given to us by Thy Son.

O Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, Thou Who wast before the world, Thou Who didst take part in the creation of the earth and of man, Thou Who hast been interested in us from the very first moment of our creation, we thank Thee also for this revelation which Thou hast given unto us—this revelation of Thyself. Help us, we beseech Thee, this morning, that we may live in the consciousness of this truth which Thou hast given. We thank Thee for the words that Thou didst speak, we thank Thee for the life that Thou didst live, we bless Thee for the death that Thou didst die, we bless Thee that the grave could not contain Thee, and that Thou didst burst its bonds.

And now as we come into Thy presence, Thou living God, we would ask that Thou wouldst graciously speak unto us the words of life and of truth. For there is a yearning in ourselves for the Divine. We feel that we have not been made for the life that perisheth. There is something within us that cries out for God, for the living God. We are sure that Thou hast made us that we may have fellowship with Thee, and that Thou mayest have fellowship with us. Our high destiny sometimes surprises us, but we are sure that Thou hast made us for fellowship with Thyself. But O Thou gracious God and Father of us all, how dim our vision is, how little we realise that Thou didst speak to us. Thou hast Thy words ever and anon, but oh, how little we know, how little we feel. We come to Thee with our small knowledge, we come to Thee with our slight feeling, this morning, that Thou mayest inspire us and give us greater thoughts, and give us a larger heart.

O Thou everlasting God, Father, Son, and Spirit, we ask that Thou wouldst graciously come into our hearts this morning, that we may feel as we have said, even though we feel surprised, the certainty of our destiny. Blessed be Thy name, we have the assurance that we are reconciled, and may be reconciled to Thee. Blessed be Thy name for the music in this word, reconciliation.

We know the barriers that stand between ourselves and Thee. We know only too well these things which have stood in the pathway of our upward progress. We feel with our heart of hearts that there are obstacles that Thou must remove if we are to come to a full sense of our birthright.

But, Lord God, Thou knowest that in our truest moments there is a call for Thee, that there is a yearning after Thee, that there is a sense that

these things of the world that are around us and that perish are not of our inmost natures, there is a something in us that cries out for God, for the living God. Blessed be Thy name that we know, that Thou hast made it possible that we may come to Thee. Graciously come to us; then we know that our hearts shall rest. If we have not realised sin as we should, graciously come to us. If only Thou art here we must say, "Unclean, unclean." If we have realised but insufficiently this high destiny of ours, graciously come unto us, for if we only feel we are near Thee, if only we feel that there are bonds between our nature and Thine, if only we learn to stammer the word, "Father" in Thy presence, we know that our hearts must be enlarged. If we are bound by the fetters of selfishness; if we cannot do what we would; if it seems to us that the world is almost too much for us, and that the ordinary lines of the world's action are those that we must obey, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to come unto us; so may it be that in fellowship with Thee we may know that ours is a larger life, ours is a God-life, that ours is to be the sense of self-forgetfulness that Thou didst show unto us.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, as for a revelation of Thyself this morning so as Thou wilt take many of us to sit at Thy table that Thou hast instituted, that so thou wouldst also prepare our minds for the reception of Thy truth, and for the greatest blessing that this service can bring to us. We make it our earnest prayer that as Thou hast given unto us this revelation of Thyself in Jesus; we beseech Thee, O Lord Christ, that as Thou hast died to reveal Deity unto us; we beseech Thee, O Thou Mighty Spirit, that as Thou canst take of the things of Christ and show them unto us: that so this morning we may ourselves be prepared for this service. Give the preacher wise words, give the people intelligent hearts, and if there are those who know nothing of this mystery of the death of Jesus, we ask Thee that Thou wouldst, O Lord Christ, open the mystery of Thy Word to them. So may it be that as we are gathered together in Thy name we may feel that Thou art here, and that we are glad to be acknowledged as Thy near brothers and as Thy near sisters. Grant us, we beseech Thee, the sense that Thou art near, and that therefore Thy blessing is upon us.

We blend our prayers again for all sorts and conditions of men. Thou dost not hear us for our much speaking. We ask Thee that Thou wouldst graciously cause Thy blessing to rest upon the wide world. We do not believe that Thou art at the end of Thy purposes. We see that Thou art already only perhaps at the commencement of Thy mighty heart. Thou art showing us a little in some nations of the world what Thou canst be. We ask Thee that these may know more and more of Thee, and in all relationships of life may carry out Thy Gospel.

We ask Thee that upon all the dark places of the earth Thou wouldst also cause Thy Spirit to rest, that so it may be that the whole world may soon offer tribute in the train of the new King Jesus. Hear us as we pray for all Christian workers, for all those who in any way, to-day especially, shall be occupied in any sphere of Christian work. Give them the sense of Thy presence and Thy strength.

Now graciously answer our prayers, and in Thy mercy answer those things which we have failed to ask, seeing we present all for Jesus' sake. Amen.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for July 20: LUKE xiv. 25—33. Golden Text: Verse 27.*

### TAKING UP THE CROSS.

WE read that "there went great multitudes" with Jesus. This was evidently a scene of the journey, when numbers of the Galilean pilgrims were accompanying Him on their way to one of the great Jewish feasts. Jesus wants to show that those who would follow Him must be whole-hearted in their following. Those who would follow Jesus must count the cost. Things cannot just go on in the old way when we become His followers. Home and friends must take a second place in our hearts. Christ gives in this lesson three illustrations of the seriousness of becoming His follower. (1) The man who builds a tower counts the cost, to see if he has enough money to carry out his plans. On the south coast of England there is a great castellated building standing unfinished because the owner did not wisely count the cost. It is called "Brownlow's Folly." It is our "folly" if, having named the name of Christ, and having put our hand to the plough, we look back. (2) The king going forth to battle against a stronger king, who sends to sue for peace. He should not have undertaken what he had not strength to achieve. (3) Believers are the salt of the earth, but they must keep their freshness, for salt without savour is worse than none at all. So professing Christians who do not live up to their profession cause the world to despise Christ and His followers. Such Christians are like the mirage of the desert, which looks well in the distance with its limpid, glassy waters, but when the traveller goes down to the place to cool his thirst, there is nothing but the hot, yellow ground shimmering in the scorching sunlight. So there is not refreshment, no usefulness, in a Christian who has only a name to live. As Jesus says in the lesson, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." Who among you is willing to become a cross-bearer for Christ. The only cross now is a cross for the soul—some suffering to bear for His sake, some denial of self. Thomas à Kempis says: "Jesus hath now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of His cross. Many reverence His miracles; few follow the ignominy of His cross. Many love Jesus so long as no adversities befall them; few are willing to endure anything for Him." But all Christ's true followers are cross-bearers who suffer something sharp, bear something heavy, for His name's sake. Jesus is the great Cross-bearer. He goes first with His mighty burden, and all His followers, with their little ones, go after Him.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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## THE POWER OF CHRIST'S NAME.

*A Sermon*

BY THE REV. CHARLES NEW.

*Preached in Robertson-street Congregational Church, Hastings, on Sunday Evening, June 29, 1890.*

“His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong.”

ACTS iii. 16.

AGES ago the prophet was bidden to say unto them that were of a fearful heart “Be strong.” And, strange though the command seemed, implying that we may be strong if we will, that it is a command shows that it is even so, that the acquisition of spiritual strength is in our own hands. To many the possibility of strength is good news indeed. Once it was not strength they wanted, but life—bare life. Spiritual death reigned within them, and the death sentence was uttered over them; they wanted life. Then they accepted Christ and found that life in Him; the life of God, with new affections, and capacities, and hopes, and powers, the undying life maintained by the mediation, and fed from the fulness of God’s Son. That they have and shall have for ever. But they want more of it; that is, now they want strength. Do we not lament, many of us, that our Christian life is feeble, that it hardly holds its own against indwelling evil, that it is often beaten down by besetment, that the current of the world often brushes aside its opposition, that its faculties are dwarfed and its achievements hardly worth the name? We have life, we Christians, but how often is it rather the life of the sick man—existence, rather than life; and perhaps the very best news we can hear is that in the Gospel of strength. “Tell me,” says the soul, “how my feebleness, my spiritual feebleness, may yield to vigour; tell me how to gain a robust piety, one that conquers sin, and that goes gloriously forward in the Saviour’s service and to His likeness—I would have that.” That want is met in the text—the teaching of the text is that strength comes through faith in Christ.

Here, on the one hand, was the Apostle, a man with no more

power in himself than any other who walked the streets of Jerusalem that day, able to work a miracle which startled the city; by a word, sending to his home, walking and leaping and praising God, the cripple whom they had laid daily at the gate of the temple, a wonderful instance of strength for service. On the other hand, here was a man lame from his birth—hopelessly lame, I suppose—able to receive the healing then surprisingly offered him. We know not which to wonder at the more, Peter's confident command to him to rise up and walk, or the man's confident obedience. The strength which gave the blessing was the strength which took it. It is a wonderful instance of strength for reception, reception of what God would grant.

Now, whence came this strength? This strength of Peter's, this strength of the lame man, and is it available to us? Can we in our infirmity, our infirmity for everything we ought to do or to be, can we be strengthened as they were? The answer tells of a source open to us as to them, and of means at our disposal as at theirs. "His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong."

Let us think for a moment of the strength in the name of Jesus. For you observe that the strength did not come from faith, but through it. The strength was in the name of Jesus. "His name hath made this man strong." Dear friends, it is well to remember the distinction, for we get sadly misleading ideas of the Christian faith—sometimes exalting it to a good work which we suppose God rewards, sometimes regarding it as having some inherent virtue of which really it is destitute. Faith, what is it? Faith is simply the hand that receives, the medium through which what is in Christ passes to us, the pipe that conveys the water of the reservoir to the thirsty city. You remember these words: "It pleased the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell." Our portion is want and emptiness. God gives us nothing. It is His will that we in ourselves should have nothing. Everything is stored in Christ for us, and it has to be taken from Him; and faith is the hand that takes. The Apostle had no strength in himself, no more strength to work that miracle than we have. It is a figure of speech to say that the Apostles wrought miracles—Christ wrought them, not they. "Ye men of Israel," said Peter, "why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly at us as though by our power or holiness we had made this man walk? God hath glorified His Son Jesus Whom ye delivered up. Ye killed the Prince of life Whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses and His name—His name hath made this man strong."

I say, think of the strength in the name of Jesus. Well, His name stands for Himself, reveals Himself. Peter, for example, says here that it is the Son of God. "God hath glorified His Son." Well, that is His name—the co-equal Son of the Father. What a vision of strength that opens to us! You remember, for

instance, such words as these, "His dear Son, by Whom were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things subsist." If we speak of strength, then, lo, He is strong. It was His strength that called the worlds into being, and that maintains them in their place. It is His strength that made man from the dust, breathing life into the clay. It is His strength that works through the forces of nature, now robing the land with beauty, then making it tremble at their voice, and always supplying the need of every living thing. It is His strength that inspires and controls the armies of heaven. The Lord of Hosts is His name. His name, the name of God the Son, is nothing less—and oh what strength it means—than the Lord God Almighty.

And His name describes His work. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus—that is, Saviour—for He shall save." By giving Him that name, what strength God implies in Him! For He is the only Saviour. As the Apostle says, after this very occasion, "Neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." All hope, even God's hope, of the world's redemption is in Christ.

Then we feel how strong He must be to maintain a spotless life amid earth's defilement and temptation, and then to bear in His own body on the tree the sins of the world, and then to bring many sons unto glory, deliver them from sin, granting them the Divine nature, supplying their need, enabling them to conquer their foes, and at last raising them to His own right hand, yea, undertaking to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. Think of the strength that must be in Him who undertakes, who is responsible for all that, think of the strength that must be in Him, the accumulated strength which has animated and will animate the saints of God; for their strength was the strength of Jesus, the strength to which alone is due the multitude whom no man can number before the throne, who, when their number shall be complete, asked the reason that they were there, will unitedly exclaim, "The Lord Jesus has done it all."

And His name is the availing plea with the Father; as He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." And that gives us another aspect of our Lord's strength—His strength God-ward as well as man-ward. All other power combined could secure nothing from the Most High, but the soul in prayer breathes the name of Jesus, and at once the doors of God's treasure-house fly open and His resources are laid at the suppliant's feet. Nothing can prevail with God—neither tears, nor prayers, nor good deeds, nor all combined. The violent storm

heaven's gate in vain; but then, then the Redeemer's name avails. At its utterance God gives all. We speak all this with deep reverence and in human language, but does it not seem, brethren, as if by the Father's will Jesus has dominion over all that the Father is and has. He asks the Father, and the Father forthwith gives. We use His name in asking, and, so potent is that name, the Father gives to us. I think, perhaps nothing so reveals the strength of our Lord as that does. It is high, we cannot attain unto it. The measures we apply to strength fail us here. God only knows the strength of God.

But now we pass to this: We have here this strength. Can we keep the thought up of its greatness? This strength of which we have spoken is available to men. The strength that healed the cripple was Christ's strength. Peter emphasises that. He not only says here "His name," that is Himself, mark you, for the name stands for the person. "His name—that is, Jesus—hath made this man strong;" but in the next chapter he repeats it. "Be it known unto you that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole." It was the strength of Christ, but that strength was exercised through human instrumentality. It came down into the Apostle and wrought the cure; through him it came down to the cripple and enabled him to receive the cure. The energy—oh, it is a sublime thought—the energy of the Son of God passed into these men. I say, what a truth that is—Christ's strength available to you and me, the self-same strength with which He lived His holy life, conquering sin and bearing peacefully His woe; the strength with which He wrought His works, making the blind to see and the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk, and raising the dead; the strength with which He broke from the grave and ascended on high, leading captivity captive; yea, the strength by which He creates all things and re-creates mankind, that strength as we need it, as we will use it according to His will and for His glory, that strength is available to His people.

Now, so great, and if it were not familiar, so striking a doctrine is not based on a mere incident which we might perhaps misunderstand. It is based on great fundamental truths. For instance, Christ's mission is to give life, and more of it. That was the end of the incarnation and the atonement—life. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should have everlasting life"; and not, mark you, everlasting safety, but much more than that—everlasting life; life, not simply spiritual nature, for that might be half dead, but spiritual vitality, capable of everlasting increase, as He said, "I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly." That is just what we want—spiritual vitality. Our spiritual nature which we already have through the new birth

—we want that vitalised. Well, then, dear friends, our tasks will be wrought easily and our burdens borne patiently, and our besetments conquered. It is more life, and fuller, that we want, we Christians. Let us have that, and we shall achieve what is impossible now. And if we doubt whether we can have it, we have but to remember this strong fact that to give it is the end of Christ's work. It is for that He descended to the cross, and for that He lives upon the throne, to give us more and more life; and what is that but to make us strong? These are the pledges that we can have the strength we need; for Jesus cannot deny Himself.

And then we remember another fact, that His people are His body through whom He will exert His strength. "Ye are the body of Christ," says the Scripture. As for the members of the body, our head fulfils its will, so does Christ fulfil His will through His people. They are to be the instruments by which He carries out what is in His heart. He no longer walks the earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but He walks it still in the person of His Church, and by His Church He would continue now what He began before—His will. Now it is the will of Jesus Christ to execute His will through His people. What is His will? To conquer sin wherever it is in us or in the world. He is its foe, and cannot rest till Satan is trodden under foot. It is His will that we should be holy—holy not merely in freedom from evil, but in possessing His character and His joy. It is His will to redeem the world from woe, to rectify its ills, to assuage its griefs, to restore the blessedness of Paradise and more. And, dear friends, it is His will to do all this by us—by us. He is prepared therefore to send His own vital force down into our resolve, and our effort, and our speech, and work through us, and conquer through us, and through us bring the world to God. Oh, there is no telling the strength, therefore, He is prepared to put into our feeble arm; our arm—nay, it is Jesus Christ's arm. Truly, Paul was right when he said: "The power of Christ may rest upon me. I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

We remember another strong truth. He holds His strength on behalf of redemption. We remember that the risen Christ holds nothing for Himself. That is one of the cardinal articles of our creed, one of the great cardinal truths of the New Testament. The risen Christ holds nothing for Himself. He has received all for us. God gave Him to be head over all things to the Church. Then the strength He has in His risen state is ours. He is keeping it for us. He has received it for us. And Jesus is a faithful trustee, and will not fail to dispense His trust as we need, and will receive and use it.

Ah, brethren, we have not received more of it because we would not, or because we kept ourselves to such small

attainments that we needed but little. "All power is given unto Me," He said; but, as though He meant, "It is for you—I am about to give it back to you"—He added, "Tarry ye in Jerusalem till ye be endowed with power from on high." And as they tarried the power came, the very power of Christ, in which they so continued His ministry that positively their mighty works could not be distinguished from His own. Cling to this, brethren, Christ's strength is ours if we will have it. The exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe is according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand.

Well, then, we have this last truth: this strength blessing the man through faith. There is Christ's strength, here is my weakness. How can that strength pass into me? By faith. Faith is the channel through which His fulness passes to my emptiness. Or, if you will, as I said, faith is the hand by which I just take, by which I just receive what He holds to me, what He would give to me. "His name through faith in His name"—or rather, as I said, because His name stands for Himself, it is through faith in Him—"hath made this man strong. We receive life from Christ from beginning to end in the same way. It was by faith we first received it. It is by faith to the very last that we receive each augmentation of it. "That believing ye might have life through His name" is the Gospel for the sinner who has none of that life. It is no less the Gospel for the saint who has life but wants more.

Now, just see as we close how this faith makes us strong. Well, for one thing, it removes—and, oh, that is not a little thing—it removes the weakening burden. "I should be well and strong," said an invalid, "but for this pain I feel." And many a Christian could say, "I should be strong but for the pain I feel, the pain of an uneasy conscience." Till that is removed there is no chance of strength. It is sometimes, as you know, a surprise to the sick man and his friends that, nourish him as they may, his strength, undermined by a secret disease, makes no advance. A restless conscience is such a secret disease in spiritual life, and its removal is the very first step to increased vitality. That removal is effected only by faith in Christ.

Have you a guilty conscience to-night? Have you been yielding to sin, been overcome by the tempter? Has he almost overcome you in the dust? Do you want to come back to the strength you have lost? Do you want strength to conquer him as you have never conquered him? Dear friend, the very first thing for you to do is to get rid of that past guilt, to get rid of that burden of pain on your conscience; and, oh, I say, how can you get rid of that but through faith, through faith in the Saviour, Whose blood cleanseth us from all sin, and Who is exalted to give remission?

Ay, when through faith in Him that weakening burden is gone, that sense of guilt, then the soul will begin to rise and strength will return, and it will be strength through faith.

Then faith awakens the inspiring memory, another way through which it strengthens us. Dull and heavy hosts shrink from the impending battle, till the commander speaks of a nation's eye upon them, and that they uphold a nation's cause and fight for hearth and home. Hearth and home, the words touch a magic spring at which a tender vision rises in the hearts of many and a sudden energy inspires them. Eyes brighten, lips cheer, swords flash, and arms are nerved to conquer. Oh the strength that comes from one swift memory. Such a memory comes through faith in Christ, the memory of One who gave Himself for us, One to Whom we owe all we have and hope for, the memory of a Saviour Whose cross has brought us pardon and peace and help, and of a dear friend Whose love cannot change. We cannot estimate the power of that memory on the sluggish soul. If this thought of Christ is an inspiration—an inspiration to resist any sin, to bear any burden, to undertake any right task, "yea," it exclaims with Peter's ardour, "Lord, I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Ah! that is strength through faith.

Faith, moreover, reveals an animating presence. For loneliness is often the source of our weakness. The grasp of a friendly hand, the glance of a friendly eye will often make a weak man strong, will often make a waverer steadfast. You may know that Lady Augusta Stanley, the wife of the late Dean of Westminster, was much interested in the poor of that neighbourhood; and one day a poor, suffering woman in one of the London hospitals said: "I could go through this operation if Lady Augusta Stanley would only come and take hold of my hand." We understand that quite well. With one by our side we care for and trust, we can do and bear what alone we cannot. Faith in Christ just means that on the highest scale. Why, He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He says, "Lo, I am with you alway." Oh, faith grasps His hand then and whispers, "Thou art near, O Lord. When others have left me, Thou, my Friend, my Helper, my All-sufficient One, art here." And with that the loneliness of the soul flies away and the weakness of it, and strength comes, and it is strong through faith.

And this is, most of all, because faith relies on Him who cannot deceive. A dozen—less, eleven—Galilean fishermen went forth to conquer the world by a message. And what was the secret of such mysterious victory falling to such utter weakness, but that they knew that power was given to their Divine Head, and that in doing His will He would supply the power as they needed it? And He did. And we—you and I, brethren—come within the same promise, for we are His people, and are equally members of His body, and for what He requires of us He will supply the strength.

And then, faith seizes on that fact, which is the great head-fact—that all the strength we need for what Christ gives us to do He will supply. And faith seizes on that. Faith says:—

“Weaker than a bruised reed,  
Help I every moment need;  
But He, according to His Word,  
Will put strength into me.”

And He does. He must. He cannot fail. He has undertaken to do it. He loves to be trusted. “They that honour Me,” says He, “I will honour.” “None of them that trust in Him shall be ashamed.” And so, once more, it is strength through faith.

Dear brethren, why then should we do ourselves this wrong, of all others, that we are not always strong? Have faith in Christ, meditate on Him, commune with Him, study Him, and faith will grow, and with the faith strength in weakness and in fear. When the task is more than you can fulfil, and the burden more than you can bear, and the heart sinks within you, whisper to yourselves the name of Jesus. It is a rare talisman. Think for a moment of Him of whom it tells, and in the selfsame moment trust Him, and you shall find His name, like ointment poured forth, in the soul reviving, strength-giving. And to His glory wondering angels will at length utter, as the explanation of the achievements which before for you were all impossible, “His name through faith in His name hath made this man, this woman, this sufferer, this seeker, strong.”

### THE SYMPATHY OF GOD.

*A Sermon by*

THE VERY REV. DR. VAUGHAN, *Dean of Llandaff and Master of the Temple.*

“Master, carest Thou not that we perish?”—ST. MARK iv. 38.

IN a dangerous storm on the capricious inland sea of Gennesaret, a little boat, occupied by thirteen persons, is crossing from the western to the eastern shore—the waves are breaking into the ship, so that it is now full of water—and one, evidently the leader of the little company, is in the hinder part of the vessel, not helping, not cheering, not sympathising with the rest—no, asleep. It is He who suggested the crossing; He who, when the evening of a long, toilsome day was come, had said: “Let us pass over unto the other side.” In some sense, then, He was to blame for the peril; why had He not foreseen the winds and the waves, and postponed the voyage, at least to the morning? They had trusted Him—not wisely, but too well—and now, instead of feeling for them in their distress, He lies there taking His rest: lies there asleep. The sting of the danger is in that sleep. If He were awake, and alive to their trouble, they could have borne it; they were always ready to follow Him—sometimes they thought they could die with Him; but that He should be indifferent to their alarm, that He should be able to sleep through it, this was unkind,

this was unlike Him; half in astonishment, half in reproach, they at last awaken Him with the question, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?"

Miracle and parable are but differences of name in many places of the Gospel—and it is so here. The crossing, that storm, that sleep, that awakening, all were typical; real as facts, significant as emblems. They have all been acted again and again in human lives, in spiritual histories; redemption itself is just that—a world's misery, a world's sense of neglect, a Divine sleep, a Divine awakening—the times of that ignorance God winked at, at last He interposed for deliverance, rebuked the wind and the sea, and would have all men everywhere to be saved.

"Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" is one of those graphic and pathetic touches which we owe to this second Gospel. The other Evangelists are contented to say, "Master, master, we perish," or, "Lord, save us, we perish." St. Mark, preserving (it may be) a reminiscence of St. Peter—himself present at the event—gives that which we seem to recognise at once as the exact expression; represents, at all events, the exact point of the feeling, in this "Carest Thou not?" Is it nothing to Thee whether we live or die? Hast Thou no thought for us who have left all for Thee?

There can be no doubt that, even amongst human beings, it is an immense aggravation of any calamity to feel that it is not cared for. To suffer unregarded, neglected, unloved, with cold careless eyes looking on, or closed in idle sleep, which one touch of sympathy would have prevented, is a thing differing in kind as well as degree from any suffering which has love, or even pity, as its companion. The expostulation of Gethsemane "Couldst not thou watch with me one hour?" was the utterance (in part at least) of a human distress. Made in all things like unto His brethren, the Man of Sorrows was expressing in that pathetic interrogation the very thought breathed once, with apparent reason to Him, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" Even He—proving in all things His Deity by His Humanity—was human also in this—that He accepted, that He even yearned for sympathy, and could say, in the agony of the sin-bearing, to one from whom He might have looked for compassion, carest thou not for this "horror of great darkness," for this fear of death which is fallen upon me?

All have known at some time the double sadness of a bereavement which, for any reason or for none, has lacked sympathy. Sometimes there has been a character veiled from all but its very nearest and dearest—surrounding friends, even friends near as a brother, have not been admitted to the privacy, or have not been congenial to the disposition of the person whose departure has created, just for one heart, a perpetual desolation—how has it jarred upon that one ear to hear the vague condolences, to receive the inadequate, the half unreal lamentations of those who, compassionate indeed, but cannot (as we say) enter into the individuality of the orphanage or the widowhood which must go with him to the grave.

Thus is it in all experiences—we see it even in the vilest. The hisses and execrations, even the curses not loud but deep, of a condemning mob, have had power to add bitterness to the last horrors of a public execution; these have been the clenching evidences that no man compassionates, that over those fathomless, those gloomy waters, there flies no vessel of com-

miseration; these have brought home to the dying criminal the awful conviction—more awful than death—that no man cares that he perishes. On the other hand there is no fear, and no anguish, and no form of death which may not be soothed and mitigated by the presence of a generous, heart deep, self-less sympathy. It is no stretch of imagination to hope that some softening influence may have communicated itself to the hearts of those ship-wrecked mariners of yesterday, in the sight of pier and beach, swarming with agonised beholders, powerless, indeed, to help, but strong to feel, and assuring them by look or sign that there were those who cared if they perished.

It is this known instinct of nature which makes the last offices of nurse and physician, of pastor and friend, so powerfully ministerial to the bed of inevitable, inexorable death; it is this which has added the last touch of misery to deaths died in abandonment or exile, where there has been none to catch the last sigh, to breathe the name of home, or to point the eye and the heart upward to that opening heaven where the Son of Man standeth at the right hand of God.

But in the instance before us there was a more than human sympathy missed and craved for. And thus it carries our thoughts into a region above that of earthly brotherhood, and suggests some reflections, not unsuitable (I trust) to the occasion, upon the complaints and expostulations of humanity itself in the ear of "a God that hideth himself," and a Saviour seeming to slumber.

It cannot be denied that there are many facts and many experiences in the life of this world, which irresistibly suggest the question whether God can be waking, or, if wakeful, caring. To try to enumerate such phenomena is as needless as it is painful. We cannot but read this sleep of Jesus Christ in the boat tossed by the wave, with His disciples standing by, wondering and half murmuring, as intending to represent the world-wide, age-long mystery to which we are pointing. It does seem wonderful, not only or chiefly, that there should be pain, disease, and death in the earth—earth being what it is in the matter of sin, for we cannot but feel that it would be more wonderful still, a real offence to faith, a real stumbling-block to virtue, if a sinful were not also a suffering creation—but how, in the confession of the Book of God itself, all the foundations of the earth are thrown out of course by the existence of sin upon it, and by the perversenesses, mismanagements, and self-contradictions, which are the growth and fruit of that primary fact of evil. "Carest thou not," we are tempted to say to the Divine Ruler Himself, "that, whether it be by a moral murder or a moral suicide, we, Thy creatures, are all perishing!"

And even if this mystery of the existence of evil were explained or palliated, it would still be wonderful how evil should be allowed to spread and diffuse itself, where there was either no freedom of choice on the part of its victim, or even a will to resist if the strength were but present. We see the ancestry of evil, tainting, to remote generations, an offspring which had nothing left for its inheritance but the memory of crime and sorrow. We see a leprosy of shame and vice corroding the very walls of houses, in which, nevertheless, women and children must carry on their miserable being, though to do so is to be involved in consequences of which they are not originators, but victims. Nay, we see, here and there, efforts

made, difficulties encountered, battles waged, in the vain endeavour of some helplessly entangled life to rid itself of those fetters of evil which it had no share in riveting. How can all this be—we vex ourselves with the question—if indeed there is a God at once of holiness, love, and power, superintending, ruling, or even overruling, a world which He caused to be and which He keeps in being. “Carest Thou not,” we find ourselves asking, as we suffer, or as we look on, “Carest Thou not that we perish?” Is it possible that neither the violence, nor the malignity, nor the lust, nor the blasphemy, of wicked men should evoke the interference, were it but for the protection of the innocent, of a God living and walking, a God on the side of right, and a God resistless in power?

These questions are as old as the Fall, and we have learned in some measure the lesson of patience concerning them. But when the experience comes into a man's own life, he finds himself still asking, “Carest Thou not that I perish?” Painful it might still be to suffer—pain and suffering are but names for each other—painful it must be to live uneasy days, in body or spirit, through poverty and its circumstances, through disease and loneliness, through fears and fightings on spiritual subjects, through cavils of doubters, and taunts of scoffers, and all the thousand tortures of a busy and inventive infidelity—painful this must be, whatever be its shape and form—yet even this is not the worst thing. If I could see in all this a kindly purpose—an end and an aim, like that spoken of by the Patriarch—“When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold”—I could bear anything. I know that I want chastening, to beat down my self-will. I know that I want sharp discipline, of scourge and cross, to cure me of my vanity and my levity. I know that I want a darkening, one by one, of the false lights of earth, to make the light of heaven precious or even visible. But surely it is not necessary, it is not beneficial, that I should be so utterly left without one sign of a gracious motive, or even of a personal dealing, that I could quite easily imagine myself the mere creature of chance, the mere sport and plaything of destiny, in all that happens to me, mental as much as physical, and can only keep alive in myself an opposite idea, by a sort of dogged adherence to principles which it would be death, and worse than death, to abandon? I feel that I could bear almost anything if I knew that God held me in His hand, that I could bear quite anything if I were sure that He was only, and of set purpose, refining and purifying me. The dreadful, the intolerable, thing is that I cannot see this, cannot know this except in theory and by rote, and am therefore constantly driven, by stress of searching winds and ashing waves, to look towards the unseen Presence, and say, “Carest Thou not that I perish?”

We might still go further, and say, that the sympathy of God is more vital to us even than His Omnipotence. The disciples accepted the “perishing”—in other words, the non-intervention of Christ to save: what they could not accept was His “not caring.” In its influence upon the heart to care is more than to save. Love is more than power, even in the Divine. We are not making light of any one of God's attributes; it is the combination of all the attributes which indeed forms our conception of Him. To suppose God all else, and yet limited in point of power, cannot seriously be allowed without robbing ourselves of His Deity. But it is permissible to go all lengths in pressing, one by one, upon our hearts all

His perfections. And to-day we have before us His sympathy. We are dwelling upon the thought, how essential it is that He should care for us. How absolutely nothing can make up to us for the absence of that care. Far better would it be for us, as spiritual and immortal beings, to imagine that there might be some opposing and thwarting impediment in the way of the present exercise of God's attribute of Omnipotence, than that there should be any defect or any coldness in His love. If we could believe that the true explanation of the present confusion was this—that the power of evil, though doomed, is not yet actually subdued and subjugated to the might of God—that there is a real warfare going on between two empires of light and darkness—that, so far from being asleep or being indifferent, God is conducting a campaign, as for defeat or victory, against the united rebel forces of dragon, beast, and false prophet—and that, though the final issue is certain, the last field is not yet fought, nor captivity yet led captive—this would go far to reconcile us to the conditions and the experiences of the present—for it would at least secure to us His lively wakeful sympathy with every soul's struggle and every life's agony of our own—it would explain to us, as far more than a parable, that revelation of joy in heaven over each sinner that repenteth, of ministering spirits sent forth thence to watch over the heirs of salvation—it would lay to rest, thoroughly and for ever, that bitterest and cruellest of all suspicions, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?"

And when a man has made up his mind at all costs to believe in the Divine care for him—and when we say, "at all costs," we mean, "at the cost of supposing some temporary limit to the present exercise of the Divine power itself—he will find, as he casts himself, day by day, upon that love and that compassion, that, for him at all events—however it may be for the universe—the power is already sufficient too. He may still be unable to add one jot or one tittle to the old argument about the existence of evil—he may count it more reverent, as well as more true, to say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain to them"—but he will find that the difficulty is no longer, for him personally, a moral difficulty—he will find that prayer does bring him the needed comfort and the needed help—as his day, so his strength his—beginning with the axiom, "Thou, God, carest," he passes on into the experimental conviction, "There is none like unto Thee, O Lord, there is not one that can do as thou doest!"

This is the present privilege of all who, for good or ill, cast in their lot decisively with Jesus Christ. Though for these, as for others, the theory of life is still dark and baffling, the practice is like the light shining more and more till the perfect day shall come. On the hypothesis (as men speak) of the Gospel, the reading of the great riddle is but a question of time. For each particular life committed to it, the mystery is unveiled already. "Yet a little while and He that cometh shall come," makes patience, patience and hope, patience, hope, and courage, these three, the sum and substance, the sufficient stay also, of the life that is. For others it is not so. On the life that has undertaken itself, its own charge, its own guidance, its own solution, the shadow lies heavily, and must lie—and the sun goes down in gloom. Whatever may be the eventual consolation of the race, it has placed itself outside it. It has no evidences to add to the stock of hope—it has no consolations to carry to the account of patience.

To it the only inquiry must be that of the text—as it watches the deepening anxieties of men and nations; as it hears the tottering faiths and despairing deathbeds; as it watches for the morning that comes not, and elaborate constitutions, Divine and human, which refuse to march—it can but look upward into the inscrutable, impersonal heaven, and ask, “Thou,” if there be one in hearing—if all be not vague chance, shifting change, or inflexible law; if there be any One above, intelligent, however silent—“carest Thou not that we perish?”

The question might have been asked, with some force of reason—may be propounded still, for such as believe not—were it not for that Divine intervention of which we have but just passed from the annual commemoration. The very reckoning of our year, little as we may notice it, reproves and forbids the expostulation of the “not caring.” It may be possible to exaggerate—certainly to misrepresent—the effects, as already realised on earth, of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ—it is impossible to overstate the argument of the sympathy and of the love. We may marvel at the slow march of the Gospel towards the conquest of nations—at the backward steps here and there, of its beneficent influences—at the re-gathering of clouds of sin and misery once dispelled—at the imperfect success, anywhere, of that message of peace and holiness which ought by this time to have spread a new life over the face of the whole earth. We may feel—and we ought to feel—the responsibility of this failure as lying individually upon all who profess, but do not live, the Gospel. We may go so far as to say that mankind is still “perishing,” though the light of day has searched out the chambers of imagery, and made it no longer excusable to sit or walk in darkness. Like the disciples on the sea of Galilee, we may feel ourselves in jeopardy, the Gospel having failed to work in us its saving work, and rather revealing than dispersing the gloom of sin and death.

One thing we cannot say—that our Master cares not. If He had not cared to save, would He have left the glories of heaven to be born of a woman, to be made one of us, to share our weakness, temptations, and sorrows, to be despised and rejected by His own, to stoop at last to death, even the death of the cross? Certainly He cares if we perish. Say, if you must say it, with the scoffer, that He attempted the impossible—that He miscalculated the comparative forces of antagonistic good and evil—that He failed in His great adventure—that He lived and died in vain. Say, if you must say it, with the scoffer, that He was conscious of failure, that He felt Himself defeated, that he died broken-hearted. At least you cannot accuse Him of not caring. He took it upon Him to deliver man—He came upon earth, He endured the contradiction of sinners, He submitted to the last agonies, that He might help, that He might redeem, that He might regenerate, those who cared not for one another, those who cared not for themselves.

And though we can, if we will, perish in spite of Him—though a salvation by force is no salvation, and a soul that will slay itself can, and a fallen nature can always stay so, or sink lower and lower, by successive acts of willing, till it dies the very death of hell—this need not be. The salvation of Jesus Christ is sufficient salvation—“to the uttermost” is its watchword—not by force, nor in spite of us, but the consent of a will made willing, He can justify and sanctify, He can strengthen, and bless, and save.

If ever He should seem to sleep through our sorrows, or to be indifferent to our prayers, this is but to try our faith, to sober our lightness, to quicken our earnestness—soon will He arise and rebuke the wind and the sea—at last, for one and for another, He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

“Carest thou not?”—has a voice for the disciple as well as for the Lord. How it reproves the lazy loitering, the purposeless sauntering, the silly dreaming, in which so many of us pilgrims and voyagers pass the time of our sojourning! Not to care that we perish, is suicide—not to care that our brother perishes, is murder. Christ cared, God cared, that we might care; and yet, as I look within, as I look around me, I find almost nothing that expresses, almost nothing that is consistent with, this anxiety! I see lives given to this one thing, the making themselves easy, and soft, and luxurious—I see minds relaxing themselves by every sentimental, sensational, or sensual study—I see souls, not so much bravely encountering terrible questions of doubting, on purpose that they may know, and on purpose that they may judge, but rather idly suspending everything, as though doubt were wisdom, as though it were an evidence of power to be fertile in cavilling, cruel in unsettling! O if we would be serious! O if we would be considerate! O if we would work! O if we would care!

Standing this day on the margin of an undiscovered future—hearing Jesus Christ say to us this morning, “Let us cross to the other side,” knowing, yet not knowing, what that “other side” means—a condition, at least, of mind and heart different from, yet made by, the present—let us gather all our energies for the mystic, the allegorical, crossing—let us resolve, like the disciples before us, two things: that we will obey the summons as His, and that we will take Him with us! This if we do, we need fear no evil—no, not if the weeks of this Term should contain in them the transition from health to sickness, from life to death!

No stranger can visit unmoved those solemn memorials, of marble slab or painted window, which keep fresh in your Cathedral Church the loved names of young men called suddenly, by accident or fever, from amidst the energetic movements of academical life into the stern realities of an everlasting hereafter. They live still—there and here—there, we trust, resting, serving, knowing, learning, worshipping, aspiring. Here in salutary admonition for those that come after—bidding them to be ready always, remembering their Creator in the days of their youth.

This may be, for anyone of us, “the other shore” to which Christ to-day is calling us—it may be so, even if no one thinks it.

But, at all events, changes will be busy in this congregation, even within the short span of one Term. O how many may have passed, by a few short steps, from faith to scepticism—from prayer to silence—from comparative innocence to a guilty conscience! Who can pretend to be confident, who can dare to be light-hearted, as he launches forth to-day for a shore veiled in mist, over a sea big with storm?

Let us all thank God that there is One who cares if we perish—let us pray Him so to keep us, in every going out and coming in; so to watch over us in the hours of toil, of converse, of resting; so to order all things for us, study, thought, influence, companionship—that we may never perish, but continually grow in grace and in knowledge of Himself, our Lord and God!

## ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

*Sunday, July 20, 1890.*

## TAKING UP THE CROSS.

LUKE XIV. 25—35.

STOREHOUSE AND FORTRESS.—The poor peasant or fellah, who lives from year to year, or rather from month to month, conceals his scanty store, which is to supply him till the next harvest, in a silo, or underground pit, carefully covered over, either in his little plot or in the yard of his house, and drives his goats every night into his courtyard; but when a man becomes richer, in a land where wealth consists in flocks and herds, and in stores heaped up, rather than in money, this wealth in kind cannot be so easily concealed, and his first aim is to secure his possessions against the surprise of marauding parties. With this object he prepares to build a storehouse, or defensible tower, such as we see still among the Druses of the Hauran, where he can bestow all his fruits and his goods. As the robber parties are generally only a troop of light-armed horsemen, a simple square building of stone, loopholed in the upper story, is sufficient for security, these towers not being intended to resist regular military operations. Such a tower still exists at Carmel, in Judah, the home of Nabal, and is attributed to Abigail's churlish husband by the country folk around, though in reality of no earlier date than the time of the Crusades, having probably taken the place of an earlier and ruder building. The need for these towers, and the way in which stores were kept by the poorer class, is illustrated in Jeremiah xli. 8, where ten men plead for their lives: "Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey;" that is, hidden stores, buried underground, which they could reveal to their captor, if their lives were spared.

"IF THE SALT HAVE LOST HIS SAVOUR."—The illustration is taken from a phenomenon familiar to many of our Lord's hearers. We do not, in countries where the salt is not found on the surface of the ground, find salt losing its taste. But in Palestine, in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, are large superficial deposits of salt, and, as at Jebel Usdum, a vast salt mountain, seven miles long and three or four hundred feet high. The salt mountain and other deposits are covered with a coating of soft gypsum, sometimes several feet thick, which must be removed before the salt is reached. This covering is created by the combined action of sun and rain, which, in course of ages, slowly evaporates the moisture and precipitates the saline particles, leaving a crust of earthy, crumbling matter, which has the appearance of salt, but is utterly useless. Salt, as is well known, is a valuable fertiliser, when used in small quantities, especially for the date palm. But this earthy gypsum supports no vegetable life of any kind, and is perhaps the only material on which nothing will grow. Even

\* From the American *Sunday School Times*.

the sulphur deposits have plants peculiar to themselves; but these, however long exposed, unless mixed with some other substance, remain absolutely bare. The marl-beds on the west side of the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan, which give an air of such utter desolation to the region, are formed entirely of this deposit of salt, which has lost its savour, and is, moreover, absolutely destructive of all life.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for July 27 : LUKE xv. 1—10. Golden Text : Verse 10.*

### LOST AND FOUND.

WE come now to some parables for publicans and sinners, in which our Lord showed to them the love and free forgiveness of God. Our Lord had a great and special love for the weak things of the castle—the poor, the down-trodden, the forsaken, the lost. This chapter is a whole Gospel of comfort to the lost.

I. The value of one lost soul. In our Lord's first parable He tells of the one sheep that was lost. The shepherd had many sheep, and only one was lost. But if the shepherd were to say, "never mind," whenever one sheep was lost, he would soon have many fewer than ninety-nine. God counts the lost soul worth all that searching which is told us in this parable, and the saving of it worth all the joy. The most worthless being you ever met is worth more than all earth's gold.

In our Lord's second parable He tells of the one bit of silver that was lost. There is a great fascination about stories of lost treasures, and the search for them. One of Robert Louis Stevenson's most popular books is "Treasure Island," which relates the history of lost treasure and the search for it. Only last year an expedition was fitted out to search for hidden treasures in the lonely island of Little Trinidad in the South Atlantic. But the treasures required to be found, and the expedition had to return empty-handed. There is often great eagerness shown to recover earthly treasure, but the eagerness of God is far greater to recover His lost ones.

II. The sinner's great encouragement. The shepherd was anxious to find his lost sheep, the woman was eager to recover her lost coin, and Jesus is far more eager to find the lost souls. Your loss is His loss. It is His chosen work; His great joy to find lost souls. The great preacher Whitfield used to say, that Jesus was so willing to receive sinners that he did not object to receive the devil's castaways.

III. The work of the heavenly mind. It is to sympathise with those who seek the lost, and to rejoice with them when the lost are found. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## JOY, REST, AND FAITH.

BY PROFESSOR HENRY DRUMMOND.

*Notes of an Address delivered in Toorak Presbyterian Church, June 4, 1890, to the members of the Sabbath Morning Fellowship Union.*

SPEAKING to those who are meeting together for the study of the Bible, and for the purpose of stimulating one another in the Christian life, the best thing I can do to-night is to put you in possession of a principle, which you can apply so as to make the Bible a little easier understood, and the Christian life a little smoother.

Many people weary themselves out in trying to make themselves good. They go from book to book, and from service to service, to learn how to grow in grace. Years pass, and they find little change occurs, and they are as far as ever from the goal which they seek. Why should it all be so resultless? Why should it not be that all our efforts to reach a higher stage in the Christian life meet with success? Why is it that Christian experience is in such a disturbed state? There must be some principle running through the Christian life which would aid us. There is a principle, and a very simple one. It is that every effect has a cause. If I am cold, there is a cause for it. I can't extirpate the cold. I must find the cause of the coldness. It must be a cold room, or a cold article of clothing. If there is anything wrong in a man's spiritual life, he must find out the cause and deal with it. Some, when they come to cross roads in their life and don't know how to turn, are advised by religious people to pray about it and all will come right. We have no such assurance that we should do this mentioned in the Bible. What the Bible says is really this: "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Then, my first business is to ask, am I upright in heart? If so, it must happen that light will arise. It is just a case of cause and effect; antecedent and consequent. We have no right to pray unless we are in the line. We must fulfil the condition on which alone the answer can be given. Our thoughts are too little fixed on effects and on causes. If we would only see this!

One of the things people want most in the Christian life is joy—perhaps the crown of all religious grace. When attained, then the Christian life becomes worth living. People search in all directions for this Christian joy. When I was in the Sunday-school I thought thus—that we were to ask for what we wanted and we would get it; and that joy was kept in heaven in lumps, and was let down in answer to prayer; and that all the graces were kept in heaven and let down in this fashion. There may be circumstances in which they do come, and whether we know it or not we can easily tell by turning over a few pages of our Bible. It does not come directly. There has been read the chapter (John xv.) which above all others tell us about joy, and verse 11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." If we want to know how our joy is to be full we must attend to these words. The vine was that which brought joy to the heart of man. And joy is to be attained by bearing fruit. Anyone who bears fruit will find it is the effect of the cause. We are to look for these things indirectly; they are not to come magically, but according to the laws of the spiritual world. I appeal to your own experience. Whenever you have done any simple thing to help on Christ's cause in the world, or done some good thing to another, joy has come of its own accord. No one can be quietly glad by praying for it, but by bearing fruit, which is the condition. You must have been struck with the conditionalness of the promises given. In that 15th chapter of John's Gospel you will see how often that word *if* comes in—*if* you do so and so, so and so will follow. Verse 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." The important part of that text is the *if*. We are not entitled to ask what we will unless we fulfil Christ's words. Verse 10, "*If* ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in love," &c. The principle I am asking you to look into is the conditionalness of the promises and answers to prayer, and of getting the Christian virtues and graces. These do not come to us unless we apply the causes.

Perhaps what some people want after joy is rest. If anyone is restless there is a cause for it. There is no use of reading books or of longing for rest in order to get it. We shall not read long in the New Testament till we find how to get rest. Christ says, "Learn of Me . . . and ye shall find rest." If we learn of Him we shall find rest at once; if we accept Him as our teacher, and take lessons of Him how to live, we will obtain rest. It is the same thing He meant when He said, "Take My yoke upon you"—not a burden, remember. What is a collar to a horse? Is the yoke of the horse the burden? No, the collar is what helps him to bear the burden easily. Christ saw men borne down with burdens. He said, "Try life as I live. My yoke is easy, and therefore My

burden is light." Instead of Christianity adding to the burden, it is the secret of the amelioration of life. It enables one to take the burdens of life without finding their weight. He actually goes on to specify what we are mainly to learn of Him. "For I am meek and lowly in heart." Do you see the connection between being meek and having rest? Most are not meek and lowly in heart. Many worry, thinking they are not in their right place; that they've been looked down on, and at night they are bitter and lose their rest from wounded pride and from imagining people are slighting them. These things would be impossible to us if we learnt of Christ, and were meek and lowly in heart. There is no other way than by doing what Christ says. It is impossible otherwise to have that great Christian experience of rest that is so much coveted.

The next grace we will notice is that of faith. Does faith come in the line of cause and effect? I was much astonished at first when, a number of years ago, I heard Mr. Moody remarking that if he had spent as much time reading his Bible as in prayer, he would have been a better Christian. I thought then that everything was obtained by prayer. But Mr. Moody had found that faith didn't come in that way. "Faith cometh by hearing," not by praying. We're disappointed in prayer sometimes because it makes no difference. You may have prayed for ten years, night and morning, and been no better for it, and so feel inclined to give it up. But prayer alone does not help us unless we help it to help us by hearing. I come to Australia, and I have heard about a certain man, and I believe in him a bit. I hear more about him and my faith increases. I get to know the man and my faith grows stronger and more intense. Faith comes by hearing about Christ. Someone has told us about Christ. We think something of Him. Someone else strengthens the opinion about Him, and we begin to believe in Him, and we grow stronger in faith and trust Him fully.

I think I have mentioned a few of the most important things in the Christian experience: joy, rest, faith. I could go over all the Christian graces and show that all had a cause, and if we attended more to cause than effect, we would obtain more than we do. Let us all apply this principle more to sanctification. Hundreds of books have been written about sanctification. But no book touches the Bible in regard to it. I wish to recall a single formula which sums up the whole matter (2 Cor. iii. 18, R.V.) "We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." The Lord's glory is the character of the Lord. We are changed into the same image from character to character; from a poor character to a little better character, and then a little better, and then into His image. The verb there is in the passive. We are changed into the same

image—transformed. Most people try to manufacture the character, but these ways are futile by trying. Christ held that up to ridicule by saying (Matthew vi. 27) "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" No one by trying hard can approach by any means to the stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus. We cannot grow by trying. We do not change ourselves into His image, we are changed. Man does not "born" himself, he is born. We do not renew, we are renewed in the mind.

Another method people adopt is trying to stop one sin at a time. Life's too short for that process. Besides, if we try this we soon find sin after sin to deal with. Others try to copy the perfections, and it is an inharmonious character that is secured. Many more give up the attempt altogether, while many others imagine that time will affect the change. There is no sanctification by time. Time is a measure, not a cause of change. There must be some cause operating to change us. Some are of the opinion that a few people are naturally disposed to be good, and to go to meetings and read religious books. This is not a magical world, but a world of law; and the law of sanctification is summed up in that one passage on reflecting the character of the Lord. If I live for years with a very beautiful character, I become changed to that image. It comes about by law. We are all reflectors. We reflect our nations, the books we love, &c. If we live with bad people we become changed to be like them. If we live with good people we become changed like to them. If we live with Christ we become changed into His character even by the Spirit of our God. All these gifts come from the Spirit. What we have to do is to fulfil the conditions and the results will follow.

I have shown but crudely how to do it, but I would suggest that you take up the subjects in detail, *i.e.*, love, peace, eternal life, and let the one who writes the paper on the subject for your fellowship meeting find out the cause of it, not merely quote texts or give examples of it, but go to the very bottom of it, and find out from the Bible and from human life how these things do come. The second great thing about the principle is that it is absolutely simple, and the third thing is that it is absolutely infallible, and so one cannot fail to find the things he seeks. All comes back to one thing: Abiding in Christ and trying to represent Him in the world in which we live.

Some time ago theologians showed man's status in God's sight, but the accent of theology has changed somewhat nowadays, and instead of the preacher dealing so much with the status of a man he speaks of a man's character. Perhaps at first too exclusive an accent was put upon the status, but the change has been a good deal brought about by the translation of the original in the Revised Version of the Bible from soul to life. The accent now

falls on life, and this is a more practical thing and has more to do with this world.

I have given you receipts you are to make up for yourselves. I have suggested the methods, you are to work them out. In closing I wish to say two practical things:—

(1) It's not worth while being religious unless you are altogether religious. It won't do to be merely playing at religion, or having religion on us as a bit of veneer. It must saturate us. Some seek first the kingdom of God, and second the kingdom of God, and third the kingdom of God. I don't think a man makes anything of it if he seeks the second time. For then prayer-meetings are dull, and fellowship gatherings are uninteresting. But the moment a man begins to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all things are right. To any man who has not heartily thrown himself into the kingdom of God, but who is seeking secondly the kingdom of God, he may be religious, but there is something he loves more, and both worlds are spoiled to him. He has neither the cream of the one, nor of the other. The great desideratum of the present day is not more Christians, but a better brand of Christians. Who, then, will first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness day by day?

(2) The last thing is—many men imagine if they become a little more religious they will become a little less happy than they are. I'd like to assure all such that it's just the opposite. It's more easy to live the whole religion than the half. He's most miserable who is half in and half out, trying to serve two masters. But many men are kept back by this thought of less happiness. More religion of the right kind means an infinity of joy and happiness, and it's much easier to live right out and out than in a half-hearted way.

## PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

*A Sermon by*

THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF OXFORD.

“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”—I CORINTHIANS i. 23, 24.

THE Christian life, the love which is the fulfilling of the law, has this much in common with the Divine perfection. In the idea of God, perfect love, holiness, and light, there is no division or contrast of separate perfections. Like the light itself, which He has shed around us as typical of His presence, His glory is subject to our analysis only when looked at through some medium which is in its nature more closely akin to ourselves; which enables us to approach the Divine light as it were from different angles, and to discern, as different colours, the infinite variety that unites in that perfect unity. As the light of the sun through the rainbow, so the light

that lighteth every man that is born into the world. Made in His image, although fallen from His image, we recognise the authority of His command, "Be ye Holy as I am Holy." And he has brought near his righteousness in the face of Jesus Christ, "To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God"; "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," has shined thus on our hearts; "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." Thus the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, coming to us through the life of Jesus, has the same unity of perfection that we ascribe to the same glory not yet incarnate. "We behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." As the justice and mercy, the loving kindness and the determinate counsel, are not different qualities but the same perfection of Deity, approached in diverse attitudes and in varied circumstances; so is the perfection of Christ Jesus incarnate, crucified, ascended, and yet ever with us, our strength and our example. The obedience of Jesus, the love of the atoning work, the patience, the perseverance, the brave self-devotion, the beneficent habit, the all illuminating doctrine, the firmness, the pliancy, the boldness, the reserve, the dignity, the lowliness, of his mortal life, are but various sides, various manifestations of the unity of character and purpose which he reveals to us. And that charity, which St. Paul in this day's epistle declares to us, as the more excellent way, what is it but the reflection of the face of Jesus in the lives of those who try to be conformed to His likeness; of those who "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." It has the same unity of the love which is the fulfilling of the law; its various attributes are but the same clear light seen from different points or by a varied medium. Take away some of its characteristics and the whole is destroyed. There are no fragments of the broken ideal. He that is guilty in one point is guilty in all. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

If then we take that charity which never faileth, as the sum and substance of the Christian life, we may see how that humility, the grace of which I am to speak in particular, is little else than that graceful attitude in which pure charity approaches God and man, and looks in upon itself; the mind that was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, and resting in the unity and equality which left Him nothing to strain after but man's salvation, divested Himself of the unapproachable and in comprehensible manifestation of His glory, "and took upon Him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "In the fashion of a man" He was found, when He humbled Himself; how deep is the lesson. In His equality with God, in His unapproachable majesty, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow or turning, "who upholdeth all things by the word of His power," there is no diversity of proportions; all things are seen by Him in their reality; His love is over all His works, and as His majesty is so is His mercy. It is when He has become man that He humbles Himself, with His great purpose of love before Him—the great glory of our salvation, the reward of the toil for which He has come to visit us; then He enters the list in which the captain of our salvation is made

perfect by suffering. Humility is the habit, the attitude in which from the first He has undertaken the labour of His divine love, the travail of His soul.

For us then, according to the idea, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, charity is not one habit or a set of habits, much less an act or set of acts, but the habit of the soul, and humility is not one of a set of attitudes, or a mere class of attitudes, but the attitude of the soul in which the Holy Ghost is working the good pleasures of God. And when we look for the bearing of the text, "We preach Christ crucified," on the special theme for the illustration of which it is chosen, we recognise, as in the charity in which His people emulate the love and devotion of His work, so in the humility in which they share the mind that was in him, the proof of the union of their hearts with His heart, the proof that the life which they now live in the flesh they live by the faith of the Son of God. "I am crucified with Him whom I preach, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

But further; it is no wonder that Christ crucified and the preaching of Him is to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. To the faithful themselves, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; more than a mystery, a very paradox if it were not that He supplies the clue. How strange are those passages in the record of His last days on earth, in which He speaks of His crucifixion as a glorification: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." "What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour; Father, glorify Thy name." "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee." And the language in Gethsemane, and on the cross, summed up in the loud and exceeding bitter cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" We stand awestruck before the great mystery; the bush burns with fire, yet is not consumed. We do not venture to attempt to analyse the strange light that gleams from the cross. But we know that in that death so meekly borne was the accomplishment of the work that he had given Himself; "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me." We have not to wait until He has passed through the grave and gate of death, risen and ascended, and sat down in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. It is on the cross that He wears His new crown; He reigns from the tree; the new glory that He wins is there, the joy that was set before Him; "those whom thou hast given Me are safe in My hand."

Is it a presumption in us to see in our life's task a reflection, a following of His? Was not the thought present to Him when He followed up that strange saying about His glorification with the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me him will My Father honour." Like His, our glory is in our service, our liberty is in our service, our kingdom and royalty is in our service: for our service is the very outcome of His service, as our crown is of His crown, our glory of His glory; that where He is, there also, in this life and in that which is to come, shall His servants be.

But I forbear to strain after analogies which, full of voice and life as they are to the disciples who have borne the cross after Him, are realised more deeply in the heart than on the hearing of the ear. Let it suffice us now to remember that we have our share in Christ crucified, in Himself, in His work, in His glory, and see how that share involves our wearing His garment of humility whilst we follow His steps; in His suffering for us He has given us our example, He has given us His Spirit, He is with us Himself.

The first requisite, I should suppose, to the realising of true humility, is self-knowledge. Not but that a great deal of the truest humility is almost if not altogether, unconscious, a habit that by God's grace has become the nature of the soul, and on which the reactionary efforts of pride and selfishness in the soul break as something strange, and inwardly repulsive to the renewed self. Still, I conceive, there is this in common to the hearers of the word, whether doers or not doers, that they must, at some time of their life, have looked at their natural face in a glass. We know that in the matter of worldly work it is an absolute requisite of success that a man should form some estimate of his own powers, unless he is willing to waste his life on that which is unworthy of him, or to throw away his chances by straining after that for which he would see himself to be incompetent, if he would look at all. And some habit of introspection forms necessarily a part of all mental and moral discipline. That view of the inner life which specially connects itself with humility is, however, not the mere consciousness of sin, the view that results for the moment in self-contempt, and wonder that God should have thought us worth saving; or what conceivable quality was there in us that Christ should set His love upon us. The humility that attends upon charity, that is the permanent attitude of the soul, comes later and lasts when much of the unhappiness of self-contempt has become a thing of the past. This humility breaks the alabaster box of spikenard, exceeding precious, because of the great love which is the proof and witness of sins forgiven; it also is full of tears, but the offering is an offering of love, not of bondage. And so the self-estimate is not a depreciating one; what have I, what am I, what can I make myself, that I may do my Master's work, grow into my Master's spirit, render myself a grateful offering to Him whose joy in me shall be perfected when He shall see me beholding His presence in righteousness, waking up after His likeness? I know that I have nothing that I have not received, I can do nothing but by the strength that He has given me, I can offer Him nothing but what He has first bestowed on me. As David said, when he prepared for the building of the Temple, we say when we proffer the dedication of our life, "all things come of Thee, of Thine own have we given Thee." We do not want to bring Him even the one talent, wrapped and buried as it otherwise would be, and say "I knew that thou wert an austere man, reaping that thou hadst not sown, gathering that thou hast not strawed." We ask what is our talent, what is our gift, what can we do to prove our love, to give Him some fruit of the travail of His soul? Our whole life is a very little gift, either as compared with the love that redeemed it, or with the love that we would render for the redemption. It is but a little lesson, yet it is more than a life's lesson, "Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou so regardest him." "Man is like a thing of nought," but "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of

truth." True love and true humility demand that, little as it is, it be not wasted.

Next, upon self-knowledge must follow self-culture ; and in the region of self-culture, where pride and humility come closest together, a still deeper effort to search out the spirit must accompany every step, every stage of growth. For there are in the very means and appliances, of which we have to avail ourselves to increase our five talents, or three, or one, dangers as well as helps ; temptations to self-worship as well as aids to self-devotion. The duty of making the most of ourselves, of strengthening where and how we can, the moral sense ; of cultivating the intellectual powers ; of qualifying ourselves to increase the sum of human knowledge, and the sum of human happiness, lies upon us ; a service, it is true, full of freedom, full of delightful energy, full of a sweet, strong sense of increasing power, abundant in hope, rejoicing in generous trustfulness, abounding in noble anticipations, yet at every step needing to be guarded. Self-culture is a duty of true love, an inseparable accompaniment of true humility ; but oh ! beloved, is not the way full, full of snares ? Not merely the danger of taking to ourselves what we should give to God—the glory of our success, the credit of our discoveries ; but the setting of our heart on the things in which we are training ourselves, living for study, living for science, living for success, living even for liberty and well doing, when our true heart's work is to live for God, casting our study, our science, our success, every fruit of our labour at His feet, with David's words, "Thine own have we given Thee" ; yet with all our power, not more than the mere fragment of what we would. Nor even that only ; jealousies of other men's success, ungenerous rivalries, heart-burnings, enmities, harsh words of those who differ from us, embittered perhaps by a sense of inferiority, or by a sense of superiority not less often, but oh ! how far apart from the spirit of Christ, or even from the spirit of St. Paul, saying "whether it be we or they" what matters it if He be glorified ?

Self-culture has its end, its true end, in self-devotion. The spirit of humility lies deep here and must needs strike. Let me give myself, such as He has made me, such as He has helped me to make myself, such as I am ; but a great way off from what I would be, to the work which He, rather than myself, has set me. Let Him choose for me. I will not say He has need for me elsewhere. He had no need of thee ; it is for thine own salvation that He has chosen thee, and given thee gifts, and a place to serve Him : accept the guidance of the Lord. Shall I, after making myself a ripe and brilliant scholar throw away my chance of doing great things for God, by taking a country curacy, or a place in a second-rate school ? Shall the vessel of clay say to the potter "Why hast thou made me thus ?" Will not He who gives the call make the opportunity ? If only you are sincere in telling Him that such as you have made yourselves, you have made yourselves for Him, be well assured He will not let you be wasted. What becomes of our first class men ? The very men whom God has equipped in His own armour to fight the battles of His truth in the misery of our great cities, in the dark places and cruel habitations of farther lands, in the great controversies of true and false science. They leave us, too often—bear with me when I say it—because they to whom their very attainments constitute a call to do God's work, have been tempted away, and refused to take His burden and learn of Him with

whom they would find rest for their souls. They go, and we hear of them from time to time as men of whom once great things were hoped, but "there is a way that seemeth right unto man." Alas! self-culture and self-devotion, without which humility may be but a synonym for indolence, yet need the training of humility at every step. Against disappointment, against jealous grudging, against wondering what God made you for, against weariness, "Master, we have toiled all night and have taken nothing," against despondency, "Lord, they have digged down thine altars and I only am left," against impatient wilfulness, against that self-concentrating energy which is close akin to pride, the spirit of humility stands in one continuous attitude of defence. And how?

I think the true cure for this constant tendency to wander from God's work, is the constant bearing in mind our share of the work of Christ crucified: the glory of joining in His work of ministration, of sympathy, the bearing of one another's burdens; the realising, it may sometimes be, of our own burden through theirs; the lightening of their toil, the helping to save them. That is the work of charity, of love; the work which they who love, are clothed with humility. It is in His Divine sympathy that Christ draws nearest us; in our sympathy with Him and His, we realise His indwelling. "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;" "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law;" bear the cross, win the glory. Humility is not merely the attitude of the soul before God or in introspection, it is the absolutely necessary attitude of every man who would sympathise with his fellows, bring Christ to them, lead them to Christ, do Christ's work in and for them. That sympathy is the oil of gladness; the very nourishment that every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, whereby the whole body under the head which is Christ, maketh the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love; it is the very salt of the Church, it is the very music of the household, it is that which joins the lowliest man on earth to the great company of heaven. And yet to enter at all into that we must know how to forget our own troubles, our own disappointments, our own accomplishments, our own selves, or to think of ourselves only as most highly blessed in forming a link between Him and those whom He loves.

How much more! He who would receive God's truth, however bestowed, must wait for it in the same attitude. The true man of science is the man who is content to labour and content to wait; he is not the crude discoverer who, as soon as he sees a new truth, imagines that he has stolen a march on all the world, and rushes out to make his market, and recreate the universe upon it. He is not the ruthless critic who will repel the weak and tentative beginnings of those whom he might cherish and discipline, not the rash theorist who tries to take the kingdom of nature by violence and demonstrate a new creation because he cannot understand the old. He is the man who works with patience and works with humility. The true man of genius is no vain dogmatist; he is at heart very humble, for true genius must surely recognise both the giver and the work that he has appointed. Who is the true preacher and minister of God's word? Not the wise, not the scribe or disputer, not the controversialist, not the eloquent man who can draw those tears that lie so very near the eyes; it is the man who can, as they say, lay his heart to your

heart, can feel for your doubts and feel for your temptations, can feel for your sins; for his message, and his mission, and the spirit of his crucified Lord, have for him the reality which makes Him real to you and you real to Him. Who is the true believer? It is he who recognises in Jesus and His work the one truth whereby his soul may be healed; and who before he can see that, has seen that there is no help in himself. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," but to those who want a saviour no sign is needed; to those who approach the truth in humility, the truth comes after no long waiting; they that do His will are taught His will. They who are willing to be taught shall speedily be taught of God.

Beloved, it is no slight mercy, no small boon, to have seen in a single holy life the true example of humility. As my mind reviews the past, and the men whom I have found it a blessing and a glory to have loved, I can remember one who for years occupied no small place in the world's regard, and died at the very height of honour; a man who had great success in life; had been loved and honoured as a schoolboy; had won the greatest success and filled the most onerous offices in the University; had early been promoted to a high place among the ministers of the Church, and performed the work of almost raising from death the religious life of a most important region; on whom promotion followed promotion, and who, if success should make a man proud, might well be proud; until he died, the same quiet and modest gentleman that he had been throughout. To the outside world his chief characteristic was calm dignity, readiness to work, readiness to mediate; a moderation which hastier men regarded as somewhat cold. No dogmatist, no controversialist, reticent, most cautious and temperate in judgment, firm and gentle, all men knew him. But to those who were nearer to him he was a very noble monument of God's grace; living so entirely above the world, that whilst he was wide awake to all that passed around him, and deemed it his duty to be first in every good work, and on his guard against every evil one, the storms of political and ecclesiastical tumult did not seem to come near him; so entirely in sympathy with his people that wherever his hand could reach it was stretched out to help; so powerful by example that, where he was, no ill-natured word was ever spoken, no unkind tale repeated; no word of flattery was uttered in his presence; a man whose life began, continued, and ended in prayer; who in his trouble turned to his God and his Bible just as the simplest cottager would turn, and who in his prosperity had a word of kindness and a deed of wise and circumspect bounty for all. The fatherless and the widow, aye, many a one, live to feel His praise. Humility was the very charm, and very harmonising grace of all.

Then I see another, a very different man in most else. A strong-minded, hard-headed, hard-working parish priest, putting his shoulder to the burden to undertake for God the most difficult of all work, the recovery of a great, half heathenised parish; a great preacher; a man of overflowing geniality, wise and witty; with long experience of men, courted in society, the friend and adviser of the greatest men of his time; only to a moderate degree successful in the eye of the world, but most bountifully prospered by the blessing of God upon his labours. Yet in him also, so different a man, the same strong and effective humility was, to those who were privileged to come near to him, far the most striking feature of

all. Humility in his estimate of himself and his labours, shown in unwearied industry; constant training of himself until he was long past three score years and ten, to become more than before a fit instrument in the Lord's hands; rising at four every day, to begin his work with prayer and gain time to let all the multifarious engagements and distractions of his busy life fall into their proper places; although a stout controversialist, taking the utmost care not to wound the man while he struck at the hostile cause, and most careful to heal the wound that a random blow might inflict. With all so patient, so considerate, so sympathetic in his great abounding fellow-feeling with weak, sinful, suffering humanity, that, wherever he went, love followed him and rewarded him as he best loved to be rewarded. None was ever repelled as trifling or intrusive because he could not boldly state his case at once, time, pains, thought, money, were freely given. "As the eye of the servant unto the hand of the master, and as the eye of the maiden unto the hand of her mistress," his whole life was to his Lord. There was no cant, no sham reserve; his humility was spontaneous and unconscious; the ornament of a strong, energetic, ready, whole-hearted soldier, and yet a meek and quiet spirit. His reward also is with the Lord; but when we think of him in his work and in his rest, we see that he had the beginning of his reward here. Hundreds of inferior men passed him in worldly honour, but none came near him in the love of men. And once more, for I would not weary you, but as I go on thinking, other figures crowd upon me, of those who in sight of men have seemed farther different still, but have rejoiced to wear the same uniform, ever bearing about in their body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Some of us can remember one, perhaps more than one, who neither gained success nor won such influence for good as these; but whose gracious gifts were spent in more retired and quiet scenes; a great scholar, a most industrious critic, a brilliant controversialist, a most indefatigable worker, the man who united acuteness of critical perception with extensive learning perhaps in the highest degree that those qualities ever are united; a man to whom to know as a difficulty was to attack it, and to attack it was in nine cases out of ten to overcome it, and to overcome was in every case simply an equipment for further research and further victory; who was content, yes glad, after years of work here, to devote himself to the care of a little country parish, where for miles and miles he found not one person who could enter into the thoughts which had occupied his whole life, or recognise the value of the man; who threw himself into his work heart and soul, without forgetting the old, and learned at an age when most men are tired of trying to learn, to speak to the child and the ignorant, in such language as they could understand, the wonderful works of God. Poor and broken in health, and worn with many discouragements, we saw him working hard to the very last day of his life, when he knew that his hours were numbered and that it was to God's blessing alone that his labours must be left. In him, too, the Holy Ghost wrought that self-same mind of Jesus. Unlike most of us, even of those who try to do better, he never spoke of himself, or of what he had done, or of what he might have done had it pleased God otherwise; his very abstinence from profession marked a profound humility, a self-knowledge and self-discipline that culminated in a rare, very rare, self-devotion. And God took the proffered life, although the reward may not be seen until the great net is drawn to the shore.

Beloved, you, the elders at least among you, must remember others whose lives have to you illustrated the great theme, far more signally than any words of sermons or examples learned through the preacher's lessons; in whom you have seen the life offered to Christ, and recognised the humility of the inner conversation in one whom the world knew, perhaps, only as the great judge, or the popular physician, or the leading politician, or the brilliant soldier, or even the man of society. Thank God for having known them, and letting the light of His glory shine through them upon you. But do not fail to recognise that which was the mainspring of life to them; the humility was the attitude, the habit, the outward unconscious garb of a spirit, the strength of which was in its union with Christ; a union which nothing but sin could dissolve; and which He and they with Him were steadfastly purposed should not be broken. That oneness with the Crucified carries with it both the charity and the humility of the saints; and He the Crucified came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; "He that is greatest among you let him be your servant." Equally fitting to every grade of human life, to the rich and to the poor, to the wise and the ignorant—and who is so consciously ignorant as the truly wise man—to the successful and the unsuccessful, to the ambitious and to the retiring, to the strong and the weak; it helps the man who has it through all trials, yes, even through the disappointment most keen to the heart of the good man, because it comes nearest to the divine sorrow which cannot be comforted, in the loss of those for whom we have laboured and toiled in love. Christ crucified is to him, why not to us also who believe, the power of God and the wisdom of God. His consciousness of Christ's hold upon him, and of his own helplessness, may like the dying of his Master be to the Jews of this world a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but in spite of the paradox, he can say with the Apostle, "When I am weak then am I strong"; "If I must needs glory I will glory of the things that concern mine infirmities"; "Yet all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

## ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON,\*

*July 27, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

### LOST AND FOUND.

LUKE XV. 1—10.

"THEN . . . PUBLICANS AND SINNERS."—When the outcasts of religious society, the publicans and sinners, heard of the parable of the supper, and that the denizens of the lanes and hovels, the homeless ones of the high-ways and hedges, were welcome, "then," as this chapter emphatically begins in the Authorised Version, they pressed into the open banqueting room to hear Him. At once He emphatically repeats His teaching by two parables, taken from most familiar incidents of Eastern life: the one, that of the lost sheep, coming home to the men, the other, of the lost piece of money, to the women, of the crowd. In a country where all the pasturage is on open, unfenced land, and where every cave and fissure in the

\* From the *American Sunday School Times*.

limestone rocks might conceal an enemy, the sheep, unless under the shepherd's eye, are never safe. By the "wilderness" is meant, not a desert, but the grassy downs and shrub-clad hillsides which are to be found, in a state of nature, not far from every village. The village is usually placed on a knoll, very often with a tower, such as is alluded to in our last note, and around it are the gardens, and beyond them, on the slopes, the vineyards, all carefully fenced in, and each belonging to individual proprietors. Beyond these are the corn-fields, where there is any tolerably level surface, for the most part unfenced, though the limits of each property are carefully marked out by stones set up at the corners and various intervals, the "neighbour's landmark," which it is the gravest of crimes to remove. Wherever the land ceases to be adapted for corn cultivation, the common land of the village begins, and extends to the common of the next little community, carefully delimited, also, by landmarks.

"IF HE LOSE ONE OF THEM."—Each villager has the right of taking his sheep and goats to pasture on this common land, but they must be continually watched, lest they trespass on the corn, stray beyond the boundaries of the commune, or be pounced upon by skulking wolves or jackals. But, with all his care, a shepherd may easily lose a sheep. As soon as the flocks, which have left the fold at daybreak, reach their pasture-ground, they generally separate, the goats hurrying up the hillsides, to browse in long lines on the shrubby herbage; the sheep moving in a parallel line lower down, and nibbling at the finer grasses. The shepherd posts himself on some rock or mound where he may keep the whole in view, and from time to time moves forward, or crosses some little dell in quest of fresh pasturage, calling on the flocks to follow him, which they always do with alacrity. But at such a juncture, some adventurous animal may have strayed out of hearing, and then, bewildered at finding itself alone, may wander farther and farther from its companions, helpless and defenceless. When evening approaches, the shepherd reckons up his flock, as they pass before him into the fold, and at once detects his loss, and retraces his steps till he haply finds the wanderer.

THE WOMEN'S SILVER PIECES.—Then, turning to the women, Christ appeals to them too. They knew well what it was, in the inner recesses of their dark Galilean cottage, to lose one of the silver pieces, the treasured heirlooms which they strung on their head-dresses; for the allusion here is not to money carried in a purse, but to the coins which formed the *semadi* worn by every Nazareth matron to this day. The *semadi* is formed of silver coins pierced through the centre, and strung on a pad on each side of the head, the larger coins at the bottom, and the smaller at the top, meeting, if the wearer be rich enough, on the forehead. These treasures are the property of the women alone. Father, brother, or husband, has no power over them, and they descend from mother to daughter. How poor must that woman be who had only ten such pieces, any traveller in Galilee will know full well! How keenly would she feel the loss of even one coin from her scanty head-dress, and how carefully would she search her house for the missing treasure!

"DO NOT LIGHT A CANDLE."—And need has she to light a candle; for in a Galilean cottage there are no windows, but generally an inner chamber, which receives scarcely a ray of light from the door, the only means of ventilation or light. In this inner chamber, or sometimes raised

daïs at the back of the living-room, are kept all the stores of the household—sacks of corn, jars of wine, heaps of olives, and, moreover, the mattocks, yokes, ploughs, and other implements of husbandry—and without a candle her search would be futile. When found, how would the happy owner tell her tale of anxiety, and evoke the congratulations of her neighbours, as they gathered at the fountain, the evening rendezvous of the women of an Eastern village ! In seizing on these two incidents of everyday life among the poor, our Lord would show to them at once how He, who came, as the poorest of the poor, to seek and save the lost, welcomed the meanest, and could sympathise in the anxieties of the humblest.

## JESUS REVEALED.

### *Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. EDWARD SPURRIER, COLCHESTER.

“ He was known of them in the breaking of bread.”—LUKE xxiv. 35.

THIS reminds us of—

I. *The sweet homeliness of Jesus.*—The moment and method of revelation in one of the commonest acts of daily life, done every day by the Jewish householder. Christ associated Himself with the ordinary life of humanity—one of ourselves. He sanctifies common life. Its whole round may be lived with Him. He does still often make known His presence and reveals Himself in the home, in social intercourse, in business, &c.

II. *The generous bounty of Jesus.*—Recalls the miracles of feeding the multitude. Recognised in His compassion for us in our need—and provision for it. Do we ever entertain Him as guest? He becomes Host, whose blessing multiplies our store and sanctifies it. We may be free from disquietude. He knows and can meet our need.

III. *The self-sacrificing love of Jesus.*—How like this incident to that in the upper chamber. Conf. xxiv. 30 with xxii. 19. The Lord revealed, not only as Benefactor and Friend, but as Saviour, Who died for our sins and rose again. The source and sustenance of our spiritual life. How often now He reveals Himself in the breaking of bread. He who gave Himself for us, gives Himself to us. We partake of Himself, the Living Bread.

IV. *The unchanged relationship of Christ to His disciples after His victory over death and the grave.*—He is now a mighty conqueror, but He renews the former intercourse—the same tenderness, grace. So ever, so eternally, will He supply, enrich, bless. Rev. vii. 16, 17.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

Lesson for August 3 : LUKE xv. 11—24. Golden Text : LUKE xv. 18.

### THE PRODIGAL SON.

THIS little story has in it three chapters :—

- I. What the lad asked for ; or what all sin is.
- II. Where the lad went ; or what all sin does.
- III. How he came home ; or how all sin is remedied.

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\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

I. Away in this pleasant farmhouse, the father has his own freehold and his boys growing up around him, the elder about twenty-five years of age, the younger twenty-one to-day, and he comes before his father and says, "Father, I am twenty-one to-day, and I am a man, and I want the money that belongs to me, and I will go and push my way in the world. I have served you a long time, for years and years." That is what all sin is. It says, "Let me be my own master; let me do as I like." Perhaps the lad had not any very evil purpose, but he wanted to be his own master. The essence of sin was there. When the devil came to our first parents in Paradise and said, "Ye shall be as gods," what did he mean? Just that they were to be their own masters. So the father went to the old chest, and took out the old bags of gold, and said, "Here you are, my lad." He divided to him his living. God has put into our hands this mysterious power to be our own master, or to choose Him as our Father and our God.

II. Where the lad went; or what all sin does. The lad starts, but not for a day or two. He does not leave the old father suddenly, but at last he is gone to the far country. He was as happy as the day was long at first. The world can give happiness for a while, but there is no peace or satisfaction in it. But at last the lad runs through all his money. Where are his friends to pay his debts? He is poor now, and poor people do not have friends in the far country. His purple and fine linen are all gone, and his whole looks cry out, "I perish with hunger." In that far country this comes to all alike. The far country is where the man lives to please himself, where the first and last thought is, "What do I like?"

III. How he came home; or how all sin is remedied. The third chapter opens with rather a sad picture—wind, north-east; a steel-blue sky with the razor edge; and here sits the poor lad shivering in his rags, perishing in his hunger, and here about him are these feeding swine. And what did the pigs care for his misery; the veriest cur would have licked his hands with sympathy, but his misery was nothing to the swine. There the lad sits and thinks of his father's house, and the love and plenty there. He remembered the hired servants—not grumbling under-paid servants—but happy, well-paid servants. He remembered his father—no grumbling, fault-finding father. These memories saved the lad, and he said, "I will arise and go to my father." Love is blind they say, but it is not. Away yonder under the porch sits the old father, and he sees the prodigal coming, and he shades his eyes, and he says, "Why, 'tis my son," although the servants in the field didn't know him. And he runs to meet him, flings his arms about him, and the lad was glad to hide himself on his father's bosom, and then he could speak. "Father, I have sinned." And the father cannot do enough to show his love. He came home naked, and he got the best robe; without shoes, and he got the best pair; hungry, and he had the fatted calf. What a love is God's love that does not wait till we are good, but that gets everything ready for us. There is but one road back from the far country to the Father. It is underneath the Cross of Jesus. Take heed to the road.

# *The British Weekly Pulpit*

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AUGUST 1, 1890.

ONE PENNY.

## A SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE AT THE CITY TEMPLE.

*Conducted by*

THE REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

*On Sunday, July 13, 1890, and completely reported.*

### THE LORD'S PRAYER.

#### HYMN.

"This is the day of light ;  
Let there be light to-day," &c.

#### FIRST LESSON.

I St. John i.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us ;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.—*That is the basis on which we stand. We have seen Him, and you have seen us, and we are in His fellowship.*

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full, *running over, filling all space, and finding it too small.*

This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.—*Light, light ; no man could have found that out.*

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, *we dis-fellowship ourselves ; we lie, and do not the truth.*

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin, *and brings us light.*

If we say that we have no sin *to be cleansed from*, we deceive ourselves, *and do not know ourselves*, and the truth is not in us. *Not a truth, the Truth, printed with a large initial letter ; the Truth, the spirit, the ghost, the true genius—not in us.*

If we confess our sins—*if we name them one by one, and turn them all*

out into the light—He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, *our statement is not limited to ourselves*, we make Him a liar—*God is involved in that folly*—and His word is not in us. *Let us rest here a moment.*

CHANT.

Psalm cxlviii. : "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens," &c.

SECOND LESSON.

1 St. John ii. 1—17.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and He is the propitiation for our sins : and not for our's only only, but for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.—*It is a moral test, not metaphysical.*

He that said I know Him and keepeth not His commandments, *whose theology and morality do not co-ordinate*, is a liar, *not occasionally and incidentally, but a liar through and through*, and the truth is not in him—*not a fibre of it, he is a liar.*

But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected : hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith that he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked. Brethren, *this is not original*, I write no new commandment unto you, *though you may never have heard it put this way before*, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning—*morality never changes*. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

Again, *in the same sense*, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you : because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes, *he is stone blind.*

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known, Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Love not the world—*it is a small place, there is not room enough in it for genius like yours, for immorality*—neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. *And the world, what of it? A flying post, or a shuttle, a shadow chased away.* And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

ANTHEM.

"It is high time to awake," &c.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, we rejoice that Thou art light of light, Thou art the fountain and the centre. God said: "Let there be light, and there was light," Himself who shone upon the brooding darkness. Shine in our hearts, be the morning of our lives, be the summer of our souls. Jesus Christ, Thy Son, is the light of the world. As long as He is in the world He is the light of the world. He abideth with us for ever, therefore are we living in the day of light, and in the presence of light may we answer light by light, and thus may Thy creation be full of glory. They that are of the darkness love the things that are evil. May we be children of the morning and not of the night, rejoicing in all things pure, beautiful, true, and lovely. If Thou wilt answer this prayer for us at the cross, we shall know that the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth from all sin. We shall know that we have God in us as the light abounds in our whole thought and purpose. Chase away the last shadow, break up the evil empire of night, and bring in the sovereignty of Thy own illumination.

We bless Thee for a religion that is full of light. We thank Thee that we are called to fellowship one with another in the full light of day. Thy Church always meets at mid-day. It is the child of the noon. There is in it no love of darkness, no trace of mystery or secrecy that is corrupt. The Lord help us to realise our call into light, and may we be found in loving obedience serving the altar of the cross. Thou hast made the summer longer than the winter. Thou givest joy when Thou givest life. All young things laugh and play, and gambol and sport themselves in the growing morning. May it be so in our souls. May no old age ever set in upon our hearts. In our spirit, thought, purpose, love, may we be young for ever. May we grow always new and not towards old age.

We thank Thee for this religion of cheerfulness, vivacity, music and sense of triumph. This is the gift of God, this is the flash of immortality. The Lord reveal His purpose towards us more and more, little by little, that we may see the way of life, and go in it with obedience and delight, not only with resignation and contentment, but with acquiescence and sense of being with God every moment. Thou knowest what our purposes are. If they are good, healthy, sound, useful, Thou wilt bring them into happy fruition; if they are otherwise, crush them as a brood of the night, and may we never be able to find them again. May our lives be beautiful with truthfulness, and useful because we walk in the steps of Him who went about doing good. May this be our one business. Then we shall have no tediousness, no wearisomeness in life. Our life shall pass like a sacred song.

The Lord direct us. Sometimes the road is full of perplexity. It breaks out in all directions, and we cannot choose the right line to take. If it be up hill, give us strength to climb the steep. If it be downhill, help us to go down joyously, knowing that in the valley we shall find the river. If it be full of darkness, trouble, and sorrow, then the God of love be with us, lest our hearts die of despair.

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. Do as Thou wilt with the seasons; send us the seasons in their order, or withhold them from us, or mingle them into one disappointment; only, give us grace to say: "Thy

will be done." Be round about our houses. May there be flowers climbing up around the door and around every window, honeysuckle, and woodbine, and roses, and flowers of all hues and fragrances; and may we know that our house is the house of God, because of the love that is there, and the fulness of summer light. If any man would trouble his home, trouble him; send darkness upon his eyes, drive away his malign purposes, and teach him that he who would spoil the home would wreck heaven itself, if he could. Be with all the people who want to build up this sweet, healthy, beauteous home—a household of pureness and joy and trust; and may these little homes that we build be pieces of heaven, sections of God's own paradise.

Be with our loved ones everywhere. We would never forget them; in their travels, in their separations from us, we would remember their heartache and their perplexity, and their wonder concerning ourselves. The Lord bring us all together again, to unite in one grateful doxology. The Lord look upon the stranger within our gates; from America, from Australia, from the islands of the sea, from the missionary fields far away. Look upon our fatherless and motherless ones. Be with all who are in trouble of heart, and dare not say so. Be with those who are dreading to-morrow morning's post, because a letter may bring blackness and ruin. Be with all who are anxious to pray, and yet cannot, or dare not, open their lips in intercession. Soften our hearts; send the Spirit of love into our bosoms. And do this because we gather at the cross, the cross of Christ, because we assemble on lonely, mournful Calvary. Thou Saviour of the world make us glad this day. Amen.

HYMN.

"Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise," &c.

SERMON.

Malachi iv.

We are studying the very last words in the Old Testament. We began the study last Sunday—the prophecies of Malachi, the fourth chapter.

Here are two effects of fire. In the first instance is the effect of destruction. When the burning day comes it shall leave the wicked neither root nor branch. That may be called the negative action of fire. No man who is wicked can fight omnipotence and win. Why do the heathen rage? Why do the people imagine a vain thing? Why do men kick against the pricks? Why does the ox back upon the goad and torment itself with keener agony? No man can fight almightiness and conquer. When the Lord's day of burning shall come, the great oven-day spoken of by the prophet, "all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble." Who can fight fire with straw? Who will set up a wooden fence against a volcano? When all the burning is done how will the day's history total? Thus: "It shall leave them neither root nor branch," nothing to be seen above ground, nothing to be found underground. The triumph of retribution is complete.

It is well that men should thus be able to forecast their fate. "The candle of the wicked shall be put out." "The memory of the wicked shall rot." The ungodly are not like the righteous: they are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away," as if in mockery and derisive sport. There need be no waiting for the day of judgment in our destiny. This is the day of judgment. The Lord's right hand is evident, and the Lord's left hand is vividly displayed, and men can rank themselves. Conscience shall be judge. In personal history shall be found personal evidence. For the wicked there is nothing but a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Terrible words; but the surgeon is a terrible man when he takes out his instrument that he may cut out the diseased flesh or remove the diseased joint. But is he only terrible? On the contrary; his terribleness is an aspect of his beneficence. If your house is standing upon a bog, it is better that you should know it in time. Do not declare that the messenger is terrible and severe. He is not. He is wise, he is considerate, he is merciful; he has come to state the facts, that you may know what to do. Why should you be a victim to your own diseased sentimentality, saying, "Do not tell me about ruin and burning days, but tell us about sunshine and flowers"? Rather say to all God's angels and ministers of grace, "Gentlemen, tell us the truth." A call for the truth will elicit the truth.

But there is another action of fire. There is the action of healing. "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." A terrible sun. Dead trees have a hard time of it when the sun shines. They do not understand one another. There is no point of co-operative contact. The tree that is dead is out of the solar system. It does not come into the current of its ministries. It stands in the soil, but is not rooted to the centre. All day the sun fights it, mocks it, blisters it, takes out of it drop by drop any lingering juice that might be in its veins, until the process of dissection is complete. It is otherwise with the living tree. The sun kisses it into larger life, blesses it with reproductive and generous warmth, tells it messages from heaven, speaks to it of the larger trees on the other side of the river, tells the most blossoming and blooming and fruitful tree upon earth that it is only a dim emblem, a poor shadowy type of God's real trees and promises of living true and good things that they shall be lifted up into the ideals which they now imperfectly typify. Nor do the trees complain. They say, "If we are only types, we can do God's work. If we trees are to be carried into a higher realisation, so be it. God's will be done. We are thankful of what we can do now, and the future we leave to Him."

What is this Sun of Righteousness? Not a man; the grammar

is against that view. The Hebrew word for sun is feminine. She a woman of righteousness. A She of beauty shall arise with healing in her wings. The universe would be empty without a woman. Eden did not begin to grow until the woman came. And if she killed it, it was because she first made it alive. We do not understand these allusions to gender. Is God Father and mother? Is there a feminine element in God? When He made man He made him man and woman, and He made him after His own likeness. Who knows the meaning of these things? No man. Yet they are full of meaning to the soul, meaning which will not give itself up to winds, but will hover about the soul, flutter near it, throw fragrance upon it, sing to it, startle it in the night time with visions of light.

We must not part with these unseen presences and ministries. There is a cant that says we cannot go into the unseen world; we know nothing about the world unseen. It is the merest drivel to say so. It is also opposed to the simple fact of the case. We are all living in an unseen world. We are trifling with ourselves when we suppose that we are only living within a sphere or circle that is visible. We are invisible to ourselves, we are invisible to one another. We only know one another by a revelation. Behind the word lies the meaning, behind the meaning lies the motive, behind the motive lies eternity. And so there be fools who tell our young souls not to trouble about the unseen. Have you seen thought, spirit, life, motive? Have you seen the self of yourselves? It is even so with these deeper, spiritual interpretations. This woman-sun is a fact.

Look at the effects of Divine healing. They are stated by the prophet. "Ye shall grow, ye shall go forth." There was to be activity. This is a characteristic of the Divine religion. It will not let a man stay at home. It develops the spirit of travel and locomotion. When the Divine religion has taken hold, "when will the ship be sailing? When will the train be going? When will the cattle be ready, that we may ride through the wilderness?" Why not sit down here? We cannot. Why not? To go forth is the watchword of our faith. Missionaries cannot always give an account of themselves. We have already in this "People's Bible" come upon men who have said, "Let me go," and when Pharaoh said, "Why? have I not been good to thee?" "Yes." "Hast thou not had abundance to eat?" "Yes." "Hast thou not been as one of my own?" "Yes." "Then why go?" "I do not know why, but I must go." That is the pressure of destiny. Pharaoh did not understand how a well-fed beast could wish to leave his pastures and his stalls; but the Lord, as we have seen, had spoken to the man, and filled him with a spirit of recklessness. Christianity is restless in that sense. It will not give any recreation nor cessation from labour until the very last man has been saved from shipwreck. Not

only shall ye "go forth," but ye shall "grow up as calves of the stall," a figure which signifies, "Ye shall be sportive, ye shall realise the idea of youthfulness." You shall be vivacious. You shall not be old, cold, dead things. You shall be as calves of the stall, full of life, leaping because of the very redundance of vitality. There is a burst here of spiritual enthusiasm. This is not an animal vivacity, it is a spiritual impulse and ambition, it is the new and deeper magnetism, it is the effect of being in touch with God.

Where there is no enthusiasm there is no true realisation of the sunlight. We have seen that it is the sunlight that keeps us in obedience. The sun tells us what to do. The sun will tell you whether it is holiday time or not. You cannot go out willingly to take your holiday in the rain. If for arbitrary reasons and appointments you are obliged to go, you go with discontent and complaining. But when the sun comes and fills the whole firmament with his glory you say at once, "Let us go." The sun tells you what coat to wear, what food to eat. The sun is master.

But there may be activity. That is so—"going forth." And there may be the scene of sportiveness and joy intimated by the words "Grow up as calves of the stall." But what after that? There will be conquest. "And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Christ goes forth to conquer. Christ never fails. Any failures are temporary and apparent and superficial. If they could fail arithmetic could fail, all truth could fail, geometry could fail; and we all know that geometry always wins. Within its own sphere geometry makes the builder take his plumb-line or, geometry says, "You must build according to me or you cannot build at all, your little edifice will topple over if you do not build according to the structure of the sun, the moon, and the stars." All these essential things are settled for you. As for your so-called architecture you can have Gothic, or Doric, or Grecian, or Composite, or what you please, geometry does not interfere with your architecture—but you must build according to Euclid—the gospel according to Euclid, or you cannot build at all. In proportion as anything is true it must eventually succeed. There will always be found fools who will venture some other policy. There have been men who have ventured to build crooked walls, and the walls have fallen down upon them.

Now the oracle is about to cease. Malachi is about to resign the pen. What are his last words? There shall no prophet arise after him until John come, and John the Baptist was not coming for four hundred years. What is to be done in the meantime? Does God provide for the interstices of history? Has God taken note of gap and vacancy and hiatus in the wondrous evolution of history? Here is the word—verse 4: "Remember

ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel with the statutes and judgments." With that Bible you must be content for four centuries—keep in mind the law. In the Jewish synagogue great distinction is drawn between the law and the prophets. In the Jewish synagogue there are two lessons in public worship. The one is read from the law, and that lesson must be read by the highest functionary in the synagogue. The second lesson is from the prophets, and any boy can read it—any mean man or casual student may read the prophet. Only the very highest officer may read the law. We do not believe in these distinctions. We believe that the utterances of God are one. Whatever God speaks is truth, is music, is poetry, is life.

We are, however, dealing with one who did make certain distinctions, and we must respect them. For four hundred years the people were to remember the law of Moses. When Jesus Christ was asked what a man should do to inherit eternal life He asked, "What is written in the law?" That was a startling answer. He did not say: "It hath been said by them of old time, but I say unto you"—When it came to a matter of life and death. God has never left matters of life and death to be settled by arbitrary dogmas and settlements and by variable theories. When it has come to a face to face interview with God, when it has come to a question of life or death, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life," we are referred to the very first chapters of the Bible. All great questions were answered in eternity. Only little riddles and passing problems may be discussed in variable terms. The lawyer answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." "Certainly," said Christ, "that will never change; do that and thou shalt live."

So the Jewish Church was not left without oracles during the four centuries of so-called silence. If the law of Moses had prevailed it would have given life, if lovingly accepted and obeyed. All truth gives life, all truth brings life. But is it the law of Moses? That is only part of the description. The full description is "the law of Moses My servant." There is the supremacy of God, "Which I commanded unto him"; there is the fountain of law. God commands, Moses communicates. All that man can do is to act instrumentally. The fountain, the origin of law, we find in God.

Is there, then, no touch of prophecy? Is there no widening horizon before that view of the church? Is it simply the law, the law, the law—iron, dogmatic, positive, unchangeable? Is there no sky above this poor earth of law? God never made earth without making sky. So in this instance we find the sky, the horizon, the far-away hint and promise: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet," not Elijah the Tishbite. We cannot always distinguish between the local and the universal. If the Lord had pro-

mised Elijah the Tishbite then we might have expected one certain definite, limited, local personality. We should have fixed our attention on the word Tishbite, and unless a man had come with that locality attached to his name, we should have refused the man, though his eyes burned like suns and his voice was eloquent like thunder. We are great in technicalities. We are *nisi prius* men. We know all about precedents, and cases that have been in the court, and localities, and technicalities, and particularities, but we are nothing when it comes to a great sky mission. The man who was to come was to be "the prophet"—the local, the parochial, the limited forgotten, and the prophetic, the inspired, was to be predominant, illuminating the sky for the day of his sovereignty.

What shall this Elijah do when he comes? He shall work out the great reconciliation, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children." This is not a family reference. The prophet is not speaking, or God is not speaking through the prophet, merely of the father of a family and the children of a family. He is speaking of fathers in the sense of leaders, teachers of the world, and children—the populations and the flocks of the earth. And this prophet, when he comes, will be known by his desire to promote, and his power to promote reconciliations. God's prophets always bring music, harmony, rest. If any man bring aught else, except in an official and temporary sense, he is no prophet sent by God.

"Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse," with a ban; lest I come and cover it with a smear, a mockery that never can be obliterated.

Would a Jew end the reading of the prophet here? No, a Jew could never read a chapter and end it with such a word as a curse. The Jewish habit was to go back to a preceding verse. And therefore if a Jew were reading the prophet Malachi to us he would not say, "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse," and then close the book. He would go back to verse 5, and conclude with the words, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet," or he would go back to verse 4, and say, "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant." A Jew always concluded his Biblical reading with a sweet verse, a tender benediction. He would go back in the chapter to find the music, and that he would bring and set it at the last. He built his rhetoric well. He would not sit down in a thunderstorm, or in judgment and terror. He would go back and find the gentlest, simplest, most limpid words in the chapter, and would fit them on to the end. Thus the Lord allows us to make beauteous images and beauteous issues out of His Word.

To close the Old Testament is a solemn act. As commentator for the people upon the Old Testament I now close the record. It is a wonderful story. We have gone through it from the first

page to the last, yet we have not ended it. Herein is the inspiration of the Bible, that we end the book but not revelation. Were we to turn back to the opening of Genesis we should find the flowers open for us as if we had never gathered one, and all the trees of the Lord's right hand planting, blooming, blossoming, bearing fruit, and in those trees we should find choirs of singing birds, uttering music from heaven. I pray you be familiar with your Bible. If you will only read your Bible no man can ever take them from you. We take the Bible only from the men who have read little portions of it here and there. But no man who ever read the Bible in its unity, and comprehended it in some adequate degree in all its bearings and relations, ever abandoned it.

HYMN.

"Christian, seek not here repose," &c.

BENEDICTION.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost abide with us, that we may be saved from the day of burning, and rejoice in the light of the Sun of Righteousness. Amen.

## THE "FIRST" GOSPEL.

*A Sermon by*

THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

*Preached before the University of Oxford.*

"And 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, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through His name."—ST. JOHN xx. 30, 31.

"THE walls of the city (writes the seer of the Apocalypse) had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb." So indeed it is. Yet when we reflect on the historical origins of our Christian faith and polity, how little in them can we attribute with certainty to the majority of the Apostolic College ! If (as seems probable) the two brothers James and Jude—the brethren of the Lord—were not members of the original body, we hardly know more than three or four of the Twelve who exercised a definite and enduring influence. But while we recognise this fact, we must not forget the lesson it teaches us. History is at best but a poor representative of the springs and powers of the life it professes to describe. In all societies of men, especially in those that are closely knit together by devotion to a noble object, a very important work is done by members who never make any show or figure in the after time. If we have been blessed (as many of us surely have been) in the intimate alliance and confidential intercourse of friends—who are sharers of like faith and hope with ourselves, we shall often be aware of the subtle, indescribable influence exercised by some one or other of our associates who is little known to the world outside. An early death may take away a brother like James, the son of Zebedee, whose personal witness might have seemed of the highest importance to our cause. Or he, who is removed from our visible presence, may have had rare gifts of tact and

sympathy, a sense of the nearness and reality of the unseen world, which our harder and more practical natures cannot replace. Others who live on, and whom we know to be better than ourselves, may have no opportunity of displaying their powers, or may shrink back from the turmoils and compromises of public life, unthought of in debate, and ignored by public opinion. But those who die young, those who live unknown, may none the less have their names engraven upon the stones of the holy city, may none the less be valued as fellow-workers by our Master, who now, as of old, calls together whom He wills, and unites them upon the Mount in a society of apostolic love and brotherhood.

Such thoughts naturally occur to us when we attempt to reckon up our obligations to this or that Apostle. For to-day—as my text implies—I would endeavour to recall to your minds, in a somewhat precise form, the chief features of the work of St. John as an Evangelist, the chief elements of our personal debt to him.

For St. John was reserved the office of founding what may be called the first great Christian school of doctrine—an office different from that of the missionary labours of many of his fellows, but none the less a true and perfect following of his Master. Though no stranger to suffering and tribulation, it was his to realise more especially a peculiarly beautiful side of our Lord's work on earth—the position of a teacher of teachers. If we look at all deeply into the lessons of the Gospels we shall see what a large part of our Master's time was occupied with the direct education of the Apostles—and to whom but the beloved disciple could the continuance of this sacred office be committed? He who lay upon His breast at supper, and drank in discourse after discourse, feeling how the profound thoughts stirred each after each the pulses of his Saviour's heart—was chosen naturally to record and hand on this teaching. "Do illo pectore in secreto bibebat," says St. Augustine, very beautifully. And, again, he who received the Virgin Mother from his dying Lord to be to himself a mother, became (as we say with reverence) a second Jesus, impressed beyond all others with the spirit and language of His inner and mysterious teaching. From the blessed inmate of his home he doubtless learnt much, as she, like himself, was one who kept many things in silence, pondering them in her heart.

Let us look for a short space at the terms in which the author describes his work in the two verses which I have chosen for my text. We may expect to learn from them something more definite as to the circumstances which occasioned its production.

Each of these verses contains a distinct statement. The first declares that the Gospel is incomplete as a record of the miracles or signs wrought by Jesus, a selection of which had been recorded in the previous chapter. The second verse explains the design with which what has been written had been set down.

The first of these statements, viz., that the Gospel is a selection from a larger mass of material, harmonises with the frequent references to other events, and with the introduction of persons, as if already known to the readers or hearers of the Gospel.

The second verse of our text gives another and a more explicit statement of the Evangelist's design. Here also we have a tradition according well with the observed facts—a tradition that there was not only a belief

to be inculcated that "Jesus is the Christ the Son of God," but that this statement of it was necessitated by the errors of Cerinthus. The existence of false doctrine at this epoch is perfectly certain. It is almost as certain that Cerinthus was a contemporary of St. John. And when we carefully compare the statement of this verse with the previous teaching in the body of the Gospel on the same subject and with the denunciation of heresy in the first Epistle, and set them side by side with the errors attributed to Cerinthus, there is scarcely room to doubt the tradition. Of the three capital errors of this heretic, two were denials of the simple statement of the Apostle "that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God." Simple and familiar as this assertion may appear to us, there was once a time when every part of it was controverted and denied. Cerinthus asserted that Jesus was *not the Son of God*, but the Son of Joseph and Mary, by the ordinary process of human birth. He did not allow that Jesus was the Christ, but separated one from the other. He separated Jesus from the Christ, making them two distinct persons; and only allowing that the Christ dwelt in the man Jesus from the time of His baptism till just before His suffering upon the cross. What a light does the consideration of these errors throw upon the use of the term Son of God, and its contrast with the scornful Jewish question, "Is not this the Son of Joseph?" How closely it bears upon the emphatic physical description of the crucifixion, and the record of the doubts and satisfaction of Thomas—upon the obscure words of the Epistle, "This is He that came by water and blood, *Jesus the Christ*; not by water only, but by water and blood." Here we have no second personality superinduced upon a first, and separable from it; but one Christ Jesus the same before and after His baptism, the same before and after His Passion and Resurrection.

Lastly, the third cardinal error of Cerinthus is touched really, if less directly, in the closing words—"and that believing ye might have *Life* through His name."

For if we examine what the Apostle means by *Life*, we shall find that it is not simply equivalent to salvation. It is the gift of Christ as the Creator, communicated to him as an attribute of the Father. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"—are the words of the marvellous prologue. And on the discourse on His equality in work with the Father our Lord Himself declares, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."

This truth about life it was that Cerinthus denied in his third and primary error, separating the supreme God from the Creator, and so throwing the whole conception of the world into confusion. He had been taught, we are told, at Alexandria; and there, no doubt, had imbibed the belief that it was "beneath the dignity of the supreme God that He should come into immediate contact with a world so alien from His own essence." Thus, in the place of one source of life simple and identical in its origin, and exhibiting itself alike in the natural world, in the moral life of Christians, and in the resurrection from the dead, this heresy supposed a distinction between the origin of natural and spiritual life. This is no mere error of the schools, no simple, fanciful theory, but a point of vital

importance. With the dualistic account of creation an element of doubt is at once introduced as to the whole course of Divine providence. Once let men believe that God is intermittent in His relation to the universe, and they will soon imagine that He is ignorant and careless. From ignorance and carelessness they descend at once to disbelief in His power, and so step by step to magic and theurgy, to heathenism and idolatry, or practical atheism.

I am well aware that the interpretations just given of these two verses are not accepted by many scholars; but the reasons for their dissent hardly outweigh the positive arguments that have been adduced. It seems in no degree whatever to lower the value or the grandeur of the Gospel, if we allow that while the author writes freely and independently, with perfect command of his materials, and as if absorbed by the eternal interests of his theme, he yet fulfils withal two definite and subsidiary ends. Nor does the fact that the Apostle is refuting a heresy make his doctrine a whit less the true doctrine of the Church. The implied premise, that any religious book written with a purpose must necessarily or probably contain what is untrue, has been so widely and destructively used, that Christians have been rather unwilling to admit such purposes lest they seem to allow a taint of error and prejudice. No doubt a book written with a purpose requires careful reading, and a consideration of all the circumstances under which it was written. But if there be such a thing as divine truth, if a revelation be possible, then there is or may be also such a thing as heresy; and he who overcomes heresy is as much deserving of gratitude as he who for the first time states a truth. And in the case of Cerinthus there is no reason to suppose that he had any hold on primitive Christian doctrine, there is no reason to attribute unfairness or onesidedness to St. John. If, for example, we compare the Synoptic Gospels, especially St. Matthew and St. Mark, we find that they totally and entirely disagree with such tenets. Nor if anyone feels himself hesitate for a moment as to the doctrine of the Incarnation as expressed by St. John, will he find in it anything more than is implied in the passage of St. Matthew. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

"Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Here we have the perfect communion of nature limited to the Father and the Son, and the assertion of the unique office of the Son towards mankind. And yet the person of the speaker includes also the human nature in all its humility, and He passes from one to the other with perfect ease and readiness. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father," here we have the Divinity, and in the next breath, "My yoke," "I am meek and lowly of heart," here we have the humanity.

It is true that the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God is not distinctly and in terms stated in the earlier Gospels, but it was no addition made by St. John. It was taught (as we all know) in distinct terms by St. Paul, and can hardly have been absent from the mind of St. Peter, when he spoke of the prophets of the old covenant, "Searching what, or what

manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter i. 11). Or again, what else can he intend, when he writes, in the very Epistle to the Ephesians, of the Redeemer Himself, "Who verily was preordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory" (*ib.* 20, 21)?

It might then be said, of what use is the Gospel according to St. John, if it only states a doctrine that was known and received before? The answer is clear, that without such a systematic presentation of doctrine the life of the Church could not have been continued in its original strength and power. In the first age the feeling of what our Lord was and had been, the memory of His visible presence, the oral traditions of His teaching about Himself, the supernatural charismata in the Church supplied the place of a written doctrine. That there existed such a background of belief we might reasonably have inferred from the Synoptic Gospels, but should have had some difficulty in demonstrating. But this power is now supplied us. The Gospel according to St. John makes their statements clear and harmonious, and helps us really to understand them. The truths contained in it are the primary basis on which they repose; and it is therefore in a real sense the *first*, though not the *first-written*, Gospel.

It was his great prerogative to be a teacher of teachers. So it is ours. Not, indeed, to neglect the little ones of the flock, the weak in faith, the unlearned, or the poor. St. John, we know himself spent great pains in the conversion of the young robber who had lapsed again into sin. But our principal work is to be teachers of those who will have to stand up to teach others. It is so to a great extent: in all branches of the education that we give it should be so more than it is, in almost all. But chiefly in our theological training it is desirable that we should recognise this function more consciously and distinctly. Much has been done within the memories even of a recent generation. God be thanked for it night and morning, every day that we live. But if Oxford is to take the place of a centre of light to heathen and infidel lands, as well as to this land, we must not rest till the work of St. John is visibly mirrored among us. We must not only aim at obtaining a due supply of the external aids to missionary studies, the endowment, it may be, of new professorships of languages, of ethnology, of practical medicine and surgery, perhaps even of the theory and history of missions—the formation of libraries and museums, and the like. But we must also long and labour after the organisation of life. St. John, we may believe, was what he was, not only from his devotion to his Master, but from his close and loving association with the Twelve and the Virgin Mother. He represents to us the essence of their common life, he gives form and words to their beliefs, he combines the simplicity of the Galilean peasant with the profoundest meditation of the recluse, and imparts this simplicity and this profundity to those who gather round him. From the sources of this common life a stream has flown down even to us; we taste at times its sweetness, and are wondrously refreshed and comforted. We feel in those moments that our gifts of mind and heart grow far beyond the sum of their separate powers. There is a common movement, bearing us like a mighty river upon its bosom, which endows us with tenfold vigour and spiritual grace. And

now, dear brethren, the meeting of this Conference would seem to call us to new efforts in this direction. Let this thought be in our minds and in our prayers: "Can we not create in our midst, after the example of St. John, a school where teachers of the word of life may be taught, and disciplined, and inspired, where another Ignatius may train another Polycarp, where a Polycarp may hand on the faith to an Irenæus and a Melito, that so land after land may rejoice with the knowledge of our Saviour's name?"

Lastly, our method should also be that of St. John. We do not only want implicit teaching like that of the Synoptists—or controversial and occasional teaching like that of St. Paul's Epistles. Both are admirable, both are beautiful, both are indispensable. But we want most of all dogmatic or explicit teaching. I believe this truth is recognised increasingly, even by those who do not know how to accept Christian doctrine. They feel the want of certainty—they respect, they admire, they even love St. John. It is not of course that dogmatic teaching is opposed to rational teaching. God forbid. On the contrary, the more dogmatic our teaching the more it ought to comprehend of method, the more it ought to embrace of knowledge in every department of science and history. If our testimony is true, it will gladly welcome all truth. But it believes above all things that there is a God of truth, and that He does not will us to wander in a mist of scepticism and uncertainty of action; that He does not delude us with phantoms; that He does not teach us what is noblest by means of lies; but that He has given us some real knowledge of Himself.

This is the foundation of St. John, this must be our foundation—the Word of God, in Whom is life, and whose life is the light of men.

## ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Sunday, August 3, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

### THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE xv. 11—24.

"GIVE ME THE . . . GOODS THAT FALLETH TO ME."—No parable of our Lord is more full of allusions to manners and customs, exquisitely true to nature; yet most of these touches, common to all ages and countries, require no illustration. They appeal to us at once. "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." The law of primogeniture was very strictly laid down under the Mosaic code, and a father could not pass over his first-born in favour of any of the younger brothers. The eldest was by law entitled to a double portion, and this always included the homestead. But neither could a father ignore the claims of the rest of his family, whatever had been the position of the mother. Each was entitled to his share, as Abraham gave portions to his sons by Keturah. In the present case, the younger son would be entitled to one-third of his father's possessions, though he had no right to demand it during his

\* From the *American Sunday School Times*.

father's lifetime. What the father gives would naturally be what we should term his "personal" property; that is, he would give it to him in the shape of money or jewels—the latter a very common form of investing wealth to this day in the East. With his fortune in this portable shape, the son stays not many days before he takes his journey to spend it beyond his father's control.

"THE HUSKS THAT THE SWINE DID EAT."—These husks are the pods and seeds of the locust or carob tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*), a common evergreen tree bearing an abundant crop of fruit, long curved pods, which are used for feeding cattle, and are largely exported to England for feeding horses, under the name of locust beans. They are capable of sustaining human life, like the acorns of the oak, eaten by our Saxon ancestors in times of scarcity; and as in Germany and England the swine are driven into the woods to feed on the fallen acorns, so in Syria they feed under the locust-trees. Latin classical authors speak of the locust bean as the food of the most miserable of the people in the last extremity. The prodigal had "joined himself" to the man who sent him to feed the swine—the most degrading of all possible employments to a Jew. The word implies more than merely hiring himself. He had glued himself (literally), so that he was practically his slave.

"HOW MANY HIRED SERVANTS . . . HAVE BREAD ENOUGH?"—He soon contrasts himself, in this, to a free man, most abject condition, with his father's hired servants. Yet the day labourer, the mere hireling, was, and is, in an Eastern household, in a far lower social position than the born or purchased member of the household, or domestic servant. Between master and slave we see still in Oriental families a community of interest, a sympathy, and an intimacy very far different from the mere business relationship of employer and hired labourer. This is well illustrated by the position of the trusted Eliezer of Damascus in the household of the patriarch Abraham. There is a depth of self-abasement in the proposed petition to his father, though never actually uttered to him, "Make me as one of thy hired servants"—as though he had said, "I do not even ask the humblest place within thy house. Suffer me to serve thee outside, as a mere hireling, from day to day."

"THE BEST ROBE."—Very different is his actual reception. "Bring forth the best robe;" literally, the first robe, the long loose and wide upper garment, often embroidered, which was worn by the Jews of rank, and in which the Pharisees loved to show themselves, like the long fur-trimmed cloak which the Polish Jews in Palestine still wear on the Sabbath day and on great festivals only. A still more emphatic sign of the prodigal's restoration from a state of degradation is the investing him with the shoes and the ring. Shoes were worn only by freemen, never by slaves. The giving of the ring restores him not only to freedom, but to dignity and power. The ring, which in the East is always also a signet or seal, is only worn by men of position or property. It is the symbol of rank, equivalent to armorial bearings in European countries. Finally, in place of the kid, the ordinary provision for a feast, we have the fatted calf, slain only on the greatest and most important public occasions, and when the entertainment was to extend beyond the mere family circle.

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## THE PROMISED POWER.

*A Sermon,*

BY THE VERY REV. FRANCIS PIGOU, D.D., DEAN OF CHICHESTER.\*

*Preached at Holy Trinity Church, Tunbridge Wells, on the occasion of the Aggregate Clerical Meeting.*

“Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high. And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them.”  
—ST. LUKE xxiv. 49, 50.

I CANNOT but be thankful to be allowed of God and privileged to take a part, however small, in the interesting proceedings of this Aggregate Clerical Meeting, under the auspices of a President whose pupil I was when he was Head Master of the Edinburgh Academy, and who bears an honoured name in the Church as one of her ablest apologists. The occasion also is of prayerful interest to us all, inasmuch as we rejoice in common to meet together here, amid the familiar scenes of his ministry, one whose life we trust may long be spared as that of a faithful witness to Christ.

Many topics suggest themselves for our consideration, more especially at a crisis such as that through which the Church of England is at present passing, when we are awaiting with anxiety a judgment fraught with moment, the issues of which, who can foresee? It may be well to divert our thoughts from distracting and embittering controversy, which rarely tends to edification, and for a brief space to meditate together upon some one practical topic in which clergy and laity are alike concerned. Would it not also be well to ask ourselves what place the comparatively trivial questions which are under consideration at Lambeth will find in our thoughts in a dying hour? Well do I remember, when my own life once hung on a slender thread, and it was not expected that I could live to see a new day, a memorial found its way into what seemed about to be the scene of my departure, requesting my signature, with reference to questions of ritual

\* Published by request.

which were at that time "vexing the Church." Need I say that in the prospect of eternity there was no room for such questions? The one absorbing, commanding thought was—"Am I resting my soul humbly and trustfully on the finished work of Christ?" I could not but feel, in a dying hour, into what insignificance much of keen and bitter controversy sinks beside the one question which must at last come to the front. This evening we will brush aside questions of ritual, and, bearing in mind our text, will plead for a fuller realisation on the part of clergy and laity of a truth somewhat lost sight of, viz., that this is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost under which we live.

We are so much in the habit of speaking of the Christian *Æra*, living amidst those creations and institutions of Christianity which, compared with the practical aspect of Atheism, are evidences of the truth of our creed, that we forget that, while in one sense the Christian *Æra*, the Church has passed into the possession of God the Holy Ghost.

The religious history of the world is evidently marked by three leading historical periods. There was the age of "Natural Religion," when God was revealed in His creation. Stars and daisies taught those who had eyes to discern His greatness and benevolence. The age of natural religion came to a close when "The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us." The second of these periods came to a close with the ascension of Christ.

If the Ascension of our Lord—a Festival slowly recovering its place in Church teaching and recognition—be the close of the Gospel history, it is in one sense the beginning of the history of the Church. The last event in the ministry of our Lord is the first in the ministry of the Apostles. So vividly was this felt that in the early Church the "Acts of the Apostles," and not the Gospels, were read in Divine Service, for some weeks after every anniversary of Pentecost. The Ascension, amongst other lessons, was to encourage and keep alive a spirit of expectation of that personal return of Christ, which so cheered the first ages of the Church. To gaze up into heaven, to ask curious questions, to lose ourselves in idle contemplation, is not the task committed to the Church militant here on earth. The grounds on which the Irvingites in part justify their position is that the second coming of our Lord is not insisted upon by us with the urgency and importance that great truth demands. During my vicariate at Doncaster, one who described himself as "serving under the restored Apostles," regularly attended our early celebration and morning service, and gave lectures in the evening at a service conducted by himself. I was desirous to know his reason for this apparent schism. He replied that the modern Irvingite holds that the Church of England does not sufficiently dwell on and enforce the second coming of Christ. Of course, the end and aim of the Christian ministry is to prepare the world for that

event ; and, though it may not form the topic of every sermon, it is, surely, more or less assumed in all our Offices ; it is the goal towards which all is trending, but it does us no harm to be made aware of these opinions, be they rightly or wrongly entertained, and "if the faith of the Church," as Dr. Vaughan observes, "is to be brought back to its simplicity in matter of doctrine it must be brought back to its simplicity in matter of fact ; there must be a full persuasion that Christ will come again." Pentecost, therefore, in the Church's history, was to this dispensation what Bethlehem was to the Christian Æra, and Christ ascended that His Spirit might be poured forth. It never was intended that Christianity should be localised. Men were not to say of Christ, "Lo, here," or "Lo, there." There are stagnant languages such as know no new accretions ; there are stagnant civilisations ; there are stagnant creeds ; they are not essentially missionary. We have no Buddhist temples nor Mohamadan mosques in the British isles. Christianity was to know no geographical or topical limits. It was to be diffused and diffusive. All of outward was to disappear, to give place and scope for this present dispensation. Every traveller returns somewhat disappointed from a visit to the Holy Land. It is difficult to identify for certain some localities closely connected with our Lord's ministry. We have no authentic portrait of Christ. It never was intended we should possess what all in every age have craved for, and what Art, to supply the felt want, has imagined. There is profound significance in St. Paul's words, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh. Yea, though we have known Christ in the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Hence expressions of this nature—"Christ in you, the hope of glory." If the Church be under any obligation to the Irvingite for specially emphasising the doctrine of the Second Advent of our Lord, it is under no small obligation to the Society of Friends for keeping alive the great truth, that this is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. In their silent worship, "waiting for the moving of the waters" ; in their honouring of the Holy Spirit, and recognition of His varied offices, they have in large measure preserved the Church from practical ignoring of His work. Now that the Holy Ghost is becoming more honoured, we hear less and less of Quakers. We do not meet them so frequently in their quaint attire. As astronomers speak of stars that have ceased to shine, because they have done their appointed work, so certain schools of thought, or sects, protesting for certain truths, cease by degrees to shine brilliantly in the firmament of Gospel truth. Thank God that the Holy Spirit is becoming more honoured. The Prayer Union,\* which so many are joining for daily supplication for the gifts of the Spirit, is largely contributing to this fuller recognition

\* Secretary and Treasurer, the Rev. H. L. Harkness, M.A., Rector of St. Swithin's, Worcester.

of Himself in His varied offices. He is more acknowledged as the source of power, or as spiritual power itself. We speak of Him in our creeds as "the Lord and Giver of life." He brooded over chaos. Does it not enhance the charm of beautiful scenery to remember that all the beauty of varied landscape is attributable to and identified with the operation on the physical world of the Holy Ghost? It was He Who rested on Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah, under Old Testament times, on Christ and His Apostles in latter days. Is it not remarkable that in one passage the dew—symbol of the Holy Ghost—is represented as resting on the manna, and that in another the manna—type of Christ—is represented as resting on the dew? Is not this remarkable mutual attestation under familiar symbols of how the Holy Ghost testified to Christ before, and prepared the world for His coming, and how Christ, all throughout His ministry, and increasingly as the time of His departure drew near, honoured and bore witness to the Spirit? Need I quote to a congregation of this character texts in support of Christ's testimony to the Holy Ghost? After His resurrection He renewed His testimony, giving the Holy One the peculiar title of "The Promise."

"Wait," was our Lord's command; wait for the promise of the Father. "Again, ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Ye shall receive *δύναμις*, power. And this is the root idea of Christianity, not a new Creed for each successive generation, but the heroism and might of a conquering force put into the Creed we have; not miracles wrought, ever and anon, *for* the Church, but wonders wrought *by* the Church with the material at hand; men and women carrying on Christ's work as energised, Spirit-inspired witnesses, living over again Christ's saintly life in the power which qualified and enabled them to do so, even the power of the Holy Ghost. This was the secret of Christ's success, as it is the secret of all successful ministry. You will remember that when the disciples "asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" His reply did not satisfy curiosity. It was plain and practical: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put into His own power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." In other words, "My work is a finished and accomplished work. I have been obedient unto death, even the death upon the cross. I ascend now to where I was before, to carry on My mediatorial work of intercession, by virtue of my Passion, for the Church militant on earth. You are henceforth to carry on My work here below." The temptation came to Christ more than once. It lay at the root of His temptation in the wilderness, to resort to supernatural methods where the ordinary conditions of obedience or trust would suffice. Wonders were not any longer to be wrought

for the Church, but great things were to be done by His Church.\* Christianity was not simply and only a revelation. It was a system for the regeneration of a lost world. It is not one of many forms of religion which shall have its day, to be carried out to its grave with extinct creeds. The demand of our age is not a new Creed more suited to our modern wants and more in harmony with our modern thoughts. Christianity is not played out. Its necessity or virtue cannot cease so long as a sinner remains to be saved and a saint to be edified. It is not some further revelation which is the crying want of our enlightened age, further development of doctrine, extraordinary manifestations, sensational efforts. We know all we need to know. No further revelation could make God's plan of salvation more simple or more intelligible. No development of doctrine could teach us more of the efficacy, world-wide, all-embracing, of the death of Christ. What we do want is more simple and perfect faith in the means of grace and the methods of the successful ministry which are already ours. We want more faith in that Gospel that makes "wise unto salvation;" more faith in all that God has promised and Christ has pledged; more faith in His presence in His church, as working in and behind all her movements, just as God is ever working in and behind the phenomena of His natural kingdom. We want more faith in the secret presence and co-operation of God the Holy Ghost. On what did the Apostles rely as they crossed the threshold of that upper chamber to confront the world in which they were to witness for Christ? What were the weapons of their warfare "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds?" How came it to pass that the Lord added daily to His Church such as were being saved, that so many consciences were pricked, so many set inquiring, so many became believers as the result, not of several but of one sermon? They witnessed to truth. Their texts were: "Jesus and the resurrection," "Christ and Him crucified." The world was converted by preaching, not by sacraments. No one would undervalue the two great Sacraments of the Christian Church. They are of Christ's own ordaining, but Holy Baptism does not convert the babe unconscious of its baptism. Some time or other in its after-life there must be the conscious fulfilment of the conditions of Repentance and Faith. We do not regard Sacraments as charms, working miracles of grace on unconscious minds or unwilling hearts. Holy Communion is "the children's bread." We come to it with life. I do not say—for I know it to be otherwise—that Christ does not make Himself known to anxious souls in the breaking of bread! But that blessed Sacrament presupposes awakening; it represents a love which the communicant is assumed to feel; it sets forth a death in the

\* "By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people" (Acts v. 12).

atonement merits of which we are trusting. As often as we partake devoutly and faithfully of Holy Communion we are assured of the forgiveness of sins "truly repented" of; we are strengthened with unseen grace by which to live more truly, the spiritual life is nourished by vital union with our Lord. These are amongst "the benefits of His Passion." The world was not won to Christ by "celebrations," more or less frequent, of Holy Communion, but believers were kept and strengthened by the breaking of bread. There is a tendency in our day, very observable, to disparage the great ordinance of preaching. I say this advisedly. On all sides the cry is for "short sermons." The setting of the Canticles may be inordinately long; the Anthem may be spread over fifteen or twenty minutes and no complaint is made, but the sermon is considered long if it exceed fifteen or twenty minutes. The clergy are in not a few cases becoming identified with this impatience of a sermon. The pulpit, to which the prominent place is assigned by every church architect, is in some danger of being depreciated in its use. This arises in part from the reaction which has set in against giving the pulpit undue prominence, against that idea of church-going which mutilates the very structure of churches, sacrificing all their arrangements and harmony to the one dominant idea that to hear a sermon was the great end of church-going. Now we hear more and almost only of *worship*; ignoring the difference between worship and evangelising, the one being the privilege of the child of God, the other being necessary for the awakening of unawakened and the building up of believers in their most holy faith. To my mind, and indeed now within my experience, it is this depreciation of the pulpit that to a large extent accounts for and explains the proverbial soporific, dead-alive condition of Cathedral cities, except where special Nave Services are habitually held. The inordinate length of Service by itself makes a very short sermon almost a necessity. But faith comes by hearing, not by vain repetition, not by music however good, and Cathedral cities are doomed to remain proverbially dead-alive so long as almost everything is sacrificed to the dominant idea of worship. You will not expect of me, in the presence of many of large experience, that I should either enlarge on preaching or venture to lay down rules for your guidance. Considering the nature of the message entrusted to our heralding, and how frequent are our opportunities for declaring it, in pulpits, Bible-classes, sick-rooms, and by the wayside of life, who can be satisfied with the result? I do not speak of Christless sermons, sermons in which Christ is scarcely alluded to. I do not speak of moral essays flavoured with Christianity; I do not speak of sermons about Christ and His example. I leave out of thought, as unworthy of this Conference, sermons not our own, purchased in response to advertisements, nor of those which have all the odour of staleness, ill-disguised with a new text. I do not speak of "Christless teaching" and "neutral tints";

elaborate criticism or controverted texts which do not touch the heart, the effect and results of which have been described as "drops of opium on leaves of lead." Nor, again, of sermons carefully written, or extempore; stiff and formal or unfettered by rule; long or short, but of what is understood by "evangelical preaching," "the truth as it is in Jesus." Is the result of evangelical teaching what it ought to be? Need I define evangelical doctrine? Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, the three R's; salvation, full, finished, free, provided, offered, present, so that we work *from* and not *for* life, we work not that we may be accepted, but because we are reconciled, justified by that faith which works by, and is evidenced in love. This, is it not, is what we understand by "the Gospel"? It is not the exaltation of the Church, but the lifting up of Christ. It is not the exaltation of the Sacraments, but the honouring of Christ, through the efficacy of whose Atonement the Sacraments are to us channels of grace. This Gospel may be variously stated: with the simplicity of a profound intellect, such as it was my privilege to hear last autumn at the lips of the present Bishop of London, or at the lips of one not greatly gifted but "taught of God." It is to my mind possible, with what I myself strongly hold, Baptismal Regeneration. It is possible with surplice in pulpit and with surplised choirs. It is possible with Eastward position in Holy Communion, which is the universal use in the American Protestant Episcopal Church and in not a few Churches in which it has been my privilege to conduct Missions, without any compromise of evangelical doctrine. The demand of our age is bright Services and faithful preaching. We are, thank God, fast outgrowing many prejudices, undoing much which estranged our more cultured classes from evangelical teaching. It is not that we offer a gilded pill, nor, under guise of an attractive Service, a mutilated Gospel, but we are learning that we have too long kept good wine in old bottles, and that it is not necessary to be a Puritan to be a Churchman. And yet with all this, with concessions wisely made, with growing perception that much which was once thought incompatible with "saving truth" is not really and intrinsically so, how comes it to pass that evangelical preaching is not more visibly blessed? that more signs and tokens do not accompany and witness to it? The answer is not far to find. Have not many of us heard sermons in which "Christ and Him crucified" is clearly preached, but there has been no allusion to God the Holy Ghost? Well do I remember being requested to visit one of culture and mental gifts on her death-bed in a town where I was conducting a "Mission." I found her in the deepest distress of mind in the prospect of Eternity. She told me she knew she could not live, but that she had no hope for Eternity. On questioning her as to her religious convictions, she answered me that with her whole soul she longed to know Christ.

“They come,” she said, “and sit by my bedside, and bid me ‘to believe’ and to ‘accept Christ.’ Would to God I could, but I cannot.” I asked her if she understood that it must be given to us to believe in order that we may accept; and when I proceeded to explain to her that it is the office and work of the Holy Ghost to convince of sin, to discover our need of a Saviour, to reveal Him to the soul, and to enable us to accept Him, and appropriate personally His precious blood, it all seemed to come to her as a new truth. She did not depart this life without having “seen His salvation.” This is one specimen only of many where evangelical preaching has failed from want of honouring the Holy Ghost, and from not encouraging our people to look to Him for conviction, enlightenment, and power. The word we preach is partly natural and partly supernatural. “It is the Spirit which giveth life.” If we sought His guidance, we should often be guided to particular texts; these, to use the late Bishop Wilberforce’s happy expression, would become “luminous.” If we sought His inspiration, and preached in dependence on Him, it would be more given us what to speak, not with man’s wisdom, but “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” If, when in the pulpit, with the Bible-class, or the sick-room, we more expected a blessing, we should more often see the Word “accompanied with signs following.” If occasionally we encouraged our people quietly to say the “Veni Creator” together, and from time to time held an After-meeting, so intensely solemn that pricked consciences might lead to anxious questioning, and fleeting impressions be fixed, we should find that the Gospel is still “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.” For nothing can supersede it. The Press can never supersede or fulfil the functions of the pulpit. It has not the accessories of the living voice and earnest diction; it is not the specially chosen instrumentality of the “preaching of the word.” So let me persuade you, brethren in the ministry, “when the day is fully come,” take your carefully-written manuscript, or your few notes—for no hard and fast rule can be laid down in this matter—and spread manuscript or notes before God. As the waters of the Nile flow over and irrigate the soil in which lies the seed, so pray that the Holy Ghost may flood what you would sow with His fertilising power: that the Spirit may be poured forth in His quickening and enabling power. And you shall be led, as it were, from Calvary, from meditation on the Cross and Passion, to the more quiet and restful scene of your ministry, and He in whose name you are about to speak shall lift up His hands and bless you with the benediction which shall endue you with power from on high.

I must not forget the laity are represented in this Conference. Suffer a word of exhortation. That word is, Honour the Holy Ghost in secret prayer, in family prayer, in public worship, when kneeling at the Holy table. Recognise Him in what you call

impression or conviction. He Who never speaks of Himself is heard in the "still small voice." Oh how much is lost through want of cherishing impressions which are not the fruit of our own thought or meditation but God created, God inspired! Stand outside our churches, listen to the conversation quickly carried on by those who have just been worshipping, and hearing of the things which concern their everlasting peace! Who would believe, did they not know it to be otherwise, that these had been to church? If the pulpit is losing power, with whom does the fault lie, not entirely, but in part? Where teaching is erroneous, it of course loses power; but where teaching is Scriptural and true it loses power because men hear but do not obey. What chance has the pulpit against "Church Parades," and "Prayer-book Parades"? What chance when people are limiting the sermon, and impatient of such a length as shall debar them from meeting their worldly friends in the park, and abbreviates the opportunity for displaying the latest fashions? And even where this is not, how many care not to cherish impression, lest it should lead them on further than they are prepared to go! I visited a devotee of fashion in London, who, when she came to die, found herself not only without hope for the life to come; but, as it seemed to herself, past the power of being impressed. She told me she had often been under deep conviction, but that she had as often done her very best to quench the Spirit. She would come home from church with earnest words ringing in her ears, the Spirit striving within her, and then she would look over her list of worldly engagements, and still His voice. No wonder that, if the witness to Christ and His truth be not reverently obeyed, the testifying ceases, and the power to be impressed ceases also. Ice frequently thawed and again frozen is the most difficult at last to melt. Cherish God-created impressions. Remain a little while on your knees in silent prayer. Tarry at Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high, and then truth will so become yours, and conviction of it be so strong, that you shall be in your way a "witness." In anxious days like these, the Church of Christ wants more and more living witnesses, laymen as well as clergy, who are taught of God, full of the Holy Ghost, and then used of God. If we would lift off the reproach too freely cast on our modern Christianity, that it is a creed of selfishness, we must show that we are not careful only of our own salvation, but that we are solicitous for the salvation of others. If we are to forbid the sneers with which some affect to despise or ridicule "evangelical doctrine," it must not be by contending for favourite views which too often only foster party-spirit, but we must recommend evangelical teaching by evangelical life, by personal consecration, by active service, by identifying ourselves with Christ's cause, by having the courage of our convictions "as the Spirit giveth utterance." The world is growing old, we live amidst signs of our Lord's second

coming which no unprejudiced mind can well ignore. It is not wars and rumours of wars, it is not pestilence and famine which are really the signs of His appearing. Our blessed Lord Himself warned His disciples against the mistake of interpreting these as signs of His appearing. These are so common to all ages that they could never be strictly predicated of one age in particular. But we see, do we not, how knowledge is increasing? We live in an age singularly restless. Greg, in his essay on "Life at High Pressure," well worthy of careful perusal, exhaustively deals with this restlessness which is abroad, and which is so characteristic of our age. The restoration of the Jews to their own land, facilitated by the gradual disintegration of the Turkish Empire, and by recent legislation for their benefit, is in itself a most significant indication of the approaching end. The decline of "the faith" at home, the impatience of definite dogmatic teaching together with a wonderful diffusion of the Gospel in foreign lands; the lawlessness of our age; the independent spirit of youth; the feeble recognition in the domain of natural science of a great First Cause; the rebellious outbreaks against needful discipline; the shocking and revolting crimes which remain undiscovered—surely we cannot affect to close our eyes to what is coming upon the earth. Tares and wheat are ripening fast for the harvest and sickle! The Church of Christ wants more than ever all the spiritual force she can command and wield, not to be wasted on controversies which only sever Christians, not expended on inter-cine bickering and strife, not to be dissipated on the details of ritual, not dormant in contemplation, but spent in earnest, united battling with evil, forming one serried rank, whose banner is Jehovah-Nissi, against infidelity, lawlessness, and indifferentism. Be up and doing, each of you according to your ability and the measure in which the Spirit is given to you! Bear in mind the true saying, "He does the most for God in this great world who does his best in his own little world." And it will be with you also as laymen as it was with His specially-chosen witnesses, even now again He will lead you from Gethsemane and Calvary, from the contemplation of His Cross and Passion as far as to the Bethany of your every-day life, and, lifting up holy hands, will bless you with that benediction of the Holy Ghost which will endue you with power both to be and to do what He would have you both be and perform. His Church is built on a Rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

## CHARACTER AND SERVICE.

BY THE REV. PHILIPS BROOKS, D.D.

*From a graduating sermon preached at Harvard University, Sunday, June 15*

"Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."—  
I COR. ix. 25.

CHARACTER and service. These two words, I think, describe the higher regions of man's life, in which alone his powers can fulfil themselves and know their real strength, and fit themselves for the full doing even of their lower tasks. In them, the workman doomed to-day to lower toils, when he is once allowed to enter, lifts himself up and knows his dignity, and begins to put forth the might which he possesses.

Character: what is that? The absolute quality of a being, distinguished from its circumstances. Behind even that closest of circumstances, which we call the body, the intrinsic substance of the soul, what the man is, original, distinct, different from what any other man has ever been before, fed through the channels of his circumstances, of what happens to him, but fed directly from first principles, from fundamental and eternal truths, an utterance of the life of God, a true unit and harmony of personal existence, which can change every condition and be itself unchanged, whose goodness and badness rest in the very fibre and substance of itself, a true soul.

That is character. And then service, what do we mean by that? The other truth about each human nature; that which is so separate and distinct is also true part of a unit greater than itself; that the personality is portion of humanity, that what belongs to it belongs also to the larger whole, that it realises and possesses itself only as it gives itself to the greater which enfolds it, that it is its own only as it serves the life of man to which it belongs, as the eye keeps its quality of vision only as it dwells in the complete structure and dedicates its power of vision to the use of the whole body, hand, and foot, and tongue, and heart, as they may need it.

These are the two great wonderful regions of life which we call character and service. These are the regions in which the human powers fulfil themselves and put on their full strength and glory. In seeking character, in rendering unselfish, self-sacrificing service, ingenuity becomes a hundred-fold acute, assiduity is clothed with an unguessed-of industry, imagination grows into bewildering fervour, love and ambition are transfigured into passions, and with the increase of strength comes an increase of fineness which shows the old powers which once hammered at the low forges of life were not merely doing higher things, but shining themselves with the revealed radiance of their true natures. Vulcan has shown himself a god. These are the regions where the saints have meditated and the heroes fought. These are the regions into which the saintly and heroic parts of our own lives have pressed sometimes and known, in spite of themselves, that they were saintly and heroic.

Now the one great thing we need is to believe that in character and service lies the true life of a human creature. We do not thoroughly believe that. We think of the struggle to be perfect, and the effort to

serve humanity as suburbs of human life, great districts into which excursions are to be made, heavens into which ecstatic flights are to be soared, not as the very city and citadel of humanity, to live outside of which is not to be a man. Until we do believe that with our hearts and souls, the higher regions are still closed to our powers, and they live, stunted and perverted, at their lower tasks.

And so we come to this, that it is only to man daring to think of himself nobly, divinely—aye, as the Son of God—that there comes the possibility of putting his human powers to their perfect use. Character and service both fling their doors wide open to Him who knows Himself the Son of God. Think how they stood wide open all the time to Jesus. Think how He always lived within their ample gates. The Divine soul within Him and the great work before Him, to be Himself and save the world, these made His life. Therefore, let the foxes have their holes, and the birds of the air their nests; let Pilate sit upon his throne and the Pharisees weigh their mint, anise, and cummin. He took these splendid human capacities of ours and carried them beyond the stars into the heavenly worlds of character and service, and when men listened—as they had to listen—hark, in these visionary worlds, the same old human faculties had put out a new strength and worked with a pulse of power and a throb of music which made heaven and earth stand still to listen. Yet it was our human patience with which He was patient and our human bravery with which He was brave, and our human intelligence with which He knew, and our human purity with which He was pure, only they proved themselves divine when they attained their full humanity.

My friends, students, scholars, men facing the world and eager for its work, do you read your Bible? Alas! for you if you do not. Does it sound like an old dame's exhortation, full of nervous and unreasonable panic? Does it sound like a priest's question with superstitions lurking in its darkness? I care not how it sounds. I ask you, as true men, "Do you read your Bible?" Not in the old ways, perhaps; not to find a charm and magic which will keep you safe; not to equip yourselves with arguments to maintain your creed, but do you read your Bible so that out of the heart of it there comes to you the divine man who shows you what it is to live divinely? Who exalts character and service as the only true crowns of life? And who gives human energy its glory and splendour when he sets it to struggling for those crowns? It is because this being, this Christ, with his superb claim of humanity for God, with his salvation of humanity upon the cross where He sacrificed free for all the body to the soul and Himself to His brethren. It is because He lives in that book and comes forth from it into the heart of every man who reads it with his heart, that one would rejoice to put the Bible into the hands of every man who goes out from the college to the world.

"Out from the college to the world," I say, and the words bring me back to the full meaning and all the bright associations which belong to this Sunday of Class Day week. What will you say as college life gathers itself into a single impression at your departure from it, what will you say of it in this regard of which I have been speaking? Does college life as it is lived to-day do this? Does it claim the energies of man for their completest uses? Does it assert that character and service are the true objects of man's living and that man in living for them finds his whole

nature working at its best? I should like to know the thoughtful answer of a graduating class to that question. Plenty of reason there would be for hesitation. Plenty of slavery to circumstances, to the comfort of the moment, to the well-being of the body which seems to leave the soul no chance; plenty of blind loyalty to old traditions; plenty of conventional standards of honour and manliness and morality which make independence and originality of life seem very hard; plenty of selfishness, even of selfishness under the rich guise of self-culture enjoined and accepted as a duty, so that public spirit and the open sympathy of democratic life seem often to be sought almost in vain. Plenty of these causes for hesitation and discouragement. Plenty of these signs of how much better the college might be than it is—and yet, in spite of every hesitation, I think your answer still would be that here in college on the whole, the crown which is incorruptible—the crown of character and service—is set before the eyes of men who are ready to see it, and the human powers are bidden to recognise in it and it alone their worthy goal.

Would that it were possible for you, to whom perhaps some clearer vision of this is coming as you leave these familiar scenes, somehow to speak back and leave your testimony to the true value of college life and cast down some of the false ideas and dissipate some of the clouds which so largely hide that value from the eyes of men who are still scattered along the valleys and uplands of the four delightful and absorbing years.

But perhaps the great fact of the best value in any period of existence is not clear to us until we have left it. That is very often at once our sorrow and consolation. We shall not know what this strange dear old earth has done for us until we stand on the far-off hill-tops and walk by the river of the water of life. Therefore we dare not believe that the value of character and service which is behind all the lighter and weaker standards of college life is to come out more and more to college men as they go forth into the world outside the college gates. Do not believe, do not dare to believe, that these few years in their quick passage told you their whole story or opened to you all their heart. It is not possible. They would not have been worth living if they had. They have perhaps seemed to complicate life and to divide life and to make life shallow. Be sure that that is not their final power. The simplicity of life, the unity of life, the mysterious depth of life—these college years have not done their full work for you till they have brought you to all these. In the great freedom of the University you are like pilgrims who have entered a vast house by many doors. You stand in many different chambers of its outer courts. You seem to seek different things, to be scattered among many different interests. Press deeper into your own interest. Insist upon living nearer to its heart and soul, and, wondrously, as you grow older you shall find yourself nearer to all your fellow-seekers, and discover that the great essential things which you all are seeking are the same, the few divine things, the two divine things which alone are the worthy prizes of the soul of man. Press into the vast house from the special door by which you have entered it, and clearer and clearer every year shall grow in your ears the murmur of invitation from the inmost chamber where you shall meet at last.

There is nothing I think more beautiful than the way in which various men, as each gets nearer to the heart of his special occupation or study

or career, find themselves one man, and realise the simplicity and unity of human life. We part at twenty to be many things. We come together again at fifty with the single desire to be one thing, good men, brave men and faithful servants of God and of our brethren. The knights ride forth in the bright morning in every direction, east and west, north and south. As the day deepens and their quest succeeds, they meet in the light of the Holy Grail, in finding which they find themselves and find each other.

There is, there must be, a prophetic power in such an afternoon as this. The lines of life held in your hands, running out variously into the darkness, must, as you sit here, tremble with some subtle movement which tells you how they will all come out together the great light beyond. The simplicity and unity of life must at this moment be felt beyond its complexity and diversity. You must see how by one flash of vision that only in goodness and unselfishness is there the final peace, and that that peace, though we come to it by many roads, is one great city of God for all. It would be all theory and speculation if there were not God—if around all our confusion and perplexity there did not rest the boundless certainty and strength of him. To know that certainty and strength is faith! Therefore believe! Therefore belief? Belief is the rest of the partial on the perfect, of the temporary on the everlasting, of that which is—on that, on him, which was, and is, and is to be.

Into that faith, let us all enter. In it, let us all abide. To them who live in it, the incorruptible crown is always summoning the willing energies, and the willing energies, hearing their true summons, are always eager to respond. Beyond the little struggles always stretches the great race course with its shining prize—character and service. Nothing can satisfy the soul but them. The soul finds them when it finds God. The soul finds God when it finds them. May we all find them and God, and so attain the crown of life. Amen.

## ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Sunday, August 10, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

### THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

ST. LUKE XIV. 19—31.

“PURPLE AND FINE LINEN.”—A proverbial Eastern expression for sumptuousness of apparel. The wealthy among the Jews, as among the Mohammedans, wear an outer garment, a long cloak with sleeves, and an under cassock of fine linen or silk, bound with a girdle. The “purple” means the outer garment of cloth dyed with Tyrian purple, or we should term it “crimson,” or perhaps “scarlet”; for it is difficult precisely to identify the hue. What is called a purple robe by St. John, is termed “scarlet” by St. Matthew (John xix., 2; Matthew xxvii., 28). It was manufactured at Tyre from a shellfish (*murex*) found on the Syrian coast, and each animal produced only a minute drop of the colouring matter.

\* From the American *Sunday School Times*.

To this day, large heaps of these crushed shells are to be seen about Tyre. Wool dyed with this preparation fetched an enormous price, and the cloth woven from it was used as the insignia of royalty or high rank among all the nations of antiquity, and a purple or crimson garment is still, in the East, a royal gift. The art of extracting this dye has been completely lost. Fine linen (*byssus*) was the finest product of Egyptian flax, bleached to a dazzling whiteness, and was so costly that we are told that it sold for its weight in gold. It was gradually superseded by the introduction of silk, which, however, it equalled in softness. Of this material was made the long inner garment, or shirt, of the most wealthy and luxurious.

"LAID AT HIS GATE."—While lepers are always outside the city, professional beggars and cripples crowd the gateway of every Eastern city, and frequently take up their quarters at the threshold of the courtyards of the wealthy. At the gate of a rich Moslem sheikh, who had a great reputation for piety, in the ancient city of Nizib, in Mesopotamia, I saw a crowd of these wretched-looking beggars, many of them were carried thither every morning by their friends, to receive the dole which their patron always silently distributed among them, as he passed along on his daily progress to the bazaar. One could picture him, a Pharisee of old, distributing his alms to be seen of men, even though no trumpet was sounded to summon the recipients together. But the Mohammedans, in their systematic maintenance of the blind and the maimed by daily alms, set us an example, and act faithfully up to the commands of their Koran.

HADES.—Our Lord adapts His picture of the world of spirits to the current ideas and modes of expression among the Jews. The word translated "hell" is *Hades*, the place of departed spirits, or Sheol, which the Jews divided into two portions—Gehenna, the abode of the wicked, and Paradise, the home of the righteous. Between the two was a yawning chasm, but everything could be seen from either side. The Talmud contains many peurile fables and conversations of the souls in Sheol. Paradise they held to be placed under the throne of God, with Abraham in the centre and Moses close by him. One of the Talmudic tales seems to be suggested by our Lord's parable. Two men died, who had committed many crimes together. One of them in Gehenna sees the other in Paradise standing in the assembly of the just, and complains of the injustice of his lot. "Most foolish of mortals," they reply, "thy companion became a penitent. It was in thy power to become a penitent, but thou didst not." He saith, "Let me go now, and become a penitent." But they say, "O most foolish of men, dost thou not know that this world in which thou art is like the Sabbath, and the world out of which thou camest is like the evening of [before] the Sabbath? If thou dost not provide something for the Sabbath, what wilt thou eat on the Sabbath day?" (Midrash Qoheleth.) (N.B.—The Jewish Sabbath begins at 6 p.m. on our Friday, and ends at 6 p.m. on our Saturday.)

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for August 10: LUKE xvi. 19—31. Golden Text: MARK x. 24.*

### THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

THIS parable is full of terrible warning to those who live selfish lives, without one thought of the sorrow and suffering which lie at their very doorstep.

I. The contrast between Dives and Lazarus in their life. Dives was a man who lived a life of ease and luxury. His very stables and barns were paradise in comparison with the hovels outside his gates. Very near him—but perhaps unknown to him—there lived an afflicted child of God, called Lazarus, one full of sores, “Longing for the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table; and the dogs came and licked his sores.” We do not know that Dives ever cared to ask who this poor beggar at his gate was; but, if he was ignorant, it was a responsible ignorance. In the great day of reckoning we shall be held responsible for the sufferings we might have known, and for the wounds which we might have healed. We ought to know the wants and sorrows of those who lie in our way, perhaps under the shadow of our roofs. Lazarus hoped in vain for any relief from the rich man.

II. The contrast in their death and burial. At last there came a day when ragged Lazarus died. He was found huddled up in his rags dead. As he had lived, so he died—alone. And Dives too must die, though the very ablest physicians were summoned; and when, on the Sabbath after, his funeral sermon was preached, people were moved as the preacher dwelt on the text, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

III. The contrast in their destinies after death. Lazarus, who found no sympathy, now lies in the bosom of Abraham. Dives’ pampered body is parched and fevered with the burning flame: he who never gave a crumb is now ready to give all worlds for a drop. Lazarus used his poverty well; Dives used his wealth ill, and had sinned away his opportunities.

What is the lesson of the parable? It is to teach us the consequences of their conduct who will not treat all their possessions as loans, as trusts for which a most strict account must be given at last.

“Alas! I have walked through life too heedless where I trod,  
Nay, helping to trample my fellow-worm and fill the burial sod,  
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls not unmarked of God.  
The wounds I might have healed, the human sorrow and smart,  
And yet it never was in my soul to play so ill a part;  
But evil is wrought for want of thought as well as for want of heart.”

Remember that every selfish life is surely preparing for itself endless misery.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## TASTING DEATH FOR EVERY MAN.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. PRINCIPAL CAVE, B.A., DD.

*Preached in Brixton Independent Church on Sunday morning, July 6, 1890.*

“That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”—  
HEBREWS ii. 9.

AS I have already said in reading one of the lessons, the great theme of this epistle to the Hebrews is the superiority of the new covenant to the old. The superiority of the new covenant really resolves itself into the superiority of the medium of the new covenant, that is to say, the superiority of Jesus. And you will observe how throughout the epistle, if you read it carefully, the one point of stress is the superiority of Jesus. In the old covenant they had received words by the ministration of Moses: Jesus is declared to be greater than Moses. They had also been accustomed to reverence the High Priest: Jesus is declared to be the great High Priest. Further, they had been accustomed to reverence angels as the media of revelation, and the writer insists that Jesus is greater than any angel. Angels are servants, Jesus is Son. Angels adore, they adore Jesus. Angels are media of a revelation that is now past. Jesus is the King of the coming age. Therefore, because of the superiority of Jesus we are bidden listen to Him.

Further, Jesus is specially called the King of the coming age. It is put here “the world to come.” Far better, as if you will turn to the original you will see—the Revised Version accepts it—far better is the reading “Jesus is King of the coming age,” rather than of the world to come. Again, in the very reason assigned we see a further ground for the superiority of Jesus. The reason lies here—the ground of the Kingship of Jesus is not His birth but His death. No angel has died for man: Jesus has. Therefore, we are bidden to remember the superiority of this new covenant that tells us of Him who by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Now, in the first place, I want to dwell for a little while upon what one can only call this remarkable phrase “tasting death for

every man," and then, in the second place, I want to say something concerning that death of Jesus as the ground of His Kingship.

First, then, let us look for a little while together at this remarkable phrase—"Tasting death for every man." Some of you will remember how, in a brilliant passage in the "Paradise Lost," Milton describes for us the scene in heaven at the first announcement of human sin. The hymns of heaven are hushed. There is silence beneath the wild conclave. Not an angel has a thought to present as the solemn fact has been announced. The council proceeds, and still there is silence in heaven. And when silence has fallen upon the whole of the heavenly ranks, the Son is described as rising, as opening out the plan of His salvation, and as announcing how, by His tasting death for every man, man should be redeemed. For my part I could wish that I had the least tinge of the elevation of style of Milton in dealing with a subject of this character. For is it not true that it seems to transcend human speech and even human thought? Who shall depict all the points of contact between the death of Jesus and our mortal life? It is one of those things where one is compelled to stand and gaze and almost wonder, feeling little more than a sense of wonderment, feeling as though explanation is beyond our human reach. Still, though that is so, though I acknowledge the mystery that must ever belong to mortal man as he comes to deal with this question of the Atonement, whilst I recognise our limitation of faculty, there are two points that comfort me. One is this—limitation of faculty is never an argument for abstinence from thought—limitation of faculty, I say, is never an argument for ceasing to think. Look at the common facts of our everyday life. The poet—is he not ever telling you that to feel is easy, but to express is impossible? Looking to the deeper ranges of human thinking, what is the whole of human philosophy but simply an attempt to understand where, after all, our faculties are limited? Nay, take commoner illustrations. We gather round our fireside, say at Christmas-time; curtains are drawn; we will not yet light the lights, and in that interval of half light and half darkness thoughts begin to travel. We talk to each other; there seems a sort of flood of talk that we can scarcely restrain. What is our talk about? Our joys, our sorrows, our experiences of the preceding portion of the twelve months perhaps, or it may be of our past lives. And yet, though we occupy this interesting half-hour in such a way, are we not each one of us convinced that our special joys and our special sorrows no words can describe? So is it ever. We feel more than we are able to express, and limitation of faculty is not an argument for ceasing to talk or ceasing to think.

It is so with these great truths of God. I imagine that the mind of man will grapple with this truth of the Atonement for

age after age, possibly even in the heavenly world when that shall be revealed ; but to think about it seems to be our duty. Further, there is another point of comfort—we must think about it whether we will or not. Here is the finest jewel of our faith. Set it in even the vulgarest setting, it will yet sparkle and attract.

Now I ask you for a little while to give me all the energy of thought that you are capable of, that we may strive to grapple with some of the Scriptural points attached to this truth of tasting death for every man.

First of all I ask you to bear in mind that death is the penalty decreed by God upon sin. Perhaps we ought to say incidentally that we mean therefore by death much more than mere decease. In the geological world it is proven that you may see there remains of death, death after our ordinary sense of decease, in the old geological ages. When, therefore, death is spoken of as a special decree upon sin, we ought to see in death more than mere decease. Think on. Jesus even in the past, the pre-existent Jesus, was the medium of divine revelation. Here you have one of those remarkable truths that bind together the whole Bible from the beginning to the close. It is not only that the Father takes part in creation, but creation is claimed by the Son. And you will see how He also in all the relationships with man is the special medium of revelation. I am not going to pretend to explain the matter. I am only anxious to state a Biblical fact ; but I say that when man was created he was created in the image of the pre-existent Christ, by the pre-existent Christ. And I see further some reason why if some marring hath taken place of the humanity that hath been created, it shall be the specific work of the Son to restore that marring. Therefore, remember that Jesus is by His very office as a revealer, Judge. Nay, more, that by His office and connection with man, Jesus is the Saviour, the Redeemer. Think again ; death is the penalty of sin. Jesus Himself has announced the penalty as Judge. More than that, of Himself—I am not arguing the matter, I am again stating the Biblical fact—of Himself Jesus is not amenable to death. Here is one of those peculiar points, those side lights upon the truth of the Bible that is given to us again and again. Notice how Jesus, I say, is not born under ordinary conditions. Had he been born under ordinary conditions, he must have died the death penalty. But He is born under exceptional conditions, and therefore He is able to taste death for every man. One point more. May I ask you to be good enough to bear in mind that death, as the death penalty, is not simply passing out of this world into the world to come. The whole Bible is also bound together by this truth further, that death is a penalty, that it is not simply the dying, the passing out of this world into another life, that there is associated with that hour of death far more ; if I may put it in a word, it is, this death is a great evolution of penalty, and it

moves on from the very first hour of a man's life right to the close. Do you remember the words, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and in the common sense of decease Adam did not die. Therefore commentators mostly take themselves to what seems to me a little out of concert with the reading of the matter, whereas if they would ask themselves what is meant in the Bible by death as a death penalty, they would have seen that already that that we read of as death in trespasses and sins, the disturbance of man's nature, had actually begun, the spirit had lost its supremacy. Man was already a slave to the body, and as slave to the body he was at the commencement of that that we call death. Read on the unfolding history of our sinful race, and you will see how again and again you have that interposition of God to restore the spiritual side. You will see how as the race unfolds you have at the same time this depraving that you know by the name of death come on, death itself in the ordinary acceptation of the word; and there again in the death of the sinner, in the death of those that know not reconciliation, you have also thoughts that are presented before you of something terrible in the extreme. Read on and on, about the intermediate state, and you come to the final stage that is called the second death. Death is the great unfolding penalty, the evolution of penalty, something that begins, and will have its infinite history.

One point more, and I think you will see what I am aiming at. Ask yourself what is the very core and essence of death, and I think you will find that it is this: God's withdrawal from man. Man began to die immediately he sinned; that is to say, that divine life, by means of which the balance between soul and body was kept alive, was removed partially, and man was allowed to see what it was to be in the world without divine assistance. Ask yourself what is the core of death in our natural acceptation of the word and you will see again that it is God's withdrawing, withdrawing Himself to a somewhat greater distance. Ask yourself what is the meaning of the second death. I know no way of describing it so ably as this, that it is the withdrawal of the Spirit of God from the spirit of man.

Those points remaining, let us for a moment or two look at certain incidents in our Saviour's life. I will ask you to come with me for a moment or two to Gethsemane and to the cross. I do not care for word-painting. It seems to me iniquitous to come to such scenes with word-painting. I ask you simply that we should stand for a while in the garden and hear those words as they come forth from the Master's lips: "If it be possible let this cup pass." Do you say that is the mere shrinking of the man, the shrinking of the man that we all know in the thought of the great passage from this world into the world to come. Why, mark you, that passage was the very thing that would be the

stepping-stone to our Saviour's glory. It would be His release from the difficulties of this earth, and would be that that should be welcomed as the ending of all His years of pain and sorrow. Mark you, again, that you should beware lest you represent this death of Jesus as less glorious than the death of a martyr, nay, as less glorious than the death of a medical man who will go into the infected wards carrying his life in his hand. You should see that when He shrank from this cup it was something more than mere mortal demise. He knew what you and I cannot tell. He knew the meaning of this mystery, this mystery of the withdrawal of God from the soul of man; and He who had found His greatest joy in communion with God dreaded above all things even the momentary separation in the sense that it must come upon Him.

Follow on to Calvary. We are standing here before the cross. You hear word after word falling from His lips. Will you not for a moment dwell upon that utterance, recorded by more than one of the evangelists—on that utterance that is so full of its own terrible significance, that utterance that tells us that for a little while there was the veiling of the Father's face? You know how He Himself speaks of the darkness and the gloom that have come across Him. Here is the tasting death, here is the tasting of that death penalty in its remarkable evolution. He knows that neither you nor I can know from our limitation of faculty the meaning of the withdrawal of the Father, and there comes that cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" which to me is full of the truths that bind the whole Bible together, which to me is full especially of this truth that He was tasting death for every man. He, Son of the Father, born under exceptional conditions, Himself the Judge who will interpose on our behalf, and as He bears in one moment of time in His infinite heart that sense of the Divine withdrawal. That law may stand that the word of God which was drawn up manifestly for man's good shall stand. He who utters the words as judge will Himself suffer the penalty.

Let us put away from ourselves the mere physical idea of demise. Let us take to ourselves His idea that in tasting death He tasted of that death penalty on our behalf. The law stands, and He who was Judge bears the penalty of our sins. That little spot called Calvary, we know not where it is to-day, and yet it is the place to which the thoughts recur again and again, as there come home to us thoughts of our own alienation from the Father, and there looking upon Him who tasted death for every man we find that there is music for us in the word "reconciliation." Again and again as we fall in the midst of this mortal life of ours, as we fall and have forgotten the reality of the life that was ours, as we have put away from ourselves that divine help, and of necessity we come back again in our hour of pain and of agony to the same spot called Calvary, and we hear again the same words, "for your reconciliation," and so man in his sin, and man as he strives to

shake his sin off, recurs to this place called Calvary that he may hear ever and anon, reconciliation.

In the mysterious government of God the law had been pronounced that the death penalty should go forth. In the working out of the omnipotent mercy of God we see also how this death penalty is borne by Him who was made for a season a little lower than the angels; and so He tasted death for every man, felt in His own soul the very quintessence of pain that a human spirit that is rightly moved can feel, separation between itself and God; He, who all through His life had turned away from the pain and agony of man—man had caused Him to feel pain and the severity of pain—He, Who in those hours had found His one refuge in the Father, comes to this hour of death and is alone. You and I, as we hope to pass through those waters, also hope that though alone we shall not be alone; that when we pass through the waters the great Presence shall be with us. But He who tastes death for every man comes to that hour, and the very face of the Father is for a while clouded.

When on Sinai's top I see,  
God descend in majesty,  
To proclaim His holy law,  
All my spirit sinks with awe.

When in ecstasy sublime,  
Tabor's glorious steep I climb,  
At the all-transporting light,  
Darkness rushes o'er my sight.

When on Calvary I rest,  
God in flesh made manifest  
Shines in my Redeemer's face,  
Full of beauty, truth, and grace.

Here I would for ever stay,  
Weep and gaze my soul away;  
Thou art heaven and earth to me,  
Lonely, mournful Calvary.

I pass to the other side of the subject, this tasting of death as the ground of our Saviour's kingship. As the Apostle John sat in his prison at Patmos, hearing possibly the dash of the waves against the prison walls, a vision—a prophetic vision—suddenly steals before his sight, and the prison walls and the dash of the outer sea are forgotten in the wall-less heaven that reveals itself and that roll of the infinite sea; and as he looks, becomes collected enough to look, vision after vision passes before his gaze.

First of all comes the vision of the Lamb in the midst of the candlesticks; then the messages are sent to the seven churches. Then follows the second vision. Now I quite admit that very many of these visions are almost incapable of interpretation to us as yet. But the earlier chapters seem to us as clear as can be. This second vision is that of a door thrown wide open in heaven,

and as the Apostle looks through the open door he sees the throne and those who are around the throne in lowly adoration of the Son, and there breaks upon his ear a sound—is it the sea or is it music? Now he knows that the words have actually shaped themselves, and he hears what is called the song of creation: “Thou art worthy to receive glory and honour and power, for Thou hast created all things.” But as the seer looks there comes a change around the throne. He is still looking through the open door across the sea of glass at the throne, but a change is produced. There stands before the throne a Lamb as it had been slaughtered, and instantly the song changes. There is given a new song. It is not the song of creation, but now it is the song of redemption: “Thou art worthy because Thou hast redeemed all nations by Thy blood.” So no sooner has the news reached the heavenly kingdom of this death of Jesus than the song there is changed from the praises of creation to the praises of redemption.

The same thing is true throughout Christian history. We, too, see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. If there was a power drawing men to God before, there is a greater power, a more magnetic force since Jesus has died. We feel the true basis of the Kingship of God lies in this death of the Redeemer.

Follow the Bible history, and do you not see how the death of Jesus is the ground of His greatest conquest? No sooner has He passed into the grave than He preaches redemption to the spirits in prison. No sooner has He passed there than the Old Testament saints themselves hear new words that were unfamiliar to them before. Look on, too; soon there comes the bursting of the resurrection morning. Peter rises up a few days afterwards, and the one message upon which he dwells is this tasting death for every man; and the Christian Church is born. Morning after morning, as Sabbath days returned, the Apostles preached in Jerusalem this same message of the Christ Who had died, Who had tasted death for every man. And the little church grows stronger, grows to its thousands. Before long, as the Apostles go forth with exactly the same message, you see how the very thrones of the Cæsars are shattered, and how the very temples of heathendom are emptied. Follow throughout the course of Christian history, and I dare to aver that we have known many intervals that may be called dark ages; but I dare, at the same time, to aver that those have been the ages in which this truth about the tasting of death for every man has been permitted by church leaders to recede. Wherever the truth has been brought to the front, bright days have been seen in the ordinary course of Christian history. Turn back to those days associated with Augustine, or with Bernard, or afterwards with Luther, or after still with the great movement in Germany, or after still with those that are nearer to our own time, the great movement of

Wesley and Whitefield, and I aver that the one truth that stands foremost there as they preach redemption to men is that He, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. And we, whilst to-day we revel in the thought of a new life; whilst to-day we realise as the world, I imagine, has never realised before the meaning of a new life, that Christianity is something super-added to the natural man—whilst that is so, let us never forget that the only great truth that enables men to see that there is, after all, a new life possible to us is always this—the tasting of death for every man. Where the great truth of the dying of Jesus is put to the front, men take new heart. Where this great truth of the dying of Jesus for every man is emphasised as almost the cardinal truth of our faith, we see at once how conversions follow, testifying to a Divine interference with human affairs. And it is necessary for us at all times to bear in mind that here we have the great truth that is the very quintessence and marrow of the Gospel.

I cannot expand, but I would ask you to see that there is some ground for the kingship of Jesus in His death. I would turn away for a season from directly Christian utterances as such. Have you ever remarked how the greatest efforts of the world's genius seem to have been called out by the recognition of this tasting death for every man? Have you seen how men of genius have seemed to rise to their highest water-mark as they come face to face with this death of Jesus? They may realise it but insufficiently. They may hold almost any Christian views concerning it, yet there is a something about this dying of Jesus that acts as a spell upon the heart of humanity. Shall I speak of poetry? I have mentioned Milton. There are times—I do not know whether it is an improper thing to say—but there are times it seems to me that the exquisite music of Milton touches the deeper springs of my spiritual life. I turn to "Paradise Regained" again and again. It puts me into a meditative mood as I see the features of the life of the Redeemer steadily unfolding; they seem, too, by their exquisite simplicity of utterance to put me to a quiet and calm mood. True, the poet does not hold the views that I hold about Jesus. True, he seems to mar much that he has to say by his Unitarian conception. Nevertheless, as I come under the spell of his words it seems to me that the very noblest and best that was ever called forth even from Milton was called forth as he stands before this cross of the Redeemer. I would turn to the one that might be called the German Milton, I mean Klopstock. As I have read his "Messias" I have seen how the best he could write has been evoked from him as he comes face to face with the cross where Jesus is tasting death for every man. He represents for us those three crosses on the hillside. We see the soldier as he rises forth with his spear to pierce the side; we hear the clank of the armour as the soldiers go away after their deed is done; our eyes fall upon the circle of the

weeping women, and then for a season one is left alone with the three crosses; and then as I read these words of Klopstock's again, there is in them the highest poetry; and I am perfectly sure of this, that the highest and best thing that Klopstock did, he did as his eye fell upon this cross of the Redeemer.

And of painting is not the same thing true? Will not great picture after great picture rise before your minds? Perhaps some of you may have heard that touching story in the plains of Lombardy. You step a little out of the ordinary track to a common monastery by the roadside, and there you find it has its little portion of history. You turn within, and you are shown a somewhat faded picture of the crucifixion, and its story is more interesting than the picture. A monk towards the close of his life had come to feel that he had a gift of painting, and an order comes to him from his Superior, that after having embellished cell after cell of his brethren, he should paint a crucifixion for the altar. "No," he says, "it is beyond my faculty." However, the order is supreme, and he obeys. He feels it impossible to get the sort of face that he requires, and he finishes the altar-picture—finishes it in unusual form, leaving the face out. In the interval the man becomes seized with epilepsy; so terrible is the thought upon him that one night he was found in the chapel with the picture unfinished, and in the morning he lay dead, and the face looks out there from the canvas. Do you not see how, by the very presence of this great thought of the death of Jesus, man is laid under a tremendous spell?

Should I speak of music? You know Bach's Passion music, decidedly the grandest thing that Bach himself ever wrote. I shall never forget hearing Handel's "Messiah" for the first time. The opening notes of the overture soon put me in touch with the great thought of the composer, and as the beautiful words of the tenor rang forth, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people," as they sang, "Unto us a child is born, a Son is given," as the music unfolded we saw also the unfolding of that Old Testament expectation of the Redeemer. Then we are amongst the Bethelhem mountains as the touching strains of the Pastoral Symphony fell upon our ears. And as the life of Jesus unfolds now and again you can see that the old prophetic ecstasy is forgotten. They are face to face with facts, facts very largely of pain. Minor chords prevail. You see how sadness is beginning to make itself felt in the life of the Redeemer. And as you listen on, soon can you not hear the very hiss of the lash as He gives His back to the smiters? Then the music seems to become more and more to the minor key, until almost unconsciously you are brought, almost against your will, involuntarily before the cross. And the music falters, falters, falters, seems to cease. "It is finished!" almost involuntarily comes to your lips. Finished! Hark again. The very heavens are split with the chorus, "Lift up your heads, O ye

gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors." "Hallelujah, King of kings and Lord of lords." The angels are shouting to welcome Him. Listen again. "King of kings and Lord of lords." Hark! What voice is that—tremulous yet triumphant—like words from the chamber where death is? "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Listen again. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead." Reason is catching the strain, and since He has tasted death for every man again and again comes the outbreak of the old strain of the chorus, "Hallelujah! King of kings and Lord of lords," until, as the music swells towards the end of the great piece, you catch, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"; and then I think east and west, and north and south, all unite in the great cry, "Amen! Hallelujah! Amen! Hallelujah!" I do say that the grandest thing that ever Handel wrote he wrote as he came under the spell of this tasting death for every man.

And to-day is not the same fact true that the one thing that exercises a spell over humanity in connection with our preaching is this tasting death for every man? For a little season it may be that the great truth of the Atonement has been receding from public view. But I am perfectly sure that in the heart of men there is nothing that it finds so effective about this Gospel as this truth of tasting death for every man. It must come to the front, we shall see a further coronation of Jesus as the world recognises that He tasted death for every man. The ground of His kingship is His tasting of death.

Do not think that I hold pessimistic views about the present state of our religious life in England. On the contrary; wherever I look I see signs of the keenest hope. Men are getting tired of mere party names, and are asking what we know about this Christ that is to be. There is nothing that makes its marks in our time like the life of Christ. And so men are getting away from Calvin, it may be, and from Luther, and from Wesley, and from any individual exponent of Christianity that they may ask about this Christ that is to be. And so, for me, I can find in the present attitude of our religious life nothing but hope. All I say is this—you who owe to Jesus your salvation, keep to the front this truth, that He tasted death for every man. Here is the ground of our new life, here is the ground of our reconciliation, here is the ground of the deepest feelings that move our Christian nature. Let us bear in mind that the grand truth is that Jesus is King, and that He is King because He tasted death for every man.

What think ye of Christ? What think ye of Christ? There are some questions of purely intellectual interest in this world of ours. Many a scientific question is purely a matter of intellectual interest. There are large portions even of Christian truth that are only matters of intellectual interest. But I venture to say that what you think of Christ is the most supremely practical

question that can be brought home to any man's soul. And I ask you, therefore, What think ye of Christ? Is He to you the Son of the Father? Is He to you the image in which you were created? Is He to you your Redeemer? Has He tasted death for you as He has tasted death for every man? Are you conscious of it? Think upon the matter, for you will find that the spring of our Christian life comes as we stand in front of the cross of the Redeemer. I do not know how it is, but I am perfectly sure that if we move our eyes when we are in mental perplexity away from the cross of Jesus we are in darkness and bewilderment at once. I do not know how it is, but I am sure it is a fact that if we can keep our eyes fixed upon the cross of Jesus, asking ourselves what it means, and what it means for us, it is true that, as has been represented for us, the burden falls from our backs. I ask you, therefore, What think ye of Jesus? and in one word I close, that He should taste death for every man. Universalism? By no means. I ask you if you are able to turn to the original, when you will see that you will have no guarantee for universalism; "that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for the individual man who will believe upon Him," is the far more accurate translation of what we have there. I ask you, therefore, again, What think ye of Christ? May the Spirit of all promise take of the things of Christ, and show them unto you May God add His blessing!

## CURRENT OPINION IN THEOLOGY.

*Notes of a Sermon,*

BY REV. PRESIDENT PATTON, D.D., PRINCETON.

"To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."—2 COR. v. 19.

AMONG the many ways of looking at the Christian religion there are these two:—(1) The way in which Christianity makes an impression upon us in its totality—*i.e.*, its general features, and its general effects upon human life; and (2) the way in which its specific doctrines affect us. In other words, these are the apologetic and dogmatic aspects of Christianity. There are common ways of looking at various things. The impression made upon you by a friend, in the general outline of his character and by his influence upon you, is one; the anatomist and psychologist view him in a different light. Let us, then, glance at these two views.

I. *The apologetic aspect of Christianity.*—It is manifest that this is at present the popular view. It has a certain fascination for some minds: they like to view Christianity in the large, without troubling themselves with its particular doctrines. They consider it to be a beneficent system, and well fitted to advance the

highest interests of men, and as such it has their support and their best wishes. At the same time, there is a spirit of doubt abroad. People, it is said, doubt more now than they used to. That is, perhaps, not quite correct; it would be truer to say that we hear more about the doubts of men than we used to. At any rate, the tendency in the Churches is to meet this spirit of doubt in this way: "Let us narrow our area of dogma; let us get men to believe as much as we can; and let us be glad to receive them into communion with us on these terms." Alongside this spirit of doubt there has sprung up a spirit of unity. It prevails everywhere. Men are beginning to get their eyes opened, and they are able to see the vast agreements that exist between their own and other forms of religion. This view is irenic. You look to those parts of Christian doctrines upon which men agree, and not those upon which they differ; and you find that the Roman Catholic, for instance, believes a great deal exactly as you do. He believes in the doctrine of the Trinity, in the Incarnation of Christ, in the Atonement, as firmly as you can. It is a hopeful sign of the times, then, when men are able to overlook differences, and clear the way to a consideration of agreements.

But, now, what is this Christianity? How is it to be stated or defined in that which is essential to it? You cannot define Christianity as Presbyterianism nor as Episcopacy, as Predestination nor as Apostolical Succession. How, then, are you to put it? What is it to be a Christian? It may be answered from this text. To be a Christian is to accept this statement of the Apostle Paul, "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." The man who accepts that accepts Supernatural Religion—Supernatural Christianity. It is the minimum of Christian belief. You cannot go lower, and at the same time conserve what is essential to a Christian.

If this, then, is the fundamental Christian premiss, how is it to be defended? How would you proceed from the standpoint of Apologetics to make it good? Now I cannot answer this question fully, but I shall just indicate the line upon which this fundamental Christian premiss might be made good.

(1) To be a Christian is so far in alliance with your intellectual nature. It meets the general conditions of thought. You don't have to undo anything. You don't have to go back upon your thinking, and undo your conceptions, and reconstruct your ideas upon different principles. If you became a Pantheist, for example, you would. You would have to undo all your thinking about matter and mind, disbelieve in the distinction you have been accustomed to make between the ego and the non-ego, and deny what you have been wont to affirm, that extension is a quality as peculiar to matter as thought is to mind. To be a Christian makes no such demand upon you: it is in correspondence with the general structure of your intellectual life.

(2) Christianity is in alliance with your fundamental religious conceptions. You are born religious; certain definite religious ideas are common to man as such. (a) For instance, there is this hungering and thirsting after God, a longing on the part of the human soul to bring God within reach, to have Him such as the soul can know and love. This is the hunger of the world, and you have it satisfied when God became Man, *i.e.*, Christianity meets this desire to know God in the Incarnation of Christ. Now of course the question may be raised, Is the Incarnation, this human longing, taking shape and form, or is it an objective, divine manifestation meant to satisfy the longing? That must be settled by evidence. All I say here is that the longing exists, and *primâ facie* Christianity meets it. (b) Again, there is the idea of human guilt, a feverish restlessness at the thought of God and judgment. Now this is no peculiarly local or Christian idea. It is common to all races and all religions, and hence arises the desire for expiation. (c) Once more, man everywhere looks for help from a source higher than himself, he doesn't like to feel that he is alone. Pantheism tries to meet this. It brings God down to our help, it tells us He is everywhere and everything, but it does so only by extinguishing us. Now Christianity does two things for us: it brings God near to us, and it conserves our individuality. It raises us up into fellowship with God. That is, the human longing for fellowship with God is met by the doctrine of the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. These three facts, then, incarnation, expiation, regeneration, are embedded in the Christian religion, and they meet the subjective religious ideas of men.

(3) As one would expect, basing itself as it does in general human needs, Christianity is the only religion capable of catholicity. It flourishes anywhere; it suits every clime and every condition of men. Other religions have good points, but Christianity has all their excellencies and none of their defects. All this is, of course, not direct proof of the verity of the Christian religion, but it is presumptive proof. If it suits the great and universal longings of human nature, then it is presumably true.

(4) Further, not only is the Christian religion presumably true from its suitability to human needs, but it comes to us specifically and historically accredited. There are two ways in which you may look at Scripture. (a) You may hold that Scripture is the word of God, or (b) you may say it contains the word of God. The last might be enough for apologetic purposes, but I prefer and hold the former.

Now, when you ask me my reason for holding that the Bible *is* the word of God, you lead at once to the subject of inspiration. Some men argue in this way: they say the Bible is inspired because the Bible says it is. But, of course, that is no proof. A man may say he is the king of China, but that doesn't make him so. To get at the real proof of inspiration you must go to the

material of which the Bible is formed. You take up the book and you examine its texture, and you say this is Divine; it has one purpose from first to last; the whole mosaic is stamped with the cross of Christ. It is the organic structure of Scripture that demonstrates its inspiration. Now, if I found this in English literature I should say the same. If the whole stream and volume of English literature, from Chaucer downwards, were directed to one purpose and governed by one idea, I should say at once that that looked exceedingly like inspiration. It is precisely this that you find in the collection of books which constitute the Bible; they were written at widely different periods of time, and yet they are bound together by an organic unity of thought and purpose. But you say, "That isn't demonstration; that is not a strict proof of your assertion." What do you mean by demonstration? If you want me to prove inspiration by mathematics, then I reply at once that I cannot; but I do say this, that, taken as a whole and in its parts, the Bible presents to you a phenomenon that you cannot reasonably account for short of the doctrine of inspiration.

Apologetic, then, necessitates this minimum of Christian belief, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself": but you cannot stop there; you can't for the life of you; you must go further. Of course, if you want to be a fool, you have a perfect right to be; but if you use your ordinary intellectual powers, you will be forced into the consideration of dogmatic Christianity.

II. *When you pass over to dogmatics* you come at once face to face with the Christological problem, you must believe something about Christ. You must say that Christ is God, or man, or both, or neither. You will be forced logically to assert or deny something about Christ—that is, you formulate your dogma about His person. Similarly with the doctrine of the Trinity. There is no more difficulty in believing in ten persons than in three; the point is, you must assert unity or plurality: you must say that there is only one person in the Godhead; or, to make room for your doctrine of Christ, you must say there are more. But this is not all. If it be true that Christ is the Son of God, and that He became Incarnate, and lived and died as sacred history represents, that leads you to the question, Why did Christ come? and immediately you are in contact with the doctrine of sin. In this way you are forced step by step to climb the hill until the whole field of doctrine included under the terms Creation, Providence, and Grace stretches out before you, with the doctrine of Predestination as central. Intellect will force you step by step on this journey through dogmatics.

I have indicated enough to show you that, however important the Apologetic position may be, it is impossible constantly to rest there. The position of those people who tell us that we don't want doctrine, but religion, is absurd. They always seem to me to be

a grotesque compound of John Wesley and Matthew Arnold. There is no religion, just as there can be no morality, which does not rest upon the activity of thought; that is, religion must rest ultimately upon belief. The text, therefore, brings you up—if you are true to history, true to philosophy, and true to Scripture—to the Westminster Confession, the Thirty-nine articles, or the Heidelberg Catechism.

Many of the modern scientific discoveries are old doctrines with new names. Darwinism fixes a man into the conditions of his birth and makes him the result of his antecedents; but we have had what heredity teaches us for nineteen hundred years under the doctrine of Predestination.

### ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Sunday, August 17, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

#### THE TEN LEPERS.

ST. LUKE xvii. 11—19.

“THERE MET HIM TEN . . . LEPERS.”—Nothing in the East has remained more unchanged and stereotyped, from the earliest times, than the treatment, the ways and manners, of the lepers. That dread disease, which is said to have been introduced into Western Europe from Syria in the eighth century, and was a scourge for several centuries (though it seemed to have died out until its recent sporadic appearance), never intermitted its virulence in Palestine. To each successive race—Jew, Syrian, Turkoman, and Arab alike—it has descended as a curse, dreaded, shunned, and counted a heaven-sent visitation by all alike. The introduction of the Moslem creed has done anything but mollify the social isolation and jealousies of jarring faiths. Jew, Christian, Mohammedan, stand as angrily apart as did ever Jew and Samaritan two thousand years ago. But there is one exception. The old proverb says “Adversity makes strange bed-fellows.” And thus we find that as, while the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, yet a Samaritan leper was in the same band with his Jewish fellow-sufferers, so Jewish, Moslem, and Christian victims of the fell disease herd together in the same cluster of hovels outside any town or village of Central Palestine to-day.

“WHICH STOOD AFAR OFF.”—It is quite certain that the isolation of the lepers was simply in accordance with the law, and not from any dread of contagion from casual contact. At this day there is no such fear, yet the isolation is maintained. So far were the severest restrictions relaxed, in New Testament times, that the Talmud gives special directions for the admission of sufferers to the services of the synagogue. For the leper, grates or bounds are to be made, ten hands high and four cubits broad. Within these he stands; but he must enter the first and depart the last, lest they should be defiled that stand in the synagogue. Even in the Temple lepers were admitted to the Court of the Gentiles; that is, to the part which was open to the uncircumcised and to those under ceremonial uncleanness.

\* Abridged from the American *Sunday School Times*.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE LESSON.\*

No men, one would have thought, had more reason to thank God than those nine lepers. "Where are the nine?" Jesus exclaimed in sorrowful amazement. He felt as if all His benefits "were falling into a deep silent grave."

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind;  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude."

It was in our Lord's last journey towards Jerusalem that He saw, on the road outside a village, ten lepers. They might not come nearer to anyone than one hundred paces, because they were tainted with the fatal disease. They kept together in a band. Misfortune makes strange neighbours, and of these lepers one was a Samaritan. You know he would not have been allowed to associate with Jews had he been well, but leprosy wiped out all religious distinctions. In Jerusalem to-day one finds in the leper-houses Jews and Mahometans living together. Nowhere else would they live together. Conscious of their misery, they appealed to Jesus. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Illness often will make men go to God who have never thought of Him before. So it was in this case.

Their prayer was an act of faith, and Jesus puts it to the test. "Go," He said, "show yourselves to the priest." He did nothing for them at the moment. He bids them go in their uncleanness, as if they were already cleansed. Could they trust Him sufficiently to make the venture? Yes! they took Him at His word, and set out on their way to the priests. As they went, before they had gone far, the glad change was upon them. "As they went, they were cleansed." It was in the very act of obedience that they were blessed. Now they were restored to their families, their homes, their rights as citizens, to all that makes life worth living. If such a blessing had come to us, should we have thought any thanks too great? Should we have gone away, like those nine, without a word of thanks to the Lord? But it is very humbling to think that we, perhaps, might have acted in the same way. You know one proverb—"Out of sight, out of mind." When the miracle was wrought upon them the Worker was out of sight. Jesus would have walked on to the village, and they were pursuing their way to the priests. So the Benefactor was forgotten by the nine. Nine out of ten of us are ungrateful likewise to God for all His benefits to us—and even more ungrateful than those nine lepers. For which of the two is better off, the man who loses a good thing and then gets it back again; or the man who never loses it at all? And which of the two has more cause to thank God? Think how well and happy those of us are, and how many of us give God the glory, or Christ the thanks! And if we have bodily blessings to be thankful for, what gratitude we should show for our spiritual blessings. Has not God given us His Son, and the hope of a joyful life after death.

We are so much accustomed to be blessed by God that we take His blessings as a matter of course, and so we wound His love. May God forgive us for our ingratitude.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

*A Sermon,*

BY THE REV. A. R. BUCKLAND, M.A.

*Preached in the Chapel of the Foundling Hospital, London, on Sunday morning, August 3, 1890.\**

“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it.”—ST. MATTHEW xii. 42.

It was in those far-off days that seem to live for us in a kind of twilight. There were still 250 years or so to pass before Romulus should found his city by yellow Tiber, and twice as many years had to come and go before Thermopylæ should teach the Orientals the unwisdom of relying upon mere numbers. In those days so far off there was found in the south-western corner of Arabia a kingdom, not great perchance, not widely known, neither renowned in war, nor accomplished in the arts of peace. Like many another kingdom and nation, it has left to posterity but little evidence on which to base a verdict about such things.

But if we know but little of the kingdom, we know somewhat of one of its sovereigns. It is odd how strangely fame is obtained and meted out in this world. It may possibly be that to-day Alexander the Coppersmith is more widely known in many quarters than Alexander the Great. And perchance Peter the Wild Boy has a much wider fame than Peter the Great.

It was some such strange freak, from one point of view, which has conferred upon the Queen of Sheba eternal memory. Others have gained fame by great deeds, profound wisdom; some also by great infamy. Eratostratus set fire to the magnificent temple of Diana at Ephesus that he might make the world to remember him. They remembered him, they of his day, and we remember him as well. But the Queen of Sheba has won far more enduring and better renown in a far simpler fashion. She merely yielded to the instinct of her sex. The characteristic weakness of woman—curiosity—has handed her name down to eternal memory so long as the words of Christ shall be read and taken note of.

\* Mr. Buckland's first sermon as Morning Preacher at the Foundling.

—ruling in those far off days, given, as Josephus tells us in his quaint fashion, very much to philosophy, and also, he adds, to many other kinds of discipline—ruling in those far-off days, whether as wife, or widow, or maid, we know not, there came to her news ever and anon of a grand kingdom stretched away to the north of her own. She had heard perchance whence that kingdom came. There were statements as to strange doings on its behalf by God of old time, rumours of a wondrous escape from a still greater power in Egypt, rumours of strange, hard things done to the nations and the people who obstructed their early path to Canaan's land. And now she heard that it had grown and spread until it was in a way worthy to be counted with the great empires of the East. And now they told her that a new king sat upon its throne, young when he ascended the throne of his father David—but nineteen, perchance, or twenty. He was fair to look upon, they said, and the beauty of his person was equalled, too, by the powers of his mind. He inherited the full treasury and the glory of the power to be found, he expanded his alliance with Egypt, for he took a daughter of Pharaoh as his wife. When his power was well consolidated he created a mercantile marine; manning his ships, perhaps, with Phœnician allies, he sent them away to Tartessus, on the distant coast of Spain, and others away down right into the Indian Ocean, perchance going on to the most southern port of India, or even to the island of Ceylon, which might, as they returned, bearing their strange and precious cargoes, their gold, their ivory, their apes, their peacocks, their spicery—might, as they returned, passing Sheba's land, have even stopped, and have been seen by the queen herself.

But, after all, it was not the power, it was not the strange things that were said of this kingdom and its ruler from that point of view that most won her attention. She leant the most willing ear when they talked of his wisdom, and when they connected that wisdom, not so much with his own personal individual characteristics as with those of the God he worshipped, that God to Whose name he had built a magnificent temple, the story of which had gone into all lands. And when she heard of him, when she recognised in that wisdom something more than mere Oriental astuteness, a solidity of intellect, and rectitude of judgment that marked him out as something far different from his contemporaries, she desired to see him. Should she go, or should she stay? It was a far-off land; there were many dangers by the road, especially for a woman. She may have debated it long, or possibly somebody contradicted her at last, and said she should not go. At all events, she made up her mind, and she went.

It was, indeed, a bold enterprise. Going as a queen, she must have a proper retinue; as a woman, a large guard, no doubt; and as an Oriental, she must carry tempting gifts in her hands. How they fared upon that long journey—as far, perhaps, as from Lon-

don to Rome, but without the multiple conveniences of modern travel, of course—we cannot tell. But it is easy to think, as the long train neared its destination, how the villagers in Egypt gazed in wonder as they heard of, and saw, perchance, the person of the Queen herself, as they looked on the swarthy countenances of the men that formed her train, and as they saw the slow-passing camels with their precious burdens of gold and gems and spices. At last they came to Solomon's capital and to the King himself. She was admitted and received, we can hardly doubt, with the traditional hospitality of the East. She was permitted to put to the King all those hard questions which she seemed to have looked forward to with so much satisfaction; some questions, indeed, which, from the nature of her subsequent answer and exclamations, it would almost appear she thought would pose this wise monarch himself.

What was it that she asked? Here, unhappily, history fails us. But where history fails you always find tradition stepping in to offer all it can. And so legend is quite ready to assure us of the kind of things that the Queen of Sheba asked King Solomon. Enigmas, mere jests, these are the kind of questions the legend puts into her mouth. A single instance may suffice to indicate their character. The Queen, they say, chose boyish girls and girlish boys and dressed them precisely alike. Setting them before the king, she asked him to discriminate accurately the sex of each. Solomon, says the legend, called for water, and then when he required the girls softly to stroke their cheeks and the boys honestly to rub theirs, he determined which were boys and which were girls.

Amusement is all very well in its way, but we can scarcely conceive that a woman of the strong personality of the Queen of Sheba would have come, at no small danger to herself and no little inconvenience to her kingdom, so long a journey merely to trifle with the time of a busy king. Nay, is it not fair to think that they were far more important questions than these that she had to ask? that she, much given to philosophy, earnestly desired to ask this man questions concerning life and death, and possibly whether beyond death there might not be for man something else yet to look for? What she asked we cannot tell, but she received her answer in full. And it seems but natural and right, and in the fitness of things, that one who had come so far with such honest curiosity should have been repaid by Solomon by the knowledge of that God Whose glory he was making known by his own personal testimony and by the magnificent temple at Zion.

It is an old familiar story, yet never by its romantic character losing its charm for us, and never let us also hope ceasing to supply a convenient lesson or two for later generations. We live, do we not, in an age which is unceasingly busy; in an age,

too, which is sadly self-centred ; in an age, people tell us, is very largely one of scepticism. But surely the great difficulty, the great spiritual difficulty of to-day, is not the critical difficulty, nor yet the spiritual difficulty. Amongst the comfortable, the well-educated classes it is the difficulty of getting a fair hearing for the claims of God. Much that passes for severe and well-thought-out scepticism amongst the fairly well educated people of to-day is based upon nothing more than a full purse and an unceasing round of engagements. Take away the one or the other, give time for thought, for contemplation, try their souls with the sterner agonies that life in this world can bring, and the old, cold, miserable, self-satisfied philosophy that says in its heart, "There is no God," takes to itself wings and flies. Better, yea, thrice happier are they who prefer the honest curiosity of the Queen of Sheba to the miserable indifference to the claims of God we too often know of amongst ourselves.

And she has her warning also, not only for those who are far too busy in an age that swiftly hurries on men and women to the grave, and to some place beyond it—far too busy to think of God, or of death, or of judgment—she has a lesson too, I say, for those so properly styled in the language of our incomparable Prayer Book, "those who profess and call themselves Christians." It is an age of much scepticism after a sort, also of much belief after a sort. There are many, are there not, children, they would say, of the light, with great praise of God upon their lips, little practice of His precepts in their lives? There are many, are there not, who justify the saying that the most serious obstacle to the advance of Christianity to-day is nothing that the outsider may say: it is simply this, the poor quality of what may be called the average Christian life.

If that be so, how sad a responsibility, yea, and how stern a duty is laid upon every one of us. How does the matter stand so far as God's will declared by Himself goes? He puts the matter with most extraordinary simplicity. None can escape His meaning, surely. He will have—if we will let Him—He will have all or He will have nothing. Why is it not more often all? Surely there are lying round about us, at our own doors, sometimes fast locked in the hearts of our own neighbours to whom we speak too much of other things, too little of things that concern eternity. Surely there lie round about us the saddest, the most perplexing problems of sorrow, life problems that shall never be fully solved until the heart of our nation is more truly and distinctively Christian, that is following the precepts of Christ. And if such problems lie at our own doors more surely they also lie a little way from them; surely there will be kingdoms where the knowledge of Christ would be received with as much joy as ever the Queen of Sheba heard the story of God from the lips of Solomon.

Then if God asks all we command should we not give it Him?

Why should not the man who has been too much taken up with the things of this world, drawn on by the hope of wealth, or enamoured by the grosser pleasures of this life, why should not such an one come, and in humble confidence upon the mercy of God in Christ declare that he too would offer his all to Him? May he not come with hope? Yea, with firm assurance, may come and find in the great heart of God the warmest of welcomes, may come and find with Christ the deepest peace, may come and find a power so to live in this perplexing life that men should see His good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven.

## PILATE'S QUESTION.

BY THE REV. DR. NEVIUS.

*A Sermon preached at the Yokohama Union Church.*

“What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ?”—ST. MATT. xxvii. 22.

IN these words of the Roman Procurator, we have: (1st) a conceded fact—Jesus; (2nd) a contested claim—Jesus who is called Christ; (3rd) a question which cannot be evaded, pressing for immediate decision—What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?

It is often said that religion, treating as it does of things unseen and spiritual, cannot be a system of positive truth and knowledge. It is insisted that truth can only be ascertained by a careful study of phenomena cognisable by the senses, and capable of being proved beyond the possibility of doubt. Christianity, which treats of the soul, a future state, and the relations between man and God, is relegated to the region of the unknown and the unknowable. But it must be remembered that the basis of Christianity is Jesus; and Jesus is a fact of history. It is true Christianity treats of another world, but it has its evidences in this. Like the symbolical ladder in Jacob's vision, while its top reaches to heaven, it starts from and rests upon the earth. It is very important, both for the purpose of strengthening our faith and also of answering objectors, to insist on the historical evidences of Christianity. I believe that it was to emphasise these evidences, rather than to put a stigma upon Pilate's character, that we have in the Apostle's Creed “suffered under Pontius Pilate.”

Before proceeding further, it may be remarked here, that not only the fact of our Saviour's existence, but the main statements forming the history of His life as recorded by the four evangelists, are almost universally acknowledged as fully authenticated.

And now the question recurs, who was Jesus of Nazareth? Whence came He? What was His character? What His mission? Different theories have been propounded to explain the facts of Jesus' life; and His character, life, and death have been viewed in different lights. Rationalists have attempted to explain the facts, without admitting anything supernatural. We have not time to speak of those theories at present.

There is one theory which harmonises and explains all the facts of our Saviour's life. It is the Scriptural theory that He is God manifest in the flesh; the theory which has been held out by the Church in all ages, and

I believe the only consistent one. It is also the theory of our text, and is fully expressed by it. Jesus is Christ. This was the contested claim which created the clearly defined issue between our Saviour and the Jews. Jesus said "I am the Christ." This claim, asserted by Jesus before His death, was repeated by the Apostles after His resurrection, in every synagogue in Judea, and throughout the Roman provinces. Everywhere the unvarying theme when preaching to the Jews, was "Jesus is the Christ."

Let us consider the full import of this claim. Christ, or rather *Christos*, is the Greek word used to translate the Hebrew Messiah, both meaning anointed. Anointing was, among the Jews, the symbol of confirming authority. The title was applied to our Saviour as the anointed of God to be the King, the Saviour of the world. Christ then is King, and King in the highest sense—King of kings and Lord of lords. It was said in prophecy, I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion and His glorious kingship and universal and enduring kingdom are the great theme of inspiration. Our text as recorded in the Gospel according to Mark, "What will ye then that I shall do unto Him whom ye call the King of the Jews," presents only a verbal variation. This word Christ brings out the marked distinction between the Christian religion and all others. Christ was God-appointed and God-sent. He was not simply an agent made use of by God, as other men have been for communicating truth and conferring blessings. He declared that He came out from God; that He was a divinely commissioned messenger from the Court of Heaven, testifying of the things which He had seen and speaking with divine authority. But what is the evidence of this? Such assumptions require the clearest proofs and credentials.

The answer is, the acknowledged facts of Christ's life are the all-sufficient evidences of his claims. His character as a man; His teachings as compared to any and all of the great and wise of the earth; and His wonderful works, one and all claim that they are what unaided man never has and never can attain to. The conclusion to which Nicodemus came is a logically necessary one. We know that Thou art a teacher come from God, for "no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." (See Matthew xi. 4—6.) The works which He did in God's name were God's testimony to the truths which He taught. Those who deny that Jesus was what He claimed to be, or, in other words, who reject the Scriptural theory of Christ's life, are bound to present to the world another consistent theory to account for what He was, what He did, and what His religion has done and is still doing. Such a theory has rarely been attempted, and who will have the hardihood to say that such a consistent theory now exists?

And now we come to the 3rd point, the question which pressed upon Pilate for a decision—"What shall I do with Jesus?" Jesus of Nazareth stands arraigned before the tribunal of the Roman Procurator. That the concise and clearly defined charge against Him was the claim presented in our text is further shown by the inscription of the accusation written on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The question as between Jesus and His accusers is one of fact and evidence. Is He or is He not the Christ?

If He is the Christ—and the evidences of His claims are sufficient—His accusers are guilty of the most stupendous crime that the world has

ever known. If He is not the Christ (I say it with all deliberation and reverence), the Jews were right in saying, "He is worthy to die." Let us dwell upon this point for a moment. Consider the impious presumption of a mere man claiming to be a messenger from heaven, and presenting to the world his own dicta as the commands of God. No greater insult to the majesty of heaven is possible; and no greater misfortune could happen to the world than to be deluded by one falsely assuming such a character.

Let us pause here to consider what a deep personal interest we have in the question now presented to Pilate—Christ is anointed of God to be the Saviour not of the Jews, but of the world. His claims are presented not to nations or communities collectively, but to every member of our race individually. This question comes home directly to us all, and we must, each one of us, decide it. Perhaps the intense individuality which marks the sacred narrative is intended to be significant. All Christ's disciples had forsaken Him and fled; and so far as it appears, Pilate had no associates or advisers. He stands—and so must we, face to face, with Jesus alone. What will we do with Jesus who is called Christ? This purported to be the trial of Jesus before Pilate—in a deeper and more awful sense it was Pilate's trial before Jesus.

Let us consider how he met the question, and if in doing so we recognise in his perplexity and anxiety and duplicity our own inward experiences, let us take the lessons and warnings of his trial to heart.

Pilate's decision of the case seems to have been unhesitating and unchanging. We do not read of his calling the witnesses or comparing and weighing testimony. From what he had previously heard before, from what he saw in the bearing and spirit of the accused and His accusers; and from the few answers that Jesus gave to his questions, he came at once to the conclusion from which he never receded, "I find no fault in this man."

Christ is the light of the world; and when He and His truth are presented, they carry with them their own evidence. It needs no lengthened process of reasoning to prove that light is light. He who created alike the sun and the human eye, is the author of the mutual adaptations, between the human eye and the sun-light. So between the human soul and Christ and His truth there are such mutual relations and adaptations, that the soul, to a greater or less degree, according as its moral state is normal and healthy, perceives at once that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Pilate wavered as to what he should do with Christ; but never as to what he should think of Christ.

With a clear judgment of the case before him, and absolute power to do as he chose, whence the perplexity and struggle which ensued? It was the struggle between duty and interest; between conscience and a sinful nature. There is a necessary antagonism between Christ and our evil nature, and whenever Christ is presented, the conflict begins. Our Saviour Himself declared "I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword." The effect of Christianity is not only to set one man at war with another, but each man at war with himself. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The essence of Christianity, as manifested in the outward life, is self sacrifice; the essence of worldliness is selfishness. The immediate question before Pilate was, whether he should side with Christ, or his accusers; but this question involved another—whether he should sacrifice Christ, or himself. The calm composure of Jesus, with meekness and dignity, truth

and divinity stamped on his every feature and every act, tended powerfully to call out in Pilate whatever was noble in him as a man and just as a Roman officer. But on the other hand, that significant but covert threat—"If thou release this man thou art not Cæsar's friend," confronted him. To release Jesus was to brave the fury of a mob, with the immediate prospect, even if his life should not be sacrificed, of being himself accused before the bar of Cæsar, by these same Jews, of complicity with rebellion and sedition. Could he who already ruled supreme over a Roman province, afford to sacrifice his hopes of future promotion. What would his associates and compeers say of his espousing the cause of a Jewish fanatic? What serious complications, and responsibilities, might his connection with this sect, everywhere spoken against, entail upon him? Taking a stand for Christ meant then, as it must always mean, self renunciation.

Let us notice more particularly the course that Pilate took. He endeavoured at first to get rid of his dilemma by shifting the responsibility. He tried to refer the whole matter to the Jews. "Take ye him and judge him according to your law." No—they would have him crucified by Roman law. Pilate hears that Jesus is from Galilee, and hopes to get rid of the case by referring it to Herod. But he only saved a little time, for Jesus was sent back to him. Again he must consider "what shall I do?" The responsibility of deciding the question is not transferable either for Pilate or for us.

We cannot shift it upon the church; or parents from whom we have received a religious bias; or upon religious teachers and guides. The question is to us personally. It may be put off for a time, but it will come back to us, and it must be decided.

The next effort was to compromise the matter—I will chastise him and let him go. He would try, so far as possible, to conciliate, and be the friend of both parties. He would yield to the Jews so far as to punish Jesus as an ordinary criminal; and, at the same time, show his kindness to Jesus by saving Him from death. He would drag this tremendous issue down to the low level of a petty offence, and dismiss it by flogging. How many since the time of Pilate have endeavoured to be friends of the world and of Christ at the same time; who, like Him, affirm and re-affirm His innocence, but treat Him as guilty; who professedly take sides with Him, but really with His murderers, forgetting that to give Christ anything less than He claims is to reject and dishonour Him.

Pilate had left the strong vantage ground of truth, right, and justice, and, in his weak vacillation, had already, though unconsciously, given himself up to the Jews.

Only one desperate effort to clear himself of guilt remained. "He washed his hands in the presence of the multitude, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this Just Person. Here we have the plea of necessity, which is made use of so often even now. "I could not help it"—"I have done all I could." "My action was necessitated by circumstances beyond my control." My position, my business, my deep-rooted habits, my natural disposition or temper, my public duties render it impossible for me to be a consistent Christian or to do what I would like to do, and what I feel I ought to do." This language, while it professedly honours and exalts Christianity, really dishonours and degrades it. It implies a deliberate preference for the favour of man rather than God, for the fleeting

vanities of earth rather than the perfect and eternal blessedness of heaven. The guilt of deliberately and finally rejecting Christ can never be excused, never washed away.

Josephus, in speaking of Pilate's subsequent history, says that it was marked by personal and political disasters. A well-known legend says that he sought to hide sorrows in the mountain by the lake—now called Mount Pilatus—and that after spending years in the recesses of the mountains, in remorse and despair rather than penitence, he closed his life by plunging into the dismal lake which occupies its summit. It is further said that a form is often seen to emerge from the gloomy waters and go through the action of washing hands. And then dark clouds encircle the lake, and a tempest sweeps over the mountain top.

We must not suppose that Pilate was the only one to whom this question came, and who had to bear the responsibility of deciding it. Every man in Judea had to meet it; decide it; and be answerable for his decision. The manner in which it was met by different classes, epitomised and foreshadowed the manner in which it has been met by different classes ever since.

The Jews who clamoured for Christ's death were the children of Abraham, the professed worshippers of Jehovah, but in fact His most bitter enemies. Christ has ever received His severest wounds in the house of His friends. History teaches us that it is very easy and not uncommon for men to think they are serving God, when they are most effectually serving Satan, and the greatest crimes have been committed in the sacred name of religion. The Pharisees were the ritualists and formalists of that day, scrupulous in the observance of externals; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; drawing nigh to God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him. They were the bitterest enemies of Christ and the principal source of weakness and corruption in His Church. They have had their successors in every age, and they are to be found in every branch of the Church at the present day.

The Sadducees affected the current philosophy or culture of the day, which was Grecian. They proposed to walk by sight rather than by faith, however imperfect their sight might be, or rather to follow with unquestioning faith human teachers and adopt human hypotheses, rather than trust to Divine guidance. The would-be scientific Sadducees were never more numerous than at present. These two sects represent the most dangerous tendencies of the human mind toward formalism on the one hand and infidelity on the other. The solemn warning of our Saviour is applicable in every age, and especially in ours. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The Jewish populace presents another type showing us how ready the masses are to follow their leaders, and what a fearful responsibility those have who lead them on to sin.

The Roman soldiers who stood guard before the cross, who, touched with pity, ran for vinegar to cool the Saviour's thirst and in view of all the circumstances of His death declared, "truly this is the Son of God," represent a large class who simply see the outside surface of Christianity, and appreciate and admire much in it which is noble and beautiful, but know little or nothing of its hidden truth and transforming power. Of Pilate and the class of men which he represents, nothing more need be added.

Nicodemus and Joseph were Jesus' disciples, secretly for fear of the Jews. When He was dead they asked of Pilate the body of Jesus. They have their type of believers now. What shall we say of Joseph and Nicodemus? It is not for us to judge. We will hope, however, that this public act, though a very tardy acknowledgment of discipleship, was accepted as a confessing Him before men by Him who is so ready to pity and forgive the weaknesses of His followers. Indeed, in some respects, their courage and devotion are more to be commended than that of the twelve chosen Apostles.

In this dark hour of trial, what promise did these disciples give of the future triumph of Christ's Church? Nearly all forsook Him, and fled. Peter followed to deny Him. Sad type, but too true, of what the Church as a whole has been in all ages—weak in faith, knowledge, courage, zeal, and love—slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken. How humbling, and at the same time how encouraging, for our Saviour still acknowledged them as His disciples, and loved them still. He will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax. He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust.

But there is another type. In the darkness which shrouded Calvary at noon-day, and the darkness which shrouded the infant Church there is still a bright spot to look upon; a bright beacon of hope for the future. Before the cross there stands a little group composed of the disciples whom Jesus loved, and there women last at the cross and first at the sepulchre. Can we doubt that it was a comfort to the suffering and forsaken One to see them there; and what an honour to them to be recognised by Him at such a time, and to hear from His lips those precious words, addressed first to the disciple whom He loved:—"Behold thy mother," and then addressed to His mother:—"Behold thy son." Christ has ever had and will have in every age His chosen ones, and His banner over them is love.

One question still remains. What, dear friends, will you do with Jesus who is called Christ? Age after age has past, and left on record the answers to this question of those who have gone before us. This is our day of visitation; of all the questions of life this is the greatest—it is the question. In the case of Pilate his decision fixed his fate, and that of the Jewish nation. So the decision of each one of us will be individual and public (so far as our influence goes) for no one man liveth to himself or dieth to himself. Christ stands before you as He did before Pilate, silent. He has nothing more to say. His claims and their evidences are before you, and before the world. I beseech you reject Him not. Look at His pierced hands and side, and say to Him, "My Lord and my God." Cast everything behind you, and take Him to be your all; and He will be to you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He will guide you by His counsel, and afterwards receive you to glory.

## THE WILL OF GOD.

BY PROFESSOR DRUMMOND.\*

IN answer to the question, How to find out God's will? Professor Drummond read the following from the fly-leaf of his Testament:—

“First, pray. Second, think. Third, talk to wise people, but don't regard their judgment as final. Fourth, beware of the objection of your own will, but don't be too much afraid of it. God never unnecessarily thwarts a man's nature and likings—it is a mistake to think that His will is always in a line of the disagreeable. Fifth, meanwhile do the next thing, for doing God's will in small things is the best preparation for doing it in great things. Sixth, when decision and action are necessary, go ahead. Seventh, you will probably not find out till afterwards, perhaps long afterwards, that you have been led at all.”

The Professor then went on: “I am reminded by the address to-night, and by this, the second last night of conference, that in a few hours we shall all be off the mountain top and down again into the valley, and I remember that mountain tops were never made by God to be inhabited. They are places to go up to and have a look around, and rest a little, and take a good view, and get near heaven, and then come down again. The use of a mountain in nature is to send streams down into the valleys, where are villages and towns, and cities, and that is the use of a conference like this. What we are to take with us is some running stream of this mountain, that it may refresh and satisfy the body of the world that God has given us to influence. But for the most part we shall have to go and live common-place lives. Most of us will not have to go home to pulpits, but to household duties and business, and professional cares. I shall have to lay down my Bible, and take my geological hammer, and open my closet and take out my fossils and skeletons. Is it a down-come, or all the same to God? The answer is contained in the words which I have read to you.

“I wish that we could all get into our minds one other little principle: What is the end of life? The end of life is not to do good, although many of us think so. It is not to win souls, although I once thought so. The end of life is to do the will of God. That may be in the line of doing good or winning souls, or it may not. For the individual, the answer to the question, ‘What is the end of my life?’ is, To do the will of God, whatever it may be. Spurgeon replied to an invitation to speak to an exceptionally large audience, ‘I have no ambition to preach to ten thousand people, but to do the will of God,’ and he declined. If we could say, ‘I have no ambition to go to the heathen, I have no ambition to win souls; my ambition is to do the will of God, whatever that may be,’ that makes all lives equally great, or equally small; because the only great thing in life is what of God's will there is in it.

“The maximum achievement of any man's life, after all is over, is to have done the will of God. No man or woman can have done any more with a life; no Luther, no Spurgeon, no Wesley, no Melancthon can have done any more with their lives; and a dairy-maid or a scavenger can do as much. Therefore the supreme principle upon which we have to run

\* From an address delivered at Northfield Conference, 1888.

our lives is to adhere, through good report and also through temptation and prosperity and adversity, to the will of God, wherever that may lead to. It may take you away to China; or you, who are going to Africa, may have to stay where you are; you, who are going to be an evangelist, may have to go into business; and you, who are going into business, may have to become an evangelist. But there is no happiness or success in any life till that principle is taken possession of.

“How can you build up a life on that principle? Let me give you an outline of a little Bible reading:—

“The definition of an ideal life:—‘A man after my own heart, who will fulfil all My law.’ The object of life:—‘I come to do Thy will, O God.’

“The first thing you need after life is food:—‘My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.’

“The next thing you need after food is society:—‘He that doeth the will of My Father in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.’

“You want education:—‘Teach me to do Thy will, O God.’

“You want pleasure:—‘I delight to do Thy will, O God.’

“A whole life can be built up on that one vertical column, and then, when all is over: ‘He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.’”

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

BY THE REV. DR. ROBINSON.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews was written to meet a danger and a want among the Jewish converts to Christianity. They had been accustomed to believe that (according to the teachings of the Old Dispensation) “Whom the Lord loveth, he *prospereth*”; they were perplexed and troubled to find that they were now outcasts, exiles, poor, persecuted. They were tempted to give up their confidence in the new faith, and to return to the old. The Epistle was written to meet this liability, and to re-assure them of the superiority of the New Dispensation over the Old; Christ, the Apostle of the New, is superior to angels, to Moses, to the High Priest; the sacrifice offered by Christ was superior to the sacrifices offered by the High Priest; the sacrifice offered by the High Priest was offered without the assent of the victim; that offered by Christ was a *willing* sacrifice; the one cleansed the *body* from outward and ceremonial impurity; the other cleansed the *soul* from inward moral defilement and from consciousness of sin.

We said that the purpose of the book may often shed light on a difficult passage. For example, in Heb. iii. 5, we find: “Moses was faithful in all his [that is, God’s] house *as a servant*; . . . but Christ *as a son*, over His house.” The moment we consider this passage, we are aware of a lack of congruity and force; the rendering does not meet the demands of the connection; the contrast or comparison between Moses and Christ is not in reference to the moral character, to the trustworthiness of the one and the other. The comparison was of the exaltation of the one and the other; “Christ is counted worthy of *more glory* than Moses.” If the comparison had been on the point of character and trustworthiness, then the comparison would tend to give the superiority to Moses, since one who is

faithful as a servant, over that in which he has no interest, is deserving of more honour than he who is faithful in that which he hopes one day to possess, of which he is the heir expectant. What the purpose of the entire book, and the especial connection of the passage demands, is a comparison of the one and the other as to *dignity*. We examine the Septuagint, and we find that the Hebraistic Greek justifies us in translating the word "*trusted*"; Moses was trusted as a servant; Christ was trusted with the absolute confidence which a father places in a son, to whom he seems to say, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. We can have no divided interest. I trust you absolutely and completely." And now all is clear, consecutive, logical. For this view, we are indebted to Dr. George Campbell, the translator of the four Gospels.

ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Sunday, August 24, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

PREVAILING PRAYER.

ST. LUKE xviii. 1—14.

"A JUDGE, WHICH FEARED NOT GOD."—From the dawn of history the venality of judges and the miscarriage of justice has been one of the chief abominations which have called down the indignant remonstrances of prophets and holy men. The Book of Job, the Psalms, the prophetic writings, the Gospels themselves, are full of denunciation of unrighteous judges. Nor is the corruption less notorious throughout the whole Eastern world at the present day. Still a man who, like Midhat Pasha, sternly refused bribes on the judgment seat, is looked upon with wonder and admiration. This character of a judge is contrary to our impressions of that office, as we see it in happier Western lands, where public opinion bears strongly on all functionaries, and Christianity has introduced a high standard of rectitude; but it is still to be seen in all its frightful corruption and malignity throughout the whole of Asia.

"AVENGE ME OF MINE ADVERSARY."—I well remember witnessing a scene which vividly re-enacted before my eyes the parable of the unjust judge. It was at the ancient city of Nisibis, in Mesopotamia. Immediately on entering the gate of the city, on one side was the prison, with its barred windows, through which the prisoners thrust their arms, and begged for alms. Opposite was a large, open hall,—the court of justice of the place. On a slightly raised *daïs*, at the farther end, sat the *cadi*, or judge, half buried in cushions. Round him squatted various secretaries and other functionaries. The populace crowded into the rest of the hall, a dozen voices clamouring at once, each that his cause should be first heard. The more prudent litigants joined not in the fray, but held whispered communications with the secretaries, passing bribes into the hands of one or another, euphemistically called fees. When the greed of the underlings was satisfied, one of them would whisper to the *cadi*, who would promptly call such and such a name. It seemed to be ordinarily

\* Abridged from the *American Sunday School Times*.

taken for granted that judgment would go for the litigant who had bribed highest.

"BECAUSE THIS WIDOW TROUBLETH ME."—But meantime a poor woman on the skirts of the crowd perpetually interrupted the proceedings with loud cries for justice. She was sternly ordered to be silent, and reproachfully told that she came there every day. "And so I will," she cried out, "till the *cadi* hears me." At length, at the end of a suit, the judge impatiently demanded, "What does that woman want?" Her story was soon told. Her only son had been taken for a soldier, and she was left alone, and could not till her piece of ground; yet the tax-gatherer had forced her to pay the impost, from which, as a lone widow, she should be exempt. The judge asked a few questions, and said, "Let her be exempt." Thus her perseverance was rewarded. Had she had money to fee the *cadi*, she might have been excused long before.

"TWO MEN WENT UP . . . TO PRAY."—The temple stood open, not only at the hours of morning and evening sacrifice (nine o'clock and three o'clock), but throughout the day for private worship. The same custom continues in the mosques; and, though every true Mohammedan always recites his prayers at the regular hours, wherever he be, carefully turning his face towards Mecca, for which purpose the stricter followers of the prophet carry a pocket-compass, that they may be sure of the right direction; yet, if within reach of a mosque, the prayer there uttered, with the face towards the *kiblah*, or recess, which is always towards the east, is considered of more value than if uttered on common ground. As of old, the worshipper commences by reciting verses of the Koran, standing with the face to the east, and then kneels upright, resting on his heels; and at each occurrence of the name of God bending forward, and touching the ground with his forehead. The rule of the rabbis, according to the Talmud, was, "Let him that prayeth cover his head and look downward." "The disciple of the wise men, when he standeth praying, let him look downward." The publican, thus looking downward, stood afar off, not in the inner Court of Israel, much less in the Court of the Priests, whither, probably, the Pharisee directed his steps, not even in the Court of the Women, but remained outside, in the Court of the Gentiles, where even pagans were permitted.

## PERFECT SOUNDNESS.

### *Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. J. P. PERKINS, NORWICH.

"And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."—ACTS iii. 16.

CHRIST'S withdrawal the signal for Spirit's descent. Apostles filled with new power in Christ's name. Impotent man totally healed. Perfect soundness, usually an ideal only. Many points in which it is to be desired and sought.

I. *Soundness of Body.*—Many born unsound. Strange that the body exposed to many dangers should keep in tune so long. Few have perfect health. Ways of rendering body unsound: (a) laziness, (b) overwork, (c) excessive indulgences.

II. *Soundness of Mind.*—Dethrone reason, and man a kingdom in ruins! Genius borders on insanity. Pathos of great lives, e.g., Byron, Chas.

Lamb's sister, Julian the musician, and Robert Hall. Commonplace mind, if sane, preferable to genius deranged. Christ's pity for deranged and demon-possessed souls. Faith in His name gives peace, and that aids mental soundness.

III. *Soundness of Heart*.—Talleyrand said a bad heart and easy life made happiness. Christianity says a sound heart and true life. Sound heart essential to a tree, so to a man. As a man thinketh, &c. Sound heart may exist with erroneous belief. Leads to search for truth. Seek by faith "a clean heart" (Psalm l. 7, 10).

IV. *Soundness of Conduct*.—A link here of important characteristics. Character (what a man is). Let that be sound, then conduct (what he does) will be right; then in long run, reputation (what men say and think of him) will be sound too.

*Apply*.—Christ comes to us as to bedridden impotent (John v.). Wilt thou be made whole? He will also say: "Thy faith hath saved thee."

## A STRANGE SIGHT.

### *Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. R. BREWIN, LOUGHBOROUGH.

"I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth."—*ECCLESIASTES* x. 8.

THE books from which God teaches man are many. Nature, reason, history, experience, revelation—all speak to him great and valuable lessons. Observation will greatly enrich our minds with facts and wisdom. See Job iv. 8, v. 3; Psalm xxxvii. 35, 36, cxix. 96. The Preacher frequently uses the phrase, "I have seen," i. 14, iii. 10, v. 13, vi. 1, text. The language is mainly figurative. Much more is meant than the words literally state. They are to be thought over, that they may yield spiritual teaching. The text implies or suggests:—

I. *That the moral world presents some strange illustrations of the unfitness of persons and things for the places and circumstances occupied by them*.—Servants upon horses and princes walking, &c. As (1) when a nation sets wicked or ignorant men in its highest places, and treats its best citizens with neglect or contempt. Charles II. on the throne, and John Bunyan in Bedford Gaol. See Jotham's fable, Herod and John the Baptist, Nero and Paul, &c. (2) When debasing passions and appetites are allowed to rule the man, and intellect, reason, and noble affections are trampled under foot. Felix, Herod, Prodigal Son. See Benzon's "How I lost £250,000 in two years." (3) When recreations and amusements which, at best, are but servants of the soul are placed upon the throne of the heart and the great and earnest work of life is left neglected and undone. Some students at Universities. Church members. Time for lawn tennis, but no time to attend the prayer-meeting, &c. Novels often become the only mental pabulum. Good solid reading is neglected. (4) When the world is seated on the throne of the affections, and Christ the "King of kings" is allowed to be but a beggar at our feet pleading in vain for our attention and love.

II. *That this state of things is surprising, wrong, and ruinous*.—(1) Surprising: reason, common sense, and Divine revelation teach this ought not to be so. (2) Wrong. Insults virtue, humanity, and God. (3) Ruinous. (1) Here. (2) Hereafter.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

August 24 : LUKE xviii. 1—14. Golden Text : Verse 14.

TWO WENT UP INTO THE TEMPLE TO PRAY.

MANY children cannot remember the time when they first began to pray. When quite babies they have been taught to clasp little hands and bend little knees and repeat words of prayer, simple words, such as "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." But the time comes when they are bigger and they are trusted to pray alone. When this time comes, a boy or a girl is often exposed to great danger. You may be tempted to neglect prayer when there is no mother's eye watching you, or, at least, to slur it rapidly and carelessly over. And when you leave home will you have courage to kneel down in the presence of strangers and pray, or will you be ashamed of your prayers and deny your Saviour? This is often a crisis at which many a life makes shipwreck. But many a one, too, wins a signal victory, and just at this point the battle of life is won. Ask God to give you grace never to neglect your prayers, and never to be ashamed of them. A boy or girl who never prays is certainly on the road to eternal ruin. How will he or she do when the day of trouble comes, and when the day of death comes? In to-day's lesson Jesus puts a genuine prayer and a counterfeit one side by side.

I. The counterfeit prayer. This prayer was prayed by a Pharisee who trusted in himself that he was righteous, and who despised others. His prayer was wordy and full of the large "I." "I am not as other men are. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all I possess." This Pharisee was full of spiritual pride, and his prayer had no need in it; it was a prayerless prayer.

"Two went to pray? Oh! rather say  
One went to brag, the other to pray.  
One stands up close, and treads on high,  
Where the other dares not lend his eye;  
One nearer to God's altar trod,  
The other to the altar's God."

There are three things to condemn in this prayer of the Pharisee.

(1) He despised others. We have no right to sneer at our neighbours, and say we are better than them. We do not know their circumstances and temptations. God may be more angry with you for an unkind word than He is with another for stealing a pair of boots. (2) He paraded his virtues. Under pretence of praising God he praised himself. (3) He was self-righteous. He thought he was absolutely perfect. The best of men come far short of that. The worst sort of pride is grace pride, and it is the most subtle and difficult to root out.

II. The genuine prayer. This was the prayer of a publican or a tax-gatherer, whose occupation was one beset with evil. But a publican might become a good man, though no good man would become a publican. He was unrighteous, but he was not self-righteous. The first cry of true prayer is the cry for mercy, pardon. The publican prayed—"God be merciful to me a sinner." This was a heart prayer, and it was heard. He confessed his sin and he pleaded for mercy, and this man went down to his house justified, with a sweet sense of pardon in his heart.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. PRINCIPAL DYKES, D.D.,

*Preached in Regent-square Presbyterian Church, London, on Sunday morning, June 15.*

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—ST. JOHN X. 10.

THE question this morning with us, brethren, is that of degrees of vitality. There are many organisms on the globe which manifest, as you know, a very low degree of vitality. The more simple or undeveloped the organism, we are told, the more feeble does the life of the poor creature appear to be. And this feeble vitality discovers itself by defective sensation, by limited range of motion, by less sensibility to pain and pleasure, by the comparative absence of intelligence. A sponge, a jelly-fish, a sea-anemone—these are creatures that possess life, and yet they are far from possessing it, as our Lord here says, in abundance.

Now these striking words of Jesus, dropped here by the way and left unexplained by Him, imply a similar variety in the higher region of human life, especially of spiritual life. As to the natural powers of man, we may quite satisfy ourselves that people do vary greatly in the amount of health they enjoy. Delicacy of constitution is often nothing else but the result of low physical vitality. The life-fire burns feebly and is readily extinguished. And so the mental and emotional activity of man differs in an equal degree. We speak, you know, of the slow understanding, the cold heart, the feeble will, and when we speak so we mean that life is low, scanty, far from abundant; while now and again we meet with a man, on the other hand, who seems to be all on fire, a man of quick perception and keen feelings, whose sympathies run swiftly in many directions, who re-acts vigorously against his surroundings, who is prompt in decision and energetic in action, infusing into other people a little of his own ardent temperament. And

we recognise in him one possessed of a strong vitality, not only having life but having it in abundance.

Well now, it is just the same with that new force of spiritual life which the spirit of God communicates to the regenerate Christian man. Among believers in the Church there are examples too often of every degree of spiritual vitality. Partly, I suppose, this depends on natural capacity, but still more it depends on the degree in which the Holy Spirit of God is suffered to operate and rule within the religious life of the man. This accounts for it that there are lukewarm believers and believers aflame with fervour; molluscous Christians, torpid and feeble, and Christians, again, full of faith and power. And if the feeble type of Christianity be too much the rule in the Church, yet we are now and then, let us confess, taught by illustrious exceptions of what consecration and what saintliness a man is capable when he not only has the Christian life within him, but has that life abundantly.

Assuming, then, that such inequalities of power do run, as I think you will confess they do, through every department of life, from the very lowest to the very highest things, to us at least on earth, what I gather from the words of Jesus is this, that God is not satisfied with any lower type of vitality where a higher can be attained; and that it has been one design of His Gospel to intensify human life through every region of it; not to enfeeble man's life powers or check them in their outflow in any direction, but on every side greatly to exalt them. The Son of God visited us—He tells us so Himself—in our poor, far-off, half-dead world to make ours the more abundant life.

Now, first of all, I think this is quite true even in the ordinary experience of men. The effect of Christianity has been not to deaden men to the interests of this life, with its common joys and sorrows, but, on the contrary, to render our earthly life larger and more intense. Now I know that that is not a prevalent opinion. Both the injudicious friends of Christianity and its shrewd opponents have often represented it as making its disciples dead to this world in a very different sense from that of the New Testament. Perhaps the old error of the Ascetics is in part responsible for this current view. Now it is true enough that the Gospel does deliver a man from exorbitant and unreasonable concern about his own petty and personal affairs. It rids us, or it ought to do so, of excessive longing after temporal good for its own sake, and it makes it impossible for us to indulge in extravagant regret when we lose temporal advantages. It teaches us to care a good deal less about this world and what it has to offer for its own sake, and to use this world rather as a scene of trial and discipline, the fashion or outward form of which is passing speedily away.

But then, when you have said that, that is very far from meaning that ordinary pleasure and pain, gain and loss, birth and death, toil and rest, and whatever goes to make up this daily rest,

have lost their interest or their meaning for the Christian. Quite the contrary. Whatever happens to a child of God gains in meaning and in interest by being brought now into relationship with God and with eternity. This world itself becomes a graver and a vaster place to Christians since Jesus Christ died for it. Every paltry incident—say when a sparrow falls—is seen now to be linked to the will of our heavenly Father, and woven into a plan which has our spiritual good for its issue. Homes, therefore are very paradises, and nurseries for Christ's little ones are infinitely more sacred spots—they are even become awful spots, so near are they seen to lie to the gate of heaven. And common business rises in its importance for you when by it you have to glorify your Saviour and serve your brother men. Social and political problems of the hour do not claim less attention from the Christian, but more, because in them is wrapped up the welfare of that humanity for which Jesus suffered, and which He calls upon us to seek and to save along with Him. Christianity thought to be a deadening influence, alienating men from common life, dulling their healthy concern in all that touches the well-being of society! Why, men and brethren, it is Christianity which has elevated this mean life of ours and made it worth living, which has let in upon it the light of eternity, brought into relief all its possibilities and its responsibilities, and so made every small thing grand and every dull person noble, by linking them each one to the destinies of the whole race, to the everlasting God and His Son's cross.

The Christian I take to be a man who lives near to the sensorium of the universe—I mean to that heart and brain in which every sensation comes to be felt at last from the remotest ends of this mighty world of ours. I mean—you know what I mean—the heart and brain of Him who is God with us, of Jesus Christ. Shall any be weak, and He not weak? May any be offended and He not burdened? Thus I take the Christian's world to be grown a very big world indeed. Christian civilisation knows less and less of class interests, of isolation, of indifference. It has knit this round globe of ours into one, and it has taught every man to concern himself for all mankind. The open-eyed modern Christian who is in touch with Jesus Christ and inspired by His thoughts about men, cares more for the interests of other people than any man who ever lived before; and he cares far more seriously about the interests of other people, he is in sadder earnest about graver things, and lives a quicker, keener, larger, more multiple life, a life that has in it the abundance of living. That is what Jesus Christ has done. The affairs of our daily existence and those of our neighbours can no longer be regarded as they used to be, with a merely parochial or provincial interest. They are grown imperial now. They are affairs of the Kingdom of God, and our little life-horizon, obscure and petty as it may be,

is no longer like a land-locked lake, set by itself apart; but, lo! it has an inlet, an open channel, uniting it to the awful ocean beyond, and through it there pour into this little life of ours, from day to day, mysterious tides of life and feeling which come from the very infinite heart of God Himself.

But, in the second place, Jesus Christ makes life to His disciples a more abundant thing by conferring upon us a new kind of life altogether, a life which has fuller pulses than the old one, a deeper, stronger vitality. What I mean is, that the experience which we call Christian, the experience of a regenerate spiritual man, is a more intense experience than that of nature, because it is awakened in the soul by far grander and more mighty facts and relationships. Eternity is vaster than time; God is mightier than the world. Unregenerate men are surprisingly moved sometimes by temporal losses or gains, which to the eye of Christian reason appear very paltry indeed. But the Gospel of Christ, whatever else it is, is never open to such a charge of pettiness as that. It never will lay you open to being accused of caring too much about little things. It sets you at once into direct contact with infinite forces, with the awful facts and relationships of the unseen world. The first thing its voice wakes in you is the sense of personal guilt. Then it speaks of the unquenchable thirst of your soul after God. Then it reveals to you your tremendous future of bliss or of damnation. It lays you alongside the supernatural operations of God working for the redemption of mankind. It opens up to you in the cross of your Lord the whole of God's mighty heart of love. It begets in you a divine passion for holiness, a superiority to transient visible concerns, enthusiasm for the unseen and the everlasting. And I tell you this is the very stuff of which heroes are made and martyrs. In short, it sets us within the sweep of a whole world of facts which transcend this world, and stir in you and me more absorbing desires, more rapturous joys than any that are born of time and sense.

Surely I am speaking only literal truths—you can judge for yourselves. Does not a man's conversion to God add a fresh department to his life? It gives him new thoughts, it quickens in him new emotions, it begets new motives, it sets before him a new ambition; and since the horizon of his being is now open, widened to take in hereafter and the eternal state, since this fresh factor which has entered to rule him is no less a force than an emotion, since the interests for which he labours now are those of the life that is never to end, it is quite clear that the man's new life must be a fuller and a deeper life than the old one, that it must give birth to weightier thoughts of it, to feelings that are more profound, to hopes that are more vast. In a word, it is life that is more abundant.

I do not say that the new life of a Christian man is more noisy or more demonstrative, because it is heart-hidden, interior expe-

riences of the soul that Jesus Christ brings to us. He comes into the very focus of your personal life and mine, where we have to deal with moral good and evil, with duty, temptation, sin, responsibility, God. And it may be that the struggles and vicissitudes and sore experiences through which you or I have to pass leave less trace upon our outward demeanour, are less noticeable to the common eye than some sorer passions of the animal life might be—rage, jealousy, or revenge, may betray themselves in voice and gesture, while the soul's conflict with ghostly adversaries, such as sin and doubt, and spiritual darkness, and the wrath of God may transpire in secret and make no signs. But the hidden forces are not on that account more feeble. You cannot always judge from external experiences. Every good student of human nature knows quite well that the materials for all the deeper tragedies of our being are to be sought within; not in noisy animal passion, but in the silent private wrestlings with temptation, with remorse, with avenging fate, with doubt and despair, and God. It was in this region that even Greek tragedy found materials for its most moving situations, and let no man think that such tragedies exist no longer. Our modern life is simpler than the picturesque life of the ancients, but it abounds in tragedies of moral experience.

There is many a Christian who looks commonplace enough to you wearing the garb of the plain trader or the honest craftsman, whose inner life, if you could but unfold it, has been the theatre of an unwitnessed tragedy too sacred to be dramatised, and too intense in its pathos for any sympathy to reach it save the sympathy of Christ. Because it is the very characteristic of the Gospel that when it comes to a man it uncloaks the Divine in that man, and fills commonplace and vulgar natures with the abundance of Divine life. This is why it has proved itself to be the author of such powerful moral movements in society, in the strife of religious conviction working in the minds of burghers, or small farmers, or peasant families, in Holland, in Huguenot France, in Puritan England, has been sufficient to create whole communities of heroes and of confessors unto blood. The life of these people, otherwise quite undistinguished and ignoble, had been touched from above, and, in the closest exercises of their faith, their life learned to run in deep channels. For when they were brought face to face with God in His wrath and in His grace they found the secret of a more abundant life, weightier truths than those of politics kindled mightier emotions than those of sense and the homely nature, and, may be, rustic fanatics made the best of heroes and saints.

Let me ask you here, Do you know what this means? Have you ever been face to face with these deeper questions of the soul, the solution of which is to be wrung out in the sweat of an inward agony of wrestling with God? Has religion entered into your life in this manner, to deepen it and to sober it, to intensify every

bit of it and make it real; making frivolity for ever impossible for you—compelling you to live seriously? Do you really recall any experience in which your own peace with God, the burden of your sin, the solid hope for your eternity hereafter, were points that pressed on you for settlement, and did you ever emerge from any such inward crisis as that with your horizon widened henceforth for ever, with new thoughts stirring about your heart, a quickened pulse throbbing through your bosom? Does there lie beneath that common life which your neighbours see, that life of daily toil and rest and eating, playing, working, sleeping, another which you dare not let go, in which you know your soul is privately touching God and is touched day by day by Him, a sacred life which you keep for other eyes than yours, a life which you know to be indeed life more abundant?

There are many of us, I dare say, who can answer such questions fairly to satisfaction, and who yet do feel painfully certain that, as to them, any religious life they may possess is lamentably languid. Have we not all room to bemoan the feebleness of our spiritual experience? If we have that true life of faith at all, it is certainly far from being abundant. Our apprehension of Divine truth at best is faint, and our personal hold on it seems loose, and our emotions towards God when we try to think of Him are sickly and pale, and our desires after communion are anything but intense; so that with such a low vitality we achieve little, and we make no conscious headway in our religion. We feel little or none of the buoyant elasticity of spiritual health. Well, what do we need? What do we need to brace and invigorate us for all our higher work on earth but this more abundant life?

Now if this be at all descriptive of our position as personal believers or as a church, let me draw out of the words of Christ this morning this stinging lesson, that no Christian needs to be, that no Christian ought to be, content with a low degree of spiritual vitality. He is bidden to seek, is bidden to attempt the Divine life in its fulness and abundance. I protest to you, sirs, that in our religion, as in everything, God wants us to live strongly. The more health we have the better He is pleased. For He is life, and the glory of Him is to give life, and the more life He gives the more He is glorified. He would have your life stronger. He came on purpose that we might have life, and He would have us respond therefore to those tremendous truths of our holy faith I have been trying to show you. About the Gospel everything is big, intense, powerful—the enormity of your guilt for which Jesus died, the love that led him to do it, the hell from which He delivered you, the heaven to which He leads you—everything about the Gospel is on a big scale, a vast scale, as becomes a religion that pretends to sound the depths of human nature, touching its entire compass and affecting its utmost possibilities. And your response and mine should be correspondingly thorough. Our

joy is in God. Our grief for sin, our yearnings and regrets, our trust in our Saviour, our hope of His reward, our struggle for mastery over evil, our endeavours to achieve good, ought not these to be on a great scale, commensurate with the Gospel? Surely we live a pigmy life, and it is a life out of harmony with the life we profess, when we think about spiritual things superficially, and feel indifferently, and resolve languidly; if we can chatter, chatter with the same shallow glibness about the gloom of Calvary where God died for us, and the radiance of the Celestial City He has prepared for us; if we never tremble for dread of judgment, and never burn beneath the words of mercy; if the deeps of our being are never stirred, nor its currents, its mightiest currents, set in motion by the attraction of God's great self-sacrifice upon His cross. And yet I am afraid that is what too many of us do. Dwarfed we are in our spiritual development.

And I am bound to remind you as well as myself, brethren, that we need not have such feeble, colourless experiences, and that it is not God's wish that we should have. For Jesus came on purpose to shed into your heart and mine the spirit of Divine love, not in a feeble measure, but in abundance. Of that fulness may we all receive if we choose. For we have actually God with us here, about us, within us, God in the plenitude of His life-power, the quickener, the source of all force in the universe, of all vitality. We have Him working upon us with a force not straitened, not feeble, able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. I pray you to recollect how Paul prayed for the Christians at Ephesus. We were reading it this morning: "That they may know the exceeding greatness of God's power towards us who are believers." Power—well, according to what standard are you going to measure it? According to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and made Him sit in the heavenly places. You hear a great deal—not too much—about the Gospel as a demonstration of the mercy of God to a poor sinner, of His pitiful love. But I want to be told that it no less reveals His mighty strength, that it is His power unto salvation, that in it He works mightily to save. And I tell you that to be a Christian, if you are a Christian at all, means that you have got to the heart of this new force, this awful activity of God; that it is operating on your spirits, vitalising you, and ready to vitalise you more, and to give you even abundance of the life that is in you—keen, high, noble, Godlike life, that thinks, feels, purposes with all its might. We have got that in Him. He is vital energy, He is the world's one life-force, and we are in Him as in an atmosphere: we spiritually live and move and have our being in God, who is life.

Brethren, let us open our nature in all its avenues; let us invite Him to come in; let us not obstruct His working, but wel-

come His lightest movement, answer to His faintest touch, entreat His fuller entrance, His more powerful influence, and yield a prompt and swift obedience to His Divine touch.

For I assure you if you and I can but find the secret of this living in God, in daily close communion with God in Christ, keeping ourselves in the love of God, and in the fellowship of the Spirit Who is life, we shall no more need to complain of a low vitality. God, I tell you, is to the soul like oxygen to the flame, like air to the lungs, and His fuller presence in contact with our inner being will stimulate the pulses of our Christian life, and rouse to fuller, more exuberant activity the healthy faculties of our souls. Surely, surely, sirs, it is our sorest need; it is most of all our want—more life; life in the Holy Ghost, more abundant life. May God grant us this boon! Amen.

## CARE.

BY THE REV. A. F. FORREST, GLASGOW.

*Delivered in the Rensfield-street U.P. Church Mission Hall, Glasgow,  
August 17, 1890.*

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.”—I PETER v. 7.

CARE is one of those things which fall to the lot of everybody. A person absolutely free from care does not exist in the world. “Man is born unto trouble.” At every age and in every position he discovers the truth of this familiar adage. The youth and the old man have each his burden of care. Poverty and wealth alike involve us in anxiety and trouble. There are happy faces in the world; but happy faces do not imply happy hearts. How often have you noticed that the instant the smile leaves a man’s lips his eye betrays a careworn spirit? Our happiness in this world is superficial and fleeting. Our deepest and most prevalent experiences are of vexation and trouble.

This arrangement of Providence has been instituted for the wisest and most gracious ends. Care keeps us from getting too fond of the world. If everything went with us quite smoothly and pleasantly here, there would be a danger of our settling down and making this our home. God had to make life very hard for the Israelites in Egypt, or they never would have left it, or thought of emigrating to the land He had promised to their fathers as an inheritance. Were there no sighing and sorrow here, what would be the attraction of heaven? Do not our experiences of vexation and hardship lead us to seek the better country—even the heavenly?

The great question is, What to do with our care?

The Bible does not say: “It is very wrong to have cares; God’s people should have no cares.” It only says: “It is wrong

to be engrossed, to be harassed, and to be vexed with our cares." They are meant for spiritual discipline, to develop Christian manhood. It is sin to allow them to absorb our attention and energy.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord." What He lays on thee lay thou on Him. If it is God's wisdom, my brother or my sister, that casts a burden on thee, it is thy wisdom, in return, to cast that burden on God. Accept the load with joyful resignation, and give it up again with unwavering confidence. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

A picture memory brings to me,  
I look across the years and see  
Myself beside my mother's knee.

I feel her gentle hand restrain  
My selfish moods, and know again  
A child's blind sense of wrong and pain.

But wiser now, a man grey grown,  
My childhood's needs are better known,  
My mother's chastening love I own.

Grey grown, but in our Father's sight  
A child still groping for the light  
To read His works and ways aright.

I bow myself beneath His hand  
That pain itself for good was planned  
I trust, but cannot understand.

I fondly dream it needs must be  
That, as my mother dealt with me,  
So with His children dealeth He.

I wait and trust the end will prove  
That here, and there, below, above,  
The chastening heals, the pain is love.

The reason given by the Apostle why we should cast our care upon God is as intelligible as it is satisfactory. We are the objects of the Divine care: "Cast all your care upon God," says he, "for He careth for you."

The heathen regarded their gods as beings so highly exalted and so far away, that they took no interest in the affairs of men. The pagan devotee looked on himself as an orphan in the world. He had none to think for him or care for him, but was the helpless victim of chance.

The Christian has another idea of God. He is a Father. From His place in heaven He watches us in our outgoings and incomings, and His angels have charge over us to keep us from falling. The very meanest of His children may be satisfied of God's constant guardianship and help. "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; He that keepeth thee will not slumber."

“Delight thyself in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

How the thought and assurance of the Divine care have sustained and comforted the saints of God in the most trying emergencies of this life! The relief has been as real and as full of consolation to them as would be the removal of a load from the back of a toilworn and fainting traveller. When poor and needy, David sang, “Yet the Lord thinketh upon me”; and that sweet reflection administered comfort and joy to his chastened spirit. Despised and forsaken of the world—when poverty and affliction came, and friends went—how often has the believer felt unconcerned and undismayed, because he could say, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.” When some trying occasion was foreseen—a temptation of the devil, a business calamity, or death, and despair was about almost to settle down upon the soul—has not the believer many a time been recalled to hope and joy by such assurances as these: “As thy days so shall thy strength be”; “He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Do you see that old man? He is useless now, and nobody cares about him. Why is he so happy? People cannot understand why he takes his trial so easily and unmurmuringly. He rests his soul on the great and precious promise: “Even to your old age I am He; and to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you.”

The Bible nowhere forbids a moderate and well-regulated attention to worldly interests. “If any provide not for his own,” says Paul to Timothy, “and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” And, again, writing to the Thessalonians, he says, “This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” Even provision for the future—for old age or for our families—is not antagonistic, but most agreeable, to the spirit of Jesus Christ. God allows care, but not *anxious care*. The things of this world—food and raiment, and so on—must not become a burden, or the supreme concern of our life. We are in this world to take things easily, calmly, and hopefully. We ought to feel satisfied that everything will turn out right in the end. If the fig-tree do not blossom, neither fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive fail, and the fields yield no wheat, we should still rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation.

God’s people often fall into the sin of over-carefulness. We have frequently to remind even true Christians that they have a Father in heaven. They behave like atheists sometimes. The patience of God is often tried by His people omitting Him from their calculations. “Zion saith, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?

Yea, she may forget ; yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands—thy walls are continually before Me.”

How common it is for people to borrow trouble ! Not content with to-day's burden they must pile upon it also to-morrow's burden. “Oh ! what am I to do ?” “Oh ! what's to become of me ?” they say, in the prospect of this or that disaster. What God intended for them piecemeal they take upon themselves in one heap.

It is this habit that causes a large proportion of the misery in the world. Men are driven distracted not so often, I believe, with present, as with anticipated affliction. This borrowing of trouble it is that kills men—drives them to despair and often to suicide.

Take no more on your shoulders than God lays on them. It is wholesome advice we have in the familiar proverb : “Never cross a bridge till you come to it” ; and in that other, which is to the same effect, “Let your trouble tarry till its own time.”

The practice of borrowing trouble is most useless practice. Did you ever hear of anybody getting rid of a cross by carrying it, in this manner, aforehand ? The dread of a bad harvest never produced a good one. No business difficulty was ever got over by a man thinking about it and fretting about it a month ahead. The widow's children were never fed, and clothed, and educated respectably, because she sat down in her great sorrow and troubled her soul daily with the vision of the most discouraging and insurmountable obstacles. A merchant buys goods because he thinks he can sell them with profit ; a gardener plants seeds because he expects they will grow up into flowers ; and a sick man takes medicine because he believes it will make him well. But people borrow trouble knowing all the while it will be to no purpose. How foolish ! how foolish !

But not only is it useless, it is positively injurious to borrow trouble. To-morrow is not rid of its burden ; but to-day is rid of its strength. By means of this habit a man has less courage, less faith, and less composure with which to encounter the trials of the hour. God never gives men strength to do an unnecessary thing. He offers you grace with the affliction He lays on you—not for the affliction He is going to lay on you, perhaps, a year hence, or a week hence.

There was a pendulum. One dull day it began to count how often it had to swing back and forward in an hour—then in a day—then in a week—then in a month—then in a year—and then in ten years. The final sum was enormous. How could it ever give all those beats ? It was impossible. And the pendulum stopped—utterly paralysed at the contemplation of its work. It forgot that in each hour it had only to do each hour's task.

The anticipation of trouble, of difficulties and disasters, paralyses

our energies. We are unfitted by it even for our present obligations. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Once more. This habit of forecasting trouble greatly enhances our sorrow. "He who foresees calamities suffers them twice over." "The state of that man's mind," says Seneca, "who feels an intense interest as to future events, must be deplorable."

But I have spoken as if we were always right in our anticipation of calamity. The truth is we are generally wrong. Tupper says: "Our worst misfortunes are those which never befall us."

Jacob heard that Esau was coming to meet him with a great company of armed men. He got terribly frightened. His brother had been cruelly wronged by him, and he was quite certain he was coming now to take summary revenge. His flocks and herds were to be seized, his sons carried into slavery, his wives stolen, and himself put to death. By and by Esau came up, surrounded with his hundreds of spearmen, all fierce fellows of the desert, whose eyes shone at the sight of so much booty. Jacob, bowing and trembling, approached his brother, crying meekly: "My lord! my lord!" Was he killed? Did his brother hurl a spear at his breast? Nay; Esau, generous soul that he was, ran, and fell upon Jacob's neck, and kissed him, and entreated him that he might come and dwell in his own country.

We have all had, I am certain, once and again, an experience like this of the patriarch. Ills which we long anticipated with great pain and sorrow we found afterwards to have been entirely the creatures of our own imaginations. We said: "Who shall roll us away the stone?" and, when we came to the sepulchre, it was already rolled away.

That which weeping ones were saying  
 Eighteen hundred years ago,  
 We, the same weak faith betraying,  
 Say in our sad hours of woe.  
 Looking at some trouble lying  
 In the dark and dread unknown,  
 We, too, often ask with sighing,  
 "Who shall roll away the stone?"  
 Thus with care our spirits crushing,  
 When they might from care be free,  
 And in joyous song out-gushing,  
 Rise in rapture, Lord, to Thee.  
 For before the way was ended,  
 Oft we've had with joy to own,  
 Angels have from heaven descended,  
 And have rolled away the stone.  
 Many a storm-cloud sweeping o'er us,  
 Never pours on us its rain;  
 Many a grief we see before us,  
 Never comes to cause us pain.  
 Ofttimes in the feared "to-morrow"  
 Sunshine comes—the cloud has flown!  
 Ask not, then, in foolish sorrow,  
 "Who shall roll away the stone?"

Burden not thy soul with sadness,  
 Make a wiser, better choice ;  
 Drink the wine of life with gladness,  
 God doth bid thee, man, " Rejoice ! "  
 In to-day's bright sunshine basking,  
 Leave to-morrow's cares alone ;  
 Spoil not present joys by asking,  
 " Who shall roll away the stone ? "

Brethren, we will get through. God will give us strength equal to our need. The experience of the past should make us confident in regard to the future. Consider how God has been with us in the most trying emergencies, as trying, perhaps, as any we have yet to pass through, and how His strength has been perfected in our weakness. " There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to men. But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The back is made for the burden, and the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb. In this assurance go forward to the future. " God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

It occurs to me to quote to you, in conclusion, a few sentences from the pen of the celebrated Dr. Payson. They are fitted to encourage us, I think, in taking a more hopeful, and more cheerful view of any disaster we may be anticipating, and that, perhaps, not without good occasion:—" Christians," he says, " might avoid much trouble and inconvenience if they would only believe what they profess—that God is able to make them happy without anything else. They imagine that, if such a dear friend were to die, or such and such blessings were to be removed, they should be miserable ; whereas, God can make them a thousand times happier without them. To mention my own case. God has been depriving me of one blessing after another ; but, as every one was removed, He has come in and filled up its place. And now," he continues, " when I am a cripple, and not able to move, I am happier than ever I was in my life before, or ever expected to be. Had I believed this twenty years ago, I wouln have been spared much anxiety."

## A PULPIT PRAYER.

BY THE REV. URIJAH R. THOMAS, BRISTOL.

*Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton, Sunday Evening August 24.*

"PRAISE waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion : and unto Thee shall the vow be performed. O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come." Lord, teach us to pray, that in fellowship with Thy whole Church throughout this great city, and throughout our country, and throughout the world, we may have access to Thee, may take our places at the footstool of the one Father, and, pleading the name of the one Saviour, may be taught and comforted, and strengthened by the one Spirit. May we know to-night that Jesus is in the midst. May there be no heart here beyond or beneath His reach, no one of us too sorrowful to be cheered by His love ; no one of us too wayward to be recalled by His grace ; no one of us too sinful to be cleansed by His blood. We have come into this place of prayer, we have listened to the reading of Thy Word, and we are awaiting some message from Thee, because we need thus to gather together, to prepare for the week that lies before us, and for the unknown future that we have to tread ; for the way by which Thou wilt lead us till we end the journey below, and then for the great way by which Thou wilt lead us for ever and for ever. We are, and we shall never cease to be. O God, Thou hast made us, and Thou hast made us men. Thou hast quickened immortal natures, and we come to Thee and pray that thus upon the first day of the week we may gain some strength that shall help us for the hours we are yet to pass through before time is over, and then for the endless years, for the age after age, Thou hast reserved for those who love Thee. Teach us to come, O God, with intense earnestness. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." We would have some of the spirit of him of old who wrestled with Thee, and who would not let Thee go till Thou didst bless. Thou art wrestling with us, Thou hast yearned for us with heart of infinite pity, and hast spoken to us by voices times without number, and followed us with influences all throughout our life ; and some have not yet yielded to Thee ; some are not yet surrendered to Thee ; some are not yet saved.

Hear the prayer of the people who know Thee and love Thee—that their kindred, that their friends, that their neighbours, that those for whom they work in the Sunday-school and Bible-class, and those for whom they labour anywhere, may come to know Thee, may see Thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ, may hear Thy call, and may be embraced to-night in the arms that are open to receive us all. And may those who serve Thee and who love Thee, serve Thee better and love Thee more. Let our lives adorn our profession ; help us to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. Oh, keep us, that we may be living epistles, that we may be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, that we may leave behind us the land of night, that our influence may be healthy and holy everywhere, till the end shall come. Hear our prayer for Thy servant the minister of this church, and his family, in the shadow that rests over them now. Comfort bereaved hearts, speak hope, speak of resurrection, speak of re-union in the world of light and bliss to those

who mourn. Bring him back to his people, renewed and strengthened even by the discipline of sorrow, that his bow may abide in strength, and that the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in his hands. We pray for this church, for all who have long known it as their religious home, and for all who from time to time enter within these gates. Let this be the place of Thy right hand, the manifestation of Thy power. May it be a quiet resting-place to many. May many drink of the brook by the way, and lift up their heads. May many find it a Bethel—house of God and gate of heaven. Bless the absent—all the scattered members of this congregation who at this season of the year are seeking health and strength in many places and in many lands. We pray for the sick and suffering, for those for whom special prayer is offered to Thee, that Thou wouldst prolong beloved lives, that Thou wouldst strengthen according to Thy promise the heart of those who are in weakness, in weariness, and prepare for the going home all those for whom death is appointed. Bless this city. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth that it soon may become the city of God, for Christ the Saviour's sake. Amen.

ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Sunday, August 31, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., L.L.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

ENTERING THE KINGDOM.

ST. LUKE xviii. 15—30.

“THEY REBUKED THEM.”—It seems strange that the disciples should rebuke those who brought little children to receive their Master's blessing. But their disapproval was probably connected with a general Jewish prejudice of the time, as to the capability of little children entering into the world to come. It might reasonably have been supposed that the scribes would have taught that the kingdom was open at least to all those who had received the rite of circumcision. But we find that, while this was held by some, yet that others taught that the child of a son or daughter of Abraham was in the kingdom from its birth; while their great Rabbi Simeon argued that a child was capable of entering the world to come from the time it could speak, and could answer Amen. The disciples probably, therefore, imagined that such young infants were below the reach of spiritual blessings. It was the custom for every child, on its first birthday, to be brought into the synagogue, that the chief rabbi might lay his hands on it and bless it; and, from this time, there was no question of its salvability. The rich were also expected to make liberal offerings to the synagogue on this occasion. These infants were brought to Christ by those who recognised Him as greater than any rabbi, that they might receive His blessing, even though they had not reached the age when they might be blessed in the synagogue.

“EASIER FOR A CAMEL TO GO THROUGH A NEEDLE'S EYE.”—Much difficulty has been most unnecessarily raised respecting this expression, and it has even been suggested that the true reading should be “a cable,” the word for which, in Greek, only differs by a single letter from that for camel. But no such change is needed. The fact is, that our word was using a common and familiar proverb, which expresses in terms of Oriental exaggeration anything difficult and almost impossible. The phrase occurs

\* Abridged from the *American Sunday School Times*.

frequently in rabbinical writings for anything very unusual and difficult. Thus, in a discourse in the Talmud concerning dreams and their interpretation, we read: "They do not show a man a palm-tree of gold, nor an elephant going through the eye of a needle." On which the commentary is: "That is, a thing which he was not wont to see, nor concerning which he ever thought." So again, one rabbi disputing with another, who had asserted something incongruous, replies: "Perhaps thou art one of those of Pumbeditha, who can make an elephant pass through a needle," which the commentator paraphrases, "Who speak things that are impossible."

### SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for August 31: LUKE xviii. 15—30. Golden Text: Ver. 17.*

#### JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

IT seems to have been a custom of Jewish mothers to carry their babies to great and eminent rabbis for their blessing. So these mothers we read of to-day did no unusual thing when they brought their children to Jesus to be blessed. And Jesus welcomed them all, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not."

A great reason for children coming to Jesus is His special love for them. There never was a shepherd boy that did not think more of the lambs than of the sheep. The young animals are always the centre of interest in the farmer's mind. And Jesus has a peculiar love for children. How many miracles He wrought for children! He healed a nobleman's son with a word, and cast out an evil spirit from the young daughter of a Syro-Phœnician woman. He cured a lunatic boy, and raised from the dead the son of a widow of Nain, and brought back to life the daughter of Jairus. But most beautiful of all is the story of the lesson. Jesus not only spoke to these children, but He took them in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them. Jesus asks all children to come to Him. Are you five years old? Jesus says you may come to Him. He will not turn you away to wait till you are older. Jesus is all kindness and goodness, and He is waiting to bless you.

Jesus said about these little ones that "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." All Christians must be like little children. Look at some of the characteristics of the little child which we have to copy.

I. The large faith of a little child. No one can have had much to do with a young child without being struck with its trustfulness. The child believes because it loves. Its trust has nothing to do with the intellect, it comes from its affection.

II. Little children live in the present moment. They have few memories, and what future there is is all sunny. A child's joy is always longer than a child's sorrow. Jesus wishes all Christians to copy the little child in this—to have no dark anticipations and anxieties, to live a day at a time.

III. Little children are humble and obedient. Jesus would have all His followers to be obedient and humble. God loves simple faith and simple obedience.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## THE ROOT AND FRUIT OF TRUE LIFE.

*A Sermon*

BY THE REV. URIJAH R. THOMAS.

*Preached in Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton, on Sunday evening,  
August 24, 1890.*

“The Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”—GAL. ii. 20.

THIS is one of those familiar texts that I suppose to many to whom I speak has become a sort of nest towards which, as a wearied bird, from time to time they wing their way in times of need, times of sorrow, times of care, of conscious sinfulness. And if to-night we come to this familiar verse again, it is that we may find the old truths that for so many years—I recollect when I was a child I sometimes used to hear preached by one of your former ministers—have been preached within these walls. I remember the saintly Samuel Aldridge talking about this text when I was a child, when by chance I came once or twice to evening worship here. And so to-night it seems proper that one should most simply, and yet most earnestly, speak of some of the old truths of this familiar text, finding, first of all, that

The root of the Lord Jesus Christ's life was love. The life of every man in this great city of yours is like a plant, in so far as it is rooted in something. Just as the root holds the tree in its place, and is the means by which sustenance passes into it, pleasure, love of gain, appetite, selfishness, are the roots of men's lives. Every life has its root that holds it where it is, and that very largely makes it what it is. And our Lord Jesus Christ's earthly life was rooted and grounded in love. We may turn to any page that we will of the Gospel story, and we may ponder any incident that either of the evangelists has recorded, and we shall come to the conclusion that at the head of every column and at the base of every column we may inscribe “The Son of God loved.” It is love everywhere, and love for everyone, and love manifesting itself in every possible form. “He loved.” There is no incident to which this is not the key, there is no sermon of which this is not the explanation, there is no suffering

that this does not explain, this does not solve—"the Son of God loved," everywhere. You find Him amongst children, and you find that He is loving them with such love as the best of fathers and the tenderest of mothers know, and yet with greater and completer and more lasting love than father or mother can ever cherish. He calls the children to His arms and puts His hands upon them, and He blesses them. He calls back to life the dead and heals the sick, and leads, as Isaiah declared He would lead, the lambs into His very bosom, and keeps them near the beating heart of His love.

And when He passes into the midst of those who are not so loveable as children, to the proud and sinful, the outcast and the rebellious, He has a love that many waters cannot quench. He loved Mary in her dissolute memories and her penitent and broken-hearted contrition; loved Peter as He stood upon the shore and looked into his face, and made him confess that he loved Him too. Everywhere was love. He was here because He loved, and when He was here He was what He was because He loved; and He did what He did and suffered what He suffered, and He wrought all that He wrought because He loved. This is the root of His life. The Song of Solomon seems to speak about His love which is an apple-tree blossoming among the trees of the wood, makes it the tree of life whose very leaves are for the healing of the nations.

And now one pauses for a moment, my friends, to say to oneself and to you, if our lives are to be like Christ's, the root of our lives must be love. Unless towards God and towards man, unless for those whom we can love with honour and adoration, for whom we can love with pity and compassion, we are filled with, possessed with, charged with love, we cannot live a life that resembles Christ's. We may imitate, we may caricature, in our imitation we shall misrepresent, but we cannot reproduce Christ's life, we cannot be in the world as He was in the world, and we cannot be to the world what He was to the world, unless it is true of us all, he loved, she loved; everywhere and always it was love—love to God and love to men that moved the hand, that warmed the heart, and that guided the life. The root of every true life, as of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, must be love.

And now, yet more important perhaps, the fruit of Christ's love was gift. "The Son of God loved and gave." And I am bold to say, and you will agree with me in your reason, in your conscience, if not in your conduct, that love always means gift. If a man loves his church he will give to his church. If a man loves his friend he will give to his friend. The warm heart always means the open hand. The poorest, the neediest of the children I know in the city of my adoption, when they want to show that they have felt at all any glow of affection towards one, will somehow manage to give, if it is only a wild flower that they have plucked from the field or from the hedgerow. They will bring the flower, that they

may give according to the passing impulse of their love. Every birthday gift protests that, gift of lover to lover, of friend to friend, of martyr to the truth, of confessor to the church, the patriot on the field of battle, protest that where there is love there will be gift. The warm heart always means the open hand. "The Son of God loved and gave." And so is it not only of the little child giving its posy of flowers right away up through all ranks of men, but it is true in God Himself. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." God could not love without giving away more than you or I can love without giving.

And the fruit of Christ's love was gift. "The Son of God gave." But oh, one stays before the word that the Apostle penned and marvels at the depth of its meaning, the loftiness of its meaning, when we read "He gave Himself." It is not that the Lord Christ gave what He owned. It is not that the Lord Christ gave what He possessed. It is not that out of His great kingdom He gathered treasure and lavished His treasures upon us. But it is that He gave Himself, His body, to toil, with unwearied feet, with hand that never seemed tired, and ear that never seemed heavy, and eye that never seemed dim. He gave His body to toil for men—to toil, to suffer.

"Cold mountains and the midnight air,  
Witnessed the fervour of His prayer."

They brought Him to the judgment hall, they spat upon Him, they scourged Him, they tore the tenderest brow with thorns, they nailed the kindest hands to the tree of shame, they crucified Him. He gave His body when He gave Himself, to suffer and to toil. That is only the beginning of His gifts. He gave His mind. I remember that the sainted and heroic Robert Moffat once stood in the pulpit in my own dear chapel and talked to those of us who were there about his life in Africa. He said that amongst all the things he had endured there was one space of time, some few months only, in which he had gone right away to a dark district, where men were sunken as low as they could be sunken in manifold degradation; and he lived alone amongst them, and tried not only to syllable their speech but to think their thoughts, and to come down in sympathy to their low-thoughted life, and to be a brother among these brethren. For he had heard what Christ in the father, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, said to the elder son, and he was trying to be a brother amongst these men, living amid them in their low-thoughted life—their dull, almost brutal, intellectual life—and he said that it was terrible, it was terrible. And that is only a hint, only a glimmer of what is meant by the Lord Jesus Christ coming down from the supernal glory, from the clear intelligence, from the perfect love yonder to live amongst men, to live amongst the poor of Nazareth, to live among the Pharisees and the publicans and the degraded. He came to this world, He came to His own,

and His own received Him not; and He thought in our way, talked in our way, lived amongst us by an infinite self-sacrifice, compared to which the self-sacrifice of the missionary among the Africans is as nothing. He gave His life as well as His body.

But He gave more. We have not given to those who are about us anything of the real treasure of our life, if we have simply given them bodily service or simply given them mental service. We may do that for hire, we may do that because we are paid for it. He gave His love. And it is when we have opened the treasure-house of our love, and have given our affection, that we have given ourselves; when there has gone forth from us all that is ourselves, and we have spent that, lavished that, sometimes it seems squandered that, upon those who are about us, that we have given ourselves. Christ gave His love. All the Niagara of His love came down in great streams, great cataracts of compassion and of pity towards men, unrestrained, unhindered.

He gave His love, but He gave more—He gave His will. As far as one can understand the philosophy of the Atonement and can get at the secret of that reconciling power by which men are brought back to God, it is when we stand by the Lord Jesus Christ in Gethsemane, and when we hear Him pray that wondrous prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," and then take it back and amend His prayer: in all points made like unto us. He fashions His prayer and says, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." And His will is bent, His will is broken. His will is surrendered, and He gives His will. The citadel of our humanity, the secret of our personal life, the I of the I, He gives for us. "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

"The Son of God loved, and gave Himself." Do you think He sang with the disciples in the upper room at that paschal feast any of the paschal psalms? "Most likely," you say; and if He did, are you not sure that whoever led the singing, it must have been the Christ? Thomas was doubting, and doubters cannot lead song. And John was overwhelmed with anxiety, and anxious hearts may follow but they cannot lead song. I think Christ led the singing that night, and He led them to sing this: "Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar." The old paschal psalm that for generations had been sung, had now its deepest meaning. "Bind it to the horns of the altar." And He was bound to the horns of the altar. Loyalty to God, compassion for men, love for you, bound Him; and you will wait till the sacrifice is consumed, and you see grey ashes there. He gave Himself—kept back nothing. "Thanks be to God for the unspeakable gift." "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory." "The Son of God loved, and gave Himself for us."

May I pause for a moment again to say that just as the root of every true life will be love, so the fruit of all true love will be

gift, and the choicest and ripest will be gift of self? And for what is God waiting to-night? For the choicest song our life can sing? Far more than that. For the largest gifts we can offer as we pass out through the doors of the church? Far more than that. For the busiest work into which we can throw ourselves this week? Far more than that. He is waiting for us, for ourselves, and nothing less than the gift of self will satisfy Him. He gave Himself for us. Be as busy as you will, be as active, and as devoted, and as earnest, in outward labour as you can, you have not met Christ's heart any more than man meets the heart of brother man until he gives love; and then, when love is given, all labour, all song, all gift, shall but add fuel to the flame and glory to the gladness of Christ. Yield yourselves unto God. "I beseech you by the mercies of God that you present your bodies, holy, acceptable, which is your reasonable service." "The Son of God loved, and gave Himself."

And yet, with all these wonderful thoughts gathering round about this familiar verse, one has not come to the full meaning of it until one reads it again, and until one reads, "The Son of God who loved, and who gave Himself?" No; "The Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." There is the music of the Gospel. There is the quivering tone of inspiration. There are the deepest depths of Christian experience welling up. "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me." What a Gospel! All that love was not simply love to the world, but to the individual men and women and children in the world. All that gift was not gift to the race only, but to the men and the women and the children who make up the race. Oh, how thankful often some of you have been, as I have sometimes been, when I have remembered who wrote this sentence, that it was the Apostle Paul, of all the Apostles, who wrote this sentence. Because, suppose some of the others had written it, we might have said it was no wonder that they could write that, no wonder their pen could distinctly trace that "Me," no wonder their lips could emphatically utter that "Me," because they had been in the presence of the incarnate Christ. Why, three of them—Peter, James, and John—if they had said this of Christ, would be constrained to say it with the fulness of experience. They had been with Him through three years of intimate friendship; they had listened to His words; His breath had fallen upon their foreheads; they had seen His tears; they had looked into His dear face again and again; one of them had laid his head upon His very bosom. Of course, Peter, and James, and John, and the rest of those who were with Him, could say, "He loved me, and He gave Himself for me," and we begin to think that we could sing the children's hymn:—

"I think, when I read that sweet story of old,  
When Jesus was here among men,

How He called little children, like lambs, to His fold—  
I should like to have been with Him then.

“I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,  
That His arms had been thrown around me ;  
That I might have seen His kind look when He said,  
‘Let the little ones come unto Me.’”

Men and women feel that as well as children. But Paul writes this ; Paul, who knew Christ just as you know Him, by faith, by the teaching of the Spirit ; Paul, who knew the risen Christ ; Paul, who had the revelation of Him that we may have, that some of you have had, but that all may have to-night—Paul wrote it after Christ had passed to His Father’s right hand, after He was the ascended and the glorified Lord. Paul wrote, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” There was foreknowing love, there was love that went beyond the three years’ ministry, beyond the thirty-three years of His incarnate life, love that streams down the ages, love that follows us as the river that came out of Horeb, followed the Israelites throughout all their journeying, and will follow men to the end of time—“the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me.” There is no child of Adam, there is no son of man, there is no one on this globe that is girdled with the love of God who may not learn to say, “The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me ; the individual love of the personal soul, the distinct and definite care for each one by the infinite heart of the Lord Jesus. We cannot tell whether to-night or not the clouds shall be completely cleared, and we shall look into a sky that is studded once again with stars ; but if it be so, and we look to-night on the firmament, and gaze at those wondrous worlds, one of the thoughts that will come in upon us is that, though there are myriads, there is room in between them for myriads more. The intervals are vast, the splendid spaces are immense, and there is room between the stars for myriads and myriads more. And so I look into the heart of Christ, and I know that a great multitude that no man can number out of every kindred and nation and tongue have learned to love Him and to find a place in his heart. But there is love in that heart for more. There is room in that heart for all of us. It is the infinite heart of an infinite heaven of which the preacher has to preach. Yet there is room. None need be excluded because Christ loved such multitudes, or because heaven is so thronged. There is room in the heart of Jesus for millions, for millions more. There is room for me. That is the message now : “The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

A few weeks ago I saw how the sunlight fell upon some of the great mountains of Scotland. Then I looked away from the mountains upon whose great white heads the sunlight was resting, to the heather at my feet. And I saw that the heather bell was lit up by the same sunlight as the great mountain summit.

And I felt it was so in the world of souls. It is not only the great, the noble, the heroic, like whom we would fain be, but it is the simplest, the humblest, the obscurest, the youngest child, the most wayward sinner that may have the light of Christ's love resting upon him, and glorifying his life, and making it as gracious even as the lives of the great and noble. "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Once again, just as I sought to tell you that if His life had for its root love, our life must have for its root love; and if His love had for its fruit gift, our love must have for its fruit gift: I want to pause for a moment, to ask whether or no, if He loves like this, there is not some constraint to some compulsion upon us all to love Him back again? Do you remember reading, five or six years ago, about one of Her Majesty's ships of war passing through the Bay of Biscay one dark night, and there was a cry along the deck, "Man overboard!" And as soon as they heard the cry, captain and crew sought to bring the great ship to, that if possible they might rescue the man who was overboard. Young Gregory, one of the midshipmen, flung off his jacket and sprang over the stern of the big ship into the dark water to rescue the man who was overboard, and there in the darkness one could hear the plash and splash of his brave arms as he went out for the man who had fallen in; and then all was still. Two boats were lowered, and brave men went out in the darkness after these two—the man who had fallen overboard, and the brave young midshipman who was rescuing him. After a few minutes, which seemed like hours, they came alongside the big ship, and up the rope ladder at the side of the vessel they soon carried the sailor who had fallen. They lay him upon the deck, and they chafe his hands, and they give him restoratives, and he opens his eyes, and they feel he is saved, it is all right. He stands aghast, wondering and grateful—he is saved. They bring up soon the other, and they lay him, young Gregory, upon the deck, but he is very cold. They chafe his hands, but they become more icy; and they look into his face and there is the vacant stare of death. And the ship's surgeon kneeling by his side, says "My God, he is dead!" And the man who has been rescued hears it, and in a passionate agony of gratitude paces the deck, and no one can still him. "He died to save me, what can I do for him? He died to save me, what can I do for him?" And he made the dark night vocal with his cry, and the ship's deck almost quivered with his agony. "He died to save me, what can I do for him?"

You and I to-night are in the presence of Him Who, once dead, lives again; not before a crucifix on which the body of the dead Christ rests, but before a cross from which Christ has ascended into the heavens we stand. And, brothers, sisters, you and I have to say, and to say it solemnly, some for the first time and some

for the thousandth time, "He died to save me; what can I do for Him?"

What can I do? "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." What can I do? "This do in remembrance of Me." Eat the bread and drink the cup. What can I do? "If ye love Me keep My commandments." Oh, there is plenty to do, song enough to fill eternity, if we want to sing the song of praise to Him who died for us, "the Son of God, who loved us, and who gave Himself for us." May the teachings of this familiar text be written on my heart and on yours afresh by God's Spirit, for His name's sake! Amen.

## AN EXPOSITION OF JOB I.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

*There was a man in the land of Uz—a man indeed, a man of God—whose name was Job. That man was perfect and upright—he was thorough, true, and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil. He had both sides of character, a love of God and a hate of sin.*

*And there were born unto him—for he was no hermit—seven sons and seven daughters—highly favoured with such a family—his substance also for he was no pauper; he was a man of God and yet rich, one of those camels that manage to go through the eye of the needle—his substance also was seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she asses, and a very great household, so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East. Yet a perfect and an upright man! You often hear it said "poor and pious," you do not often hear it said "rich and pious," because people are not apt to believe you. But here is a case in which it was true. Here is a man who has the blessings of the upper and the nether springs. He has all he needs on earth, and his portion is in heaven.*

*And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day—perhaps his birthday—and sent and called for their three sisters, who were very modest and retiring, and might not have come to the feast if they had not been sent for. Their brothers were gentle and thoughtful, as all good brothers will be. They sent for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them. He does not seem to have gone to the feast. He felt too old, his character was too staid; not that he judged it wrong in the young people, but it was not suitable for him who knew more than they, and had higher things perhaps nearer his heart than ever.*

*And he rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Perhaps they, in their prosperity, have fallen, if not into atheistic beliefs, into unholy thoughts. They have been unguarded, they have lapsed, they may not have gone into any great sin, but in their sportiveness they may have gone too far. So, therefore, he had a sacrifice. Thus did Job continually. Not only occasionally, but always, he had his altar unto God, and he worshipped Him, and sought keep his household right before God.*

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.—Into heaven? Oh, no. The presence of God is very wide and vast, and even hell lies open to him, and there is no need of the idea of admitting an evil spirit into heaven in the fact of his being before God.

And the Lord said to Satan, *Whence comest thou?* He is his Master. He asks him where he has been. I wonder if the Lord were to say to-night to everybody here, “*Whence comest thou?*” whether you could give a clean and honourable answer? Judge ye for yourselves. “*Whence comest thou?*”

Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* Uneasy, without rest, active, seeking whom he may devour. Ah, we little know how near he may be to us now, and even in our prayer, when we are nearest to God, he may come and assail us.

The Lord said, *Hast thou considered My servant Job?* He is an example to you, he is so obedient, and you are so rebellious. Hast thou considered My servant Job, *that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?* Then Satan answered the Lord, and said: Well, now, if there had been anything in Job he would have said it. But, however excellent a man is, though there were none like him on earth, he would find fault with him. Satan found fault with him because he prospered. His friends found fault with him because he did not prosper. So you can make anything a blight on the holiest of men if your mind is malicious enough.

Then said Satan, *Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast Thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?* The dog had been prowling, to see whether he could get in, and so he knew there was a hedge made right round Job, and about his house, and all he had. And he hints that Job fears God for what he can get out of Him, that his love is cupboard love, that he is well paid by providence for his reverence to God. *Thou hast blessed the work of his hands.* The devil dare not insinuate that he was not a working man, that he had come by his estate by oppression or plunder. No, said he, Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, *and his substance is increased in the land.* But put forth *Thine hand now and touch all that he hath and he will curse Thee to Thy face.* Ah, see what Satan can do and what mischief he can contrive against the righteous. The mercy is that he is not almighty. He is very mighty and he is very malicious, but there is One stronger than he, Who can match him.

And the Lord said unto Satan, *Behold all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand.* So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, *The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.* He had not wronged these Sabeans, they were no enemies of his, but they were plunderers, and when Satan moved them they came to plunder this good man.

While he was yet speaking—to give Job no time to rally his faith and to

encourage his heart—*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.* Which must have distressed Job much more, for the fire had burned up the sheep he was accustomed to offer in sacrifice to God, and the blow had seemed to come from God Himself, lightning had fallen and the sheep were all destroyed.

He had not time to recover himself from that shock, for *while he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.* He had not time for a pause, for before, while he was yet speaking—for Satan had arranged it to bring on the troubles one after another as quickly as possible, so as to overwhelm the good man. And, have you noticed it, troubles seldom come alone. When you have one you have another: as the old proverb has it, “It seldom rains but it pours.” When there is one black scroll, there is a flock of them.

*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house. And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.* This was the worst of all, to lose his children, not while they were praying, but while they were feasting. When he had not time to call them together to sanctify them, they are called away, in the heyday of their youth. And the shock that took them was manifestly from Satan, seeing that he is the prince of the power of the air. And this strange tornado had smitten all four corners of the house at once.

*Then Job arose, with all his burden on him he rose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head.* He did not pull his hair out; that is what a maniac would have done, or a person delirious with trouble. He deliberately shaved his head, *and fell down upon the ground and worshipped.* Grand old man! How bravely does he come out here! “Fell down on the ground and worshipped.”

*Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped. And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* The grandest words, I think, in human speech. Considering the circumstances of the man, that he should speak them, this was a miracle of grace. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

### A WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYER.

BY THE REV. A. MACLAREN, D.D.

QUICKEN our desires, and lift up our hearts, O Lord! we beseech Thee now, that we may draw near to Thee, in full assurance of faith; and knowing not only our needs but Thine all-sufficiency and fulness, we desire the greatest gifts which Thou canst give, O Lord! we would not come with small wishes to Thyself, the Fountain of large benefits. But

we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst help us to widen our desires in some measure to the extending of Thy loving purposes, so that we may take more in of the things that are freely given to us of God ; and be filled because we "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

We draw near to Thee now, O Lord ! with thankful remembrance of Thy great mercies and past benefits to us, and we, too, have to say "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," and to bless Thee that in all, that "hitherto" there lies the pledge of all future benefits. "Leave us not, neither forsake us, O God of our salvation." Perfect that which concerneth us, inasmuch as Thy mercy endureth for ever. We pray Thee that we may be brought into closer union with Thee, and in all the variety of duty and circumstance may be able to still keep our hearts in the heavenly places, and our inmost spirits in true touch and union with the spirit of the Lord. Oh ! preserve us, we pray Thee, from listening to the tempting voices that seek to draw us away. Deliver us from the power of our own weakness ; defend us from the errors into which we are too apt to fall as to the worth of things here, and the things at Thy right hand. And may we not be so shortsighted as to prefer the joys of a day ; and the fields, and the yokes of oxen, to the bread and the wine of the Kingdom. Do Thou help us as we travel on life's path to carry ever with us the assurance of Thy presence ; and may we distrust our own guidance and look always to Thee in all junctures and contingencies of difficulty or trying circumstance for that wisdom which is profitable to direct, and that Hand which alone is able to sustain. We would cast ourselves on Thy faithful promises, O Lord ; we plead them, and in our faith in them put the faithfulness of them. And we ask Thee that Thou wouldst do unto us according to the counsel of Thine own heart, and the sure testimony of Thine own Word ; and so rebuke and put to shame our distrust and forgetfulness of the large and wondrous blessings which Thou dost bestow.

We ask Thee that Thou wouldst so order our outward lives as that by means of them we may be helped to a more assured, and calm, and constant possession of the eternal blessings which Thou dost mean life to bring us.

O help us, we pray Thee, this evening, as we are gathered here before Thee, and let Thy word come to us with power ; and may we be able to speak Thy high message as it ought to be spoken. Shed abroad upon all our hearts the influences of Thy grace. If there have been in the history of this day anything, either by reason of our own faults and failures, or by reason of the difficulties of the way of Thine appointment, which may make it especially hard for any of us to draw near to Thee now, and to enter into the sweet seclusion and calm of Thy presence, we pray Thee that Thou wouldst take away all the hindrances ; and so touch our hearts that they may open to Thy grace, and so loose the bonds that bind us down to the things seen and temporal that we may enter into the secret place of the Most High now. And not only in our outward appearance, but in inmost reality, may we all be prayerful in Thy presence, and waiting to hear what God the Lord, and not a human voice, shall speak unto us.

O Lord, we pray for one another, and for all that are dear to any of us, and for our homes and those in them, and for those especially who may be in any kind of sorrow or trouble, and beseech Thee that Thou

wouldst comfort such with that gracious and all-sufficing presence which brings light into darkness, and calms the wildest storms. And grant, we beseech Thee, that those of us who may be exercised by any kind of sorrow may so accept the Father's will, and enter into the meaning of His dispensations, and bow ourselves in submission to His holy purposes, that the "peaceable fruit of righteousness" may spring up in the hearts that are scored deep by the ploughshare of sorrow.

We pray Thee, O Lord, to bless us and all our work and worship. We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst prosper us as a Church and congregation; and give to us who minister in public, and to all of us in our several places and degrees, the helpful Spirit of Thy Grace. And grant, we beseech Thee, that the word of the Lord among us may run and be glorified.

Now, O Lord, we desire to commend ourselves to Thy loving care. We thank Thee for all our past experience of it; we pray Thee that the distrust of it may be conquered and finished, and that we may be able to lay ourselves and all our interests, hopes, plans, purposes, anxieties, and everything that belongs to us, into Thy gracious hands, who hast redeemed us, and who will not forsake us.

We beseech Thee to hear us, to forgive all our sins, and to grant us Thy gracious presence in our hour of worship, for our Saviour Christ's sake. Amen.

## LIFE.

### *Outline Sermon,*

BY THE REV. J. OSWALD, STOKE-ON-TRENT.

"Break up your fallow ground."—JEREMIAH iv. 3.

*Introduction.*—(1) Fallow ground gives no fruitage but "nature's own." (2) Possesses latent power of production. Tilled, the "desert blossoms as the rose."

I. *Surface Life.*—There is a growth—nature run wild. (1) In many the "natural man" rules. Moving throng of men racing for earthly good. Sacrifices made for wealth—sweet, true home-life! Hand that gathers only earthly good flings away fine moral sensibility. The soul's sympathies and longings shocked and paralysed. The virtues apparent are but stunted herbage of fallow ground. (2) Physical rules in many. Live in world of fashion. Soul stunted and dwarfed by trivialities of life. (3) "Culture" does not mean godliness even! To touch the mind is not always to touch the man. To know is not always to be. The grandest thing in man is deeper than mere knowledge.

II. *Latent Life.*—Fallow ground capable of better things. (1) Wondrous possibilities lie within us. Cannot sound the depths of soul. What we are, and yet what we might be! Sinners, but might be saints of God; demons, but might be angels, messengers of God's mercy and peace. Angel of better life slumbers within. Deep below surface—below thoughtlessness, selfishness, depravity—lies a mine of better feelings and powers, only needing to be touched by God. (2) Glimpses of soul depths occasionally—revealed by powerful tale, by nature in its sublime moods and scenes, by circumstances of danger and disease.

III. *Higher Life.*—Obtained by "breaking up of fallow." False life must be broken in upon. Ploughshare must crash through surface. Fires

must burn refuse. God breaks the fallow in life's sufferings and sorrows. Often by the gentler influence of Spirit Divine to stir up latent life of soul. He convinces the world of sin, and the life passable in twilight of worldly morality—shown to be waste fallow. He also shows beauty of life in Christ, and possibility of being presented faultless before presence of His glory.

## CHRIST ALL IN ALL.

### *Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. D. RITCHIE KEY, M.A., EDINBURGH.

“I am Alpha and Omega.”—REVELATION i. 8.

THERE is a threefold setting forth of Christ in the New Testament. The conception of the Evangelists embodied in the narrative of the Gospels. The reflected picture seen in the effects produced on the people; they feared, wondered, &c. Christ's own setting forth of Himself in the titles He assumed. Here we have a part of it. The self-presentation of the glorified Christ. He here identifies Himself with God, whose peculiar title is “the first and the last.” In many ways is Christ the Alpha and Omega.

I. *He is Alpha and Omega of Creation.*—It began in His thought (Rom. xi. 36); was made by His power (John i. 3); exists through His bounty (Heb. i. 3); has its issue in His praise and glory (Col. i. 16).

II. *He is Alpha and Omega of History.*—The years before Him we mark B.C.; the years after A.D. The centuries before were a preparation for His advent. History since has been a record of His triumphs.

III. *He is Alpha and Omega of Scripture.*—He appears in Genesis, “The seed of the woman.” He is the grand figure in Revelation. He the subject of all between.

IV. *He is Alpha and Omega of Salvation.*—He is Author and Finisher of our faith. He convinces and converts. He justifies and sanctifies. There is none other name.

V. *He is Alpha and Omega in the Life of the Believer.*—He is crucified with Christ. He lives for Christ. To live is Christ—to know, love, glorify, be like, work for, enjoy, Christ. So Paul says: Whose I am, whom I serve.

VI. *He is Alpha and Omega in Christian Church.*—He is foundation and head corner stone. He began it. He has been with it. He is with it. He shall gather it, and glorify it.

## SPIRITUAL SONG.

### *Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. J. E. DOUGLAS, DOUGLAS (ISLE OF MAN).

“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.”—MATTHEW xxvi. 30.

*Introduction.*—“Whatever God has revealed must deserve our careful study and prayerful investigation.” Much of Christ's life unrecorded. Where the curtain falls it is presumption to look behind. Where the veil is lifted it is for man to see God's goodness, know His will, and serve Him. Avenues for thought opened by this act. As waves of light shine through the smallest crevice, so the glory of Christ shines through this opening in His history.

I. *On the threshold of suffering Christ with men sings a triumphant psalm.*—Teaches entire consecration to God, creates calm trustfulness and fortitude in trial. To sing thus we must have unbroken fellowship with God, illustrated in the lives of Paul, Luther, Wesley.

II. *Christ's kinship and sympathy with the disciples.*—Hymn used to cheer, strengthen, and inspire confidence in God.

III. *Teaches simplicity of Christian Worship.*—No robed choristers. No mystical chanting. This service parallel with Christ's prayer-meeting, two or three met in His name. Thus possible for all to worship. (Accessories not forbidden.) God the author of music. The harp and psalter not to be broken or destroyed. Convert the player, and the music will be heavenly. The singer a disciple of Christ, we have the song of the redeemed, not the Bacchanalian revel of the unregenerate. See Paul's advice to Ephesian converts (Eph. v. 19).

*Practical Lessons.*—Spiritual song should be used to bring men nearer God. This part of worship a pathway to His presence. The hymn learned in childhood brings many a prodigal home to God. "God sent His singers upon earth" (see Longfellow).

*Apply.*—Those with the gift of song consecrate it to Christ. Be ready for service.

"There golden harps they took,  
Harps ever tuned that glittered by their side."—Milton.

See the crowned Saviour, list to the new song (Rev. xiv. 2, 3). May we join them where, as Kingsley says, "all speech will be song."

## ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Sunday, September 7, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

### JESUS AND THE PUBLICAN.

ST. LUKE XIX. 1—10.

"CLIMBED UP INTO A SYCOMORE."—The meeting of our Lord with Zacchæus took place on the Plain of Jericho, on the west side of the city, where the road crosses the plain to the foot of the pass by Wady Kelt, through which He ascended to Jerusalem. He had come from Galilee, not by the ordinary route through the country of Samaria and Benjamin, but by the east side of the Jordan valley, till He reached the Plain of Shittim, and then crossed by the same ford by which Joshua had led the chosen people into the Promised Land. An interesting illustration of a minor incident in this part of His journey is afforded us by the fact that there still linger by that roadside a few old gnarled sycomore fig-trees. The sycomore is not to be confounded with the sycamore or maple of temperate climates. It is a species of fig, bearing its fruit crowded on the stem and naked boughs, and not among its leaves. It is very sensitive to cold, and cannot bear frost. ("He destroyed . . . their sycomore trees with frost," Psalm lxxviii. 47); and, though common in Egypt, in Palestine only grows in the mild climate of the maritime plains of Phenicia, Acre, and Sharon, and in the hot Jordan valley. It grows to a large size, sometimes

\* From the American *Sunday School Times*.

a circumference of fifty feet, and is evergreen, as in the case of the celebrated sycamore tree by the Khan of Damascus. It is not a tall, but a wide-spreading tree, and, with its low, laterally extending branches, and dark foliage, recalls the English oak. It is consequently, on account of its shade, a favourite wayside tree. With its very short trunk and wide horizontal branches, it is very easy to climb, and would naturally be selected by Zacchæus as an accessible position, where he could sit overhanging the path, and thus obtain a view of our Lord as He passed underneath him, from his "coign of vantage." We may remember that the prophet Amos speaks of himself as a gatherer (literally, a scraper) of sycamore fruit; that is, one who punctured or scraped the fruit to let out the acrid juice before it was quite ripe, without which precaution it is bitter and nauseous. Only the very poorest would devote themselves to such a task.

"ZACCHÆUS . . . A CHIEF PUBLICAN."—Zacchæus was chief of the publicans—an expression which only occurs in this passage. But it is at once understood, when we remember the great importance of Jericho as a source of revenue to the imperial government. Here alone was cultivated the famous balm of Gilead, now quite extinct, and not a native of the country, but of the east coast of Africa. Tradition said it was originally introduced by the Queen of Sheba, who gave some roots to King Solomon. From hence plants were taken by Cleopatra for her gardens at Heliopolis. It was always a government monopoly, and imperial guards were placed over the plantations. Hence the importance of the position of the tax-gatherer at Jericho, who naturally would be a chief officer of the publicans. Besides the revenue from the balsam, Jericho was the great halting place for caravans from North Arabia to Palestine and Egypt, and here they paid the duties on their merchandise.

"IF I HAVE TAKEN . . . BY FALSE ACCUSATION."—The system by which taxes were, and still are, raised in the East, is very different from the mode in which the revenue is raised in Western and happier lands. The Romans, like the Turks, let out to the highest bidder among the chief publicans the collection of the revenue at each place. It is true that the amount payable on each article was fixed by law. But the contractor has to pay his fixed sum, and to secure his own profit as best he can. This opens the door to every kind of surcharge and extortion; and if the oppressed cultivator or merchant should appeal, the temptation to meet him by false testimony as to the value or quantity of his produce is to an Eastern official almost irresistible. It is to this evil custom that Zacchæus alludes when he speaks of false accusation.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Golden Text: Verse 10.*

"So I be good I care not to be tall,  
I'd rather be Zacchæus than a Saul."—*Thomas Fuller.*

THIS story of the salvation of Zacchæus on the roadside by Jesus Christ, the Son of God in human flesh, in all His love and grace, is an illustration of the Golden Text: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

that which was lost." That word "lost" has a real and awful meaning. The awful reality of "lostness" lies here—that I have lost God, and God has lost me. Surely the Gospel of the Gospel lies in this golden text, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

I. Jesus at His work. Our lesson to-day is an illustration of how He does His work. It needs skill to find out a thing that is lost. Some of us have not got this skill, and when the hunt for the lost thing is begun, you are told, "Oh, *you* had better sit down. *You* will never find it." You have not the happy knack of ferreting out lost things. See how the Son of Man seeks and finds a lost sinner. First of all He comes to the lost sinner's town. "He entered and passed through Jericho." Jesus knew all about this lost sinner—his name and address. He comes to the street in Jericho where Zacchæus is, and more than that, He comes to the particular tree, on the roadside, in the branches of which the lost one is sitting. Jesus calls him by his name, and says to him, "Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully." The seeking Saviour and the lost sinner met together then at the foot of that tree, never to be separated again.

II. The man who needed saving. Zacchæus was a publican, and he was rich. Israel, you remember, had lost her independence, and was under the conquering heel of Rome; and she had to pay taxes to Rome. The taxes were farmed out, and a particular class of men lifted the taxes for the hated Roman power. When a Jew gave himself to this business, he must have come very low, soiling his soul and his fingers making money by lifting the hated tax. Suppose that this country were under the conquering heel of France, and we had to pay a tax to France, what would you think of the Englishman who made his money by collecting the tax for the usurping Frenchman? He would not be a popular man. Now that kind of a man was Zacchæus—popular neither at church nor market. Perhaps he had feathered his own nest unjustly by putting on the screw.

Now this man felt a great curiosity to see Jesus. God often works upon curiosity. Fools have come to a meeting to scoff, and have remained to pray. Zacchæus wanted to "see Jesus who He was." Curiosity limes the twig, and the bird lights upon it, and Christ comes and catches it.

Zacchæus had difficulties in the way of seeing Jesus. He was undersized, but he had courage and pluck, and "he ran before and climbed the sycamore to see Him." Do your part and Christ will do His. Zacchæus got a personal call to a personal Saviour, and he answered to the call. He was willing to come down, and they went away home together. Christ's love broke Zacchæus' heart, and this love purified his heart and overcame the world.

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## OLD TESTAMENT PROBLEMS :

*An Address delivered in the Scots' Church, Collins-street, Melbourne,*

BY PROFESSOR ANDREW HARPER, M.A.

IT has recently been said that the great battle-ground of the Christian faith in the immediate future will be the Old Testament Scriptures. Do they record a real revelation from God, or are they only the documents of a very interesting development of human thought? Are they in any way helpful to and binding on us of this modern day? Do they reveal a religious life which in any sense is unique, or are they only another specimen of that development of religious faith from illusion to illusion which philosophers tell us forms the necessary course in which human thought about religion moves? Lastly, does the religion of the Old Testament stand in any organic connection with Christianity, or are they two separate things connected with each other by little more than external ties of place or time? Questions like these are being asked and argued with very great ability. They will soon become, if they have not already become, the commonplaces of the Press, and to those who have been trained in that reverence which the Bible, as the Word of God, most surely claims from us, the mere statement of them is painful. But they are the product of our modern ways of looking at the world of men and of nature, and being so, the Christian communities of our day will have to face and answer them. The answers found in the past to similar questions will not do good service now, for the world has not been standing still.

In our generation especially, very great, even astounding, advances have been made in scientific knowledge. Light of all kinds has been pouring in upon us, and as the face of nature changes with the changing stages of the day, so the whole world of things and of thoughts has been changed, in appearance at least, by the new illumination. The result is that the demand for a new treatment of religious questions, a new answer to the old outcries, a new defence against what are in essence the old foes, is a perennial necessity unavoidably laid upon the Church of every age. And in taking up this burden here, there is no necessary disrespect to the past, or any claim to occupy a standpoint from which we can afford to condemn our predecessors. Even if we are in a worse and weaker position than our fathers, we shall have to answer the difficulties of our time out of the worse and weaker materials which alone on that supposition will be at our command in dealing with men of our time. This is so manifest that if the men of each generation had to fight their

battle in isolation from the others, if there were no men whose formative period lay amid other surroundings, there would, I think, be complete unanimity in the effort the Church would make. But this is not so, and there is consequently an ever new feeling of anxiety on the part of the old as to where the new movements within the Church will ultimately end. And on the part of the men of the generation immediately concerned there is a restive fret against the half-suspicious anxiety, which tends to mar some of their best work. The truth is both feelings are natural, but both ought to be repressed. But, so far as they cannot be got rid of, their existence is just one of the necessities of the situation, and must be borne. But there is no need for any trembling for the ark of God. Truth, like freedom, always brings with it the cure for the evils it creates. If the new knowledge which physical and other science has been giving us has incited earnest men to try religious faith with new questions, it also supplies us with new defences. Danger to the Church can arise, therefore, only if it lazily and unfaithfully refuses to look from the new points of view, and contents itself with the answers which were good for another time.

To meet present-day modes of sceptical thought with the solutions of the last generation is to court defeat, and it will be universally found that men who attack religion with the weapons of the new science are even more anxious than its belated defenders themselves to bind the Church of the present to the positions of the past. Christian defence, like any other subject of human thought, must be affected by its surroundings, and we have to ask, speaking out of our time, to men of our time, what reply can be made to the new methods of attack upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

The first thing that strikes us from that point of view is that if there be a belated defence there is also a belated attack. It is admitted as fully on one side as on the other that the Divine effort began with the chosen people at a low point, and it has become a commonplace of Christian apologetic that as regards both morals and religion, what was commanded as well as what was done must be judged by the moral and religious standard of the time. Our Lord Himself admitted this in saying that the Mosaic Law had been tempered to meet the hardness of men's hearts. Yet God is represented in the Old Testament as setting before His people an ever-rising ideal. By miracle and prophecy, by line upon line and precept upon precept, He drives them towards this till in the line of His action there appears the embodiment of the moral ideal in Jesus Christ. That surely is a worthy course for a Divine revelation to take, and when the Biblical revelation is so regarded there is room in the conception for everything which can be urged by opponents from the side of morality. A similar process has freed us from any need to defend or to accept the science of the Scriptures as the norm or test of what we are to believe on such matters. It is now universally recognised, though with limitations here and there which will have to be given up, that it is no part of the function of Scripture to give us science. It is admitted [that on these matters what the Old Testament writers give us are the popular notions of their times, and that properly understood, the Bible should never have been thrown across the path of scientific investigation at all. Attack on that side, therefore, is also antiquated, and a fruitful source of quarrel is entirely removed.

But in our time, and with the weapons of our time, an attack of a much more formidable kind is being made. Critical history is emphatically a product of this age, and literary criticism, though not a product of our time, has been so splendidly elaborated and so deftly used that it has gained for itself a position such as it never hitherto has had. Applied to the history and literature of many nations these twin disciplines have transformed our ideas of ancient history, and have established with more or less certainty the course which the growth of peoples and literatures may usually be expected to take. Extremists here, as in other domains, will tell you that they have ascertained the course which such growth must take; but without conceding any such extravagant claim, we may grant that something like agreement has been reached as to the general course of such developments. Now with a long list of successes, or what have generally been accepted as such, at their back, men have in our time applied the methods of critical history to the records contained in the Old Testament, and we are at the beginning of a prolonged conflict as to the truth of the results which the critical school have reached in regard to the whole structure of the Old Testament and the growth of the Old Testament religion. Here we have the true touchstone of our time, which is to test the wisdom and the faithfulness of the churches, and their ability to deal with new questions in a large and enlightened spirit. Of course, it would be quite impossible to go into any full detail of the results in question, but the new positions with regard to the Pentateuch will give sufficient insight into the matter we have to discuss. You know, of course, that the Pentateuch used to be regarded as one book, divided up into five for convenience sake, but substantially one book, written by Moses, and containing, therefore, first-rate contemporary evidence as to the history of Israel, from the exodus from Egypt till the death of the great law-giver. Now the critics tell us that they have discovered that instead of being one the Pentateuch is a conglomerate made up of at least three or four separate documents written by unknown men, at different and only approximately ascertainable times, but all of them later than Moses by centuries. Wellhausen, whose writings have done most to gain converts to this view, thinks the first part of the Pentateuch in time is that which contains the beautiful narratives concerning the patriarchs in which the Divine name Jehovah is used. This, he thinks, was written after the division of the kingdom, perhaps about the ninth century B.C. Deuteronomy, which is second in order, he thinks was written just before it was found in the Temple in 621 B.C. The remainder, that is Leviticus and the ceremonial parts of Exodus and Numbers, he holds not to have been written long, if at all before 444 B.C., when Ezra made it the law of the Jewish community. Roughly put, what this means is that instead of being the first fundamental thing in Israel, the whole ritual and ceremonial law, as we have it in the Pentateuch, was the last and crowning thing of the long development, and that instead of reading the simple annals of the nation with that as their presupposition and background, we must confine ourselves in our study of what really existed earlier ages to what we can gather from the scanty historical records.

As to the main parts of the scheme most critics now are agreed, and their main proof, after they have established the existence of the different documents, is a peculiarly strong one. They take the beginning of the reign of Josiah as their fixed point, as being the period at which the book

of Deuteronomy is said to have become prominent, and they divide the history of Israel into three periods—that before Josiah, that between Josiah and Ezra, and the third, that which follows Ezra. They then ask, can we trace a correspondence between the laws given in our various documents and the history and literature of these periods? They say that they find a most remarkable correspondence, which, though not complete in every detail, is, they claim, as complete as can well be expected, considering the fact that the Biblical history was edited by various later writers. Before Josiah, the history as given by the Jehovist, they tell us, necessarily presupposes no laws except those in Exodus xx. to xxiii., and everyone admits that the law prescribing one altar only as the true place for worship, if it existed, was in this early time ignored by the best and most pious kings and priests. After Josiah again, the legislation of Deuteronomy, which in many respects is simpler than that in the middle books of the Pentateuch, is the only legislation which appears in the history, for while pious kings now do show a knowledge of a law against the high places, and endeavour to get the people to obey it, they have only a very partial success. Lastly, in the period after the return from the exile, for the first time, we find the life of the people dominated by the law as we have it in the Pentateuch. This, too, is admitted by everybody, but the new critical school claim to have been the first to see the true significance of this fact, viz., that the ceremonial law was now for the first time written. Now all this is startling enough, but it must be evident to anyone that the new stream of opinion is supported, to a large extent, by facts which have always been recognised as difficulties on the ordinary theory, and that it is not mere wantonness nor wickedness that actuates those who hold these views. Many men who hold firmly to supernatural Christianity have declared their acceptance of the fundamental point in the new scheme, viz., the late date of the ceremonial law. But, on the other hand, it has enormous difficulties. When Wellhausen was asked by the editor of a London paper what he regarded as the weak point of the theory, he replied at once with the candour which distinguishes him, the transposition of the literature. And he is right; that is an enormous difficulty. Formerly it was held that the literary activity of Israel began in the days of Moses, and the tradition was emphatic that in the time of David and Solomon literature had reached a high point of perfection. Now, this theory demands that regular literature in Israel shall have been begun only after the division of the kingdom. In the hands of the new school the great mass of it has tended more and more to late dates until the post-exile time, which has been looked upon as a time of decay, and which Wellhausen himself admits to have been so, has been credited with a literary activity surpassing in the splendour of its productions any previous period. That is much as if one were to assert that all the Elizabethan literature ought to be transposed to the time of Charles I., and is in the highest degree improbable. If such a transposition ought rightfully to be made in this case, it will stand quite alone in history so far as my knowledge goes. Not even the supporters of it have produced a parallel. Another difficulty, and one which will bulk more largely in the public eye than this even, is, that if the critics of this school are right, there must be a great deal of history in the Old Testament, which represents not the facts of the ancient times, but either conventional

legal forms of a kind very strange to us, or a reading of these facts which seemed natural to men who inevitably, from their circumstances, in speaking of the past dressed it in the colours of the time in which they were writing. This is a great stumbling-block, and so far as I know it has not been adequately dealt with. At the same time we must not charge those who hold the theory with holding that there has been deliberate fraud, and that the theory requires us to believe that whatever Divine guidance the writers of Scripture history had was given to men who were writing to deceive their countrymen. Robertson Smith, for instance, expressly repudiates that conclusion. He produces what he considers a parallel case in modern India, where in publishing regulations about water supply, which all men knew had just been brought into the district by the British Government, the native authorities issued them in the form of a narrative, implying that they had existed for a thousand years perhaps. "I have been told, however," says Sir Henry Maine, "by some of those who have observed the formation of these rules, that they do not purport to emanate from the personal authority of their author or authors; nor do they assume to have been dictated by a sense of equity; there is always, I am assured, a sort of fiction under which some customs as to the distribution of water are supposed to have existed from all antiquity, although in fact no artificial supply had been even so much as thought of." Here there was neither the purpose nor the possibility of deceit, and yet had any Englishman come across such a document without knowing its history he would have denounced it as a forgery or accepted it as fact, whereas it was neither. This curious and well-authenticated case is sufficient to show that there may be a way of looking at the history which would both save its credit and leave room for such a development of the religious life of Israel as the critics say they have discovered. But that we are justified in extending this Indian analogy to the Old Testament is yet far from being proved. In any case we may be sure of this, that if the dilemma ultimately offered to the world be this, either accept fraud in the history or error in the theory, there will be no question at all as to which of these alternatives all sane thinkers will prefer.

I do not present this hurried outline of the great critical struggle now being carried on as to the Old Testament writings as either a defence or a refutation of the critical theories; I have spoken of them first of all because it is impossible now to speak in defence of the Old Testament writings at all, and not to mention them. But I have spoken of them especially because I wish you to see that while our new time, with its new methods of research, have brought these difficulties upon us, that same new time and its new spirit suggests a point of view from which we can see, while the scholars are fighting the critical battle out to its destined end, that we need not wait for the issue of it to make up our minds that in the Old Testament we have, indeed, the Word of God. That is the really important point for us. Many who are reading of these matters for the first time in "Robert Elsmere," and some few who know the subject well, jump to the conclusion that if the current and traditional views of the age of the Book of Daniel are wrong, or if the Pentateuch was completed by Ezra, then the belief in the supernatural must perish. We must henceforth content ourselves with the negative creed with which Gordon-square has just set forth to conquer the world. As against such notions I hope to

show that the real heart of the Old Testament revelation is untouched by such external matters, and that if we approach the record of it without preconceived notions as to what the Bible must be, we shall find it justify itself for the claim it makes. Now, so approached, I think one of the first things we shall notice is that religion is not conceived by the Old Testament writers, as we conceive, as primarily an affair of the individual man. In primitive stages of social development now we see that the individual is lost in the community to an extent which we civilised peoples who have pushed individualism to such fanatical extremes that we have produced a dangerous reaction towards Socialism, find it difficult even to understand. But, nevertheless, it is the fact that the Old Testament knows and deals with the relations, not of individual Israelite men, but of the whole nation of Israel to Jehovah. Jehovah and Israel, these are the actors in the great drama of history which it sets before us, and the relation of the individual to Jehovah is determined and regulated by each man's relation to his people. Now, if this be so, it is plain that we must look from the national point of view at all that concerns the religion of Israel if we are to conceive it aright. The revelation of the character of God will be made in dealings with the nation. The inspiration which makes sure of the meaning of the revelation will be national also, though, necessarily, individuals will be the national organs; and the national laws, as well as the national literature, will have a unique character, determined by the unique relation of this nation to God, if any such exist. In other words, if the national life of this people was shaped and moulded by a specially close and specially active intercourse with God, all the phenomena of national life will have a significance, a meaning, a power in them which does not belong to similar phenomena elsewhere—will, in short, have in them elements which come to them only from the Divine. Laws and customs, though in the main perhaps taken over by this people from their heathen ancestors, or their heathen neighbours, will here have a new face put upon them. The ordinary course of Providence, too, may be expected to be full of impulsive power, driving men towards the goal of the whole progression. Even when the miraculous exhibitions of the love and fear of God which will be necessary in order that He may fully reveal Himself are withdrawn, there will be sufficient receptivity of mind in at least a portion of the people to use the teachings of Providence so as to make further approaches to a complete understanding of the character and will of God. But it is in the literature of the nation especially that the supernatural in this national life will most fully express itself. It will be natural; that is, it will be in all outward respects, in form, in manner of composition, and general make up, like similar literatures elsewhere, but it will also have in it the very highest power of the supernatural which is inwoven with the nation and its history. It will, as a whole, therefore, be touched to finer issues even in its commonest forms by the Divine element which mingles with the nation's life. That this is actually the case will easily be seen, if we compare the book of Proverbs with the collections of proverbs belonging to other nations. Though parts of it are not meant for or produced by the popular mind, but are distinct treatises belonging to the Wisdom Literature, much of it does undoubtedly represent the ordinary range of motive and the common wisdom of Israel; and how high even these parts stand above the other expressions of national

wisdom in this form is manifest. For the most part these never rise above a low and calculating prudence, while the Proverbs may, without any feeling of incongruity, be used as a moral and spiritual nurture in the most advanced nations of Christendom to-day. But striking as that fact is, we have other and better guarantees.

The Bible contains what survives of the ancient literature of Israel, and literature which survives is always the best. Further, the best literature of a people is filled with and sustained by that which was the very life-blood of its spirit, and the writers of it are great because they *are* the nation at its highest. Therefore the Old Testament must, from this point of view as well as from others, have in it the quintessence of whatever supernatural and natural elements were involved in the life of Israel. That is our first guarantee. The second is that not only have these writings survived, which they could do only by appealing to the nation, they have been selected and preserved as the choicest nourishment of the religious minds of the nation, have been proclaimed and revered as such, and were then made canonical when the creative period ceased. Lastly, we have these writings guaranteed by Him who was the end, the perfection, of that development of which they are at once the evidence and the product. He declared that they spake of Him, or, in other words, He declared that they were the authentic documents of the progression towards Himself, who was, in His own person, the perfect embodiment of all that Israel had been imperfectly. Now, I wish you to observe that it is the writings as we have them now, whensoever they may have been produced, which are thus guaranteed. But what is the conclusion to be drawn from that fact? Is it that therefore the critical inquiries must be declared illegitimate, and those who carry them on cast out? No; far from it. The inference, rather, is that whatever has to be said, or may be discovered in regard to the order, the authors, or the composition of these writings, whatever truth about such matters criticism may ascertain, their central lesson, their enduring power, has been got out of them, and will always be got out of them in the shape they have now finally assumed. In other words, the conclusion we should come to is, that the work of the critics, however interesting, and however important, cannot touch the central message that the Old Testament has for mankind. If the ceremonial law can be shown not to have the place in the process of Israel's life it was thought to have, that does not alter the fact that it did enter into that process; that it has a place in it as finally accomplished; and that it therefore has as much supernatural significance as any other portion of these writings. If the critics could prove that David wrote no Psalms, yet the Psalms are written, and have all the guarantees for future generations which they would have had, except that we lose the satisfaction of thinking that David wrote them. They will, in any case, remain authentic documents of the pre-Christian kingdom of God. In fact, we might admit all that critics of the first rank demand, though I think the expectation that we shall have to do so a very extravagant one, and yet lose nothing but this—that instead of the divinely-guided progress of the chosen people from having been accomplished in two thousand years, as we thought, we shall find it was really accomplished in twelve or fifteen hundred. In any case, the development under supernatural guidance is there, on the one supposition as on the other. All the familiar phenomena of religious revelation remain, though in a different setting; and, so far as I

can see, the explanation of the whole on purely naturalistic principles would be just as difficult if the critical demands were admitted, as it seems to me to be on the ordinary hypothesis.

For what, viewed in the most general way, do we find the history of this people to have been? Separated from their idolatrous kinsmen in Babylonia, and brought down into Egypt, their career as a nation begins with their deliverance out of this house of bondage. So much is acknowledged by all but the most wrongheaded of the critics. Moreover, it is acknowledged that under Moses they experienced a wonderful deliverance, and that it was his perfectly historical character and actions which moulded Israel into a nation. It is further acknowledged that it was the worship of Jehovah which formed the basis of their national life, and that the first deposits and the germinal principles of the Law were due to Moses, so that whatever extension the system afterwards had, it was justly called Mosaic. Moreover, Robertson Smith admits the Decalogue to be Mosaic, so that a monotheism, the essence of which was righteousness, was taught by Moses. Further, throughout the whole course of the nation's history, this central conception of a righteous God, knowing Israel alone among all the nations of the earth, but knowing it as the instrument of a gracious purpose to all, is found working itself out into increasing clearness. According to the Abrahamic promise, which is found in a document dated by Willhausen not later than the ninth century B.C., all nations of the earth were ultimately to bless themselves, or be blest, in Israel, and the moral and the religious growth of the people corresponded with this idea. The mass of them often fell away into evil and idolatrous practices, it is true. Times without number they rebelled against Jehovah, and ultimately brought destruction upon themselves. But their calling never failed to be acknowledged. Always there existed a true Israel, which was Israel, and in the midst of the multiform confusions of their troubled national life, their conception of God continued to widen, the thought of God's holiness and man's sin became more potent, and the need for some reconciliation between sinful man and a holy God became more pressing, and more inward in its demands. At the same time the consciousness that Israel itself was to be the bearer of this reconciliation was urged home more and more clearly by the prophets. Israel was the Kingdom of God in germ, they taught, and in all the institutions of their divinely-called nation there lay for them the promise and the potency of that perfected Kingdom of God to which all nations should come. This they looked for with an assurance so perfect that they sometimes allowed their desire to hasten its advent more than was meet. The future was sure, and they unavoidably looked for it in the form of a glorified Israel, and whenever any of the higher functions of the nation was discharged in a manner which seemed to approach the ideal, they were quick to imagine that the perfect kingdom was nigh, even at the door. Consequently when the kingdom was powerful the future was conceived as a Davidic kingdom of Israel, reigned over by the anointed of God. When the prophetic aspect of the national life was regarded, a prophet, like unto Moses, was to be the Divinely-appointed guide of the people. When the priestly office was taken for the typical one, the Messiah was to be a perfect priest, making reconciliation for a repentant people. But when the nation was too manifestly departing from God, the eyes of the prophets were in nowise blinded by national prejudices.

The mass of the people, indeed, faced threatened danger with a light heart because they believed that Jehovah was irrevocably bound to their cause, and that any coldness on His part could be overcome by the multiplication of sacrifices. But the prophets mocked at such folly, and, falling back upon the fundamental truth that Jehovah was righteous, they declared that their iniquities had separated between them and God, and that the evils they saw threatening would not be warded off by Him, because they were His doing, the appointed punishment for Israel's obstinate refusal to be faithful. But they also declared that the Divine plan of blessing the world through Israel would be realised, nevertheless. Though the nation must be rejected, a remnant should be saved, and out of this faithful remnant should come the future Israel. Later, when decay had gone even deeper, the whole hopes and visions of the prophets come to be centred upon one who should be the servant of the Lord, the ideal of Israel, and who should bear the sins of His people. Under all these varied figures the prophets committed themselves, and what was of greater importance, they committed Jehovah to the declaration that within Israel there should appear the supreme religious figure of the world, and then their voice was stilled. Now I would specially like to call your attention to three points in this Israelite history, so roughly sketched. (1) These are, first, that Jehovah was from the first conceived of as a personal God and as a righteous God. One is amazed that Matthew Arnold should have had the courage to assert that the moral order of the world was what the Israelites meant by Jehovah. But against his denial of personality to Jehovah, while he ascribed to Him righteousness, we may set the opinion of many critics who assert His personality, but deny Him righteousness. The truth is, He possessed both. (2) Secondly, we have to notice that the nation of Israel was not only chosen by Jehovah as other nations were supposed to be chosen by their gods, but from a very early time they had received or conceived the extraordinary thought that these were chosen not for their own sake only, but in order that Jehovah's gracious purpose for the world might be carried out through them. (3) Lastly, we have to observe, as Smend, a pupil of Wellhausen, so well says, that "the fact is unique that the God of Jerusalem showed Himself only the more powerful when He seemed defeated by Chaldea and Assyria—rather that He claimed the annihilation of His people as His own work even before its accomplishment, and that He declared all the powers of the world to be His instrument, by means of which He makes justice and righteousness prevail."

Now, to me, all of these fundamental points, admitted by all parties you will observe, seem to be fatal to the naturalistic explanation of the history of Israel. No one has been able to explain the genesis of the ideas which underlie these facts, on the hypothesis that Jehovah was originally an ordinary Semitic tribal God, and that any advance made in the conception of His nature was due merely to the advancing civilisation of the people. As Wellhausen well says, the moment a deity is conceived as moral, from that moment the step is taken which must necessarily end in his being conceived as the only God. Now, speaking of Jehovah as worshipped by Moses, he says:—"Jehovah was not merely the God of Israel. As such He was the God at once of law and justice, the basis, the informing principle, and the implied postulate of their national consciousness." That

seems to me decisive. That conception was revealed through Moses, and instead of being the product, it was, and remained, the basis of the national consciousness of Israel, and by it their moral progress was secured. Further, I am at a loss to understand how the thought of themselves as organs of blessing to the world could have arisen if Jehovah and His people had been as Chemosh and his people, the inhabitants of Moab, were. On the level of a God, conceived of fundamentally as Chemosh and Moloch were conceived, victory over their immediate enemies and prosperity within their land were the highest thoughts that could have occurred to Israel. Yet it hardly needs to be pointed out how immeasurably remote these ideas are from the moral greatness of their mission, as it is expressed in the Abrahamic blessing. Then, lastly, while on the one hand you have Chemosh destroyed with the people of Moab, and Moloch disappearing with the independence of his worshippers, Jehovah remains, though His people are conquered, and by their destruction He becomes the God of the whole earth.

If these things are natural, what is there that is supernatural? If they be wholly within the domain of ordinary history, where are their causes? If the religion of Israel is as the religion of Moab, what has made its history to differ so marvellously? The reasonable answer is that here as nowhere else the God of all the earth was revealing Himself, and the critical treatment of the history of Israel is to be thanked for bringing into new and surprising light this fundamental point in the Church's faith.

But if the past of Israel's history suggests the finger of God, how much more does its future, after the prophetic stage was ended and the law had entered into its heritage? As we have seen, the whole Israelite economy was distinguishable from that of other people's by its resolutely forward look. It had attained to much that no other people had ever seen, but the spokesmen of Israel always declared that the best was yet to be. So far as social conditions were concerned, the law of Israel was singularly noble in spirit, and the poor, and those that had no helper, were treated with a compassion which had been taught by the everlasting love of God. Yet the best that had been attained was nothing to what was looked for when all the hungry and thirsty should have their needs supplied without money and without price. Its ritual law, whatever defects it may have had when separated from the prophetic spirit, did most undoubtedly deepen the sense of sin in all the noblest hearts, and by the inadequacy of its remedy, made them look for a reconciler. But most of all in the Messianic hope do we find this persistent faith in the future exemplified. Disaster only added new touches of desire to the national longing, disappointments only made Israel look for the swifter coming of the Deliverer's feet. But at last, nearly four centuries from the time when the last of the prophets had spoken, He appeared whom those who believe in His claim to their obedience, and those who do not, alike acknowledge to be the supreme religious figure of the world just as had been foretold. And not only was He that, but He has done, in utterly unexpected ways, what the prophets expected of Him. He has made for Himself an imperishable throne. He has done away with old restrictions which held men back from the awfulness of God, and by His death He has broken down the middle wall of partition between men, and opened up a new and living way to the Father. He has made the religion of Israel the religion of the

Gentiles, and He has proved Himself to be the binder up of the broken-hearted, and the opener of the prison-houses of sin to them that were bound therein.

Can this fulfilment of prophesy on a large scale be reasonably explained away? I think not. Individual prophesies may be disputed and whittled down; special points connected with the supernatural events in the Old Testament may be made to appear doubtful when taken alone; nay it may be so dismembered and torn asunder that the supernatural seems to disappear. But when the whole of this strange history is regarded, it refuses to be conceived in the naturalistic manner. I, for my part, have no hesitation in saying that it demands something out of the ordinary course of nature to explain it, and whatever may be proved or disproved as to the dates of parts of Scripture, whatever changes may have to be made in our manner of conceiving revelation and inspiration, the Old Testament Scriptures must, when fairly dealt with, bring us to the feet of the supernatural Christ. Beginning with a personal and righteous God, and ending in the unapproachable sublimity of Him who proclaimed Himself Divine as well as human, this history has running through its centre a strong cable of supernaturalism which refuses to be broken. Holding firmly by that, we can adjust all the minor supernatural in it, and proclaim that to Him the Scripture pointed. In Him what was wanting in the old dispensation is supplied, and with Him the whole spiritual and moral movement of the Old Testament comes to a fit and harmonious conclusion. The kingdom of God, as He proclaimed it, is what was hoped for in the ancient days; and by it the Abrahamic promise has been amply fulfilled, for salvation has indeed been of the Jews, and the wide-reaching hopes of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets have been fulfilled. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government is upon His shoulder; and His name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever."

## KNOWING GOD.

### *Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. HERBERT COOK, SILVERDALE.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."—JOHN xvii. 3.

ALL life is a mystery—physical, mental, spiritual. This latter is "knowing God," &c.

I. *How do we know God?*—How do we know each other? No one has ever seen another. It is by contact with each other through our words and works. We know God in the same way. Three paths lead us up to Him. (a) Through ourselves. A moral obligation to do right leads us to the belief in a Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge, whom we must obey. (b) Through nature. No chance or blind force could have made the world as we find it. The universe points us to an intelligent mind behind it all. But neither of these paths leads us to a conclusion that satisfies. (c) Through

Jesus Christ. "I am the way," &c. We now come in contact with His truth, wisdom, justice, love!

II. *To know God we must become like Him.*—Some people we cannot understand; no bond of sympathy. We cannot know God unless there be a bond of sympathy between Him and us, but that means we must be spiritually living, for there is no bond of sympathy between the dead and the living. Then to know God does not give life, it *is* life! The knowledge of God is a proof that we are living.

III. *What do we mean by knowing God?*—Acknowledging His Kingship and Fatherhood, resulting in love and obedience on our part. An essential feature of life is activity.

IV. *"And Jesus Christ," &c.*—Acknowledging Him as a personal Saviour, King, Teacher, and pattern.

V. *Before we know God and Jesus Christ there must be a change in us,* and we shall have love, joy, peace, and hope. The nearer we get to Him the more we shall know of Him, and the richer and fuller will be the eternal life we enjoy. But here we see but through a glass darkly, by and by face to face; now we know in part, then shall we know even as we are known. Our prayer: "That He would grant us," &c. (Eph. iii. 16—19).

## GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MEN.

### Outline Sermon.

BY THE REV. DAVID LLOYD, NEWHAVEN.

"And now men see not the bright light," &c.—JOB xxxvii. 21.

I. *The resemblance of God's dealings with us.*—"Cloud." God's dealings like clouds in their (1) appearance. Sorrows like clouds often come unexpectedly, and often expectedly. (2) Continuance. (3) Magnitude. (4) Effects. When clouds or an eclipse veil the sun, birds, &c., think it night, and prepare to rest. Men mistake the cloud of sickness for the night of death, and prepare for the eternal rest. Clouds and eclipses make savages and creatures think that the sun is gone out, and some think that the Sun of righteousness is gone away when clouds of sorrows, &c., come.

II. *The goodness of God's dealing with us.*—"Bright light." The bright light on and around the cloud. (1) Surrounding mercies. In trouble we have health, &c. (2) Past dealings of God. He has led, kept, and blessed us. (3) The character of God. "God is love." The love explains His dealings. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." (4) The purpose of God. It = our good. "All things work together for good to them that love God." (5) The promises of God. However great our trial, God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "When thou passest through the waters I shall be with thee," &c.

III. *The mysteriousness of God's dealings with us.*—"Men see not the bright light." Men see not—because of: (1) Physical causes. Elijah under juniper tree. (2) Mental causes. Can the finite comprehend the acts of the Infinite? Clay and potter. (3) Moral causes. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." Clearness of vision proportionate to spirituality of heart.

IV. *The understanding of God's dealings with us.*—"The wind passeth," &c. (1) In future earthly life we shall see much that is now dark.. (2) In future heavenly life we shall know all. John xiii. 7; 1 Cor. xiii. 12

## ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE.

*Outline Sermon.*

BY THE REV. W. H. RICHARDS, FARNHAM, SURREY.

“Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.”—ST. MATTHEW xii. 13.

NARRATIVE full of various lessons. Pass by all, except the great spiritual truth suggested by this verse, viz., that with every command given by Christ there comes the power to obey; and what is needed on our part is the endeavour of faith.

I. Many Christians are like this man with the withered hand. (1) They have life, but lack power. Or (2), they have life, but carry some dead limb—of sinful habit—doubt, &c. Or (3), there is some particular gift which they have lost the use of through their own neglect, and which now seems dead.

II. To such Christ comes with His commands, which seem impossible, unreasonable, as the command, “Stretch forth,” to this man. He commands the weak to be strong, the indolent to be active, the sinful to be pure, the feeble to put forth power—to use the dead limb. Never so firm and so exacting a Master as Christ. No moral standard so high as His. No religious leader ever demanded such complete self-surrender. Yet His commands not grievous. His yoke easy, &c., because with every command He gives adequate power to obey.

III. Thus, to achieve the impossible, on our part there must be (1) Desire, (2) Faith, (3) Volition, or the endeavour of the will—the acting upon our faith, or rather upon the word of Christ—the “stretching forth.” These essential on our part, whether we seek power, holiness, restoration, or deliverance from besetting sin. Illustration: Ulysses and the Sirens. He desired to escape, put forth endeavour; beyond that we have the Almighty power on which to depend. “He giveth power to the faint,” so that “the lame take the prey.” Same truths apply to unconverted. Christ commands you to repent, believe, live. Have you the desire? If so, move Christward, in dependence on Him, and with the endeavour of faith. He will give the adequate power, and though dead, yet shall you live. His work complete—“whole as the other.”

## A PULPIT PRAYER.

BY THE REV. A. MACLAREN, D.D.

O LORD! our Father Almighty, we have to sing of mercy and of judgment. And yet, though we have two names for them they are but one, for all is mercy; and Thy judgments are righteous and true and gracious altogether. We thank Thee that Thou hast taught us to think that every good and every perfect gift, and nothing but good and perfect gifts come from above. And we pray that the deepest conviction of our hearts, not to be shaken or contradicted by any sorrows or trials or pains, may ever be that Thou art light, and in Thee is no darkness at all.

We beseech Thee that Thou wouldst help us, in the strength of such

glad assurance, to meet all which Thy holy will may appoint for us here, to discharge all duty which Thou dost lay upon us, and with patience born of confidence to accept all sorrow.

And now, O Lord! when we come to Thee we bring a great burden of need and of sin, and would ask Thee, first of all, to cleanse and release us from the yoke of evil and the load of our transgression; to deliver us from every falsehood and wrong inclination and desire that may be in us; to pardon all that has been amiss in Thy holy sight in our purest past, and to give us grace for the time to come, to make more fully our own the enlightening and sanctifying influences brought to us through Thy grace by Thy Holy Spirit; and to give to us this evening, and for all the days and nights that remain to us, the full absolution and remission of our sins; and grace to stand for the time to come.

Regard us, we beseech Thee, gathered here before Thee this evening; strengthen us, we pray Thee, in all our worship; and now, as always, may we, each of us, be able to take Thee for our portion and our heritage; and in simplicity to say that we have none on earth that we desire beside Thee.

O Lord! Thou art our all-sufficiency; may we each make Thee so, and withdraw wandering desires and fond affections from creatures if these conflict with our supreme and all-pervading love to Thyself. And help us always to set Thee before us that we be not moved. Guide us with Thy counsel, uphold us with Thy hand, direct us in all our ways; and in that dim Afterward to which we cannot but sometimes look, and to which we pray that we may look more habitually, receive Thou us into glory.

Now, O Lord, we pray Thee to hear us, forgive all our sins, and in Thy great mercy accept and love and bless each of us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

## ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Sunday, September 14, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

### PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.

ST. LUKE XIX. 11—27.

“A CERTAIN NOBLEMAN WENT . . . TO RECEIVE . . . A KINGDOM.”  
—The parable of the pounds differs from all the other parables of our Lord in the fact that it has a distinct local and historical reference to events which had recently occurred at the very place where the parable was uttered. It was at Jericho, where Herod Archelaus had built himself a sumptuous palace. On the death of his father, Herod the Great, he claimed by his will the sovereignty of Idumea, Judea, and Samaria, the northern part of his kingdom having been bequeathed to his two other sons. But all these were under the suzerainty of the Roman Empire. To Rome, therefore, Archelaus repaired, to obtain from the emperor the ratification of his father's will. The Jews, to whom he was most obnoxious, followed

\* From the American *Sunday School Times*.

him by a deputation of no less than five hundred representatives according, to Josephus, to protest against his assumption of kingly power. His enormous bribes, however, prevailed against their remonstrances, and he returned with the authority, though not with the title, of king. He took, after the fashion of his family, a fearful revenge on those who had opposed him, slaughtering three thousand Jews within the precincts of the temple, and perpetrating an equally atrocious massacre of the Samaritans. After a reign of ten years, he was summoned to Rome (though this is not alluded to in the parable), and deposed on the complaint of his brothers and his people. He was banished to Vienne in Gaul, where he died.

“GAVE THEM TEN POUNDS.”—But within this historical framework the lesson and the details of the parable are simple and without local colouring. It is still the custom in the East for grandees and officers of the government to trade through their dependents, who are, as is expressed in the text here, their domestic slaves. A pound, if we take the word to signify the Attic *mina*, was a very small sum—about sixteen dollars; but it was evidently given to each as a test to prove his ability and skill in trading. In those days, as in the East in our own day, there were very few modes of investment. There were, and there are still, money-lenders or bankers, who will receive money to lend it out on mortgage of the crops to the farmers and peasantry. But beyond this the art of banking has hardly gone. A great magnate considers it beneath his dignity to personally engage in money-lending. This he does through his subordinates, who are generally his slaves or freedmen. Orientals are almost always in debt. Their ingenuity is exercised, not in keeping out of debt, but in scheming to avoid payment of their debts. A pasha of Gaza, twenty years ago, amassed an enormous fortune in a very short time by lending small sums to the cultivators of the land on the security of the coming crop. This he did not personally, but through his household. The people, always eager to anticipate their gains, borrowed trifling sums, for which they were to pay one per cent. per month, or twelve per cent. per annum, on the security of the crop of olives, the staple of the district. The result was that at harvest-time the pasha found himself the owner of the whole crop of the district, and sold it to the hapless fellahin—for the olive is one of the principal food staples—at an exorbitant price.

“LAID UP IN A NAPKIN.”—The wrapping up of the pound in a napkin is an instance of the common practice of hoarding, money and treasure being frequently concealed and buried in a country constantly disturbed by war, and without banks or other safe means of investment. To the present day the fellahin of Palestine commonly bury their trifling savings in the ground within their houses. The habit has come down from the remotest antiquity; and as very often, through death or other causes, the hoard is forgotten, the practice of searching for hidden treasure, mentioned as early as the Book of Job, is persistently carried on, especially about ancient ruins, and is not unfrequently rewarded by success. The reward of the faithful servants is another accommodation from local history; for Josephus tells us that Archelaus, on his return, rewarded those of his retainers who had been true to him in his absence by placing them over the different cities of his dominion.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for September 14 : LUKE xix. 12—27. Golden Text ; Verse 26*

“OCCUPY TILL I COME.”

JESUS told His disciples this parable of the Pounds, because His disciples thought “that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” Our Lord here sought to turn them away from these false hopes, and to teach them the lessons of patient waiting and active work. This nobleman was going away, and he thought of a plan by which to test his servants in his absence, and so to discover those best fitted to occupy positions of trust in the kingdom he expected to receive. The servants were divided into three classes. I. The first were devoted to the service of their master. They were noble and whole-hearted. II. The second class were less devoted. III. The third class were complaining half-hearted ones, fearing rather than loving, indolent and neglectful. Then the parable tells us of the nobleman’s return, and how he rewarded these servants. His rewards to the faithful servants were evidently of grace, for they were out of all proportion to the amount gained. The unprofitable servant’s paltry excuses were heard, and he was told that out of his mouth should he be judged. He knew nothing of love or devotion, and all the more should he have been the most anxious of servants. But indolence and neglect were really wickedness which must be punished. Jesus expects all His servants to be busy. “Occupy till I come.” I know some children who went to deposit a little money in the Post Office Savings Bank. They got a form to fill in. They had first to write their names, and then their “occupation”; and one wrote, “schoolboy.” That was quite right, for that was his occupation. So, you see, the law of England expects that everyone should have some occupation. We read sometimes of some people, who put in an appearance in the police-courts, whose names are followed by the words “no occupation,” but they cannot be considered respectable members of society. Hard work has been the lot of those who have lived the best lives. Melancthon once said, when he saw some rich, idle people: “Let them have their riches; give me the work.” There are many wrong ideas in the world about labour. There are some parents who toil early and late to make money, pinching themselves to save, so that they make their sons gentlemen who can live without work. This is not according to God’s idea, for we find Jesus saying, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.”

It is not for nothing that Jesus Christ toiled at the carpenter’s bench, and He was as much the Son of God when He stood up to His ankles in washings as when He walked the seas.

Our Lord’s idea of His servants is that they should all be doing their duty. We ought to be better every-day workers in every sense for being servants of the Lord. You know we are preparing to be God’s servants in heaven, and we must begin now. Above all, those who are His servants should be anxious not to miss an opportunity of doing good to others for His sake. Ask Jesus to let you understand what He wishes you to do, and look to Him for strength to do your duty. He will honour you by giving you very much to do for Him, and at last He will say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## SOME LESSONS FROM AN UNFAMILIAR TEXT.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. THOMAS CHAMPNESS,

*Preached in St. John's-square Wesleyan Church, Clerkenwell, on Sunday  
Evening, August 31, 1890.*

I AM very much struck by this fact, that a large number of us preachers confine ourselves to a very small portion of the Bible; that there are a great many things mentioned in Holy Scripture which we never talk about. I have made up my mind that during the remainder of my preaching life I will try and take hold of some of those things which are not preached about every day. And accordingly I ask you to consider two verses in the First Book of Kings, the sixteenth chapter, the twenty-fifth and thirtieth verses:—

“And Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him. . . . And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.”

The first thing that I would have us learn is this, that very bad men may have worse sons. We are told that Omri was the worse living man than any other man that had lived up to that time, but he had a son, and it is said of his son that he was worse, worse even than his wicked father. We who are parents cannot be too careful as to our actions. We may be sure of this, that our habits and the way we spend our time is to tell upon the people that will live in the world after we are gone. Every man and woman in the world is a manufacturer of history, and the people that are living to-day are to settle whether there are to be more tears in the world in the future than there have been in the past, or whether there are to be more smiles in the world than there have been in the past. The responsibility of living is something tremendous, and it is a very happy thought that every-one of us has the power of making this world a very much happier place than it otherwise would have been. I have seen that over and over again, and you have, and you know yourselves that there are parts of your life when you have lived to make the world very much easier for other folks to live in it,

and when you have taken away from the burdens of other people and added to their joys. And I want us who have children—especially those who have little children—I want us to realise the possibilities of the cradle, the possibilities of the fireside, the power which everyone has who is king or queen, the kings and queens, the monarchs of the hearthstone, that they should so rule their hearts and lives, and so use their powers and influence over their children that their name may become a proverb of goodness. It is very nice to think that it is possible to make the most commonplace name sound like a jewel. It is possible for us to make folks, as soon as they think of our names, feel as though they were enriched, as though something valuable had been placed within their reach.

Omri's influence was the contrary of this. He had great powers as ever king had, and he used his powers so as to bring it to pass that there was more oppression, and more war, and more wickedness than there would have been if he had died in his cradle. And there are men living in London now of whom it would have been an untold blessing to this world if their mothers had buried them in a little cradle.

You will say to me, "Preacher, why do you talk to us? There is no Omri in our midst. We do not belong to this wicked class. We are church and chapel people, we are." Well, be it so, but every man has an Omri in him. Every man of us has some principle within his life which exists for wickedness, and which curbs his goodness, and which often destroys that which has been good if allowed to grow up. And, therefore, I will take you upon your own verdict, and say, though you are good, I want you to destroy in you or to ask God to destroy in you every principle of evil, and do not let it produce its own kind. I am not a great reader, but I keep my eyes and ears very wide open when I am awake, and the other day I was taking a walk with a friend of mine in Northamptonshire, an enthusiastic farmer. And as we walked along by and by we came to a field, and he paused and said, "Now, Mr. Champness, look at that field of beans. Did ever you see such a field of beans in your life?" He could not help but say, Lancashire man as he was, he had never seen a better field of beans, and I had not, though I had lived in what I considered the finest agricultural county in England. "Oh yes," I said, "these are grand ones." "Yes," he said, "but look at them docks." And he pointed out to me, up and down the field, great tall docks—weeds, you know—taller than the beans, and he said, "Do you know I spent a great deal of money on this field, cleaning it, we worked at it, and did our very best, but look at them docks—look at them!" Do you know, they were just coming into flower, were these docks, and in another week the seed-pods would be developed, and they would empty themselves all over the land. He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll send

somebody in among them beans, and I'll wring the tops off them docks and wont let them seed themselves."

That's it, that's what we want. We want the tops of the docks breaking off. We don't want evil that is in us to be allowed to seed itself and to scatter generations of evil in the time that is to come. Don't you see it? If you have got a covetous disposition, that is the Omri of your life; if you have got an evil imagination, it is the Omri of your being. If you have got an over-reachingness, a disposition to get to the windward of people in business and to take advantage of them, that is the Omri that is preventing you from making as good a score as you otherwise would have done. And I want you to see to it that the Omri of your life does not produce its own sort. I am not going to extremes. I am not preaching—whatever I may believe—I am not preaching that it is possible for men to live so that there shall be no weeds in their lives. But I do preach this, that it is possible by God's grace to prevent their multiplying in our existence, making it more and more difficult, as God's grace shall have fair play in our future conduct.

Now, these Scriptures which I have read teach me also that bad men may make things worse by unholy friendships. Ahab was worse than Omri, but Ahab was worse in his manhood than he was in his youth, because he married a woman who stirred him up to do wickedly. I want the young people here to see to it that in their friendships they do not make wickedness in themselves easier than it otherwise would be. Bad men may make things worse by unholy alliances; ay, and good men may make it much more difficult for themselves to be good by choosing their friends among the evil. Look round now. I am certain we preachers have been too mealy-mouthed in these matters, and I say to you that are not married, "Mind what you are doing." I sometimes say to young women, "Be very particular in whose company you are when you sign your maiden name for the last time." It was an evil day for the world, specially was it evil for the kingdom of Israel, when Ahab married Jezebel. She was a woman that gave birth to tragedies. She was a woman who, when her husband was only sulky, stirred him up. And you may make friends of that sort, who when your sins are like some coal clinking, when your sins are hardening and dying out, will rake them up and break them up into a flame. And I say, you had better say, "God, take me out of this world rather than let me live and marry anybody that will make me worse than I otherwise would be." Sometimes when there are weddings going on, and there is a great deal of gaiety and pleasantries, and people are dressed in their best, and everybody is wearing a smile, some of us who are in the secret, and who know something of the past and the possibilities of the future with regard to one that is being married, we feel as though the bells, instead of ringing out

a merry peal, should toll; instead of ringing out jubilant notes those bells ought to toll of dead hope, toll for dead joy, toll for dead hope. Marry those who will help you to pray, marry those who, if you want to take a wrong step, will say: "My dear, if you do that you must do it alone, I cannot go with you." Temptation is never so much to be dreaded as when the hand of affection offers you that which is evil. Therefore, I say, beware of unholy friendships. For Ahab, bad as he was, would never have been the man he became but for somebody that he married.

And now look on the other side. The story of Ahab goes to show that wickedness, however powerful, cannot prevent the existence and development of goodness. Did it ever occur to you that bad as Ahab was he knew when he was well served. He was a very shrewd and clever man, and he knew when he was well served and he had a man as his steward, Obadiah by name, and Obadiah lived with Ahab and managed his affairs for him. And when you come to study the character of Obadiah you see very plainly that bad as Ahab was, his conduct evil though it was, did not prevent the goodness of Obadiah developing even in the presence of Ahab. Those were bad days for preachers, those were hard times for faithful servants of God. As you will remember Jezebel killed all the prophets of the Lord that she knew of, but Obadiah took some of these same prophets and hid them, and fed them with bread and water. Those were days when water was very scarce, when the king himself, in order to find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, went out on a long journey, he one way, and Obadiah, his steward, another. Depend upon it if it was difficult to find water to keep those horses and those mules alive there were many poor things that perished with thirst, sheep and oxen that died in the fields. But Obadiah found a secret spring somewhere and he never told the king. When the king said "Let us go and see if we can go and find some grass," he did not say "I know a place where there is some water," but he kept that, and used to go every day and take these prophets bread and water. Better than a Worn Out Preachers' Fund was Obadiah.

I want you to think of it—this virtuous character lived in the time of Ahab and lived in the neighbourhood of Ahab. And let no man here say "I cannot be good because of my surroundings." I know better. I have good reason for saying I know better. Let no man say, "There are so many wicked people round about me I cannot be good." It is a mistake. God is stronger than Satan, and goodness is stronger than wickedness, or else what is the good of living at all? It reminds me now of a little publichouse in a village far from here which I know very well and know every one in every lane round about, and in that village public there lived a man and his wife who had formerly been Christians, and they were apostates. And there is nobody so bad as those who have been good and have for the sake of money turned bad. It was so

with these. More than one murder came out of that house. Yet in that wicked place grew a fair and lovely Christian maiden, one of the sweetest Christians I ever knew. It was her home, she had no other. These were her father and mother. And there, amidst oaths and curses and wicked brutal language, and in the very place from which murders had gone out, grew up this beautiful Christian girl. The other day a young man came to me to ask me to go and preach in their circuit. I said, "Who are you?" and he told me his name, and it was the name of those wicked people. I said, "Are you the son of so-and-so?" He said, "Yes, sir. We want you to come, sir." I said, "I will come. I am sure to come." I could not help but come. How could I help it, to be invited to come by a lad who had been brought up in such a wicked place as that? How could I say "No?" I am bound to go, and I am bound to do my best for that place. And I want you to understand that, bad as your surroundings be, God can make you beautiful. You may live in a Christless home, you may live where oaths are the staple part of the conversation, or you may be mixed up with those who use the name of the Divine Being to make their conversation the more terribly wicked, but God can keep you pure and true in spite of it all, and He can make fair flowers grow upon the edge of a volcano. It was Obadiah that lived with Ahab.

Now I go further, and say that God takes great pains to save very wicked people. It will be found at the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts are disclosed, that some of the violent and most wicked people of the earth have had great chances of being good, and that God has over and over again interfered to keep them out of their wickedness, and given them a chance of becoming virtuous and righteous people. See what pains He took with Ahab. It was in the days of Ahab that Elijah flourished. Let it be known that in the days when God was in the minority if you only counted heads—that when God was in the minority, as He was in those days, there came a man like Elijah. And I love to think that however wicked this world may be, or any part of it, God can make the finest specimens of manhood come there. And it was so with Elijah. And how Elijah, under God, was brought into conflict with Ahab to try to save him. Nobody can read the story of Carmel without reading that God does take great pains to save wicked men. I have no doubt there are bad people listening to me, because almost everywhere I go I find some very wicked people in the congregation. It is rather a singular thing, but I have found that out over and over again. I could tell you many a story about it.

I remember in one of the places where I was, one town where I lived, there came a young man, a native of the town—came to live there and entered into business, and what we thought was his wife with him. They lived together as man and wife. One

Sunday night they were in our chapel, and I was preaching. I did not know them at the time, and did not know the history of this woman, but I was preaching from the words, "Felix trembled," and one of the things I had to say was that it was Felix, and not Drusilla, that trembled. And I had a great deal to say about women who led men wrong, and made them worse than they otherwise would be. I spoke so strongly that when I got home my wife took me to task, and said I had no business to speak as I had spoken. As a rule, I find my wife's criticisms are correct—most wives' are, but the best of wives can make mistakes sometimes. It turned out that Drusilla was there. I could see her sitting in the gallery, as it might be, up there. There she was; I did not know her history. I knew afterwards all about it. She was not his wife. And not very long afterwards they left the town, and one day in Birmingham he killed her, and then killed himself, and they brought him home and buried him at twelve o'clock at midnight, with his father—poor old grey-headed father—as mourner; buried him without service. That poor thing, the kingdom of heaven came nigh to her, and she got her chance. God spoke to her by the mouth of his servant that day. It seems that somebody asked her how she liked the preacher, and she said she did not like him. I don't wonder, but there was her chance.

I do not know who is here, but I say to any wicked man who is here, "O wicked man, if thou wilt turn from thy wickedness thou shalt live." I tell thee in the name of God, and if it were the last word I have to speak, if this were my last message, and the angels were waiting here on this platform to take my soul to God, my last words would not be a message to my wife and children, but my message would be to thee, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live," for God has no pleasure in thy death. Whatever thy past has been, Jesus Christ died as a malefactor for thee. Jesus Christ, the holy and true, died as though He were the worst man that ever drew breath to bear thy shame and thy pain, and opened the kingdom of heaven that thou mightest enter in. Oh, wicked man, I plead with thee for thy everlasting soul, and I say, God is now taking pains to save you. Look at the conduct of Ahab, look at that wonderful scene on Carmel when Elijah, in the strength of faith, called the prophets of Baal to enter into battle with him, that they might prove in the presence of the assembled Israel who was right and who was wrong, and said, "Let them kill a bullock and put it upon an altar, and I will kill a bullock and put it on an altar, and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God." And Ahab was there, and the people said: "It is right, that is fair play; let the God that answers by fire be the God." You know what was done. In the presence of Ahab the priests of Baal brought their

bullock, put it upon the altar, and then cut themselves with knives, and began to cry out, "O Baal, Baal, Baal; O Baal, hear us." But there was none that regarded, and the sun climbed up the sky, and as it got near to noon they cried again, "O Baal, Baal, Baal; O Baal, hear us." But there was no response. And as the sun travelled on towards the west Elijah came forth and said, "Why don't you shout? he is asleep, he is gone on a picnic; call out now, and wake him up." And they called again, "O Baal, hear us; O Baal, hear us." But there was no reply. And when they had done all, the man of God stepped forth again and said, "Throw water on the sacrifice." And they did so. Then they gathered twelve stones. Ay, I should like to have been his labourer, and he the mason that day. I should like to have carried him the stones. He built the altar with the twelve great pieces of rock, and put his bullock on it, and then knelt down to pray. And the fire of the Lord fell, and there was only a cinder where the bullock had been. And the people cried out and said, "The Lord Jehovah is the God." That was Ahab's chance.

I say God takes great pains to save wicked men. He is taking pains to save you. Why am I preaching on this subject to-night? I pass over the godly, I pass over the Christians, I pass over even those who are not very wicked. I appeal to the wicked here, whether God is not speaking to you? Why am I preaching upon this subject? Because God has told me to try to save. "What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he find it?" And the Good Shepherd is after thy soul. The question is, Is this to be the night of your conversion? Is this to be the time when thou wilt yield thyself to God, when thou wilt give thyself up?

There is one other thing I want to say. Wickedness cannot hide itself from death. Ahab was a powerful man, he was a man of great strategy and skill. For a time he eluded death, for a time he kept himself in safe places. But the old warlike instincts came upon him, and once more he would go out into the field, once more he would fight the battle. And you will remember how, in his desire to elude death, he disguised himself and put on somebody else's armour. But somebody else's armour, it does not fit the bad, as well as it does not fit the good, whether it is David in Saul's armour, or Ahab in somebody else's armour. It does not fit. And there was a place where two iron plates did not join together. There was room for death to enter there. If you remember, one of the Syrian soldiers as he put the arrow on the string, said, "I wish I knew where the man was who has made so many widows among my countrymen," and at last he drew the bow at a venture, and the arrow came along, and it entered in the joint of the armour, and he sank down in the chariot. And they brought his body home, and they washed his chariot in the pool

which is there to this day. In the place where dogs had licked Naboth, dogs licked his blood.

I say to you, wicked man, you cannot elude death. How will you do it? How can you escape death? I wonder sometimes that men dare to go out of their homes, I wonder sometimes that men dare to get inside a railway train when they are wicked men; how do you know but the next time you gather your samples up and set off on a journey, when you take your ticket, how do you know but that when that ticket is asked for somebody will find it in your pocket—you won't be alive to show it? How do you know but what the next coach accident, how do you know but when you next sit behind horses that they may not run away? I wonder, wicked men, that you dare to go on at all, and I ask you to be honest and think on this matter. Look at the interests of your life, look at your immortality, look at the fact that you are to live on. What is to become of you? Thousands of years to-day your soul will be in existence—where, where? Where will you be and what will you be feeling? We sang just now about the scene at the judgment day. Will you think of it? Will you bring your mind to bear on it? Man, I am in earnest about your soul. I am not the minister who is to be here next Sunday, to be here for years—I have just one chance for pleading with thee for thy soul. I want to win yours for Christ. O blessed thought, Christ is here, the Saviour of men is present and would rather save thee than anybody else, thou who art deeply dyed in wickedness. And I urge thee by the value of thy soul that thou make haste and delay not to keep the commandment of God which calls thee to come in, to repent, and be pardoned of thy sins.

Yonder, not far from Sunderland, there was a terrible collision, and there was a good Methodist man who was to go to Newcastle for the day on the train. He had an invalid wife, and he always, before he started to business, with his own hands used to dress the poor invalid and put her on her couch for the day. He did not leave it for any hireling, he did not even trust his own children; but every day, every morning before he started for business with his own hands he put her there. And one morning he had been delayed, and to catch the train he ran with all his might to the station and was just in time to get in. And in a few minutes there was the collision, and the shock slew him. There was no hurt found on him, he was found sitting quietly, dead. And what do you think his daughter said? Thinking of her father, after he had been so kind to his wife, making haste, she said, "Papa ran to heaven, papa ran to heaven." It was so. But supposing it had been you, would your children have said, "Papa ran to heaven?" Would they not have to say, "Oh that papa had learned to pray"? Wicked man, wicked woman, you are without Christ and without hope. I beg of you, come to Christ, come

to-day. The collection is to be made, and I do not want it to put this thing out of your mind. Let the collection be sacred. Let us put our gifts into the boxes as though it were the hand that was nailed to the cross taking the money. And then let us pray awhile, and let those who must, go home; and give God and the church a chance to help thee to come to repentance and salvation.

## PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

BE pleased, O Lord, to impress us with the thought of our great value. Teach us something of the importance of existence. Teach us that we are candidates for immortality. Make us to know the preciousness of life. Help us to understand the responsibilities of being. Teach us to make the most of opportunity. We have come into Thy house, and we would worship at Thy footstool. "We crowd Thy gates with thankful songs." We come to bless Thy name for Thy great goodness to us. And we would make the very most of the chance we have. We bless Thee that Thou hast not given angels the monopoly of worship. We bless Thee that Thou hast not limited the power to praise Thee to smless beings, but Thou dost allow those who have erred and strayed from Thy ways to turn their faces toward Thee and ask for Thy blessing. And so we, the sheep of Thy pasture, the flock of Thy hand, though many times wandering from Thee, we turn to Thee now, and we look toward Thee and we seek Thy blessing. O God, turn not away Thyself from us, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thine anointed well-beloved Son, receive us and bless us, and make this service the occasion of great blessing. Do not let one of us go out the same as we came in, but do something for us every one.

We pray Thee to make us understand something of Thy great love, and something more of Thy wonderful willingness to save us. Pour out Thy Spirit upon us. O Jesus Christ, Who didst pour out Thy heart's blood to save us, we cry to Thee that Thou wouldst give unto us all that Thou hast obtained for us by Thine ascension, by Thy glorious intercession. Oh let the Spirit of the living God fall upon us.

While this service is going on, in every hymn we sing, and every verse of Holy Scripture that is read to us, in every sentence the speaker shall speak, let Thy power be in it all. We want Thee to demonstrate Thine existence. If there is any man here who has been afflicted with doubts as to whether there is a God, as to whether there is another world, as to whether the Bible is true, make him to feel the supernatural, make him to feel the other world, the powers of the world to come. Make him blessedly conscious that God Almighty is stretching out His hand to save him.

It may be that in this house there are gathered together some who once did well—some who once were useful workers in Thy Church—but something has turned them aside. Lord have mercy on them, and may this be the night of their restoration, may this be the time when they shall once more be brought into the blessed circle of Church fellowship and into a saving acquaintance with Jesus Christ. We pray Thee that Thou wouldst make Thy Word a power to prevent people from going wrong. We feel that in Divine things prevention is better than cure. We feel that it would be a blessed thing if many of these young people should never know what some of us have known. And we would ask Thee to make Thy Spirit to-night a power to keep them from going into forbidden paths. Make it

a power to keep them from having to shed bitter, scalding tears of remorse, which some have shed. May Thy mercy, by the agency of this service, deliver numbers of people from the knowledge of evil.

Stretch out Thine hand and bless anybody in whom we have any interest, those who are left at home; little children that are left at home—oh, be gracious to the little ones belonging to Thy people here; and to all children, to the London street children who seem to have nobody to care for them, the poor little lost children.

O God, we do pray Thee that Thou wouldst do something for this London. Do more than has yet been done. Bless all people that are doing work for Thee in this city. Grant, we pray Thee, that all efforts made for the rescue and deliverance of the people may have Thine assistance. May every man from the Bishop of London to the youngest officer in the Salvation Army—may they all get Thy blessing in any effort that they may make.

Grant, we pray Thee, that all branches of Thy Church in this country may be strengthened to go to preach the Gospel and to save souls and bodies of their fellowmen. We pray Thee to raise up other agencies than those which already exist, and to bless those which are now at work. And may this place of worship become a greater centre for active benevolence and unselfishness than it has ever been. We pray Thee to bless Thy servant, who once ministered here and has removed to other spheres of labour. God bless Edward Smith, make his future more glorious, make him still more a power for good. Let Thy young servant, who is next Sunday to begin his work here, be anointed with fresh oil and may all parts of the machinery of this church be wonderfully blessed of God.

And now we pray for all classes and conditions of men, for those who sit on thrones and for those who sit on benches in the workhouse. We pray for the waifs and strays as well as for those who have come from good homes. We pray for the great and for the little, we pray for the rich and for the poor. We pray for those who spend their lives in the abodes of learning, and those who as yet have never learned to read. We pray that Thou wouldst stretch out Thine hand and bless all kinds of men that are at work to-day, men that must be at work, men on boardship, men in camp or barrack, men who are doing their duty, and are therefore kept from Thy house. God bless them. And may every sailor upon the wide deep, and every soldier right round the world, know that there is a God that cares for them, and is waiting to bless them.

Hear these our prayers, and, though we deserve nothing, give us all things we require. We ask that self may be forgotten, and that power may be given us to lead souls unto Thee, and that this service may be the means of saving men from their sins, saving others from sinning at all. Lord, grant us our request for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

#### PRAYER AFTER SERMON.

O God, we ask Thee to hear prayer for the sufferer who asks that we should intercede that a blessing should come to her in her sick-room. The Lord go to her and bless her while we wait here.

And now we ask of Thee, O Thou God who tookest such pains to save Ahab, we ask Thee to stretch out a hand and help us in our endeavour to save some of those who are out of Christ. Thou seest the peril in which

some of them are placed, how before to-morrow comes they may be invited into some fresh sin, tempted to do something which will make it still more difficult for them to be saved. Thou knowest the temptations waiting outside for the unsaved. Lord, help them to stay and pray.

Tarry with us in our meeting. We feel ourselves helpless without Thee. We feel powerless to grasp with the souls of these people without more divine influence. Holy Spirit, come still more mightily to us. Holy Spirit, do Thine own work here still more definitely and powerfully, and save people. Lord, Thou knowest the future. Thou knowest how soon some will be in extreme peril. Thou knowest which of us is to be soon hurried out of this world. But Thou art here, and Thou art waiting to save people, and Thou art now taking pains to get some of these that have remained to pray. Continue to work, continue to assert Thy sovereignty in saving men and women. Tarry Thou with us, we beseech Thee, for Thine own name's sake.

And now may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, abide with us to-night and for ever. Amen.

## AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH LXIII., LXIV.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

THE division of the chapter is very useful in some respects, but in some respects it is a very unhappy arrangement. I wonder what we should do with others book if they were chopped up into chapters as the Bible is. For the chaptering has been very badly done indeed. Sometimes we quite lose the teaching by not going straight on with the book. Now we begin in the sixty-third chapter with "The King cometh"—the Lord Jesus cometh in the glory of His power to conquer the enemies of His Church. After that we hear her cries and prayers for His return, and in a measure we begin to see that return—not fully till we reach chapter sixty-five.

*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*

*Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?*

*I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment.*

*For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come.*

*And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me: and my fury, it upheld Me.*

*And I will tread down the people in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.*

So it runs—a dark and terrible time, no one on God's side. His people discouraged; evil triumphant. And then comes the one great hero of the Gospel, the Christ of God, and by His own unaided strength

He wins for His people a tremendous victory. Terrible to His foes as He is glorious to His friends, He stands before us the one hope of His Church. There is the picture. Now the prophet goes on to say:—

*I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord.* Do you do so, dear friends, or are you silent about them? Learn a lesson from the prophet. Talk about what God has done for you and for His people in all times.

*I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.*

*For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie; so He was their Saviour.*

And that is a verse full of sweetness. I cannot stay to-night, as my object is to read much, to take out the sweetnesses here, but there are so many, it is a piece of the honeycomb; read it when you get home, nay, suck the honey out of it and be glad.

*For He said, in the old time when first He called His people out of Egypt, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie,* will not act deceitfully. *So He was their Saviour.* He thought well of them. He treated them as if they were trustworthy. He took them into His confidence. "Surely," says He, "they will not deceive Me." This is speaking after the manner of men, of course, for God knows us, and is never deceived in us.

*In all their affliction He was afflicted.* He was with them. He was so near to them that they could not suffer without His feeling it, and they could not have a grief but what He sympathised with them.

*And the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* Happy Israel! These were her summer days, when she was faithful to God, and God communed very closely with her. Then God was very near. He could be seen in the bush, He could be seen in the cloud, He could be seen working with a rod, He was so familiar with His people.

*But they rebelled, and vexed His holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them.* A great change in the dispensation, though no change in the heart of God. This is how He deals roughly with His people. They would not be improved by tenderness, so now they must be scourged and come under His displeasure.

*Then He remembered the days of old.* They were never out of His mind. He remembered happier days, the days of old,

*Moses and His people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? where is He that put His holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make Himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble? As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst Thou lead Thy people, to make Thyself a glorious name. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of Thy holiness and of Thy glory: where is Thy zeal and Thy strength, the sounding of Thy bowels and of Thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? Just as the groom stands at the horse's head and leads it over the rough*

part of the way, so He can lead His people. *As the cattle go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: So didst Thou lead Thy people, to make Thyself a glorious name.*

Now comes the prayer suggested by their condition of sorrow and desolation. *Look down from heaven*—Thou art still there though we have wandered. *Look down upon us from heaven, and behold from the habitation of Thy holiness and of Thy glory: where is Thy zeal and Thy strength, the sounding of Thy bowels and of Thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer: Thy name is from everlasting.* It should be, “Thy name is everlasting,” for so it is. It is a sweet plea with God. We have offended, we have wandered, but we are still Thine own, redeemed with a price. And Thy name, the Redeemer, is not a temporary one. It lasts to everlasting. Therefore look on Thy poor children again. Leave us not.

*O Lord, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways, and hardened our heart from Thy fear? Why has Thy grace so gone from us that we have gone from Thee? Return for Thy servants' sake, the tribes of Thine inheritance. The people of Thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down Thy sanctuary.* Thou didst give us the land, but we had it only a very little while. It was an everlasting covenant, and, lo! the enemy has come in and driven Thine Israel away from her heritage. Can it be so? You know happy times seem very short when they are over, and when they are succeeded by dark trials we say, “The people of Thy holiness have possessed it but a little while.”

*We are now become*—for this is the true rendering—*we are now become like those over whom Thou never barest rule, who were never called by Thy name.* A sad condition for the Church to be in, and I am afraid it is getting into that condition now. Sinking to the level of the world, leaving its high calling, and becoming just like those whom God never knew and who were never called by His name.

It is a pitiful case, and here comes a prayer like the burst of a volcano, as if the hearts of gracious men could hold in no longer. *Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down.* We have asked Thee to look down; now come down, a look is not enough. Our case is urgent, we need Thy presence.

*That the mountains might flow down at Thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, or much better, “as when the brushwood takes the flame.”* For if God does but come, His people are ready to catch the fire like the dry heather. And His enemies shall feel the fire like the brushwood. “As when the brushwood burneth,” to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence! *When Thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, Thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at Thy presence.* Lord, come again, Thou didst this once; repeat Thy former acts, and let us see what Thou canst do.

*For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.* Or, another rendering is, “Since the beginning of the world none have seen a God save Thyself, who is prepared to help those who wait for Thee.” For God is ready to help. He has got everything in preparation: for all our needs He has laid in a

supply, for our prayers He has prepared answers. Blessed be His name.

*Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways.* He does not wait for us to come to Him. He meets us, He comes to us, the moment we turn our feet towards His throne.

*Behold, Thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee: for Thou hast hid Thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.* Just as the wind carries away the faded leaves, so our sin, like a mighty blast, will carry us away.

*And there is none that called upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee.* A wonderful description of prayer this. A man stirs himself up to take hold of God in prayer.

*For Thou hast hid Thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. And now, O Lord, Thou art our Father.* Adoption does not come to an end because of sin. Regeneration or sonship does not die out, cannot die out. I am my father's son, so I always shall be, and if I am my Heavenly Father's son, I shall never cease to be.

*But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?* You see he touches the minor key, and weeps and wails for the sorrows of the people. In the very next chapter God breaks out and says, "I am sought of them that asked not for Me." He will hear prayer, He does hear prayer. Let us not cease to pray.

## ORIENTAL LIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Sunday, September 21, 1890.*

BY THE REV. CANON H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., OF DURHAM.

### JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM.

ST. LUKE xix. 37—48.

"HE SAW THE CITY AND WEPT."—Our Lord had sent for the ass's colt on which He rode to a village on the hill opposite Bethany. The road by which He had walked up from Jericho through the wilderness here enters a narrow valley between two hills, the northern one being the Mount of Olives, on the south-eastern slope of which lies the village of Bethany, quite shut out from any view of Jerusalem by the intervening hill. Round the base of Mount Olivet the path winds by a rugged ascent. Passing over a smooth, rocky ledge, it takes a sudden turn to the right, and in an

\* From the American Sunday School Times.

instant the whole city, with the mighty walls of the temple platform filling up the foreground, bursts into view. When that platform, impressive and surpassingly grand in its now denuded state, was surmounted by the lofty porticos, the long cloisters, and the tall pinnacles of Herod's temple glittering with white marble in the sunlight, there could have been few grander views in the world. We may be certain that it was just at this turn, on this ledge, that the multitude halted, and Jesus, as the city burst before His view in all its dazzling magnificence, wept over its coming destruction.

**JESUS FORESHADOWS THE DOWNFALL.**—The prediction of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, uttered by our Lord, was exactly fulfilled in the minutest particulars. "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee"—literally, "a stockade." This is what Titus did in the first instance at the siege of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. He surrounded the city, as we are told by Josephus, with entrenchments surmounted by sharpened stakes. When the besieged, by frequent sallies, broke through these, he compassed the city round with a regular wall of circumvallation, so strong and so well guarded that it could not be broken through, either by sorties from within or by sudden surprises from outside. At the same time, Titus cut down all the fruit-trees and hedges of the gardens round the city, and levelled and filled in the valleys, so as to prevent any chance of a surprise, either from the city or the country. Thus they were kept "in on every side," and the incessant sorties by which the crowded multitudes within the city endeavoured to escape, and to relieve the garrison of so many useless mouths, were invariably baffled.

**"SHALL LAY THEE EVEN WITH THE GROUND."**—This was literally done by the Romans. Titus proclaimed, after the capture of the city, "We certainly had God for our assistant, and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of man, or any machines, do towards overthrowing these towers?" Accordingly he directed the tower of Hippicus to be left, as an evidence of future ages of the strength of the fortress he had captured. And this tower still stands, as every traveller knows, close to the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem. The temple and all the other buildings of the city, except the lower part of the castle of Antonia, he razed to the ground. But when from the road round the Mount of Olives we gaze on the stupendous walling which rises above the valleys of Kedron and Hinnom, and know that these very walls were those on which our Lord looked, and which in great part probably date from the time of Solomon, we must remember that we behold not any portion of the temple itself, but simply look on the massive substructure, by which a great platform was raised upon the sides of Mount Moriah, up to the height of its summit, where had been Araunah's threshing-floor, and afterwards the altar of burnt sacrifice, the mass of rock, under the dome of the mosque, now known as the Kubbet es Sukkrah.

**THE TEMPLE'S GREAT PLATFORM.**—This platform was formed by building up the massive walls which still exist, from the valleys round the mount to the height of its crest, and filling the interior partly with great cisterns and partly with massive arches and masonry. But all these were not part of the temple, but merely its platform. Titus swept, as with a besom, all the superstructure, and hurled the materials over the platform, where they now lie, heaped to the depth of a hundred and twenty feet against the south wall of the substructure.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE LESSON.\*

ON the tenth day of the month Abib—what we now call Palm Sunday—on that day Jesus slept at Bethany. Bethany was near the bottom of the Mount of Olives. It was five furlongs from Jerusalem—a little more than half a mile. It was almost a suburb of Jerusalem.

That morning Jesus got up very early, and He came over the top of the Mount of Olives, came down the side till He got near the village of Bethphage. Then He sent two of His disciples into the village to fetch Him an ass of which He had need. He knew all about the little colt, and if anybody stopped them they were to say “the Lord hath need of him.”

That is what God says to all children, “the Lord has need of you.” It seemed wonderful that the Lord should want the colt, and it is wonderful that He needs any little boy or girl. But He does. He would be happier in Heaven with you there. Did Jesus pay for the use of this ass and colt? I think He did. Did He pay Peter for lending Him the boat to preach in? Yes. Such a draught of fishes. Perhaps Christ paid the man to whom the colt belonged in some wonderful prosperity. In some way He blessed the man. You never give anything to God but what God will repay you. On which did Jesus ride? Jesus liked the young one best. Don’t you think He does so still. Does He particularly wish to have the young, “They that seek Me early shall find me. My son give Me thine heart.” Children can be of great use to the Lord.

Why did Jesus ride on “an ass” at all! Zechariah had prophesied it long before, “Lowly and riding upon an ass.” If Jesus had come in a warlike way He would have ridden a horse, but riding on an ass meant that He came in peace. In Deborah’s beautiful song she speaks of great people as “Ye that ride on white asses.” It was no condescension to ride an ass more than any other animal.

Many people thronged around Him, for Jerusalem was very full because it was the feast of the Passover. And besides He had raised Lazarus—therefore the people met Him. They carried branches of palms and sang “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” So He went in triumph along, and He passed a small river, the Kedron, and then through the valley of Jehoshaphat, and up the steep hill, and so wound His way round to the Temple. Did He stop? Yes, He stopped to weep over Jerusalem when He thought of its wickedness, and all the trouble coming on it. In His triumph He stopped to weep.

The people in the streets of Jerusalem were all shouting “Hosanna.” What did they say on the Friday after? “Crucify Him.” Was it possible the same people could be so changeable? Can we say one thing on Sunday, and another on Friday? Haven’t you felt one day “I love to pray and praise the Lord,” and before long you have done some wicked thing. This is really to stab Jesus. Take care, seeing how changeable we are. Would you like to have carried a palm and cried “Hosanna” that Sunday in Jerusalem? But you can do so now. When you sing His praises now you are saying “Hosanna.” And supposing you do something to help Jesus to ride on in His Kingdom—to help on His Kingdom. Then you are crying “Hosanna,” and carrying a palm.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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## HOPE FOR THE WORST OF SINNERS.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. JOHN EVANS,

*Preached in Liverpool-road Wesleyan Church, London, on Sunday morning,  
September 14, 1890.*

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”—ST. LUKE xxiii. 42, 43.

WHEN our founder, John Wesley, set out as an evangelist he gave prominence to the following sentiment :—First, that the best of saints is not free from danger ; and again, that the worst of sinners is not without hope. He taught the people the possibility of falling from grace, and I am rather afraid that many people practice the doctrine. But he preached in a more emphatic way that God so loved the world that Jesus tasted death for every man, that the salvation of Christ is a provision made for all without any respect of persons. In other words, he taught that the best of men is not unconditionally saved, and, on the other hand, that the worst of sinners is not unconditionally hopeless.

This miracle of grace recorded in the text is inserted in the Word of God to keep this hope, this hope for the worst, before the readers of the Bible to the very end of time. And if there is one poor sinner present this morning who is on the verge of despair, his sins so many, his conscience so burdened with guilt, his inmost soul stained with corruption and spiritual decay, and worst of all, with his force of will is giving way ; who has resolved more than once to mend his ways and seek salvation in Christ, but his manliness is dying out, and his good resolutions go to the wind ; this has happened again and again, and what is he to do ? He is sorely tempted sometimes to believe that for him there is no hope. Hope ? Yes, my friend, there is hope for you. I came to this pulpit this morning in the sacred name of the Saviour of the dying thief to proclaim to this congregation, by the help of the Holy Spirit, that there is still hope for the worst of sinners. Remember, this incident was never recorded to justify delay. It was never intended to administer any consolation to that callous, hard-hearted sinner who procrastinates

in his duty towards God, who puts off again and again this question of conversion. Oh, allow me to give a warning at the present moment, so as to prevent anyone who is tempted to leave this question until he comes to die on the ground that the dying thief was saved by Christ at the last moment. Bear in mind, my dear friend, there was another dying thief crucified at the same time and place, under similar circumstances as the one in the text, who did not repent, who died in his sins. And rather than abusing this wonderful fact of grace by justifying delay, take warning and accept Christ at once.

The message of the text is rather what I have indicated before, to preach hope, hope to the worst of sinners. It may be that some of us, believing Christ, who enjoy at this present moment peace with God, full of hope, full of joy, yet are apt to forget that there are people who live perhaps in the same street, and worship in the same chapel, whose greatest temptation is to get into despair, to give it up as a hopeless, hopeless case altogether. O God, help me to cheer that despairing heart this morning.

Come nearer, my friend. Look at this case. First of all, consider the helpless, the miserable condition of this man. He was first of all in the act of dying. Death means separation, and implies change of place. Death separates between the eye and that sweet light; between the ear and that beautiful music. Death severs between men and their closest friends, and their most beloved attachments. Death, it comes between the whole man and this whole creation, and more than that, it deprives him of every means of improvement, mental, moral, and spiritual. Death implies change, change of connections, change of surroundings, change of abode. And it is this, after all, it is this thought that makes death so solemn and awful. Death frequently implies bodily pain. To die nailed to the tree, as this poor man had been sentenced to die, meant excruciating agony and pain. Oh, just think of the agonising attitude, the burning thirst, the ceaseless pang to every nerve and muscle, to his body and his mind. It means pain that no words of mine can describe. But, after all, the solemnity of death does not consist in anything physical, in anything bodily. It is that separation, that change of abode, the summons to the soul that it serves upon us to quit our present state, and to appear without our bodies, apart from our earthly surroundings, before God in eternity. To die, even to die at home, on a smooth pillow, surrounded by tender friends, waited upon by skilful nurses; to die even when we are prepared to die, having peace with God, not afraid to die—it is a solemn event. But look at this poor man, nailed to the cross, hooted by the mob, cursed by his countrymen—this poor man was in the act of dying, yet he prayed and he was saved.

Think again, and the picture grows darker. Think again, that this man had been brought to realise the value of his soul, and

its helpless condition. "Remember me." Me, not an egotistical, big I—that is created by conceit and selfishness. That I vanishes like a dream in the presence of death. No, but the real self, the man's own soul, his true personality—"Remember me." That is one of the features of sin. We ignore our real selves, we disregard the rights and needs of our real selves, we bury the true I there. But when this man, this wicked man, is brought face to face with eternity, and surrounded as he is now with manifestations of supernatural powers, and feeling that he is in the very presence of a superhuman being, the true self leaps up and stands before him in all its preciousness, in all its solemnity—me, remember me. There may be a friend here present this morning who has disregarded this real self, who has sold his real self for the gratification of sin. The day will come when that friend will be brought to feel that there is a self down there that cannot be ignored.

"Remember me; Lord, remember me. I am quite sure that my poor mother who is weeping at the cross will think of me. I am fully persuaded that my tender sister and my beloved brother on the outskirts of this crowd will remember me. But to-day I feel that my soul is so weighty, my personality so important, so precious, so that their sympathy, their help, their remembrances, are not sufficient. I am going, I am sinking. O God, the King that pardons, the Saviour of men, remember me."

And again, let us not forget that there is another black feature in this wretched picture. Oh, may God bless this plain, simple truth, that it may reach the heart of the callous sinner. May that daring prodigal son here present in this congregation this morning remember this. May the moral degradation of this man's condition—he felt in looking that there was blackness of darkness. When the other thief is reviling our Saviour, he says: "We are unworthy, we suffer justly, we indeed justly deserve all this punishment. Here I am, I have spent my life upon sin and now my callous schemes to pilfer, and steal, and murder my fellow creatures, and yet not be caught—they are in vain, they are a miserable failure. Here am I, hurled into the other world, and I cannot see what will become of me, and my conscience is loaded with guilt." He is called a malefactor, he is described as a thief, and in all probability he had been guilty even of murder, for he was a desperate character. We read in the Bible that Manasseh, notwithstanding his bloodguiltiness, yet he was heard. We read in the New Testament that Zacchæus the publican, notwithstanding the fact that he was a thief, yet found salvation; and the poor woman in the street, although she was a harlot, she was forgiven. But this poor man, in him we have the bloodguiltiness of the king, we have the dishonesty of the publican, we have all the rough pollution of the street, combined in his character. I can hardly think of a worse character, a more hopeless case. A

word of prayer never before quivered on a more unholy lip, never before ascended from a blacker heart. Even the darkening heavens above him were bright compared with the blackness within. Where is the man who is in despair; where is the man who has almost given up every hope of salvation? Let me invite him forward. Come forward now and look at this case.

Look again, and see the conduct of this man. He must do something. There is no time to be lost. As I said before, he is in the act of dying. Oh, if he could only have a couple of days to hear a sermon delivered by the Lord Jesus on the way to the kingdom, or that some word of advice should drop from the lips of one of the Apostles concerning this great question, namely, the salvation of the soul. But there is no time for any such thing. The great process of death is pushing the man nearer the precipice moment by moment. A few minutes longer and the soul of that man will be weighed in the balances. There is not a moment to be lost. What is the man to do? He must do something. It is one of the fixed principles in God's government in grace as well as in nature, that He never saves a sinner unless an effort is put forth on the part of the sinner himself. And then, poor man, he must put forth the little power, the little effort he can command. What is he to-day? What can he do? What could you have done had you been placed in the same circumstances? But he must do something. There is a great variety in the behaviour of the crowd. The Pharisees, the selfish, formal Pharisees, they are reviling the Saviour and shaking their heads with contempt. The poor women are weeping at the foot of the Cross. Some of the disciples are busy burying their hopes. Roman soldiers are already parting His garments. What is this poor man to do? What is there left for him to do but to pray? He never prayed before. His knowledge is limited, his words are few, but there is nothing else left for him. He cannot save himself, he must appeal to a power which is stronger, higher than himself. He must feel after a God; but where can he find Him? Where can he find the Mighty One to save? "Who is this on my right?" he said. "He has prayed now for those who nailed him to the tree, who is He? What means this darkened heaven; what mean these rending rocks, these bursting graves? What is the meaning of all this? Is He after all the Son of God, the Saviour of man? It may be that He is. There is nothing for it. I will try." And he prayed, "Lord, remember me." It is a short prayer, but it stretched right up to Paradise and received for Him an eternal home. Where is that man who is on the brink of despair? Try this prayer. It is already made, it is short, easily remembered—"Lord, remember me."

Now, what became of this prayer? It is a most important day even in the history of the Son of God. It is the great day of atonement. He came down from heaven, as George Herbert puts it,

“undressing all the way, in order to die and take away the sins of the world.” You remember what an important day was the day of atonement in former ages in connection with the Jewish High Priest. The sacrifices were brought forward, he divested himself of his holy garments, he went to the laver and washed his flesh in pure water, he girdled his loins with fine linen; then he goes in to have his censer lighted at the foot of the altar of burnt offering, and places it within the veil in the Holy of Holies. He goes again with his golden vessel, to have it filled with blood. Ah, what an important hour! The destiny of the entire nation is now in the balance. Suppose a poor leper knocks at the door, anxious to see the High Priest. “The High Priest to-day? There is no time for even a leper to see the High Priest to-day. It is the great day of atonement. Go home.” That would have been the reply. But look—look at Jesus Christ on Calvary—the most wonderful hour in the history of the universe, the final glory of the departed saints in heaven, and the only hope of sinners on earth, even to the end of time, are depending upon His right discharge of His duties to-day. I could almost fancy angels poising on their wings and suggesting to their Master and Lord, “O Lord Jesus, to-day, even if Thine own mother ask Thee a question, ignore it. If one of Thy fellow sufferers offer a prayer, forget it.”

The day was so important that there was no time for the poor thief to waste in hesitation, and he ventured to pray. And although Jesus, our great High Priest, was in the very act of giving Himself up for the sins of the world, while the tread of His feet upon the winepress alone was shaking earth, although His unutterable groans were rending the rocks, and His blood pacifying the law of God, and His whole conduct magnifying the love of God before the universe; yet when this poor sinner prayed, He answered, and with an infinite arm stretched forth He snatched the soul of the poor sinner from the very jaws of hell itself.

And oh, mark how the answer surpasses far all the request of the prayer. Read the text again: “And he said”—the poor sinner said—“Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” And what did Jesus say? “Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” The poor sinner, he simply prayed for remembrance, but Jesus raised him to companionship. He prayed for a passing thought, but Christ gives him a permanent pardon. The Lord said, “Verily—I give you My word; stand on that rock—I say unto thee, notwithstanding thy past history and thy present unworthiness, though thou art weak, I am strong; thou art a sinner, I am a Saviour.” I and thee—Oh, when the sinner and the Saviour meet together there is glory. A blessed link is created on the spot. “I say unto thee, to-day.” “To-day.” What a memorable day to the poor thief. To-day on the cross, to-day on the throne; to-day in disgrace, to-day in glory; to-day a sinner, to-day a saint; to-day a criminal,

to-day an angel; to-day, before our bodies are cut down and these crosses removed; to-day, before My tears dry up on the pavement of the city, before My blood congeals at the foot of this cross; to-day, before the earth ceases to shake; to-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise, with Me to guide thee and guard thee on the way home; with Me to introduce thee to My Father and His great family; with Me in Paradise." Paradise lost—that is our sorrow; Paradise regained—that is our prospect. There is a fine garden, where perpetual summer reigns—Paradise. Oh, make an effort to climb up there, brothers and sisters. "With Me in Paradise." He is not going to leave him to get adrift in the wilderness, or to spend a certain time in purgatory, half-way home. Straight up, "With Me in Paradise." What a wonderful answer.

But the promise was fulfilled. The great transaction on Calvary is coming to a close. The chariots of heaven are covering the mountain side ready to carry the conqueror home. Everything is ready to go, and the angels are hastening to leave. But the Saviour says, "Stop a moment." "Oh, the crown of glory and the heavenly welcome are waiting. We have been ordered to hurry back." "Yes, but wait a moment. Look on that poor sinner there. Wait until these soldiers break his limbs and release his soul. I have promised to give him a lift on the way home." Then they ascended into heaven.

And the voice from heaven comes down to this chapel this morning. Hope for the worst of sinners. Come to Jesus now, just as you are. And may God bless this Sunday morning service in the salvation of souls. Amen.

## THE SAVIOUR'S RULE.

*A Sermon,*

BY F. SCHLEIERMACHER, D.D.\*

"Then said Jesus to His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."—ST. MATT. xvi. 24. It is a very remarkable connection in which the Saviour spoke these words. He had asked His disciples who the people said He was, and what was their own opinion about Him; and when Peter had answered for himself and in the name of the rest that they knew surely that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Saviour had given him His full approval, and said that flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, he could not have known that either of himself or from other men, but the Father in heaven. But immediately after this (for in this the accounts of all our three first evangelists agree), when the Saviour began to tell His disciples beforehand that He must suffer and be delivered up and slain in Jerusalem, and Peter answered Him, "Lord, spare Thyself, that this come not upon Thee," then He repulsed Him with stern words, as being

\* Specially translated.

for the moment possessed by a spirit utterly opposed to Christ, and seeking not the things of God, but those of men. And yet it was impossible that the Saviour should not still have in mind what He had so shortly before said to this disciple; and therefore we must think of the two things as compatible: that there may be in a human spirit that faith in Christ as the Son of the living God, which is, in fact, the revelation of God Himself to him, and at the same time that state of feeling which the Saviour rebuked in this way. And when He had thus spoken to Peter, He addressed to all the disciples (as again all the three evangelists agree in recording) the words of our text, in which He, as it were, makes this the condition on which alone the faith of His being the Son of the living God can make a man His disciple, the condition that everyone must deny himself and take up his cross.

Now if we consider just in the light of all this context how the words of our text stand connected with the Saviour's announcement of His approaching sufferings, and how we seem only to hear over again in them another word of the Lord, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord," we shall readily admit that this word is thoroughly of a piece with the then existing circumstances of the first disciples, that it is quite in accordance with the earliest times of Christianity, when as yet the open and loyal confession of the Saviour naturally involved much suffering; but just because this is true we could easily suppose some one might add that now it has no longer any real bearing on us. Nevertheless everyone who hears this last suggestion will ask himself, Are we to make such a distinction; dare we make it among the sayings of the Saviour as to regard some of them as applying only to the nearest circle in which He lived, to whom He spoke, and only some others, as given to the whole Church of believers to the end of time? This question gives rise to various differences among Christians, and has almost always been, and is specially in our own days, a cause of endless debate among them, and, indeed, when we consider the subject closely we cannot but see that this is very natural. For could we actually persuade ourselves that our Lord and Master really lived a man among men without speaking to them when they were beside Him, with reference to the exigencies of the time, and therefore for the passing moment, and out of the strength of feeling called up and required by that moment? And if He did so speak, then we must believe, on the one hand, that very many of His sayings were of this kind; but, on the other hand, did He not know—was it not indeed always present to His mind—that He was not speaking only for the generation then living, still less for that little flock alone which then followed Him, but that He was sent as the Saviour of the world so that light and truth as to the things of God should for ever be found in perfection only in the power of His words, in the wisdom of His mouth? And, therefore, must He not have borne constantly in His mind and in His heart, besides the crowds who surrounded Him and besides the disciples, all those who even to the end of the world should believe on Him through this world? The one truth can as little be denied as the other. What therefore remains for us to say, but that with the saying of the Saviour this must be the case, that we shall find they have, for the most part, two different sides; there may be something in them that derives its whole force from the relations and circumstances of the moment for which He spoke; but in them all there is

a truth that endures and is of force for all time. In this light then let us consider this rule of the Saviour, that in order to be His disciple a man must deny himself and take up his cross.

Let us, in the first place, carefully consider certain points that must not be overlooked in applying in a general way the sayings of the Saviour exactly as He spoke them in the then existing circumstances; and then, in the second place, lay to heart the truths contained in them, which are invariably the same, and just as necessary and applicable to ourselves.

I. In the first place, then, when the Saviour says, "He who will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me," these words were in the highest degree applicable to the circumstances in which they were spoken. They were spoken in reference to the remonstrance of His disciple; well-meant, doubtless, and dictated by heartfelt love, and yet utterly unsuitable and mistaken, urging Him to spare Himself, that such sufferings and such a death as He had spoken of should not befall Him. He indicates to them that they also in following Him must be prepared to bear what was difficult and repugnant to them, so that we cannot understand the expressions "self-denial" and "cross" in any other way than that in which we use them in ordinary life. But if we wish to make a general application of this rule in the same sense, two difficulties present themselves—the one or the other suggested according to different dispositions.

Only reflect, first of all, how great a difference there is in the proportion in which the adversities and troubles of this life are assigned to individuals. And this inequality in no way depends on differences of position or occupation, which though only external are yet in a certain sense permanent distinctions for a man's whole lifetime. No! in the world of indigence, and in that of luxurious wealth, in the lowest stage of degradation, and in the circumstances of those who occupy high places in human society, troubles and disappointments are to be found in equal measure. In the one class as in the other there are those who are continually tossed by the storms of life, and are hardly delivered from one misfortune, from one sorrow or suffering, till they become a prey to another. And on the other hand, there is often, in the simplest and most obscure life, even in the most unfavourable circumstances, an outward calm, a quiet peace that is little disturbed, so that little suffering or real sorrow is seen in the life. It is quite another source from which these differences proceed. They arise, on the one hand, from the mysterious connection, so inscrutable to us, yet always anew exciting our curiosity, between the physical or earthly part and the spiritual part of our nature; on the other hand, they arise from the variety of ways in which the life of each person may become involved in connection with the general state of things, and according to the place and order in his life of events and circumstances over which the individual has no control whatever, and which may occur to the meanest as to the highest; events which, therefore, are most like what we in our shortsighted weakness are accustomed to regard among earthly things as accidental, which are subject to no calculation, and for which no law can be laid down.

Well, now, let us imagine a scrupulous spirit, anxious about his salvation, and deeply impressed with this rule of the Saviour's, that it is necessary for a man to deny himself and take up his cross in order to be His

disciple. But this person is in that peaceful position, otherwise so desirable, as far from great turns of good fortune as from heavily pressing pain and suffering; he is going on quietly amidst the surroundings to which he is accustomed, and in which he has been brought up from his youth, without any definite occasion for denying himself or giving up anything that forms a part of his ordinary life, whatever his circumstances may be. What doubts will seize on such a scrupulous spirit, because, with the best will, he cannot possess himself of the firm and sure evidence on which the Lord will acknowledge His follower. If there is really nothing in which to deny ourselves, if there is no cross to take up, whence have we any certainty that He reckons us among His followers? Whence any certainty that living faith in Him, as the Son of God, is counted to us as belonging to the host of those whom He acknowledges as His disciples? Oh, what a painful struggle this idea may easily cause in many a pious mind! As Jacob wrestled with the Lord, and would not let Him go unless He blessed him, although he does not seem to have had in view any definite blessing, so we may suppose such a soul as we have spoken of wrestling with the Lord for the special blessing of the cross, and how possibly wrestling ever in vain till the last hour of earthly life has struck. If, then, we could suppose that while the Lord, who has revealed to us the will of His heavenly Father, said that those alone are His followers who prove it by denying themselves and taking up their cross, yet the Father whose will He reveals, and who appoints the lot and controls all the circumstances of men, has denied to some the cross which they needed in order to make themselves sure of their faith and to be certain of their salvation, although they, not less than others, had seen in the Saviour the glory of the only begotten Son, what kind of an idea of a loving Father would necessarily be the end of such a vain struggle?

But let us consider yet another point. When there is a question of a human soul being freed from earthly bonds, and of arousing in it the longing after higher and eternal things; there are great diversities of opinion among men as to what is most likely to effect this; whether the calm of an untroubled life, inclining us so much to recognise an eternally over-ruling goodness, or manifold difficulties, distress and misery, awakening in the soul the sense of how little man is sufficient for himself, of how little he is his own master, and thereby leaving us to look up to a higher master. But supposing a man to have reached this position; that he has become acquainted with the kingdom of God on earth, and has been received into fellowship with the Saviour—then if we ask, what is the social atmosphere most favourable for cherishing the germ of heavenly love and of everything good in the soul during this earthly state; What are probably the circumstances in which a man most generally grows and matures in wisdom, to the stature of a perfect man in Christ, without disturbance or interruption?—there can be little doubt of the answer. Most of us will agree in this that the more quiet and undisturbed a man's position is, without the disappointment and trials of life to lead him into temptation, without a superabundance of earthly possessions to allure him to sensual enjoyments and to awaken pride, the better it is for his progress; that it is in this kind of middle position and in those tranquil outward circumstances that the tender heavenly plant, during this earthly life, ever thrives best and most securely. That is the universal feeling. But if we attach to the

Saviour's words the special meaning that He intended them to have in this text, and yet wish to make them universally applicable, then we must give up all our wishes in regard to what we count the natural and, probably, the best thing to aim at in the conduct of human affairs, and what the noblest and best unremittingly toil to bring about. For what should be the aim of all the wisdom, all the mutual self-sacrifice, all the faithful love, by which we seek to bring our social relations into good and happy order—what but just this, that the troubles of life, by which peace and quietness are forcibly interrupted, may always be becoming fewer? And yet, in the case I have supposed, we should be obliged to desist from these wishes and efforts, that no one might lack what was necessary for his salvation, that every one might find sufficient opportunity for self-denial, every one find a sufficient cross to take up, in order only to be sure that he was one of the followers of the Saviour.

This, then, is the first difficulty that naturally presents itself when we attempt to give a universal application to this word of the Saviour in its limited and temporary sense; now let us look at the other.

There are some Christians—I cannot better or more truly indicate them than by calling them strong-faithed people—who, as soon as they come to know the Saviour and have given themselves to Him, no longer give way to any doubt, but have an immovable certainty that they are destined to the salvation that comes from Him. But now this word sounds in their ears, "He who will be My disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." What is the effect on minds like this of such an application of Christ's words? Ah, we see it only too often in human life. They feel equally sure that the cross which is necessary as a mark of the Lord's followers will not be wanting to them; that there will not be wanting to them occasions of self-denial, by which He will acknowledge His own. And yet their lives are beset with no greater difficulties than those of others, they have no more struggles to maintain than they; but whatever of that kind befalls them, though perhaps in itself, and regarded in its true light, of much less importance, they represent to themselves as a cross, and rejoice over it accordingly. That which, perhaps, requires no strong effort of will, what perhaps comes up naturally with others as an active exercise of piety, they picture to themselves as a high degree of self-denial, that it may correspond with the inward certainty which they feel.

And that we may see the full evil of such a state of mind, let us take note of two things in human life. There are very many kinds of things—and certainly they form a great part of the afflictions and disappointments of a man's life—which befall him from no other cause than his own imperfection, his own faults, and the still so frequent victories of the flesh over the spirit. And just these people of robust faith are, moreover, sometimes inspired with a zeal which, in respect of its object, can be called nothing but commendable, well-pleasing to God and of good report among men, but which, in regard to its vehemence, has really much of an earthly and fleshly character. And, if in giving vent to this zeal they in any way hurt the feelings of others, and then have to experience the usual results of so doing, they regard this with satisfaction, as suffering which comes upon them for Christ's sake; they believe that they are thus taking up and bearing His cross. Had they not taken up this idea, these sufferings might have been in deed and truth a blessing to them; if they had accepted

them as only the natural consequence of their own conduct; seeing that they only needed to trace them back to their real cause to discover that they were the result of their own imprudent business dealings, their thoughtless or selfish character, or their want of love. But the more they regard such sufferings as coming upon them for Christ's sake, the more this salutary effect is lost. And the more it becomes a matter of course with them to hold this opinion, just the more are they yielding to human infirmity, and are ever anon congratulating themselves on the sufferings which they bear for Christ's sake, and by which they believe they will be known by Him as being His followers more fully, more surely, and better than others. Is this not just as great a mistake as the other, though in an opposite direction? Can we believe that in such a way of thinking which so manifestly, so conspicuously, so visibly to the whole world hinders the progress of sanctification—that in such ideas the truth of the Saviour can be found? And yet this is a natural result of the manner in which that word of the Lord is quite justly applied, if we regard it as a universal rule and pattern in the sense in which it was originally spoken.

And this is not all: if, in connection with this second error we note the fact, that things which, when they happen to ourselves we regard as serious calamities, we are only too ready to estimate far more lightly when others have to suffer them; we cannot help seeing that this way of applying the Saviour's rule leads to comparisons that are utterly unjust, and to judgments of others that are utterly mistaken. And what interruption to the true unity of the Spirit, what a limiting of Christian love, is the natural result of this. For if others who are just as deeply interested in the kingdom of God, not being carried away with this kind of blind zeal, do not fall into the same difficulties, but peaceably and quietly pursue their Christian course, they are regarded by those zealous people as not bearing the true marks of Christ's disciples. They are never seen (say those partial judges) coming forward as true and self-denying Christians; they are never seen taking up the Lord's cross; rather they know how to find the way through the earthly life even without the cross; they were able so to accommodate themselves to their circumstances as to have no need of self-denial. Now is not this a misconception of the higher Christian wisdom that lies in such a manner of guiding one's life? Do not such people in this way falsify to themselves the whole conception of the true nature of the Christian life? But this, also, is a natural result of the error of which we have spoken.

II. Well then, let us now see in the second part of our subject, how we are to understand this word of the Saviour as being a word from Him to all His disciples, for all times, for all conditions, without distinction.

When Peter, after the Saviour had foretold His sufferings, exhorted Him to spare Himself, that those things should not befall Him, what had he in his mind but that a longer continuance of the Saviour's visible presence on earth was needful, if the kingdom of God was to be brought in; and he was afraid that if the Saviour was obliged to meet sufferings and death it would probably be again only a hope—as some other disciples afterwards said—that Jesus would have redeemed Israel. This completion of the kingdom of God was before his mind as an event very immediately at hand; but how far the kingdom of God on earth still was from its completion, what patience and long suffering, what perseverance amidst manifold disappointments, would be required if everyone were to do even

a little, but that little truly and faithfully, towards its advancement—all this was quite foreign to his thoughts, and certainly as little had the other disciples any idea of it. There are not wanting various proofs in our Holy Scriptures that at that time what they had in their minds was a near event, that they entertained the hope that soon, in some way, under Divine direction and through the personal influence of the Lord, the kingdom of God would be set up in its full glory: so that it was not until the Saviour had suffered and died that they could attain to the true knowledge so necessary to them, of the way in which it would be their duty to carry on His work.

Without taking this opinion into account, we are in the matter itself quite like the disciples. From us also the consummation of the kingdom of God is still at a distance; we, too, must say that we can only see it as through a glass darkly; our imagination cannot yet produce the true, full, and living picture of it, because we are still too much encompassed by the imperfections of man's condition on earth. But so long as these conditions exist, so long, also, is there the same necessity for all the disciples of the Lord to deny themselves and take up the cross, as the Saviour has placed the two things in direct connection.

The cross which He Himself was appointed to bear was a great burden, first of all, because, apart from its being a burden on the direct way to death, it was a burden that He must carry alone; and that He bore it was His free act, but certainly not His original choice. He did not take up the cross because He wished to suffer, because He coveted pain and wounds, because He wished to die earlier than He would otherwise have done; but in order to drink the cup which His Father in heaven put into His hands, and at no one moment less than another to be fulfilling the will of His Father, to which He referred everything connected with the outward carrying on and finishing of His work.

Well, then, in this sense we must all, in like manner, deny ourselves and take up our cross. What self have we to deny? Certainly not that better self, through which we are members of the kingdom of God and of the living, spiritual body of the Lord; not that self which is directly the temple of the Divine Spirit, in which He dwells; but we know well, that is not our whole self. What we have to deny, what we must all always be denying, just because we are to take up the cross in order to follow the Lord, is this natural self, which, looking at it not in connection with sin, but merely in respect of human infirmity, is acted on in two ways; it is affected by the force of habit, and by the power of momentary impressions. As often as we obey those impulses, we are failing to deny ourselves, and we can never obey them without missing something of what is offered to us in the kingdom of God. Whenever we do anything, whatever it may be, because we are accustomed to do it, or because we do not wish to be disturbed in our life-long habits; whenever we do anything because we are seized with some eager desire, of whatever kind; these things do not proceed from the spirit that seeks to build up the kingdom of God, and must, therefore, have more or less of an opposite effect. Every such moment, in which we are wanting in real denial of self, draws us deeper into the bondage of our natural mind, and therefore diminishes our actual liberty as children of God. Without freeing ourselves from these notions by self-denial, we cannot take up the Saviour's cross—His cross as the

burden it was to Him. It is true, indeed, that it is no longer with us a question of such sufferings as the first disciples had to endure for the kingdom of God ; that belongs to the dreams of those mistaken minds we spoke of ; for what are all false representations of our words, what all the scoffing at the living faith of Christians, which, besides, is always becoming less, nay, what are all such pitiful trifles that we should venture to look on them as a cross ? But although this is true, yet it is also true that everyone who is in earnest to work for the kingdom of God has his cross to bear. True, it is not always easy to keep this one thing in view in all circumstances and to measure every step by it. For even if we keep ourselves free from all the force of habit, if we permit no momentary impression to have power over us, if we ourselves act by the direction of the Spirit, according to the aim set before us ; yet in so doing we come into collision with others, who, although generally speaking they are as much under the control of the Divine Spirit and as much enlightened by the Divine Word as ourselves, yet may in this or that particular instance be opposed to us, being misled by habit or some momentary excitement. And thus even where we see clearly, and have discovered the right way, we have to fight against the prejudices and the mistakes of others ; and thus everyone has his burden to bear, be the circle of his influence what it may, greater or smaller, in so far as he is in earnest about the advancement of God's kingdom. Therefore he who does not deny himself and take up his cross by this constant crossing of the ways and aims of men is not by his deeds a follower of the Lord, and his faith that Jesus is the Son of the living God consists more in words and in passing emotions than in powerful, active work.

But, again, the cross which the Saviour bore was at the same time the mask of a foreign rule, under which He, with His whole nation, lay and groaned. For if this had not been the case, that would not have been the kind of death the Saviour would have died, and the whole unfolding of His earthly career could not have led up to exactly this issue. Now the same death constantly threatened His disciples. Just as the man who exercised authority in the name of a foreign, heathen power was drawn into joining with those who belonged to the Saviour's own nation, and in this way his earthly lot was brought about ; the same, He knew, was in prospect for His disciples. They would find everywhere a dominion different from that of the kingdom of God, and this would prepare for them adversities in abundance ; but they were to take up even that cross, and to meet those adversities just as joyfully as they were to bear the burden of active life, and of obedience to the will of God.

And thus it is still. For, though we all confessed the name of the Saviour, though all were Christians in deed, and not merely in name, and had really the mind and will to follow Him ; yet we should be obliged to say and confess that another power than the power of the kingdom of God rules in the world : that is, men's earthly business, which still exercises a power over them that is not seldom hostile to the kingdom of God ; and even when it is not hostile, yet always remains alien to it. Everything that is done among us—and it is not a little—not purely with the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God, not from this motive pervading the actions of men, impelling them or sanctioning their doings ; in short, whatever is done just as it might have been done if we had not been Christians, is

done by a foreign power. And if thus the desire after earthly things, delight in man's rule over natural things for its own sake acts as a special motive, how easily it happens that what is done with the best intentions for the kingdom of God is repressed, and that all the most zealous servants of the Lord must bend under that power which girds them and carries them whither they will not ; just as the Saviour Himself bowed under His cross. And this cross He has left to all His disciples without distinction, until that is at last an actual fact which the first disciples thought was even in their time close at hand, that there are no other powers in human affairs, of any kind whatever, nothing by which we are either urged on or opposed, but the power of the Spirit and of the Word of God. Until that state of things has come, we shall all be aware of this opposition ; and amidst other claims on our hearts and our time must struggle on, each one to his goal, must bear with courage and cheerfulness, and without relaxing in our zeal the feeling that a foreign power is restricting the free development of the kingdom of God—bear it by ever anew taking up this cross. And if we reflect how every time that we are anew made conscious of this adverse power, it casts a sting into the human soul ; how easily at such times we are drawn into being influenced by a momentary impulse, though the zeal to which we are thus moved is no longer the true, pure, wise zeal for the House of God, but a consuming and passionate emotion ; must we not be constrained to admit that every way in which we can be called to take up the cross must ever begin with the denying of ourselves and return to that.

And finally, the taking up of the cross was for the Saviour the way to death, to a premature death, before the fruits of His presence could have time to ripen. And the thought of this was so much and so often before His mind that there can be no doubt when He spoke to His disciples of taking up the cross, He meant to announce to them that this lot should be theirs also. They saw indeed more of the fruits of their labours than the Saviour saw of His. For in how many places was the word of God made known through their preaching, and Christian churches gathered ! But the clearer the eye of faith became on the one hand, the more confidently on the other hand they had expected the consummation, and still for the most part were looking for the second appearing of Christ, so much the more must what they actually saw have come short of their expectations. And the times of trouble which their Master had so plainly foretold, by which their work was first to be tested, and even for the first time fully vindicated ; who knows if more than one of them lived through those times and survived them !

This cross also we must take up, and reconcile ourselves to the thought of not living to see and enjoy the fruits of our labour. Nowhere do the affairs of men make equal progress, and even the soil on which each one has to sow his seed and expend his labour, is unequally apportioned. Even if we are now living in a time of which we can boast that it is witnessing a great progress of the Gospel, what is the work as a whole, but that more soil is being prepared for the seed ? It is true we plant and water ; but as we have ourselves come into the labours of others, and reap where we did not sow, as the Saviour said to the apostles, so others will in turn come into our labours and gather the harvest for which we have toiled. But love reaches downwards ; and therefore we do not easily bring ourselves to acknowledge the resemblance that really exists here. If life

is going on under its usual conditions, little indeed of the joyful harvest that we gather into the barns is the fruit of our own labour. The new era which we have helped to introduce, we know, but not without bitter pain, that we shall not have the joy of seeing its fairest blossoms. The younger generation, in whose hearts we have sown the seed, and fostered its first shoots, if they wish to pay their debt, will remember us only at our graves. We know, and we need not be ashamed to confess it, that this is a cross for us to take up; and if we would not have it hinder us in our work, we must begin by denying ourselves in this respect also.

Therefore, taking all things together, the Saviour was certainly right in making this condition so universal. We may safely assert that so long as this earthly state of things lasts, there will be no disciple of the Lord who will not have cause to deny himself and to take up the cross; and the two duties are essentially connected. There are Christians who hold a different opinion; who think that no doubt we must take up the cross as long as we are in the world and the opposition between the world and the kingdom of God still continues; but that we should say no more about self-denial, everything about which we might need to exercise self-denial should be utterly obliterated from our minds. The Saviour took up the cross, and owned that He did so; but that He should have to deny Himself was not consistent with His divine dignity. He could not have said that of Himself in the same sense without putting Himself on a level with us in a way in which He was not really so. But because this was His special prerogative, because it was a part of His glory as the only-begotten Son, that he had no need to exercise self-denial, He announced it as a universal rule for all His disciples, and it would only be empty self-conceit in us to try to believe that we had carried self-denial to such a degree of perfection as to have no longer need to practise it. If we have only looked deeper into our hearts in moments of human weakness, there will be no one who can say of himself that he has no need to deny himself; just as everyone must say, that the whole position of human affairs is such that he must take up his cross if he wishes to do the will of his Father in heaven, and so in deed and truth follow the Saviour.

Therefore, even if our life could be free from afflictions and trials, if there were nothing from without which could cloud the manifestation of peace which the higher life effects in men, if all that were past and gone, yet we should be bound to say that this is still the Saviour's rule for all His disciples to the end of the world. They alone who deny themselves and take up their cross have living, efficacious faith in Him as the Son of God who came to bring true salvation. And although we know well that we shall never have perfectly fulfilled this law, yet in the measure in which we fulfil it we have the witness of the Divine Spirit in us that we are the children of God, who have received power to become such through Him, our Lord and Saviour; and only in this measure will our life be a picture of that peace which the Saviour left to His people, and which He alone can give now and evermore. Amen.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for September 28 :—Review of the quarter's lessons.*

### AIMING AT HIGH THINGS.

"Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth."—COL. iii. 2.

IF you should shoot an arrow at the ground, you would be sure to hit the ground, but no one could praise you for it. If you should aim at a very small mark and should hit it, all would praise you for your skill. To shoot downwards and hit the great earth, anybody can do that : but to shoot upwards and hit a small mark, very few can do that, and few have patience enough to get the skill to do it. It is said that Indians put their boys' dinners on limbs of trees and the boys must shoot them down before they can have them. Thus they learn to shoot straight.

Paul told the church at Colossæ—and the children in it—to set their mind on the things that are above, where Christ is, and not on the things which are upon the earth which is under the feet. He tells us to do the same. Our text tells boys and girls to aim at high things, and to keep aiming at them until you hit them. Let us see how you may do this.

I. In the home there are high and low things, and you should set your mind on the best things there, and strive for them until you win them. You should aim to be the best boy or girl in the home for good manners, for kind treatment of one another, for ready obedience to your parents, for tender love in everything. If you fail now and then, try again, and still again until you succeed. Hit this high mark in your home.

II. There are high and low things in play, and you should mind the high and shun the low. You should be fair in play, and never unfair ; truthful, and never untruthful ; kind, and never unkind.

III. There are high and low things in schools ; you can just play at school, have poor lessons, and be a bad scholar ; or you can study and work hard and behave as you ought. Now on which will you "set your mind ?" Aim at the high things, get every lesson perfectly, and make your conduct and schoolship perfect.

IV. There are high and low things in learning a trade. Do not slight any little detail. Perfection comes from minding trifles ; aim at the highest and do everything in the best way.

V. Paul looked above the things of earth and said, "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is." Let us set our minds on Christ and Heaven. Pray to Jesus to help you to mind the Heavenly things. Think on the things that are above. If you set your mind on them, God will guide your feet into Heaven.

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\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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ONE PENNY.

## ENDURING TRIAL.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

*Preached in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, on Thursday Evening,  
August 29th, 1890.*

“In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”—Job i. 22.

THAT is to say, after all this—this trial, this temptation, these losses of his goods, this loss of all his children at a blow; all this—it was a great word, was it not? Some of you have got troubles to-night, but if you lay them down by the side of Job's troubles they will be mole-hills compared with his. All this—all this, reduced from a peer to a pauper, from a man of great wealth to one of absolute poverty; in all this—a father, and ten children taken away—Job sinned not. Ah, dear friends, if God could keep Job in all that, you may look at your trouble to-night and say, “God can keep you in all this.” It alludes also to all that Job did, and all that Job said, and all that Job felt. He had shaved his head and rent his garments, and he had spoken wondrous words; but in all this Job sinned not. He rose up, for he was a man of action, a man of great and powerful mind, and he put forth that mind; but in all this Job sinned not. It is a great deal to say of a man when you write the story of his life. I fear it will never be the case with any one of us. He passed through a world of trouble; here it is, the catalogue written within and without with lamentations, but in all this he sinned not. He did this and he did that, and he spoke this and he spoke that. “In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” Let us think of this very wonderful matter in a practical way.

I. And our first head shall be, *In all our fears the main thing is, not to sin.* It is not said that in all this Job was never spoken against; for he was spoken against before God, and slander even reached the ears of the Highest, and by and by he was spoken against among men, ay, among good men, who brought fearful charges against him. You must not expect this, dear friends, that you will go through this world and have it said, “In all this nobody spoke against him.” They said of one, he was a man who never had an enemy. I will venture to

say that he was a man who never had a friend, for it is singular that all those who have hearty lovers are pretty sure to have hearty antagonists. A man who is such a chip in the porridge that he never gives any flavour at all of sweetness may go through the world without anybody finding fault with him; but it cannot be said of an out and out man of God. He will be sure to be slandered, and he need not mind it. Christ was slandered. God Himself was slandered in His own Garden of Eden. And you must not wonder if you are slandered too. That is not a thing to care about—to go through life without calumny; but it is to be desired that we may go through every trouble and every joy without falling into sin.

Neither is it a main thing for us to think of going through life without suffering. For God's servants, the best of them, are ripened and mellowed by suffering. Amos the herdsman was a bruiser of sycamore figs, a kind of fig that never ripened in that country unless it was struck with a rod, and then being bruised it begins to ripen. I fear me there are very few of God's people that will ripen without suffering. High character might be produced, I suppose, by continued prosperity, but it has very seldom been seen. Adversity, however, which seems our foe, is a disguised friend, and after a little acquaintance with suffering we come to feel that it is the shadow of a greater joy. It should be no ambition of ours to get through the world smoothly without losses and without crosses.

"Shall Simon bear the cross alone,  
And all the rest go free?  
No! there's a cross for every one,  
And there's a cross for me."

And, dear friends, I think also it should not be our ambition to go through the world without sadness. That is worse than suffering. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" Some men seem to pass through great trouble without any feeling—pachydermatous persons, thick-skinned. And truly I have sometimes half prayed to have a thick skin. It would be a very doubtful blessing. Oh, we need to be thin-skinned to feel the slightest touch of God's hand. "Be ye not as the horse and the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." The Apostle says that now for a season if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Many read it as if there was a needs be for the trial. Ah, so there may be, but the needs be is for the being in heaviness. If you could bear trial without being heavy, well, then it would scarce be a trial. By the blueness of the wound the heart is made better. It is the ache of the ache, it is the sting of the sting that works the real force, and if you do not feel the rod so as to smart under it, it becomes a non-effectual rod to you. So I would not even pray that we may be kept from sadness; but pray seven times, pray to-night from the very bowels of your being, "Lord, keep us from sin. May it be said of us as of Thy servant,

Job, 'In all this Job sinned not.'" For remember if we do not sin, if the grace of God prevents trouble from driving us into sin, then we have disappointed Satan. Satan did not care what Job did, so long as he could make him sin. "Give him back his camels, give him back his sheep; I can ride on a camel, or I can assail him through a sheep." His wealth may be a means of temptation to him, and what he wanted was to make the good man sin, to make him curse God and charge Him foolishly. Now, if in your great trouble, my dear brother or sister, you do not fall into sin, you are more than a conqueror over Satan. The arch-enemy will fly away confounded from you if you are able to resist him in the darkness of your soul and conquer him. May there be a monument erected to you as to Christian of old.

"The man so bravely played the man,  
He made the fiend to fly.  
Whereof a monument I stand  
The same to testify."

Another thing will be that if you do not sin under the special trouble God will be honoured. He is not honoured by preserving you from trouble, but He is honoured by allowing you to be tried, and yet preserving you in it. When one Winstanley built a lighthouse on the Eddystone Rock, he said he was sure it would stand any storm, and he should like to be in it in the fiercest storm that ever blew. Well, he was in it one night, and there came on a fierce storm and it swept him and the lighthouse right away. He was never heard of more. Still, he courted that trial. But now, the lighthouse which has stood so long has had all manner of storms beating upon it, and not a single stone is moved, and the builder of that lighthouse is honoured by the trial through which his work has passed. Beloved friends, God is glorified in every trial that occurs. See what grace can do, what suffering it can endure, what labours it can perform. Grace is like an athlete performing before God and a cloud of witnesses; and, like a mighty giant, with sinews of iron, it does whatever it is bidden to do; it even enters into contest with the fiend of hell, and gives him a deadly throw; and He Who made the athlete and trained him to his work is honoured thereby. If you do not sin, your trouble will bring glory to God.

And, remember once more, if you do not sin you will never be a loser by your trouble. Your sin will be your injury; but if you stand clear, if you are stripped, you shall lose nothing. As one saith, "It is not a pleasant thing to strip. It may be if you are going to bed, you are all the readier for it. And sometimes a child of God in his stripping has been enabled to go to bed and die the better, because what he might have needed if he had further to go in his pilgrimage it was a mercy to be rid of when he was so near his end. The Lord knows best. You are put into the fining pot, the fire may blaze vehemently, but you can lose nothing if you are pure gold. If God

makes and keeps you, so you should be but the brighter by reason of the vehement heat. No, though you be reduced in circumstances you shall be enriched in grace, and if you be sick and ready to die, that readiness to die shall be a readiness for eternal life in its full-blown splendour. Thus, dear friends, I would insist upon it that our one thought when we are tried—indeed, always—should be, “Let not iniquity have dominion over me; keep me from evil;” then let the trials come, even like those of Job, it shall be well with my soul.

II. So much for that; now for the second thought. *In all time of trial there is a special fear of sin.* It is well for the child of God to know that the time of great affliction is a dangerous time. He is likely to fall into sin. Hence it was needful for the Holy Spirit to give a testimony to Job that in all this he sinned not. It looked as if he would sin, he must sin, but he did not sin. He still held fast his integrity and served his God. Dear friend, when you are coming into trouble it is a time of testing, and there are men that have sorely grieved their God by what they have said and done in the time of trial. For instance, we are very apt to get impatient. We think a trial lasts too long, that the answer to prayer is delayed altogether an unconscionable time. If God be God, why does not He hurry up and deliver us at once? In the olden time, He did ride upon a chariot and did fly; yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind. Why are His chariots now so long in coming? The feet of His mercy seem shod with lead. That is one of the sins to which we are very prone, to get dictating to God as to times and seasons, and limiting the Holy One of Israel. I think, of the two sexes, women most usually carry the prize for patience, especially in bodily sickness. But as for us rougher fellows, who ought to bear up well, how often do we lose all patience when we really are brought to suffer. And that is one of the sins to which we are very prone. Yet Job was not impatient. In all these first trials he sinned not as to impatience.

Sometimes we are tempted to the sin of rebellion. I have met with cases—I think one or two are here to-night—cases where there has been great trial, and in a strong season of pain one said, “God has taken away my mother; I shall never forgive Him. I can never love Him as I did.” I thought then it was a dreadful word to say, and so it was. I heard one say of his dying child, whom I was called in to see, “That is my last child, and God is not so unrighteous as to take my child away. If He does I will never believe in Him again.” I put my hand upon him, and I said, “Your child will die. She is in a consumption from which it is impossible she should recover, and what is more, I fear you will die yourself.” He looked at me. I said, “A child of God cannot speak as you speak without some heavy disappointment being very near him.” And it was so. Ah, if it comes to rebellion against God, you know it will be a poor out of it for us. If we stand out against Him we shall be consumed with terror; we do but bring a heavier rod upon ourselves. Yet

that is a temptation into which Job did not fall, for in this respect he sinned not.

Sometimes we sin by despair. "Well," says a child of God, "I shall never look up again, I shall never hope again, I shall never be cheerful again." Why not, dear friends, why not? You are bidden to believe all this. If any walk in darkness and see no light, let him trust. Now is the time for trust, not for despair. The child that is sullen will probably have a severer discipline yet to bring him to his right bearing. God grant that we may never sin by a sullen despair. And some sin by unbelieving speech. I will not repeat the naughty things that God's children have sometimes said. Job said nothing of the kind. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Some even have been driven into a kind of atheism by successive troubles: "There cannot be a God, or He would not let me suffer so." Beloved, you must not get into that, or you will greatly grieve your God. Job sinned not in that way, neither must we.

The sound of the bell chides me; I must hasten on, as I have to make the service short to-night, and notice

III. Thirdly, *in acts of mourning we are not to sin*. Hark, you are allowed to weep, you are allowed to show that you suffer, you are allowed to give expression to your woe. Listen, and see what Job did. "Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped, and in all this Job sinned not." She did weep over her child; well, and she may not be sinner. Those may have been perfectly holy tears. He did mourn when his beloved was taken from him. I should have thought far less of him if he had not. He did right to mourn. Job was not wrong in rending his mantle. He would have been wrong if he had thrown it away altogether. He was not wrong in shaving his head. As I have told you, he did not tear out his hair as some do in despair; he deliberately took the razor and shaved his head. He sinned not in his mourning. Jesus wept; you may weep. It may perhaps be a comfort in your great sorrow to let the hot floods flow, and they may cool your spirit. His acts were moderate acts, acts of mourning toned and moderated by his faith. His words also, though very strong, were true: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." If we say no more than the truth, we may say it, though perhaps sometimes it is better to say nothing, like Aaron, who held his peace. "I was dumb with silence, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." Job mourned, and yet did not sin, for he mourned and worshipped as he mourned. Oh, this is what I commend to you that are mourning to-night. If you must be on the ground, worship on the ground. If your heart is bowed down, emulate the seraphim, who fall on their faces and worship God. I believe some of the finest, purest, sweetest, and strongest devotion has come to God from hearts that were breaking with grief. Remember that, then, in acts of mourning there is not a necessity to sin.

IV. But, fourthly, *in charging God foolishly there is great sin.* "Job sinned not," and the phrase tantamount to that is, "nor charged God foolishly." And here let me say this, that to call God to our judgment-seat at all is sin. "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." He is absolutely sovereign, and He may do what He will, and we are out of place when we begin to sit in judgment on God. And, in the next place, we sin in requiring that we should understand God. What, is my God to explain everything to me or else I will revolt from Him? Blessed be His name, He is inscrutable, and I am glad to have Him so. Do you want God to explain things to you? Beloved, this is unbelief. This is indeed making yourself to be wiser than God. No; let us bow before Him. He giveth no account of His matters. Bow before God, and ask not to know why this or why that. He hath done it, and it must be right. But we can easily charge God foolishly when we require Him to explain Himself.

But sometimes we charge God foolishly when we think He is unjust. "Oh," says one, "when I was a worldling I prospered. Ever since I have been a Christian, I have had no end of losses and troubles." You mean by that, then, that God does not treat you justly. Half a minute, half a minute. If He were to treat you justly, where would you be? If He were now to call you to account for your sins, and deal with you with the naked edge of the sword of justice,—ah! you would not be here to complain, you would be in hell to despair. Never accuse God's justice.

Some, however, will charge and question His love. "How can He be a God of love to permit me to suffer so?" And yet you forget that word, "As many as I tenderly love"—for that is the Greek word—"As many as I tenderly love, I rebuke and chasten." The more He loves you the more He will rebuke you, for He sees in you a something which is so precious to Him that He would make it "perfect through suffering." God loves you much, my sister, or you would not have to suffer so. "Oh," said one to me, when I was in great anguish, great pain, hardly bearable, "you are one of God's children, are you? Then I thank God I am not one." Oh, how my eyes flashed, as I said I would take an eternity of such pain as I had sooner than be in his place, for to be without the love of God would be hell to me; but to have His love whatever I might suffer, was a heaven to my spirit. And every child of God under such a taunt would feel the same. Beloved, we are willing to have His love with every drawback that can be conceived so long as we may but know Him to be our Father and our Friend: Besides, it is all in love:

"In love I correct thee, though called to refine,  
I make thee at length in My likenss to shine."

Then sometimes we begin charging His power, and think He cannot help us. Throw that to the winds, the winds will have it, and let it be forgotten. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" And

then we get charging His wisdom. If He be so wise, how could He suffer me to get weary as I am, and to be tried as I am? Thou, who art thou, that thou shouldst measure the wisdom of God? Shall the emmet begin to measure the wisdom of the man who built St. Paul's Cathedral? Shall some tiny animalcula, sporting with myriads of others in a drop of water, begin to judge the sun? Who art thou, what art thou, that thou fliest against God? Thou art nothing, less than nothing. Wilt thou call the Infinite Wisdom to thy bar? That be far from thee. Job did not so, for he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

V. Now lastly, as I must close, *in coming clean out of trial is our great honour*. If we are tried and come clean out of it, then the greatness of the trial is in part our honour. "In all this Job sinned not." Now suppose your life was this—brought up tenderly from a child, well educated, left a sufficient sum of money to supply every wish, happily married, no sickness, a long life; well, if that is all, I could not say, "In all this Job sinned not." But supposing it should be thus—from birth to suffer, throughout life a struggler, at home a wrestler, and abroad a soldier and a cross-bearer, yet full of joy and peace through believing. Tried, tried to the uttermost, yet found faithful. Then there is something in it. Why, there is no honour in being a feather-bed soldier—a man who puts on his fine regimentals, and has got a fine helmet; you can see your face in it like a looking-glass—such a gentleman. All you ever hear of him is that you hear his spurs jingle as he walks over your floor—such a swell never smelt gunpowder in his life. Now that is not much to write about in a book of history. If we could have our choice, and we were as good as God is, we should choose the troubles which He has chosen. Am I going to have a little bit of a puddle about the size of a duckpond all my life? Nay, Lord, if Thou wilt, put me on the Atlantic, make me big enough by Thy grace to be uplifted to the heavens and to go down to the deeps; for though such a voyage may have a thousand discomforts and dangers, yet when it is over safely, there is some honour in it, something to talk about in heaven. If we did not know troubles we should sit down there nearly mum; but now we are getting comfort to make songs out of throughout all eternity, something to turn round and talk to our brethren about, the infinite mercy and love of God, who helped us and delivered us. Give me an interesting life after all.

And if it is to be an interesting life, then it must be one that has its full share of trouble, as Job had, so that it can be said in the summing of it up, "In all this Job sinned not." And the honour of a Christian, or, let me say, the honour of God's grace in a Christian, viz., when we have practised a detailed experience of obedience—detailed obedience. "In all this Job sinned not," in neither what he said, in what he did, in what he did not say, in what he did not do. "In all this Job sinned not."

How you are apt to think you will shut yourself up in a cupboard

and never go out in the world any more, never do anything. Why, that would be one big black sin that will blot out all your life. No, no, no, no, no. Go on acting, go on suffering, "breast the wave, Christian," swim to the other shore, and make God's infinite mercy to be seen in you, so that with a life crowned with acting, crowned with suffering, it shall be said, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." God grant us a detailed experience of complete obedience through His grace.

Now I feel, as I must finish, that I would say just this. As I read the verse through it looks too dry to me. I must wet it with a tear. "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." And I who have never had a thousandth part of all this, I have sinned; and in times of bitter anguish have charged God foolishly. Dear friends, is this true of some of you? If so, let the tear drop. That tear won't wash out the sin. Fly to that

"Fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins."

For sins of impatience, sins of petulance, sins of rebellion, sins of unbelief are real sins, and they must be washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and nowhere else. Oh, how dear that fountain is, how dear to you that have to be in bed and suffer, for you still sin. How dear to us whose occupation is to serve, for we have the sins of our holy things, and we need to be washed from them. And you that go into business every day, and mix up with every sort of people, how much you need a daily washing. Come, beloved, let us go together and say, "Lord, forgive us;" and when we have done that, you that are God's people, I would like to say this to some of you who are not God's people: suppose I were to sum up your life, so many days spent in gaiety, so many days in frivolous amusement, was sometimes drunken, sometimes would use profane language, and so on. Oh, what a story that would be about you, if I were to say, "In all this Job sinned not." Why, you have done nothing else but sin, some of you; and God has loaded your table, and clothed your backs, and kept you in health, or restored you from sickness; and in all this you have done nothing else but sin and charge God foolishly. I want you to come to that same fountain and cry to-night, "O forgive us; we have been anti-Jobs, we have been the very opposite of him, for in all our comforts and mercies we have never shown due gratitude to God, and done nothing else but transgress against Him." The Lord bring us all to His feet, and then may He keep us in all future troubles to stand firm and not to sin. I know some of you are going into great trouble; you have got it into your minds to-night, and sitting here you have felt depressed about it. Now pray, Lord, if Thou wilt lead me by this rough road, keep my feet that I stumble not, and preserve me even to the end with garments unspotted from the world, and I will ask no more of Thee but this one thing, holy Father: Keep me like Thy dear Son, serving Thee with heart and soul and strength till I go up higher to dwell with Thee for ever.

## PULPIT PRAYERS.

BY THE REV. JOHN MCNEILL.

*Regent Square Presbyterian Church, Sunday morning, September 21st, 1890.*

## OPENING PRAYER.

Lord, we bless Thee for this opportunity of coming into Thy presence. Wilt Thou open widely for us the gate of Thy mercy! Let us in to the very secret-place of the tabernacle where Thou dost dwell! Draw us, and we will run after Thee. Speak to us by Thy Word and Spirit, and our whole souls shall listen. We shall be stirred up in every faculty of our being to praise and magnify Thy holy name. The Lord be praised this morning, says every heart among us—every believing heart—for all the mercy and all the faithfulness that are commemorated by our gathering together now. The Lord open the windows of heaven and pour down upon us a rich blessing. Take away all our sin, look over and forget all our provocations, our offences, our continual unworthiness, and so deal with us that this day Thy grace in us shall grow and flourish, that this day the powers of evil in us shall be mightily weakened, and subdued, and cast out. Lord, we cast ourselves upon that greatness of Thine which Thou hast oft-times shown to us in Thy holy place. Repeat to us Thy former mercies, only more abundantly, even as Thou art always willing to show to Thy people. We thank and praise Thee again for our gathering here. We thank Thee for the sight that opens to our eyes when we come into this familiar place, when we set ourselves once again at the entrance of this familiar, this dry round of routine of praise, and prayer, and preaching, and holy service. Lord, we thank Thee that it has all come round to us again, and we are come back to it. Now do we beseech of Thee, make Thine own presence to be felt, and Thine own power to be acknowledged. Although all is seemingly fair, and desirable, and beautiful, unless the Lord Himself—nothing less than that—unless the Lord Himself be with us, this is a fair but a deceitful prospect; the sun does not shine, our faces are not bright, this is a well without water, a cloud without rain; notwithstanding, what seems to be desirable, it is all bleak, and barren, and unfruitful, if God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, are not with us. But Thou art with us, O God, and we are with Thee. We stop at this—rather, we begin at this; we lay hold on Thee in these ordinances. Lead us, O God; send forth, as of old, Thy light and truth; lead us and guide us into renewed experience of pardon, and peace, and of spiritual blessing. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

## PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.\*

Lord, we thank Thee for these inspired words, by which Thou dost enable us to pour out our hearts before Thee. We thank and praise Thee that we are able to tell Thee from our hearts that every item of

\* After singing Psalm ciii.

this programme of grace and faithfulness is true. There are the things that we know, our eyes have seen, our hands have handled, our ears have heard, our own tongues have tasted the grace and the goodness of the God of Israel, Who to us is Jesus Christ, our living, our adorable Redeemer. O our God, our Father, and Saviour and Comforter and Friend, accept of the praises of our hearts this morning because Thou hast redeemed us from destruction, because Thou hast forgiven all our iniquities—all. We hear a voice which wakens up in our heart, and would say, "Are they all forgiven?" "He healeth all our diseases, he forgiveth all our iniquities." O God, we thank Thee, we praise Thy glorious name; we marvel and adore as often as we come to the mercy-seat, with a deeper admiration, with a greater wonder that all this overwhelming grace and mercy are indeed given to us individually who believe in Thy revealed Son. And we ask Thee that Thou wouldst touch our hearts now, and find in our souls true and acceptable worship. Here are no priests with swinging censers; here we do not come to smoking altars, dragging forward our helpless, innocent lamb of substitution and sacrifice. But we ask Thee to find within the courts of this New Testament house a true and deep spiritual worship, find for Thyself in our own thought, in our own purpose, in our own feelings, all manner of service coming to-day with incense, with sacrifice—willing sacrifice. Waken us up, O God, that our very soul within us may be a heavenly temple where God the Lord is enthroned, where we offer to Thee incense and a pure offering, where upon Thine own altar we lay down ourselves as whole burnt offerings and sacrifices unto Thee, body, soul and spirit, all that we have, yield freely unto Him Who gave Himself entirely for us, and continually devotes all His love and grace to further our personal redemption. We thank and praise Thee, O God, as a united people for all Thy mercy to us in the weeks gone by, when we were separated one from another: for all journeying mercies, for all that we have seen elsewhere of Thy goodness and of Thy truth; and for all Thy people who have steadily stood by this dear old place. We give Thee thanks for all the messages, for all the messengers; we thank Thee that now Thou hast brought us back again. Enable us to raise our Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Help us, that in our very hearts we may have some strong and clear understanding that the Lord is with us, that He is revealing Himself to us. We thank Thee for all that we have received in past weeks. Those of us who have been witnessing Thy wonders in the sea, those of us who have been at coast or country, drinking in recreation and strength and peace at every faculty, yea, at every pore. Our God, we thank Thee for the wealth that Thou dost give to us in the wealth of nature; for all that the eye can delight in, and that the ear can hear, and that the soul can find that rest in and meditate upon that prompts with remembrance of a present God. But, above all, we thank Thee for the sanctuary, for the house of prayer, for the open

Bible, for the preached ministry, for the old familiar faces of our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus that greet us as we greet them as we cross the familiar threshold and take our place in Thy worship and service as of old. Our God, we thank Thee for all that Thou hast been to us, and for all that Thou hast done for us, and we ask of thee that Thou wouldst enable us again to consecrate ourselves and all that we have to a more faithful, a more devoted, and a more useful service in the days that are to come. Remember our thoughts, remember our meditations, yea, remember our vows when 'in quiet solitude we thought of Thee, as we thought of this place, as we thought of this day, as we thought of our work waiting for us, and in some quiet place, some lonely place, we lifted up heart to God, and talked to Thee about all this. We anticipated this very hour, and we asked Thee to be sure not to forget us, to gather Thyself together with us again, and to reveal to us the arm of the Lord in our midst as of old. We thank Thee for these times. How quiet was the sea, how solemn, how mighty! How quiet was the moorland, how lonely we were! If Christ had appeared walking to us across the moor we had not been greatly surprised, it looked so like His own word, and we would not have been surprised to see His beautiful and blessed feet once again travelling over it. O Christ, we thank Thee that the four corners of this earth, since Thou wast here, are all full of Thee. It never can be the same empty, godless, heartless world again. Every nook and cranny of it is filled with suggestions of the man Christ Jesus, Who came into it, Who loved it, Who died for it, Who rose again, Who is present still by His word and Spirit, and a thousand messages. And now, O God, we thank Thee for particular mercies; Thy servant here and this people, as pastor and people we thank Thee for particular mercies. We thank Thee that in a particular hour of danger when there flashed through our minds swift thoughts of a crash, of maimed bodies of, it might be, a weakened, a broken, or a finished ministry; and, lo! the shock came, and it passed, and we were as we were before, with Thy ministry of protection in between. Thou didst give Thine angels charge concerning us, and, lo! we are alive. Our God, we thank Thee, we praise Thee. What can we say? Words are weak. Thou knowest our hearts, and now we ask that Thou wouldst accept all such thanks given to Thee. We have all our personal tale to tell. We can all point to some particular place and say, "Here, here, the promise was made to me; at this turn of the road some particular Scripture leaped into life and meaning, was fulfilled to me," and the thing that hath been is the thing that shall be. Thou wilt always be with us, Thine arm shall always work deliverance for Jacob, and we shall be immortal till our work here is done. What manner of persons ought we to be, O God, to whom Thou hast shown such great mercy, so large, so full, so abundant, so minute, so particular? And now we ask of Thee that Thou wouldst baptise us with Thy Holy Spirit this day for all the work and service that lies before us. Dry our

eyes if we be weeping; comfort our hearts if we be in distress; brighten our whole prospect and outlook with Thine own presence, and with thy exceeding great and precious promises; and enable us once again to take up the yoke, enable us once again to take our place on the gospel field. How white it is to harvest! Lord, send us back to our work as ministers, elders, deacons, Sunday-school teachers, heads of households, witnesses and testifiers for Christ, each in his and in her own place. Oh, help us to burn and shine for the Lord our God. Help us this very day to preach as if we had never preached before. Help us this day to teach, to sow the seed with liberal hand, doubting not that God is with us, and that our words and our work shall tell to eternal days. Now, hear us. Oh, hear us! Open Thine ear, open Thine heart, open Thy word, and as of old make this place of Thy feet glorious by saving souls, by strengthening Thy people, by bring all heaven into quick contact with our need here upon earth. For Christ's sake we ask it. Amen.

### KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE.

*A Sermon preached at the Leeds Parish Church before the British Association, by*

THE REV. J. R. ILLINGWORTH.

"If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine."—ST. JOHN vii. 17.

"ALL men naturally desire knowledge," said the "master of those who know," and it is a statement never more re-echoed than to-day. But among the varieties of knowledge there is one, and one only, which concerns us all, learned and unlearned alike, and that 'is religious knowledge—the knowledge of our relation to God.

This is the subject of the treatise of Aristotle, whose words I have quoted, and it is a subject that modern society is eager to discuss and hear discussed; nor can it be far removed in one phase or another from the thoughts of an intellectual age. For practical convenience the sciences may be separated, though the separation must be more or less artificial, and cannot in the last resort be sundered from their root. History, mathematics, chemistry, social science, all lead up ultimately to the question, Who and what is God, and what is His relation to the world He has made?

Among men with an intellectual aim, secular and sacred science cannot be divorced, but when sorrow comes with years, and the trials of life press hardy, no amount of general culture or intellectual attainment can compensate for the omission of that which alone can 'bring a man peace at the last.' Nor can we make any real progress until we have learnt to accept the axiom contained in the text.

This dependence of knowledge upon the will is a thing which men are not ready to accept. Why, we are asked, should religion differ from other truth? The answer is that it does not so differ, we only imagine a difference from the failure to understand what true knowledge is; we live in an age of intellectual distractions; literature increases and leisure grows less. We have no time to think and yet

are expected to have opinions. The volume gives place to the essay, the essay to the paragraph, the paragraph to the latest catchword of science, and intelligent appreciation takes the place of intellectual effort.

We breathe an atmosphere of opinion and miscall it *modern thought*, but if we look at our real thinkers we find at once that moral qualities are involved in pursuit of the simplest science. Francis Bacon and John S. Mill are both emphatic in tracing intellectual fallacies to ethical causes—in other words, to the region of the will.

Take a physical science, and consider what a call it makes upon him who would successfully pursue it. There must be infinite patience, unflagging perseverance, and the enthusiasm which alone makes patience and perseverance possible. These are among the necessities for the adequate knowledge of any science, and it is a high degree of moral excellence they involve.

If we turn from abstract to human virtues, from natural to social science, the same virtues are absolutely necessary, with one addition. The political or social philosopher who is to be worthy of the name must also be as patient and persevering, as independent and enthusiastic, as the biologist or chemist, but must also possess sympathy and courage, for he is confronted, not with inert matter, but by men with hearts and passions which react upon his own. If he quails before antagonism, or is misled by respect of persons, his theories will remain untested, unreal, the dreams of a *doctrinaire*. If they are to fulfil their object, he must leave the study for the market-place, and face misrepresentation, failure, disappointment, danger, and possible death! Not only does the student impress his moral personality upon the subject-matter or the living object, but they in their turn influence him, colour his imagination, dictate his mode of reasoning.

In this light the knowledge of God resembles all other knowledge, differing from it only in degree. While we may stop short in the science of our fellow-men, God once known in any degree makes an immediate personal demand upon our conduct. To reject that demand is, by the very nature of the case, to refuse to know Him, while to comply with the demand is to do His will, and so to verify the teaching of the text that if any man willetth to do, he shall know of the teaching. God means to us, above all things, a holy being, and holiness casts an obligation upon us who come near it. To be in the presence of holiness is to feel an obligation to *be* holy. This obligation is part of the very nature of holiness. To decline the obligation is to deny the nature of holiness, to be blind to its existence, and therefore to Him Whose attribute it is. *There is, therefore, nothing unreasonable in the assertion that conduct is the key to creed*, for the analogy of all knowledge argues this. The only difference in this respect between secular and sacred science is that the former is departmental, while the latter is universal. There are certain virtues which a man of science may neglect as far as success in his science is concerned, but the man of religion who breaks *one* commandment is guilty of all.

Nor are we false in asserting that this same law must guide the

whole course, as well as the commencement, of religious life. Every step in science is won by experiment, and so in religion; to do more is to know more, and to grow weary in well-doing is to have the understanding darkened. Speculative questionings of mere curiosity are sternly discouraged in Scripture. "Lord, are there *few* that be saved?" is met by, "Strive to enter in." "Lord, and what shall this man do?" by, "What is that to thee?"

There is a quantitative relation between our doing and knowing. We shall learn exactly as much of science as our experiment has justified, of God as our conduct may deserve. The same line of thought may help us to meet a further objection of the day. Knowledge which is based on conduct is a personal property which outsiders cannot share. This many resent. They expect belief to be universal—open to all; to be read in a book and criticised at will. But such is not the case with any other sort of knowledge. Science is the individual possession of the earnest experimentalist. When its results (such as steam and electricity) are embodied in practical appliances we know the danger of such appliances in ignorant hands, and its speculative results are equally unsafe in the mouth of one who knows nothing of the method of their attainment; and neither more nor less is this the case with religious truth. The irreligious world may all unconsciously absorb its sunshine, appropriate the peace, the freedom, the love which it has so incorporated in our secular lives that we think of them as secular things; but they were won for us by the men of religion at the cost of life, and no more make those who inherit them at secondhand *religious* than the daily employment of the railway or telegraph makes the business scientific. We are too apt to appropriate the labours of other men without due acknowledgment. We take a kind of credit to ourselves for being the heirs of all ages, and are tinged with more contempt than reverence for those who worked so nobly in darker days to amass the fortune we so indolently spend. And so when we turn to religious questions, we expect to find ready to our hands the things for which martyrs suffered, ascetics prayed and fasted, and which penitents have mourned a lifetime to regain. All truth resents such treatment, but the truth of religion more than all. We must approach it as little children, each beginning life again. We must seek it as for the pearl of great price—a hidden treasure. We must be willing to forego all that hinders in the pursuit of it, to cut off the right hand, to pluck out the right eye, to forego perchance a familiar friendship, and all this because it is no abstraction we are seeking, but a Person, and that Person the Most High God; He Who first revealed Himself as a jealous God, because He desired to lead us on to find in Him the desire of our hearts; "the chiefest among ten thousand;" "the altogether lovely;" and in Whom we can regain more than we have foregone for His sake.

Secular knowledge might be discovered, but Divine truth is a revelation. We have not chosen Him, but He has chosen us, and He appeals to all the faculties of our complex being. It was not in

the critical attitude of the faculties that the saints of old spoke. From this personal character it follows that religious knowledge must be mystic, incommunicable. The religious man may be able to adduce reasons for the faith that is in him, but he feels all the while that his arguments cannot produce conviction. They but draw their colour therefrom, and are too secret, too spiritual, too sacred to produce. Our belief is sure. The influence of our life, prayers answered, judgments unmistakable, punishment for secret sin—these, as they gather round our inner history, make us hear the same voice speaking which said to Nathanael, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, *I saw thee.*" Sainly example may call us to Christ, but it is only the sense that His eye is upon us that can change probability into certainty, and elicit the confession, "Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." The knowledge of God depends, primarily, upon the desire to do His will. It is revealed, not invented. It may be described and commended, but not imparted to our fellow-men.

"Come, and I will show you what the Lord has done for my soul" is the limit of a possible missionary appeal. From this vein the Church of Christ draws a practical corollary which men do not like to draw—that moral purification is necessary to the knowledge of God. There may have been earnest seekers after truth who have not found Him, but these are few and far between. Those who bandy words about Agnosticism have not been in earnest as the Church of Christ counts earnestness. Earnestness means to bring our secret sins into the light of God's countenance; to mourn over them, forsake them, and acquiesce in the solemn fact that we have marred our purity for ever. The very fact that men consider it an insult to have unbelief attributed to sin shows how little they have studied the effect of sin on the soul. If we take any kind of sin—sins of youth, waste of time, bodily indulgence, sins of the tongue, thoughts of the heart, of envy, jealousy, malice, analyse any one in effect if you can, and your consequent incapacity to draw near to God, you will find sin is not an isolated thing; they weave themselves together until they dim our vision, till we fail to see what God really is, and in proportion as we have lost Him we need penitential purification to regain the vision. We believe we are persons in relation to a *Person*, and the highest form of personal relationship revealed is love; consequently our duties in whatever way they are done are ultimately regarded as doings to be done for the sake of *love*. A violation of the law of love must bring with it a loss of insight, dislike, and at last *hatred*, in which love violated invariably ends. Therefore an attempt to do better, all-important as that is, is still incomplete without the emotional sorrow which wounded love involves, and incomplete in the very point where conduct influences creed. So regarded, the knowledge of God may indeed be hard of attainment, as calling for personal effort long sustained. But it is within the reach of all, simple as well as sage. All men, of whatever intellectual capacity, are capable of loving, and may follow love's leading if they will. "And he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL  
LESSON.\*

Lesson for October 5th. Luke xx. 9-19. Golden Text, Ps. liii. 3.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD.

There is no being whose claims are so little understood by men as the claims of God. When the conduct of men towards God is represented in a parable, we can see better its ingratitude and treachery. Every one will admit that the *lord* of the vineyard had a *right* to demand its fruits. And God has a right to our obedience and our love. To Him we owe all we enjoy, and the very power of enjoyment comes from Him. But how do men too often behave towards God? In the same way that these husbandmen behaved to their lord. They refuse to obey God, and are angry with those who reprove their disobedience.

These husbandmen treated the servants worse and worse. They *beat* the first servant, *shamefully used* the second, and *wounded* the third. So do sinners increase in wickedness, for every sin committed and not repented of, prepares for the commission of a greater. Christians who look back on their days of rebellion perceive that they were fast growing from bad to worse. There was some fear of evil in early youth, which was lost as they grew older in sin. When the Saviour had concluded His parable, He declared the punishment the lord would inflict on the husbandmen. "He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others." Now this prophecy was intended as a warning to the Jews, who had persecuted God's servants the prophets, and who were now plotting the death of the Son of God. The people understood that this warning was for them, for they exclaimed, "Chalilah" ("May it not be"). If they had been as anxious to avoid *sin* as they were to avoid *suffering*, they would have escaped this punishment. Jesus now changed the figure from a vineyard to a building, and He quoted a passage from Ps. cxxiii., "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner." These words are full of severity and awful foreboding for all the rejecters of Christ. He was the Stone given by God as a sure foundation upon which we might build. But we can spurn and reject this Stone, but it is to our own hurt. He is either the Rock on which we build, or else He is "a Stone of stumbling." And if rejection is persisted in, then the issue must be utter destruction—"It shall grind him to powder." The blessed Saviour, who might, like a stone, be a support and defence, will become, if we refuse to believe in Him, the instrument of our destruction.

These Jews were rejecting builders upon whom, after a few years of grace, "the Stone" fell and ground to powder. Away in a lonely Highland valley there lies a huge rock that has fallen from the face of a tall black cliff. A shepherd was passing beneath it, and suddenly, when the finger of God's will touched it, it came down, leaping and bounding, and it fell; and the man that was beneath it is there now, "ground to powder." That is Christ's illustration of His rejecters. Make Him the foundation on which you build, and you will be safe.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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## THE IDEAL MINISTRY.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

*Preached in the City Temple, London, on Sunday Evening, Sept. 28th, 1890.*

"When they heard these things they were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong."—ST. LUKE iv. 28, 29.

ARE there any such perorations in connection with the pulpit eloquence of this day? The preacher retires amid thunders of applause, or amid tepid compliments, or without recognition, or with more or less of well-calculated or ill-calculated criticism. But when does the congregation ever rise up filled with wrath, seize the minister, lead him to the brow of the hill, and threaten to cast him headlong from the eminences of the city? Never! We have fallen upon other times. Hear the trumpety criticism of this day: "The sermon was so quiet, so delightfully quiet; the preacher was so pleasant, so tranquil, so composed; never betrayed the faintest excitement." Or we get it again in another form: "The sermon was so comforting, soothing, healing; there was balm in it; the preacher was a son of consolation. How richly he dwelt upon the Divine promises! How aptly and happily he applied them to human necessity!" There is room for all that kind of preaching. It is not a kind of preaching in either case to be despised or held in light esteem. Sometimes we need quietness, oftentimes we need healing. The broken-hearted are the majority of every congregation, if they knew themselves. We need the balm that is in Gilead, and we need no other physician but the One Who is there. All that is true, so create space for such a ministry, for we need it all.

But where is the other kind of eloquence? It must be the right kind in some instances, at least, because it is associated in this text with the name of the Lord Jesus. This was not some wandering preacher who had gone forth without licence or authority, or without adequate cause, and had excited public passion, or excited religious hatred. This speaker was the Son of God, He Who spake as never man spake: and yet when He had uttered a few words, to

us apparently so simple and so inoffensive, the whole congregation rose up in a mass, filled with wrath, and led Him forth to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.

There should be room for that ministry as well as the other. We do not like it. Therefore, perhaps we need it the more. "We would rather not be disturbed. We have disturbance enough in business and in politics. When we go to the sanctuary we want to hear something to calm us, and soothe us, and comfort us." That is bad reasoning. When we go to the sanctuary we should go for truth. Sometimes truth will be like a child-angel, so sweet, so tender, so familiar, so domestic, so necessary to the completeness of the household. Sometimes it will be as the voice of a lute, just what we need; and sometimes it will rage and storm and judge the world and thunder against its iniquities and corruptions. We need it all. Christ's was the perfect ministry, and in Christ we find all this kind of preaching. And only that ministry is right, four-square to the edge, that can be both tender and judicial, comforting and critical, sympathetic and damnatory.

Nor must the preacher be afraid of the people or of his own income. That is the great curse of every age of the pulpit, that a man should think whether he is diminishing his own resources when he declares this or that part of the counsel of God. Those who do not like it must go and take their own gold with them. It will buy them nothing. For such metal there is no exchange with God. It will be a mistake to upbraid the ministry of the time with self-consideration to that degree. The preaching of this day is as fearless as it has been in any other day. Not, perhaps, so fearless in every church; but wherever there is fearless preaching there is a congregation rising to thrust the preacher out of existence. The fearless, all-truth-speaking preacher is hated everywhere. He is not and cannot be a popular man. He can have no sympathy with the majority of his race. He must be prepared for consequences.

What a wondrous ministry was Christ's! In verse twenty-two we read, in the same chapter, "And all bare Him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." A few verses after, the whole of the people in the synagogue rose up, being filled with wrath. What a change He wrought! What a wizard He was! Now look at the people. "How benignant, how complaisant," they say. "Did charmer ever charm like this? Hear that music and say was the like ever heard in Israel?" In five minutes more, by historical allusions which the people alone could understand, the same people rose up, being filled with wrath, and would have killed the very charmer whose entrancing power they had just acknowledged.

And was there ever any exciting preaching in the Church? Read: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that

they taught the people, and they laid hands on them, and put them in hold." They do the same to-day. If you were to preach apostolically you would be put in prison. The magistrate before whom you would be tried would not understand the case. What case is there that a magistrate really thoroughly understands all round and round where the Gospel is concerned, where high moral impulses are involved, and where the real good of the people is the question of the hour? The magistrates are never on the side of the apostolical preachers. The magistrates have always suggested prison as the best treatment for men who preach the Gospel. It looks energetic; if a magistrate were to sympathise with the preacher it would look sentimental. A magistrate seems to be doing something for his dignity when he puts somebody in prison. Read the life of George Fox; read the *Life and Journals* of John Wesley; study the biography of George Whitefield; read the present day records of the Salvation Army, and say when were apostolical preachers otherwise treated than Christ Himself was treated in the very instance before us.

Understand that we are not saying a word against this same popular quiet preaching, in which a man speaks for an hour and says nothing that would at all offend or exasperate his audience. We are not undervaluing healing preaching. God forbid. For we all need it; if not to-day, yesterday; if not yesterday, to-morrow. But we want to point out that the counsel of God is full-orbed, now soft as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes, and now a wind that silences Euroclydon.

"But the times have changed." Have they? Who changed them? Is the devil changed? Has that miracle at last been wrought? Has evil washed its hands and come out of the catharism pure and stainless? What has changed? Is the thief honest? Why, that is a paradox, a contradiction in terms. Are there no thieves to-day? Is the miser generous? When did he convert himself? If he is generous he is not a miser; if he is a miser he is not generous. "The times have changed." When? Services may have changed, transient relations may have been transformed and modified, but the times have not changed in the sense of making sin less sinful, dishonesty less thievish, miserliness less worldly. We find these great radical principles and policies abiding. But what if we should be the real thieves? That is a harrowing suggestion. But what if the magistrate should be the real thief, and the little boy who took the pocket handkerchief should be honest in his soul and only thievish in his feelings because of some impulsion or compulsion not easily understood by those who are outside the circle and atmosphere within which he lives. What if the man with the fine clothing and the gold ring and the high position be the real thief?—not a vulgar, common, street thief, that is the very poorest kind of felon; but the calculating, smooth-tongued, long-headed, nimble-fingered

gentleman, who writes well and reads much, and talks fluently, and has his turns of piety—what if he in the soul of him and in the whole track of his policy be the real thief?

Have the times changed? In that direction they may be changed. Refined sin may have displaced rough criminality, but the devil is inconvertible, and will be the same when the hour of doom has struck. Do not misunderstand things, and do not be such wonderful optimists and poets as to see improvements where there are really no improvements at all. If there are improvements at all, prove them, recognise them, be thankful for them; but understand that the devil cannot change. If he is dead the times may have changed. If we have any reason to believe that he is still hidden in some corner of God's universe, he is as fruitful of poison and iniquity as he ever was. What if we be the misers? That is an exasperating suggestion. The man who makes it ought to be led out and cast down—down from the top of the highest hill that is accessible. What if we be the misers? I that? You who gave a hundred pounds all at once may be the miser. Why did you give it? In what atmosphere did you act? What was your regnant motive? Go into your soul and ask your soul torturing questions until you get at the truth. If you gave it honestly, gratefully, lovingly, you will be blessed, you shall have it back a hundred fold. The question is, Did you or did you not? and that question you must force back upon yourself until you bleed. Is not every man more or less miserly? Who gives what he ought to give? Who gives to the point of devoting his last crust to Christ? Does he give anything who withholds anything? Does he answer God's appeal? He has his meals regularly and fully, and he sleeps through all the night of the world's darkness and sorrow. These are questions which I must put to myself and hold a long inquest with my own life. And it may turn out that I am a thief, a miser, a felon, a self-indulgent wrong-doer. If judgment thus begins at the house of God, what wonder that everybody in the synagogue should rise up inflamed with wrath? Yet so curiously are we constituted, so wondrously made, that we have a positive delight in hearing the sins of other people denounced. Thus we eke out our own virtues. We do like the man in the next pew to have the truth told plainly to him. We love to hear drunkenness denounced, whereas we may be the real drunkards. The man who drinks his potass may be the real winebibber. That is no paradox, it is a real, plain, literal possibility in life. Men are what they are in the soul of them. Less the habit, more the spirit, must be taken as the judge and estimate of the man's spiritual quality.

Speaking thus, how different an aspect is put upon everything. The first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Many shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in God's Kingdom of light, and we ourselves, pretentious, ostentatious, pharisaic professors, shall be

cast out because we nodded our heads at certain dogmas, but gave no heed to the commandments. We sought to suck the honey of the beatitudes, but never attempted to obey the law.

Great mistakes may thus be made about any ministry. You hear a man once, and judge him altogether. How foolish and unreasonable, how wholly unjust as well as unwise is this course. If you had heard Jesus Christ in the twenty-second verse, so to say, you would have gone away with this report: "So gracious in His speech, so musical, tender, comforting." If you had gone away from the twenty-eighth verse you would have said, "Exasperating, maddening His congregation. Instead of taking that people into His hand, and playing upon them as a skilful man would play upon an instrument He roused them to madness; yea, so vehement, so terrible was He in style that all the people rose up and seized Him, and led Him out, and would have killed Him on the spot." Neither report would have given a fair idea of the ministry of Christ.

Yet this is just how ministers are treated to-day. A man who never heard a minister before falls upon some occasion when the minister is very tender and sympathetic, and thinks he is always so; or falls upon another occasion when the minister is denunciatory, and goes away and reports him in terms that are full of all evil suggestion. You never know any ministry that has anything in it until you have heard it seven years long, in all its moods, tenses, variations, shapes, colours, in the whole gamut of its strength. What is true of a ministry is true of God's Book. We must read it all if we are to judge it fairly. It is true of the Gospel; we must hear it all before we may pronounce upon it with wisdom and ripeness of judgment.

So with Christ our Lord. Hear Him: "Blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the weak, blessed are the peacemakers." Oh, how the beatitudes flow from His sacred lips. Hear Him: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; woe unto you, ye lawyers; woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida." Where are the beatitudes now? It is the same man, in the same brief three years' ministry. Behold, you must take in the evening and the morning to make the day. God's great sky lies in it four directions, and every one must be estimated and set in its proper relation to the other if you would understand the geometry of God's canopy. Blessed be God, the severity is always against the sin. It is sin that is predestinated to go to hell. It is sin that is foreordained to be damned. Some persons do not like these words, "hell" and "damned," yet how wondrously men change in their estimate even of such terms and of the doctrine and preaching with which they are associated. I know a remarkable artist who came to a church with which I was very familiar, and heard a sermon on the damnation of wickedness, and fled away in horror because she did not believe in hell and in damnation. Years have come and years have gone, and she is now in the Roman Catholic Church, where there is a real hell, where there is no want of literal fire. So curiously

are we made, and so mysterious is the reaction which is the possibility of our lives.

We must have the whole counsel of God. We must hear of the night as well as of the day, and we must not as ministers and churches allow ourselves to be cozened out of half the truth because there are people who will come in thousands to hear our musical utterances about Christ, who would be exasperated and offended if we held up the law in its terror. We must lose them; we must bear our lot as bravely as we can. Better the pews be empty to the point of desolation; better that the minister should starve than that we should never hear that God is Judge as well as Saviour. All the gentleness is for the sinner. God never turns against the prodigal; He is always against the self-righteous. The self-righteous is, of course, the greatest sinner, but God has no pity upon him, because He cannot have pity where there is no pity for himself, that is to say, for the sinner. The man himself, the man is self-righteous, self-satisfied, he wants no more; he is the perfect man and the upright, yea, he is the temple of the living God, and other men are the filth and the off-scouring of the race. God can have no pity for that man. He can only encounter him with sternness and judgment, and visit him with the final penalties. But where there is a broken heart, where there is a contrite spirit, where there is a desire to come home again, all the angels are sent down to make the way easy, and great welcomes await the returning prodigal. God is gentle and good towards any soul that can weep over its own guilt and its own sorrow. Let us, therefore, take heart and come before Him with tears. He will dwell with the contrite in spirit.

Brethren, this is my conclusion: It ought to be the supremest blessing of society to have within it a pulpit that can be both gentle and terrible. When you lose that pulpit you lose a saving element from your social constitution. It ought to be the supremest educational force in morals to have a pulpit that is afraid of no face of clay, to have a pulpit that will speak all the counsel of God, come weal, come woe. Do not let us misunderstand this. He is the great preacher who preaches to himself. Yea, he is the man to be trusted who first takes up the law and smites himself with it, and tells you across the ruins of a broken law that he is criminal as well as preacher. I would listen to that man. It is an infinite impertinence on the part of any man to preach the law as if he kept it. It is an infinite help to us to hear any man preach the law who says he has broken it through and through, yet by the mercy of God he has crawled home again, and has begun to taste the sweets of Divine forgiveness.

In this spirit I begin my twenty-second year of ministry amongst you. God help us both to be faithful, most gentle, most tremendous, a voice tender as love, a judgment terrible as the thunders of heaven. Only in such a ministry can we find any approach to the completeness of the Divine ideal.

## PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

Almighty God, help us to hear all Thy truth. Give us the hearing ear, the understanding heart, lest we reject any portion of the counsel of heaven. Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. We want to hear every tone of Thy voice. Not one word of Thine would we allow to fall to the ground. We want to hear Thy commandments. The thunder and the lightning and the great earthquakes shall not keep us back from the commandments of God. We want to hear Thy beatitudes, Thou lovely One, fairest among ten thousand, Whose voice is music, Whose eyes are morning. We would hear the commandments and the beatitudes, the great law and the tender benedictions. We would keep company with the prophets and with the minstrels, and with the apostles and with the evangelists. We would hear all their utterances, and treasure them in our hearts as revelations from heaven. Forgive us wherein we have neglected one portion of Thy Word or cultivated one at the expense of the other. We have lost the proportion of facts, we have heeded not the compulsions of thought, we have not known all the way and all the counsel of God. Dost Thou not speak in great thunder, and hast Thou not also a still, small voice? Are not Thine the cataracts, and are not Thine also the rills and the streams that make glad the City of God? The Lord give us fearlessness of soul that we may pursue our quest after truth amid all dangers, difficulties and perils, and when the voice is harsh and terrible may we still listen to it, for in the judgments of God there is no want of music. Find a way for Thyself into our hearts, abide in our judgment and in our conscience, accept the sovereignty of our will. These prayers will be heard because we baptise them with the blood of atonement. We offer them all at the altar of the Cross, we make them mighty in the name that is above every name in which name the universe ever bows its knee before God. Amen.

## PEACE.

*A Sermon by*

THE BISHOP OF NEWCASTLE (DR. ERNEST ROLAND WILBERFORCE).

*Preached at All Saints' Church, Hull, before the Members of the Church Congress.*

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you."—St. John xiv. 27.

From out of the deep hush of the upper chamber at Jerusalem, Judas gone out into the congenial night, the Master alone with the eleven, these words proceed, and there is in them alike the suggestion of a coming separation and a breath of benediction.

Before the eye of Him from Whom no secrets are hid, the train of quickening events stood up clear and sharply defined. Already He could see the pale and lonely figure battling in that sharpest conflict in the garden, till the falling drops of blood betoken the agony begun ; He saw the long-drawn shadows cast by the moon as the sweet Pass-over wind is rippling the trembling olives, He saw the glare of torches, the hurrying soldiers ; already He feels the traitor's kiss, sees ranged round Him the blasphemers, the revilers, the cowardly assailers of a bound and helpless Man ; already before Him rise three crosses, where under a darkened sky the blood is gleaming, and the rocks are rending, and the graves are opening ; yet upon the restful quiet of that secluded room fall the tones of the Master's gentle voice, broken only now and then by a word from a disciple ; and with all that is to come, and that so shortly, " naked and opened before Him," from the depths of His own peace, He makes the magnificent bequest to His followers, " Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto unto you."

Often must this scene have come back to the minds of the apostles ; often when racked with pain, foreboding disappointment, fear, or doubt, these words of power and of hope must have returned to them, and never without something of the blessing which they promised.

And if to-day, gathered as members of the Church Congress—the Church descended directly from, and traceable distinctly back to, the Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by Christ and His disciples—if to-day we look far and near, as well to the Church at large as to the microcosm of our own souls, do not these words speak to us in tones which at once address the deepest instincts of our nature, and point us to sure standing ground where all else is treacherous and uncertain.

We look out into the world at home, where for centuries the Cross of Christ has been planted ; where generations have been baptised into His name ; where He has never left Himself without witness ; where true and steadfast hearts, made strong by Him, have found power to endure unto the end, as seeing Him that is invisible ; where simple faith and childlike trust have proved the victors in many a stricken field, the mightiest of the mighty arrayed on the other side ; where blameless lives have been often lived in the midst of the most cruel surroundings and the deadliest forms of temptation ; where the miracle of a changed heart is often seen ; where the haunting devil has been extruded and triumphs of the Holy Ghost have been witnessed ; where baptismal robes have been worn white even to the very end, and the garment of righteousness has been wrapped by a pierced hand over forms which once verily flaunted in the most meretricious of the sinful garments of the world ; into such a world we look, marked everywhere with the victories of Jesus, but can we say truly that His peace is there ?

Doubt, mystery, and despair rise round so many with walls that seem impenetrable ; pain, misery, and sorrow stalk through the land ;

impurity and intemperance go hand in hand with unbelief, and their deadly work is being done; the cries of children to whom the very name of home is accursed; the wail of drunken and dishonoured womanhood; the injustice between man and man; the brutal licentiousness that knows but one, and that the basest, use for woman; the hardening and degrading forms of betting and gambling; the hideous selfishness, the reckless carelessness for others, in the race for wealth; the cruel necessity that herds whole families together in one room, poisoning alike both atmospheres, moral and physical; the dolorous monotony of many toiling lives, making hands eager to reach out to any form of relaxation or excitement, no matter whence it comes or whither it leads; the problems all unsolved of every great city—oh, alike in the roar that rises nightly from the streets and lanes of every town where masses of humanity are heaped together and in the fainter voices that reach us from many a quiet-seeming village there are tones that seem to contradict, and that absolutely, the legacy of Christ our Lord as we listen to the record of St. John.

Or if we look closer home, into that human heart where such dramas are enacted, and sometimes even such tragedies are witnessed, is not the absence of this peace often one of the foremost characteristics? Those hearts, often overshadowed, perplexed, beset with fears, harassed with recurrent temptations, and sometimes even honeycombed with cruel doubt; hearts sometimes quiet, yea, peaceful, and then again plunged into a world of shadows where all the hills are full of noise, or again fighting, as it were, for very breath and life for a time, like mariners upon whom the sudden cyclone has descended—we ask ourselves—Why is this, and what can be the remedy?

And gathered thus before our God, at the outset of our deliberations this week, it is well to examine somewhat beneath the surface, to be content with no mere temporary palliatives, but to look to the foundations of our faith, if believe that the Gospel of our God contains within it the true, the only remedy for the sorrows and the sadnesses as well as the sins of humanity.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you.”

The Master differences off His peace from all else claiming the same patronymic; the world promises peace without conflict: Christ assures us of peace in struggle, calm in tempest, stability while the foundations of the earth are shuddering.

“My peace”—yet He came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; clearly, then, His peace that we are to look for will bear characteristics of Himself, His work, His life. And there rises before us the recollection of His life when His sacred feet were treading the hills and valleys of Judæa, the peace that was a contest, the field of battle where the sounds of conflict were not hushed until the sun sank low in the west, and the evening of His life had come

down upon the weary Toiler; and then we see no bed of ease on which those busy limbs were laid, but thorns and spear and nails conspire with the sharp and lacerating words to torture the last hours of that strange, unbroken peace; for through all and in all, remember, we ever read of Him as the "Son of Man Which is in heaven," and who is there has peace, the peace of God.

If then on such a day, when we would seek out and mend the weak and torn places in our nets, that afterwards we may use them better, rather than persuade ourselves that rent meshes will confine and bring fish safe to land—if we would understand more perfectly how Jesus is the great Physician of the sorrows we acknowledge, the Binder-up of the wounds we deplore, we must consider the nature of His gift, and the means ordained for its national and personal application.

And, first, the peace of God. What is it? Inactivity or a changeless state? Nay, but that peace which is of the essence of God runs ever out into deeds of active love. The voice of a Divine necessity is heard articulately in all creation; into the pre-existing peace of God, the love of God would call His creatures; therefore creation is begun. Nor is the love of God contented with this primal impulse, for "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The peace of God then manifests itself through love in work. If, therefore, the Church or any individual heart would know of the peace of God, there must be manifested by each Godlike activity as the spontaneous outcome of God-given love; and how many of the evils we deplore have their real root in the absence of this in the Church or the individual. Some, thank God, see this with exceeding clearness, but life is keyless, peaceless, to the selfish.

And, secondly, we have assurance that the peace of God can be secured to His Church by the continued life of Christ on earth. We serve a living present King, not one absent or at a far distance; One Who guides and governs, and, above all, Who loves; not one who from behind an almost impenetrable barrier sometimes and at long intervals looks forth upon us.

The teaching of the great forty days when before His ascension Christ lingered still on earth, held by the love He bore to His disciples, symbolises and declares His present and continued life on earth. He was the same, though changed, with the same powers of eating and drinking, though the necessity for the exercise of these powers had left the risen Lord for ever, revealed in bodily presence when least expected, and not always recognised when He came. Entering into the common pursuits, the walking and the fishing, providing for the ordinary necessities of the body, as by the "fire of coals with fish laid thereon," as well as standing suddenly within the doors of the secluded chamber with the words of benediction on His lips, He made known to His disciples that He was with them, watching, listening, guiding, assisting. And this continued presence on earth of the living Lord is only intensified by Pentecost, when

God the Holy Ghost came down to carry on the work of Christ inhabiting the Church, and the individual heart.

Here, then, is one great means whereby through the Church the peace of God is to flow out into the world. And if so, we need not be dismayed though many regions remain as yet to be annexed to the kingdom of Christ, though many hearts know Him not, though contradictions to His will abound.

These things should neither dismay nor confound us; rather they should stir us up to attempt fresh conquests. If the life of Christ be present in His Church, if through that life alone can peace come, it is ours to see that over the jangling disputes of men, and the opposition of sin the word of peace is spoken, and this by the healing life of Christ being poured into the souls of men.

Very awful and yet most inspiring is it to remember that in some sort Christ has left His character in the hands of Christian men and women. Men naturally judge our Master by what they see in us. Ours it is to prove that life and strength and peace flow out from Him, that there is power, and in abundance, present to heal. Yet what practical infidelity we meet with in Christian people!

For what else is that blank acquiescence in some of the worst forms of evil which is expressed in the old formula, "These things must be; it is no use trying to stop this while human nature is what it is," and the like? Ay, but how long is human nature to be what it is? Till the Divine nature is poured into it, and then comes peace. And for what else, oh, my brethren, have we been made "partakers of the Divine nature" save that we may witness to others of its exceeding power and unfathomable abundance; that, strong in simple righteousness, we may go to and fro carrying the peace-bringing life to others, even as we have received it ourselves; that no difficulties should daunt us, no rejections rebuff us, no seeming want of progress weary us, for in "due time we shall reap if we faint not"?

Hearken, my beloved brethren. There is no life without assimilation. The Church of God must assimilate these broken lives, these helpless waifs, these careless, these defiant, these worldly, these sinning, that, purified by the current of the Divine life, proceeding from the Son of God, her life may broaden and increase. And the work can be done, but it will depend upon the steadfast faith and lives of individuals if ever it is to be accomplished. Not by sudden surprises, but by slow and secret growth, is the work of our Master accomplished. Christianity ever works from the centre to the circumference; it is first a faith, then a life, afterwards a victory. And one of the truest works of a Church Congress, I take it, is to send each one of us back to a review of his personal relations to Christ, that he may see if he has the true power to work, because his soul is vitalised by faith, and because in that faith he has found his peace.

Beneath a true view of the peace of God the Christian idea of brotherhood rises transfigured, and before a practical rendering of that

idea many of the disjointed portions of Christianity would be reunited, so making peace.

But for this there must be a true realisation of unity in Christ. "The highest outcome of heathenism," it has been finely said, "reached to a unity, but only a unity of principle, or an abstraction, an It, not a He; fate, not Jehovah." It is of the essence of Christianity to conduct us to a Person, to place a hand in ours, to make us feel the expulsive powers of a personal love flowing into us, to raise us out of and above ourselves by joining us to One greater, holier, purer, than ourselves, and to answer by an objective reality that instinctive longing of the heart voiced from of old by the Psalmist, "Oh set me up upon the rock that is higher than I." And before such an idea of unity the little party disputes, the petty logomachies, the worse than useless shibboleths, drop off scorched, confounded, ashamed, and the Church of God stands forth a body of brothers, animated with a common purpose, united by a common love, worshipping a common God.

There it the power to reanimate the worn; the life of Christ can yet through it flow down into the wasted veins and kindle anew the failing pulse of sin-distraught humanity, it can bid the languishing revive and glow again with the warmer currents that herald and betoken perfect convalescence—a power that can once more, as of old, "turn the world upside down," and in that great upheaval teach men to avail themselves fully of the Master's glorious legacy, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you."

Only let us remember, as again to-day we set ourselves to bravely face the old, and whatever the future may have in store for us of new difficulty, that the peace of God is manifested chiefly in the stress and turmoil of an energetic warfare. The word has gone forth of old, and has been ratified by Christ, "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." Yet a cry comes to us from the pages of the New Testament as the word of exhortation from a leader to his troops upon the very eve of battle, "Fight the good fight of faith;" and, standing there, the soldier of Christ begins to see that the serried ranks who march with him reach onward even to the shores of Paradise, and that by far the larger wing of the army has already proved victorious, as the "Church expectant" has passed into the presence of her Lord; and with that view there comes the sense of peace, of final and assured victory.

And, brethren, we need to be reminded at once of our personal responsibility in the conflict, and of the means for calm though strenuous endeavour; for we may not think that lapse of time will end disputes or dissipate temptations; rather, if I read the New Testament aright, will the sounds of strife increase as the shadows deepen round the world's eventide; we may not see the victory, nay there may be continual personal conflict even to the very end; yet when the archangel's trump shall sound, and the combatants

divide, we may be found upon the victorious side, and then comes peace.

Oh, from that blessed union of the Lord with His followers comes strength for the contest, comes peace in all, a peace none know who have not stood by their Master's side in His painfulness and weariness, in His wholehearted seeking for the lost sheep of His household; who have not asked Him the secret meaning of His words, alone, in the hush of evening, when the busy feet are still, and have heard the great assurance from the loving lips, "Peace I leave with you, My peace give I unto you."

## THE TRUE TEST OF CHARACTER.

*Notes of a Sermon*

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR MARCUS DODS, D.D.

*Preached in Wallace Green Presbyterian Church, Berwick, on Sunday, September 21st, 1890.*

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them," etc.—  
Matt. vii. 24-29.

OUR Lord preached this and preceding parables to convey a correct idea of the kingdom He designed to set up, and the righteousness required of those who were members of it. He does this by contrasting what He required with what was general among men, and concludes by showing the disastrous consequence of mistaking the one for the other. In contrasting, He uses three figures—1st, the sheep in wolves' clothing, those who put on an appearance for the purpose of deceiving; 2nd, the thorn bush decorated with artificial flowers and fruit, which may deceive for a night and even look beautiful, but cannot last; and 3rd, the man who has built a mansion correct in every detail that meets the eye, but lacking the chief requisite of a house, namely, a foundation. All these having merely the appearance without the thing are shown to be utterly worthless. Two objections rise to everyone's mind as they read this passage: First, no man would be such a fool as to do what is here said to be done. No man would build a house in the dried-up bed of a mountain torrent. This is the objection of a pedant, and yet is worthy of consideration; for what a man will never do in earthly matters is just what many men do in matters of religion. Second, our Lord predicts disaster to the man who hears and does not, while at the last day it is the man who says he has done many things who finds himself shut out. It is by this very inconsistency our Lord would bring out His meaning. The inward influence must be shown by life. In a word, there must be Christian conduct as well as profession. Not

loud verbal profession, not even the performance of striking and public deeds, which need no backing of character, yet imply that there is that backing, but the outflow of loving heart-service resulting from fellowship with the Father. The fleece on the wolf, the fruit on the bush, the house without foundation may look real, genuine and spurious may be identical, but done for the purpose of pretending, of appearing to be what is not there, and not the spontaneous outflow of what is in the man are absolutely worthless in reality. Bad men cannot do good works; good men do them because of the goodness in them. Christ came to gather into one kingdom all men. Those who already held the field had misunderstood altogether what righteousness was. They lived blameless, so far as the law required of them. Christ came with His fan in His hand prepared by one blast to show how useless such righteousness was. The distinction between what they had and what He required was no slight one. A few formal observances or zealous prayers were not sufficient. There must be the right motive which impels right action in spite of everything. Christ warns His hearers first against trusting to appearances. There is more danger of show in religion than in worldly matters. There public sentiment is against it. The man is generally despised who would try to appear what he is not. Even those who are not free of this failing themselves notice it in others, and dislike it. Then there is no class more numerous than the respectable people. People who live under the influence of social opinion, whose judgment of right and wrong is regulated by what people will say on the matter, in this being totally the reverse of Christ's action when on earth, as they think the poor wretch sunk in sin much further from righteousness than the formal Pharisee who is outwardly religious. Those persons are building a house without foundation. They are shallow in religion; would treat God as some courtiers treat a monarch when they desire a favour, as if He were a Lord to be propitiated by certain acts of religion, considering that God is the one who benefits, while God has arranged it all for our benefit—an essential of human life and happiness. Thus they are content with a formal religion, while all the time the nature is unchanged. Then, again, most people admire some one quality or character in man. It is their ideal, yet they do not possess it themselves, only admire it. Often the very thinking about it leads them unconsciously to assume the possession of it; not intending to impose on others, they yet do so. It is thus in religion a man admires a Christian life and gradually gets the reputation of it, until at last he comes to consider himself as having it, and contents himself with such reputation without the reality. Christ would impress on us the insufficiency of mere hearing, while we are often ready to think we have done enough if we have been ready to hear. We have, perhaps, resolved to amend, to give heed; at any rate, we approve of the Word, but unless the hearing, result in doing, it is utter failure. Christ's word is, "Do the will of My Father." The result of such

conduct is portrayed in strong language. It is certain destruction, not resulting from anything of a special kind, but through the ordinary emergency of life. Such is sure to be the end. For a time a man may restrain his natural inclination, as the wolf may for a while appear a sheep, but some time the test will come and he will awake to the reality. He will be alarmed to find difficulty in keeping up appearances, to realise that all his life he has merely been impelling himself so to act, while all the same his nature was unchanged. The awaking may come to himself without the shame of public exposure, or it may not come until after life is ended, but it is certain to come some time. Only wait, and the true character is sure to be revealed. Let us ask what is the foundation of our character? Beneath the ground of traditional morality, of pious desire and hope, get to ourselves. Find out the ground of our actions, the reason for our holy actions, and judge by that. In a word, is Christ your foundation? There is no solid ground for character except this. This alone will stand the test of storm and judgment.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for October 12th. Luke xxii. 7-20. Golden Text, I Cor. xi. 26.*

### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We are told that in Rabbi Duncan's last long illness he looked out from his bed one day, and saw quietly seated on the floor a little friend of his, looking at him. The conversation was to this effect: "Oh, missy, are you there? What are you at in your Bible lesson at Mr. Oliphant's?" "We have just finished the Passion week." "Oh, lassie, lassie, there was never a week like that since the world began, and there never will be a week like it again—that was the week of weeks. There are in the heavens a heap of fixed stars, and all of them probably have suns around them; but never in the universe of God did there take place such things as took place that week on this earth. It is a wonderful place this earth." By this time the old professor had forgotten the child, though her round solemn eyes were still looking at him. In the lesson to-day we have come to the most wonderful day in this most wonderful week. In telling the story of a day, we always begin with the morning; but the Jews always began with the evening. This day began at six o'clock on

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

Thursday evening and ended at six o'clock on Friday evening. The Jews reckoned their day from sunset to sunset.

Our Lord spent Wednesday and part of Thursday in retirement, perhaps with His disciples in the house at Bethany, until Thursday evening, when He went into Jerusalem again for the Last Supper. Jesus, as a Jew, would keep this feast of the Passover. Jesus said, early in His ministry, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." The disciples asked Him where they should prepare the passover for Him. Jesus gave them instructions. With what holy awe the two apostles must have beheld the man carrying a pitcher of whom their Master had spoken. Jesus knew the exact moment when this man would be carrying the pitcher. Jesus knows all the circumstances of our lives, small and great. He not only *knows* their circumstances, but He will if we love Him so order them that they shall work together for our good.

Only think, in this great Passover of Passovers that Christ our Passover just about to die for us, so loved His own as not to forget the smallest trifles that had to do not with their souls only but with their bodies. All the little details had room in His memory. What a heart of love is revealed here!

Of all the touching words that Jesus uttered at the Last Supper perhaps the most touching were these: "This is My body; this is My blood." The disciples had been unwilling to believe that He would die, but could they doubt it any longer? He would die a cruel death—His body would be broken like the bread—His blood would be poured out like the wine. Jesus told His "little children" that the hour of His departure had come, and He gave them the new remembrance feast—in place of the old Passover feast—"Do this in remembrance of *Me*." He foresaw how great the tendency would be to forget Him. Knowing that some of us might be tempted to forget and some to misunderstand Him, He instituted this remembrance feast in love.

You can remember a thousand things, but there are times when you do forget Him who gave Himself for you. Love makes forgetfulness impossible, and if we loved our Lord as we ought it would be impossible not to remember Him.

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

*A Sermon by*

THE BISHOP OF MANCHESTER (DR. JAMES MOORHOUSE).

*Preached at Holy Trinity Church, Hull, at the Church Congress.*

"We know in part and we prophesy in part."—I COR. xiii. 9.

It is universally acknowledged amongst us that in the religious teaching of the Old Testament we can discern a gradual development. God not only spake to the fathers in the old time "in many parts and in many modes," but also with a largeness of truth and spirituality of feeling which, on the whole, increased through the ages until the great revelation of the fulness of the times. So much is admitted. The law of development unquestionably prevailed under the old covenant. Shall we then say that it ceased to have validity when that covenant came to a close, or that it passed over as a rule of the new order, at the coming of the Christ? In one respect this must be denied. The revelation given to us of the nature of God and of His relation to us in Jesus Christ, was final and complete. The great spiritual truths of our Lord's teaching are as unchangeable as His divinity. The age will never come when it will be less true than it is to-day that God is our Father, that man is our brother, that love is the law of our life, that Christ died to save us from our sins, and that from His throne above He sent His Holy Spirit to make us partakers of His holiness. Nay, more; whatever changes time may bring in the scope of our ethical thought and practice, it will never obliterate those eternal lines of human duty which have been laid down once for all in the Sermon on the Mount.

But although the revelation of the Father in the Son be thus final and unchangeable, it by no means follows that our understanding and exposition of that revelation are so. "We know in part and we prophesy in part." Our Lord's words may be simple and plain, but too often we read them without intelligent apprehension. A kind of mist rests on them, springing from the steaming marsh of our own worldly life, or our spiritual vision is obscured by narrow capacity and the misleading suggestions of current habits and opinions. Thus, although the Lord's words may admit neither of change nor

improvement, it may well be that His Church's grasp and representation of them, like the teaching of the prophets of old time, may be the subject of growth and development.

Now, an imperfect apprehension and statement of the truth will necessarily contain good and evil, perfect and imperfect elements.

Such a combination is manifestly susceptible of improvement, and will, in fact, approach more nearly to the truth which it has only partially expressed, if in process of time it drops more and more of those evil or imperfect elements which have been added by the sin or error of human interpreters. Is there, then, reason for hoping that this may actually be the course of Christian thought—that as the centuries pass it will drop more and more of the impure mixture of human haste and prejudice, and come nearer in love and insight to the simple teaching of our Divine Master ?

I think that such a hope is plainly suggested by the promise of the Lord Jesus that He will be with His people "all the days, even till the end of the age;" and yet more plainly by His promise of another Comforter, whose office it should be "to bear witness of Him; to bring to remembrance all which He had said; to take of His, and show it to His disciples." Under the guidance and illumination of this Spirit, then, we may confidently hope that the reason and conscience of the Christian Church will constantly strive to exclude whatever of false or evil has come down to it from darker or less faithful ages; and that, though this struggle may be often frustrated or hindered by unbelief or misfortune, it will never cease. Remembering, indeed, the weakness of man and the vicissitudes of history, we must not expect too much from it in any special age. There will naturally be ebbings and flowings in that tide of Christian thought which seeks to cover with its fertilising waters the waste places of the world's ignorance. Even when heathen resistance has been overcome, obstacles may arise from the immaturity of Christian thought and feeling. Beliefs which the reason suspects and challenges may have become so dear and venerable by long entertainment, may have offered so grateful a shade to the generations which they sheltered, that the heart will cling to them in spite of misgivings.

This conservatism indeed of the emotions, while appearing to retard the progress of truth, may not be wholly without its use and place. It holds back the stronger and more eager spirits, and prevents them from rushing forward so fast and so far as to pass out of the sight and reach of the lagging masses of the race. It thus helps to keep up the solidarity of humankind, and secures that unity of thought and interest without which such a thing as corporate development would be impossible.

In spite, however, of all these drawbacks of human weakness, error, and affection, I believe it to be true, as has been said by a well-known philosopher of our own time, that "our historical inheritance of religion is richer in the elements of moral truth and power than any ever entrusted to any previous age." Nay, I think that it

is not impossible to indicate roughly the great stages of progress through which that inheritance has been reached. I do not, of course, mean that there has been a regular and continuous succession of such stages, or, again, that there has ever been any one age in which many of the essential aspects of Christian truth have been totally obscured.

He who ventured on such a statement would speedily be contradicted by enthusiastic specialists, who would have no difficulty in showing him that even in the darkest times individuals or small communities recognised clearly what the majority of their fellow-Christians were neglecting. In spite, however, of all such exceptions and irregularities, it will not be difficult, I believe, to discern in the history of the Church the traces of a real development of Christian doctrine. This development, it is true, has often been of a very partial kind.

Of the contents of revelation different ages have taken special portions as the object of their careful study and exposition. They have spent their whole energy upon the task of exploring and determining the precise meaning of some single class of truths, and have too often not only suffered other fundamental verities to be neglected, but, their own self-imposed task accomplished, have sunk into mental and spiritual lethargy, leaving the future work of development to be undertaken by another and unexhausted generation of believers.

Thus it was the special task of the early centuries of the Christian era to determine the Scriptural doctrine upon the nature and relations of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Then, with the irruption of the barbarians, a dense cloud of darkness passed over the rational heaven of the Church, and the great problem of the nature of man, and of its relation to the grace of God, already opened and illuminated by the genius of Augustine, was dropped, with much else; while minds were narrowed, and knowledge dwindled, and worship hardened into formality, and thought lost itself in scholastic trivialities. It was a period of rational ebb and decline. The ages, however, as they passed were not altogether unfruitful. Noxious weeds of superstition might indeed flourish in the darkness, but at the same time minds were gathering power, spiritual needs and aspirations were making themselves felt, and in the great schools of the later middle age men began to ask once more what were the spiritual means and benefits of redemption, and what the conditions of their use and attainment by sinful men. It is no more than might have been expected, that in that age of rudimentary spiritual development attention should have been largely directed to those outward means and ordinances through which the life of Christ was offered to human faith; or that in an exaggerated estimate of the value of these the minister should have become the priest, and the sacraments the supposed seeds and channels of magical operations. The less these earth-bound souls felt within themselves the power to see and

grasp the spiritual and heavenly the more did they long to have their conscious spiritual impotence supported by something which was perceptible to sense.

Once again, in the dawn of the Renaissance, human thought went forth eagerly on the quest of truth in every direction, and in none with greater boldness and enthusiasm than in that which was so familiar, the way of revealed religion. After ages of neglect the newly opened Word of God spoke to them with the force and freshness of an audible voice from heaven. It reached depths of their soul which had hardly yet been sounded, it touched feelings and stimulated capacities which had slumbered for centuries; thus filling life with interest and work with sanctity. In the dazzling light of this intellectual rebirth, priestly authority and sacramental miracles became not only less credible, but less desirable. Awaking to new spiritual needs and capacities, men sought a directer and a diviner mode of communion with heaven, and they found in St. Paul's gospel of salvation by faith the very revelation which they sought.

The centre of interest and effort was suddenly changed. It was found not in the Church and the sacraments, valuable and necessary as these might be, but in the believing soul, the living temple of God, that consecrated scene of penitent efforts and divine approaches and joy-inspiring triumphs, which angels desired to look into.

Once again, tired by its mighty effort, and losing interest in what it thoroughly grasped and defined, the reason and conscience of the Church seemed to sink into a kind of lethargy. Thought lost its freedom, and the heart its joy, and to the dry, dogmatic age which followed the Reformation the Bible became little better than a miraculous oracle, and life nothing more than a petty theatre of mean, secular interests, in which at length men felt it hardly worth their while to play a part. Then came the great Evangelical revival, taking all kinds of outward forms, now known as Quietism, now as Methodism, and now as Evangelicalism; but everywhere essentially the same—a revival rather than an advance.

As at an earlier time, it concentrated attention on the individual soul, on the subjective appropriation of salvation—stopping too often at the gaining of heavenly gifts and experiences, without going on to insist decisively on the appointed divine end of such gains. Had the great change come? Was the man converted? Had he laid hold on Christ? had he experienced the joy of adoption? These were the main questions, and with the answers to these interest and effort too often ended. Nay, so blind were many good men of that period, and so proud of their blindness, that the very imperfection and fragmentariness of their conceptions seemed to them a special merit.

To confine attention to the work of Christ, to the offer of pardon and life in Him, and to the acceptance of that offer by faith was called preaching the Gospel.

To go further, to call attention to the fact that the work of Christ,

the ministry of the Spirit, the ordinances of the Church, yea, and the subjective moods of mind and heart which appropriated the benefits of these, were all only means to an end—the reproduction in each man of the image of Christ; and hence to make much of the revealed features of that image, and of the daily Divine discipline, effort, and abstinence by which it might be perfected; all this was looked upon with suspicion, as a departure from the simplicity of the truth, as legalism, formalism, or even a magnifying of human merit to the disparagement of the grace of God. What wonder that so crippling and injurious a mistake provoked a violent reaction, and even a contempt which would have been more loudly expressed but for the respect inspired by the characters of good and holy men?

But now once more, in our own days we are beholding what I believe is not merely a revival of lost truths, but a distinct advance in the human apprehension of the Gospel. Without losing sight of the vast importance of past gains, of the dogmatic definitions of the early centuries, of the later discovery of the preciousness of the means of grace, or of the mighty grasp of reforming times upon the critical importance of a realising faith; we are now discerning, I believe, more clearly than ever before, that all these are concerned mainly with what is preparatory and instrumental, with what looks forward to a great spiritual end; the realisation in the heart, in the Church, and in the State of the ideal set before us in our Lord's life and teaching. The signs of such a development may be discerned, I believe, in many directions.

First, in the much greater proportion of attention which is directed to the personal teaching and example of our Divine Master.

We feel instinctively that the dogmatic teaching of St. Paul's Epistles, though by no means exhausted, has been very largely apprehended and realised. True, it is not the less important for that; but it is on this account a less necessary and interesting object of attention. In the teaching and life of our Divine Master, on the other hand, we feel that there are depths which have never yet been sounded, lessons which have never yet been learnt, light for our perplexity which has yet to spring forth and illuminate the heaven of our thought and practice.

It is with us in this respect very much as it was with the Hebrews in respect of our Lord's priesthood and sacrifice. No one can say that the doctrines of "repentance from dead works," of "faith toward God," of "resurrection from the dead," and of "eternal judgment" are not of first-rate and eternal significance; but they had been apprehended and realised, and so to the Hebrews had become rudimentary and almost self-evident. There was little need of insisting upon them. Powerful temptations had given a greater claim upon attention to the true meaning of that priestly and sacrificial system of the law of Moses which threatened to draw away the thoughts of believers from the one all-sufficient Sacrifice, and to reimpose the broken yoke of the ceremonial law.

It was necessary, then, in order to secure what had been already gained, that an advance should be made to the better knowledge of other truths, as yet but imperfectly apprehended.

Unless I am greatly mistaken, a like necessity is felt in the Church of the present day—a necessity which proclaims itself in such exclamations as these—“Christianity is a personal religion,” “Christ in Christianity,” “We want now not St. Paul, but St. Paul’s Divine Master.” Nay, the urgency of this need is felt not only in the old Churches of Europe, but also in those heathen lands which are being awakened from the sleep of centuries by the light, now painfully striking upon weak eyes, of European thought and civilisation. What is the report with which missionaries have been lately startling the minds of thoughtful Christians? That they are met everywhere, in India and Africa alike, with the demand, “Tell us about Jesus: tell us what He said and did; let us hear the words of love which go straight to our hearts; which are so like what is good in our old creeds, and yet so much better than the best which they taught us.” All this surely means that the four Gospels will be studied in our days as they have never been studied before; with an eagerness and a seriousness which have their birth in the felt needs of a larger thought and a deeper humanity.

Secondly, I believe that the social movements of our own time—themselves largely due to the Gospel—are enabling us to gain a better understanding of the meaning of Christ’s words. For ages we have been so much under the dominion of prevailing thoughts and habits that we have been literally unable to believe that the Lord meant what he said. Men who loved Him lived lives so utterly unlike that which He set forth by His teaching and example that we have felt it necessary to bring precept and practice into some sort of tolerable harmony, by all kinds of ingenious and non-natural interpretations. The Lord could not—so it has seemed to us—He could not have meant His words to be taken literally.

Such an acceptance of them would involve nothing less than a social revolution, a change which would unsettle everything, and let loose upon the children of peace all the destructive forces of selfish passion. That the Lord intended to create a vast social change, that He meant by the arms of love to conquer all the wild impulses of selfish passion, seems hardly to have been conceivable. I cannot say that all this has been changed—that would mean what is called the millennium—but assuredly all is changing.

I have lived for more than sixty years, and I can remember the time when to have required employers to consider in fixing wages, in arranging workshops, in building cottages, in determining the hours of labour, not only profits, but also and more, the physical, moral, and spiritual welfare of working men, would have been looked upon as a kind of lunacy. Christ might indeed have said that one human soul was of more value than the whole world, but that, no doubt, was a kind of Oriental figure, and at any rate it was no concern of those who took

the trouble of prosecuting worldly labours in order to make money. No change whatever has been made in the words of Christ, but how much more those words have come to mean to us, through the reluctant recognition which has been forced upon all, partly by the teaching of great humanitarians, and partly by the combination of labourers, that after all man is more than money, that character is greater than possessions, that human truth and honour, purity and love are more than all the victories of war, or the accumulations of peace. What, again, could seem to be more Utopian than our Lord's command, "When thou makest a dinner call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours, . . . but call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind." We are far enough yet, it is true, with all the luxuries and extravagances of our London seasons, from laying that precept to heart, but at least the movements of our time have brought some kind of obedience to it within more measurable distance. We do see rich ladies in large numbers going down into the poorest slums of our cities to carry to the least fortunate of the race the help of Christian love and the light of Christian refinement. We do see noble-hearted men giving up all the enjoyments of a brilliant society to live in the midst of the wretched and depraved, and to find a deeper delight in the restoration to miserable outcasts of the lost image of God than any which the world can offer. We do see colleges and public schools establishing or assisting Christian Missions to the ignorant, the depraved, and the fallen, and eagerly contributing not only money, but sympathy and personal aid, to make the love of Christ a living succour where succour is most needed. In the light thrown upon our Master's words by such movements as these we are almost beginning to believe that He meant what He said, and that perhaps, after all, armed Europe will never suppress the aggressions of selfishness by the cannon and the sword, nor, indeed, in any other way than that which Christ has disclosed to us, by "doing good to those who hate us, and by praying for those who despitefully use us and persecute us," so overcoming evil by good.

But, thirdly, in whatever degree modern social and industrial movements have contributed to dispel the mists of prejudice which cling to Christ's words, it is impossible to conceal from ourselves the selfish motives by which such movements are often disfigured and defeated. Do we not know forms of socialism which are little better than political materialism, prescribing the worship of gold as a god, turning the State into a providence, and taking the equal division of loaves and worldly advantages for salvation? Have we not recently seen these mean, secular aspirations too faithfully reflected in the savage threats and lawless violence of some who, in their eagerness to win a larger share of the products of labour (possibly in some cases their due), have not hesitated to infringe personal liberty and to imperil social order? Never does organised oppression wear so ugly a look as when it is practised by those who inscribe liberty and

fraternity on their banner; and never does the contemptible cry, *Rem quocunque modo rem*, sound so forbiddingly as when it comes from the lips which have cursed so bitterly the unscrupulous greed of the employer. If these blind feelings forth after a juster and more loving order of human life are to escape their present perils, and to win real blessings for the poor and wretched, they must seek nobler motives, a higher point of view, and an ampler justification of their claims.

If God and Christ and the eternal world are to be ignored or denied, if man is to be the highest object of regard, if the best pleasures are held to be the pleasures of sense, and if the ultimate law of human life is to be gathered from the order of nature, then all the lofty theories of the socialist are baseless, and all his efforts are foredoomed to failure. For men are not born equal, but unequal in every quality of body and mind, the forces of nature do not favour the survival of the poor and feeble, but only of the fittest; and so long as men are incapable of prizing character above strength, and self-sacrifice above the pleasures of sense, all clamorous assertions of equality, and all State decrees for the equal payment of labour, will only end in the dismal and heart-breaking failure of M. Louis Blanc's State workshops. It is Christianity, and Christianity alone, which can at once justify, elevate, and direct the industrial efforts and aspirations of our time. If all are members of one great spiritual family, with one Heavenly Father, one Saviour Brother, and one destiny of redemption from sin, then all are brethren and equal, then the laws of the lower natural order are seen to have no exclusive sway and currency in this high moral sphere, then money is of no value but to lighten labour, to give leisure for improvement, and to remove the hindrances to moral and spiritual development. Then violence will be as impossible as oppression, and idleness as covetousness, for all will seek not their own, but another's wealth, and find the only true greatness and happiness in 'service. Strange as it sounds, it is profoundly true that we shall never succeed in our efforts to secure a juster distribution of wealth until we come to feel that wealth in itself is of no intrinsic value. He alone could sell all that he has and give to the poor who has found his treasure in heaven. And, therefore, whether men see it or not, the only true law of life for our industrial future is that which has been formulated by Christ for all time, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Here we have a formal statement of the *summum bonum* of man. Is it a true statement? No question at the present day presses more urgently for settlement. For how can we determine which of all the modern attempts at social reconstruction are possible and hopeful, worth thought and assistance, until we know the goal which we should endeavour to attain? We cannot be agnostic on this question in such an age as ours without the deadliest peril, for if we refuse to incur the trouble and responsibility of its consideration, our senses will settle it for us, to the corruption and degradation of our life.

What, then, is supremely good for us, what is the one thing needful? Is it the Love of God, or the praise of man? Is it character or possessions? Is it what we are, or what we have? Is it the food of the senses, or the eternal life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? We must gain a complete and final answer to that question, if we would rid our life of perplexity, vacillation, and disappointment. Do we believe, as our Divine Master taught us, that we are the children of an Omnipotent Fatherly Love, which is the source and basis alike of our life and the life of all creatures? Do we believe that to restore to us the broken communion with that love the Lord Jesus lived and died? Then, surely, we shall acknowledge that to live in the light of that love, to reflect its brightness, to feel its warmth, to share its impulses, and to do its work is the highest felicity whether of earth or heaven! To will as God wills is to be noble and happy. It is to have the rare power of finding in all outward things the occasion of lofty thought and feeling, to see the goodness of the Divine love in the impartial sun and rain, to behold its beauty in the hue of the lily, and the far shining of the sea, to realise the outgoings of its sympathy and pity in the innocence of the child and the patient faith of the sufferer, to recognise the touch of its redeeming discipline in the pain of remorse, the stirrings of compunction, and the birth-throes of better resolve. So to live is to win back again clearness of vision and readiness for self-sacrifice, to rise into a sphere so lofty that its clear air is never obscured by the mists of selfishness, to have a heart sensitive to every touch of Divine feeling, and an intellect which is the willing servant of the loftiest principles of truth. Then, if social troubles arose how prompt and easy would be their solution. Capitalists would ask, not how can we get as large a share as possible of the products of human toil and prudence, but how can we so moderate our just claim as to secure to our fellow-creatures the opportunity of a good and noble life? And labourers, on their part, with the same lofty conception of the true aim of existence, would consult, not how to wring the last possible farthing from the capitalist, but how so to frame their requirements as to conform to the necessities of trade, to the advance of the common interest, and to the progress of mutual confidence and love. All this may seem, perhaps, to some of you, the merest Utopian dream. Call it what you please; still, if it be accordant with the will and teaching of Christ, I believe that it will one day be realised by redeemed men on this earth. For I believe in a true development as well of goodness as of truth. Nay, more, I see the signs of such a development in the course of Christian history, and in the movements of our own time, and, above all, in that promise of our Divine Master, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age." If He be here, if His spirit of love dwell in the heart of our struggling Christendom, I know that it must be pressing us forward in the direction marked out in the Divine counsel, and that in spite of human ignorance, sin, and opposition it will one day bring us to the appointed goal.

Do you ask me how long I think it will be ere the Spirit of God has thus taken of the things of Christ and made them blessed realities in the thought and life of the world? I cannot, of course, presume to answer such a question. I know how suddenly moral influences which have been slowly gathering force sometimes leap to their triumph. I know how in the history of the kingdom of God the darkest night has been sometimes broken by a supernatural sunrise of grace. In some such sudden movement and victory I expect that the world will see the fulfilment of Christ's promise of His return. But of course if we set aside, as we have no business to do, that Divine promise of help and demand of expectation, and if we construe the rate of moral progress in the future by that in the past, we shall be constrained to admit that it may be slow and variable, continuing through long ages and generations, with many a halt, many a deviation—aye, and many a falling back. But even so, even in the most unfavourable event, is it nothing to believe in dark and chaotic times that we are moving after all under Divine guidance to a divinely determined goal? What of defeat is too shameful for endurance, or what of misfortune is too heart-breaking to be borne, if only we may hope that all things are working together, both effort and opposition, both faith and unbelief, for the establishment of that kingdom of which Christ is the light and life?

I conclude by three short words of counsel which are naturally suggested by our subject.

First, it is necessary to advance in order to preserve what is of eternal value and significance in our teaching. At all times the human mind naturally strives to find a rational relation between the various particulars of its knowledge. It endeavours to bring them into a reasonable harmony, to include them within a single intelligible scheme. It follows, then, that in any given age the eternal verities of religion will be brought into rational relations with what in that age is looked upon as historical and scientific truth. When, however, as time goes on, doubt is thrown upon those historical and scientific conclusions, that doubt will be reflected on those eternal truths of religion which human reason has associated with them. Then a new need arises. We must carefully separate that which is certain and essential in our historical inheritance of religion from that which was merely accidental, which was only added to it to serve the needs of intellectual harmony.

The necessity for what I may call this "advance of separation" is specially great in our own time, because more than in almost any previous age what is merely human in our religious traditions and doctrines is being called in question. To save, then, what is eternally true, we must not hesitate to advance in the separation from it of what is accidentally and already more or less discredited.

Secondly, while not hesitating to advance, we must be satisfied to advance slowly and prudently, so as not to overrun the will or capacity of those we seek to take with us. However true may be

our principles, and however benevolent our aims, we shall fail if we reckon on moral capacity which does not exist, or on Christian knowledge which has not yet been realised. If we would raise men we must keep within reach of them, and count it a higher thing to bring the whole of Christendom one step nearer to Christ's ideal life in a decade than to dart forward to the end in thought and imagination in a moment. For the moral redemption of the race, then, insight is not more necessary than patience, that tender consideration of the true shepherd who restrains his own impatience that he may carry the lambs in his arms and gently lead those that are with young.

And, lastly, in all circumstances, whether our advance be slow and halting, or swift and hopeful, we must make ceaseless endeavours to reach the appointed goal. The way to it may be strait and hard, but at least it is plain and unmistakable, for it has been marked out for us by the pierced feet of Him who waits to welcome us at the end. Many a time, no doubt, human pride, folly, or wilfulness will stray from it into the crooked paths of falsehood and selfishness, but not the less must we strive unceasingly to press back into the appointed path.

Our place is among our brethren, however far they may stray. We are to be their memory and their conscience, the living voice which ever cries in their midst, "This is the way, walk ye in it." And though sometimes the star of our hope may look dim and distant, may seem to our straining eyes to waver and flicker and almost disappear, we must still press onward with a faith which is stronger than sight and surer than reason. We have a sure ally in the divinely implanted instinct of human aspiration. For it is true, as one has nobly said, that "an eternal longing, an unwearied pressure, a beating of the labouring wings, however far the height and lone the track, mark the spiritual tendencies of Christendom." It is for us to appeal to this Divine witness and impulse, and in the days of doubt and danger, when foes are many and shadows are dark and hopes are low, to stay our souls upon that promise of Him to whom all human power is weakness and all human wisdom foolishness: "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me and every tongue shall confess to God."

### A PULPIT PRAYER.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR MURSELL.

O Lord, we look to Thee and we desire so to depend upon Thee as that we may derive the inspirations of our own friendship from Thee, so that in our degree the sympathy which we show to one another may be like Thine own. Thou art never weary of supporting the weight of those who cast themselves upon Thee, and Thou hast wrought out a sacrifice by which the still heavier weight of all our transgressions may not only be sustained, but carried away and cast into the depths of the sea. Lord, we praise Thee for that record which

is inscribed in Thy word of the scape-goat which went away from the midst of the people with their sin upon his head, and how under the uplifted hand of the priest that scape-goat went further and further with his load from those whom he had relieved, until, lost in the oblivion of the distance of the wilderness, the sins were carried all away. We bless Thee that our sin is laid upon a still more efficient and complete Scape-goat, and that Jesus Christ taketh away the sin of the world, and in that taking away we feel that the weight is removed, and that the impediment goes out of the pathway by which otherwise we should be let and hindered in our approach unto Thee. Look over our transgressions, then, we pray Thee, and may there be nothing to hinder the closeness of our access unto Thee; and may we feel that we, even we, with all our past transgressions, and with all our proneness to wander and to err, that we find the place of the lost sheep which is held so close to the seeking Shepherd's heart and breast, that there is nothing but the love of forgiveness and of safety to be experienced, and nothing but forgetfulness of all the sin. Lord, we praise Thee for the many times in which in Thy Word this completeness of Thy pardon is reiterated. And we desire to have the ear of faith unstopped, so that we may hear the voice of the Parent who awaits the returning prodigal at the gate, not only commanding the shrift in the tone of the High Priest upon the sinner, but calling for the best robe to be put upon the naked and shivering limbs of the penitent child. Lord, we beseech Thee to give us such a view of the Cross of Christ, and such an intense appreciation of all that it has done for us, such a thorough feeling of our need of it and of the supply of that need in it, that we may feel that indeed we are complete in Jesus Christ, and that dedicating all our life and all our service and all our aspiration to Him, may we humbly wait by the wayside for Him to call us to some simple service. And wherever the cry of sadness is heard, whenever the challenge glove is thrown down at the feet of sympathy, then may we be ready to run in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and in His dear name to do what good we may. Oh, fill our hearts with tenderness and love. We would aspire after no other sentiment than this, that we may love even as we have been loved, and even as Christ still loves us all. So shall the sigh of our sympathy carry at least some sign of sincerity and relief with it to those who need it; and Thou knowest that there are many amongst us who do need it. Comfort them in their mourning from whatever source or from whatever cause that mourning may arise. Draw very near to such as are bereaved, and fill up with a sense of Thine own presence the void which aches in the hearts which are tried. Bring together, we entreat Thee, in the bonds of affection and tenderness, all those who are left in families which have been in any wise invaded by trial, and grant that in their mutual love, and in the sense of the love of their common Redeemer towards them, there may be happiness and joy for years to come on earth and then

the eternal and the inseparable reunion in Heaven. Lord, we have friends there beyond the veil, and sometimes they seem to visit us very closely. Sometimes in Thy house and at Thy table we see their faces, hear their voices, and almost clasp their hands. Oh, we bless Thee for these gleams, because they are hints of the eternal reality which is beyond that veil. Help us to live as seeing the invisible, and may we love Him through Whom we see it more and more intensely because of the sweetness of His revelation and His life. We have many petitions to present before Thee, many cares, as it were, to roll upon Thine all-willing and all-powerful, and all-loving, and all-sustaining heart. Lord, do Thou look down in tenderness upon those left at home, those who are sick. We beseech Thee, Lord, to draw nigh to them, and bless them, and cause Thy face to shine upon them, and may we find them cheerful, and strong, and patient, when we return to them. And whatever may be the special solicitude or care, do Thou, O Lord, solace us in the bearing of it, and comfort us whatever form our trial or our anxiety may take. Lord, upon all those that love Thee let Thy constant blessing descend; and upon those who love Thee not, oh let the tidings of Thine own great love come with such power as that their hearts shall be melted and drawn towards Thee. And now we pray for Thy blessing. We ask Thee to quicken us by the power and inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit. Bless us individually; bless us in our households; bless us as a Church and people. We thank Thee for all the glimpses of Thy face which Thou dost afford us. We thank Thee for all quickening, and all blessing, and all inspiration from time to time, and we pray Thee to help us patiently to bear whatsoever anxiety may be around us. May we still feel that nothing can disturb or hurt us so long as our patient waiting is for Thee, and our firm faith and trust are in Thee. Lord, give unto us all the wisdom that we need. We need Thy light, and we need more Thy love. May we be found with those who seek to humbly sit at Thy feet to ascertain Thy will, and to do it wherever Thou dost appoint it for us. And give unto us that peace which is the very basis of all prosperity, that peace amongst ourselves, that union which is the strength of those who seek to co-operate in Thy work. Thus shall peace be within our walls and prosperity within our palaces, and for our brethren and companions' sake we will now say, "Peace be amongst us." Lord, now do Thou draw near to us, and let the light of Thy countenance rest upon us. Hear us whilst we pray for the furtherance of Thy kingdom everywhere, for Thy manifested and felt presence in the midst of all special assemblies which may contemplate gathering in the week which is to come in Thy name, and in the interests of Thy church throughout the world. Let Christian missions receive an impulse and an impetus, and may the hearts of those who are far away from home be sustained by the tidings which they shall hear of the expressed sympathy, and of the much prayer, and of the deep solicitude of Christians who work

in the same cause at home. Lord, let Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done among all sorts and conditions of men. O Lord, rain down Thy rich and Thine abundant blessing. Let the people praise Thee, O Lord; yea, let all the people praise Thee; for Christ's sake. Amen.

“MINE,” AND “HIS.”

“My beloved is mine, and I am His.”—Song of Songs ii. 16.

*A Communion Address by*

REV. ALEXANDER JEFFREY,

*At Trinity Presbyterian Church, Maryland Point, Stratford, London, on  
Sunday Morning, September 28th, 1890.*

“He is mine,” because He gave Himself for me. “He is mine,” because by the hand of my faith I laid hold on Him. “He is mine,” because when He knocked I opened and gave Him entrance. “He is mine,” and I am rich beyond compare. “All things” are mine, since Christ is mine.

His death is mine, for, like a broad, blood-sprinkled shield, it comes between me and the stroke of offended justice. His righteousness is mine, for it clothes me with the fair white robes of acceptance. His life is mine, for it thrills through all my being, and I live by it. His virtues are mine, for I may claim them in the time of my need, His joy in hours of sorrow, His peace in hours of unrest, His patience in hours of harassment, His strength in hours of weakness. His Heaven is mine, and it is waiting for me. Death cannot part us. He who is mine in time, will be mine through eternity.

“And I am His.”—His, for He bought me with a great price, and I am not my own. His, for He “keeps me as the apple of the eye,” and “hides me under the shadow of His wings,” yea, folds me within the pitying love of His own most tender heart. His, for His nail-pierced hand of omnipotence holds me, and none can ever pluck me from its grasp.

“My Beloved is mine”—here is my priceless privilege: “I am His”—there lies my great responsibility! Nothing I have is my own. His name now rests on all that belongs to me. He has stamped His broad-arrow of proprietorship on me and mine: on the very furniture of my house, the very books in my study, and the very tools in my workshop! He claims my time and talents, my money, my opportunities, my influence, my all! Everything about me is His.

My sins are His, for He took them over upon Himself, that He might save me from their curse. My sorrows are His, for he makes them His own, feeling tenderly for me, and with me, in all life's woes.

“In every pang that rends the heart,  
The Man of Sorrows hath a part.”

My service is His, and to withhold it from Him when it can be given is to rob Him of His due. My affections are His, for He reigns on the throne of my heart, and I should love Him more than life. My intellect is His, and all its powers must ever be at His disposal.

—“I am His,” body, soul and spirit. Body? Yes, body! These hands are His: shame on them if henceforth they lie in the lap of indolence, or be lifted to do the devil’s work! These feet are His: can they ever venture again on forbidden paths? or go where their Master went not? These lips are His—touched as with “a live coal from off the altar:” is it possible that they can ever again utter an impure, an unkind, or a false word? These ears are His: will they ever dare to listen with delight to an obscene speech, or a foul suggestion? These eyes are His: shall I ever permit them to look upon sin with approval? God forbid!

Back to the world I must go, but not to worldliness: no not to worldliness. For since “Christ is mine, and I am His,” “the world is crucified” and dead “to me,” and I unto the world.” Henceforth I am Christ’s—Christ’s alone, and Christ’s for ever—consecrated to Him and to His service, from this sacramental hour as I have never been.

“Jesus, of Thee shall be my song:  
To Thee my heart and soul belong;  
All that I have or am is Thine,  
And Thou, blest Saviour, Thou art mine!”

Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory for ever and ever.—Amen.”

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for October 19th. Luke xxii. 24-37. Golden Text, Phil. ii. 5.*

### JESUS FORETELLS PETER’S DENIAL.

THE “fall” of Peter lay very heavily on the heart of Jesus. He thought about it, He prayed about it, He spoke about it long before it happened. If any one is inclined to think little of a “fall,” let him study what *one* “fall” of *one* disciple was to Jesus. One sin of a child of God gives more pleasure to Satan than thousands of sins of the world. One sin of a child of God does more harm than thousands of sins of the world. One sin of a child of God is a wound to Jesus—such as no other sins could ever make.

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

Jesus traced this sifting time to its source—its Satanic agency, "Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." What a view this passage gives us of the malice of Satan. He had succeeded in obtaining one of the apostles as his prey, and he longs to destroy Peter too. It seems that Satan is allowed to try the saints, but these trials only serve to make them brighter Christians afterwards. Jesus watches over His people, and were He less watchful no soul would ever reach the heavenly fold. No little child is so dependent upon the watchfulness of its nurse as we are upon that of Jesus. It was Christ who delivered Peter. He knew all the designs of the enemy. He had already prayed for Peter, and now He warns him. He laid up for Peter's comfort encouraging words of his restoration, and showed him how even his sin should turn to good account. "When thou art converted, strengthen the brethren."

Peter had many strong points, but one weak one, and that one was at the beginning of this disastrous fall. You know the strength of a rope is to be measured, not according to its strongest but in its weakest point. When the strain comes let it be broken there, and it is no matter how strong the rest is. So it is with the strength of a soul. Peter's weak point was his impulsiveness. Impulse has its cold fits and its hot fits, its bravery and its cowardice. "Enter not into temptation," said his Lord, but Peter went on unheeding. He loved Christ far too much to deny Him. He knew how to take care of himself. Peter thought himself an iron man; but there was a flaw in his iron, though he knew it not until he entered into a trial for which he was not fitted; then the iron broke!

But at length Peter obtained a martyr's courage, and now he wears a martyr's crown. The time came when he fulfilled his own words: "I will lay down my life for Thy sake," and he was stretched on a cross like his beloved Master.

About seventeen hundred years ago there were thirty youths in the Roman army who declared for Christ. And for doing so they were condemned to stand on a frozen lake, naked, in the depth of a northern winter, till they froze to death. They said they were quite ready to die for Jesus; but one of them gave way. He was told that if he denied Jesus he would have a hot bath at once, and he denied his Lord and got the hot bath, but this only hastened his death. He lost by his denial, after all. The others stood firm confessing Jesus, and their faithfulness so touched the heart of one of the officers there that he took off his badge of office and said, "I, too, will be a Christian and die with the rest." He joined the others on the ice, saying, "Now your number is again complete." Thus the "Thirty Martyrs" died for Jesus, and their lives were not wasted, for their brave confession of Christ strengthened their brethren.

Never be ashamed to stand up for Jesus, and one day He will show that He is not ashamed of you.

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## CHRIST'S SECOND COMING A NECESSITY.

*Notes of a Sermon by*

THE REV. ARTHUR MURSELL,

*Preached in Stockwell Baptist Church on Sunday evening, October 5th, 1890.*

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."—ACTS i. 11.

It is not always because the wish is father to the thought that we find certain religious sections and individuals of a special type of temperament professing practically and literally to anticipate the second coming of the Saviour to the earth. The oldest men, whose retrospects include the longest vista into the past and whose memories enumerate the most eccentric variety of religious manifestation—these will assure us that there is nothing new in these anticipations of the definite and almost immediate coming of the Saviour, and that there is nothing specially typical of our own day in the extravagances to which they sometimes lead. The reader of the everyday newspaper will often see in the columns allotted to advertisements curious, and involved, and ingenious calculations, evolved or drawn out of the prophetic data of the Bible, from which are gathered a very speedy close of the dispensation, and the imminent appearance of Messiah in the world amongst our concerns and affairs. Specific dates are assigned, and passing political or social events are signalled as pointing towards the crisis which is predicted, until the sum is worked with a kind of arithmetical precision which tends to reduce the sublime almost to the ridiculous. Many of the dates selected have long ago passed by, and our grand-sires will tell us that these prophets plied their curious craft and hawked their vague and nebulous hallucinations when they themselves were in the nursery. It is usually rather a morbid mind, one would think, which becomes cobwebbed with these material calculations, and it by no means follows that because a sect betakes itself to prophesying, the aspiration, "Come, Lord Jesus," is truly fervent in the soul.

But for all that, and without desiring to cast any uncharitable reflections upon those who are thus almost ridiculously definite, a

reverent and devout attitude of expectancy and hope is a very different thing from this, and it is an attitude well befitting and well becoming to the Christian church and the faithful Christian heart, the heart which beats under the impulse of Scripture inspiration and of prophetic promise. The watch-towers of Zion should never be unmanned of the sentinels who look stedfastly towards the east, and however dark the night, or however chaotic the clouds on the horizon, the wistfulness should never flag or intermit which listens for the sound of the chariot wheels. To gravitate from that spiritual alertness to which a thousand voices from the world of revelation would arouse the child of God, and to plod contentedly in the smaller orbit of a prosaic time, to succumb with an unambitious kind of drift in the shallow round of an ascetic mood, or to resign the soul to the Babel-noise of markets or of merchandise—this is a very poor posture, one would think, for those whose hopes are full of immortality. It is a fitter and far more Scripturally enlightened attitude for the Christian hope to keep its finger delicately and sensitively upon the keyboard of prophecy, not strumming the poor scales of its arithmetic, but sounding the clear keynote of its promises, and in the rapture of the music, as its cadences rise, drink draughts of the *abandon* and delight of hearts of earth which wait patiently but hopefully for the Lord from heaven.

For not only is there nothing incredible in the speedy advent of the Messiah to the earth, but a devout discernment is well entitled to contemplate the probabilities which seem to hint at the Saviour's coming. That He will come, and that He must come, surely is patent to all, not only from the declarations, the distinct declarations, of His Word, but from the absolute necessities of the case. The treatment which Christ received when He paid His visit of condescension and of sacrifice demands alike for His dignity and His pity that He should come again on a mission of vindication and reprisal. Coming before, He was despised and rejected of men; coming again, He shall be the crowned, the Christ, the cynosure of homage, and glorified and admired by His saints; the same Christ stretching the same hands to the same race, and where they pierced Him He shall show the nail prints set, as it were, with the jewels of the power which those who inflicted those wounds derided. It is impossible that the claim of Christ to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world should be left partially recognised by man, or imperfectly asserted by Himself. He will come. He will come to watch the abatement and to hasten the disappearance of the offence of the Cross, and to give a rebel world a gracious opportunity of returning to its loyalty, and kissing the sceptre from which they had revolted.

The sufferings of His own servants will add a fervour, if needs be, to the coming of their Master to the world. He will not vindicate Himself without vindicating them. He reads the pages of history with a sympathetic heart, and those chapters which are written in the blood of His saints are precious archives in the Saviour's memory.

The flag of His empire and the crown of His reign shall be attached to the stakes where martyrs have sighed forth their dying testimony for His Cross, and the prelude and recitative of premonition shall give way to the air sung in the Master's own present voice, as He cries, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people." He will not be content with deputies, or representatives, or ambassadors, but He Who at one time, and even now, speaks to us by prophets and by ministers, shall speak to us by His Son as a reigning King in the midst of them. The whole character of the passing dispensation is probationary. It points to something more permanent by itself, and the nature of the events which are necessary to perfect His executive render the second coming of the Saviour to the world not incredible and impossible, but highly improbable and apparently essential. He must surely propose to revisit the earth, which He found formerly in such strange revolt against Him. It must assuredly be the purpose alike of His pity for mankind, and of His ambition for Himself, to answer the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." We venture no predictions as to the construction that "quickly" will receive at His hands, or at His heart, or in His calculation; but when He sees those who spurned Him returning to confess the sceptre which they rejected, and to honour the throne which they despised, He will reciprocate the attitude of the world which gives Him welcome, and take to Himself this once revolted earth as a territory in His universal and restored empire. There is no need for the gaze of a dazed and bewildered amazement, but there is ample ground for the vigil of intelligence and of sure expectancy. We will not, therefore, look with the bewilderment or the open mouth of those men of Galilee, but rather with the set lip of the children of the promise who await their coming Lord, assured that this same Jesus who was taken from our fathers into heaven will so come to us in like manner as they saw Him go into heaven.

A glance, just a very hasty one, at the purposes to be subserved by such an advent of Christ to the earth will tend to confirm more strongly its probability.

The first and the initial purpose which lies right across the threshold of every movement in the policy of Christ in His filial capacity is the vindication of the glory of His Father. It was to lay the basis of a renewed fatherhood, after the fatherhood had been forfeited by sin, that Deity advised this dual or twofold relationship, and exemplified at once the obedience of a son and the atonement of a sacrifice. The obedience was rendered to the Father, the atonement was offered to justice. It was the paternal rule which required the one; it was the judicial necessity which demanded the other. Obedience was necessary to establish the tender relationship of child to father. Atonement was necessary to balance and keep up the equilibrium of that eternal attitude of righteousness, without which the Father could not be Himself. The Father exacts and receives the first, He participates in the offering of the second. We can never

protest too often or too emphatically, as we are continually doing, against the caricature of atonement which portrays it as a vehicle of vengeance wreaked by an outraged power upon innocence as the condition of condoning guilt. It is Godhead's loving and original scheme to meet the challenge of absolute necessity. It thus became God in this way, through the medium of sacrifice, though the shedding of blood; it thus became Him to fulfil all righteousness, and the Cross was set up as a finger-post upon the track of Christ's second and triumphal entry into the world. If one of its bare arms pointed to the red west where the sun seems setting into night, the other pointed to the amber east where it should rise again in the glory of the morning. That same Jesus who seemed to sink with the sinking day has travelled through the night of death and of the grave, that He may come again in the glory that shall know no night at all. He began His second advent with the first footstep of His exit from the earth. He began to come back again the moment He went out of the world. It was to re-enter in more regal robes that He left the stage on which He seemed to die, and even in His passing furnished a robing-room for all who would welcome Him, or attend Him, by changing the grave itself into the wardrobe of the soul.

This is the obedience by which God as a Son perfects our sonship, and so vindicates the glory of the Fatherhood. Death would have balked and frustrated that glory had not obedience overcome it and led the pathway of redemption through the shadows of the grave. So that the second coming of the Saviour should be the coming of an acknowledged Conqueror and King, of one whose conquest is confessed, and whose royalty is accepted. And it shall not only thus fully vindicate the Father's glory, but it shall institute a lasting and a permanent separation between light and darkness, between right and wrong, between good and evil, between life and death. Tares and wheat may grow together till the harvest, but at the harvest-time the winnowing operation, the scattering, the division, must come. "His fan is in His hand, and He shall thoroughly purge His floor." Sifting, separation, are principles and conditions of the coming of the Son of Man. He shall come in His glory, and it will be in order to sit upon the throne of His glory, and what is out of harmony with the splendours of that throne must stand apart and be divided and be set by itself. The sheep who have followed the Good Shepherd will be distinguished from the goats who have forsaken Him. The discords and disloyalty will not be permitted to mar the songs of those who are the children of the kingdom, nor shall the skull of death grin there with his charnel-jaw. For at the coming of the Saviour He shall merge and blend the mediatorial into the final and regal economy. A brighter and a fairer coronation shall accrue to Him than the poor obedience and shows which would have been marshalled by those who would have made Him a King if He had come into the common royalty of earth. The irony or satire of the jib which laughed at the crown of thorns should be answered by th

splendid satire which comes from a universe of the redeemed, "All hail, King of the Jews, King of kings and Lord of lords." No longer pleading at the bar, but garnering and gathering the fruits—the precious priceless fruits of tender intercession—He shall merge the vindication of His priesthood in the glory of His reign.

What the features of that glory shall be it simply baffles us even to picture or to fancy. If imagery may at any time be taken literally, or any hint or suggestion of the reality be gathered from it, Christ, when he comes again, will appear attended by every conceivable seal of the Divine complacency and approval. Necessarily so, for this is but saying that God will find complacency in His own world; it is but declaring the Saviour's satisfaction in the trial of His own soul, it is only catching from Calvary the emphasis of the "It is finished," for had there been any minute detail or punctilio undone or left unfolded, the gloom had never lifted at the Cross, and the throes of soul-travail would add no new birth to the progeny of hope. It would, indeed, have been a human sacrifice if Deity had withheld His seal. The Divine complacency ever attests a work which is itself Divine. The Divine pleasure and complacency is inseparable from the work of the Cross, because the work of the Cross was a Divine work. Around the manger at His birth the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest," and pointed to the Babe. When He was baptised, the Voice came from Heaven, "My beloved Son, My beloved Son," sunk under that wave. When He was tempted, there was angel ministry at hand to wipe the sweat of wrestling from the Victor's brow, and flout the poisoned reek of hell with the feather fan of heavenly wind. In mountain clefts He often met that smile which lighted Him through the paths of darkness. If He seemed to look for it in vain in the Garden, it was only that the impress of the seal might be the sharper. It will be from heaven and not from earth that His retinue shall be enlisted, and the evidence which attests His royalty shall be the seal from the girdle of Deity itself. He shall come attended by signal proofs of the vastness, the immensity of His triumph. A rainbow planted the first pillar of his splendid arch upon the earth at the point where the cross was fixed. That arch shall be complete, and shall plant its other pillar where the Saviour's throne is reared. How much that rainbow shall bestride or cover in its vast span who shall dare to guess or to tell? Shall it only cover just a few thousands or millions of God's creatures, or shall it girdle the whole universe? Men are found to-day who tell us that we presume and dare when we talk of such enlargement of the girdle of hope, of life, of possibility. Dare that? Of course we dare! We dare anything when we have paid a wrestling visit to the cross, when we have seen the sacrifice, and when we have bowed our head before Him who cried "It is finished." Bivouac on Calvary, rest near the cross, while the "Father, forgive them" swells out amongst the bloody ranks from the lips of interceding patience—this snaps every rusty link and brightens the

whole vista with the silver of eternal hope. I can prove nothing. I can bring no mathematical proof to show that all shall live again; but I can hope all things when the love of Christ constrains me, and I can find a rock in Scripture for the anchor of my wildest and most splendid dreams when, with the thrill of His love within me, I read of His destroying death and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, that He may deliver us who, through fear of death, were all our lifetime subject to bondage.

Coming, then—coming as He surely will amidst the homage of all creatures, there is surely room to hope faintly, without presumption, that He will receive that homage, not only with complacency from His willing worshipper, but with clemency from His vanquished foes. Foes no longer, they will submit themselves to His rule, and willingly abase themselves before Him. Will it be like the Lowly One of Galilee to spurn such homage, although late, or to spurn such surrender? Will He in haughty homage pass on when His enemies shall lick the dust? Even earthly victors will set free their prisoners when the token of submission is given, and it seems hardly uniform with the sweetness of the Lamb of God to regale Himself for ever on a quenchless holocaust of restless souls.

We dare not dogmatise, and we do not attempt to do so, about the prospects of a better resurrection for the world, as others do sometimes about the eerie resurrection of eternal despair. But if Christ shall come again, and there is a dissolution of nature, if hills and sky and plains and valleys shall be folded up like a scroll whose writing is effaced for ever, there may be surely born out of the throes of such a travail hope for the new heaven and the new earth which shall succeed upon it all. If the stage is to be destroyed, the evil part of its past drama may well be torn up and cancelled. As for the actors in that drama, they may haply be cast in nobler parts in the rehearsal which shall come.

Yet it is perilous, it is very perilous, to wait. We may fondle these hopes, but we cannot prove them. It is very perilous to wait, and it is almost idle to conjecture. We know nothing of the future, but the present is our own. The challenge to that present is to touch the hem of a gracious and a present Saviour's robe as Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. It is our Captain Who shall triumph, and it is our King Who is to reign. There is no crown which shall be for Him which His meanest follower shall not be permitted to share. There is not a hallelujah greeting Christ's approach in which His humblest disciple does not join. There is a place in the shining ranks for you and for me, whatever be the crimson of our past. Let us then take our place in the great procession; let us walk side by side. We have been side by side in sin, let us be side by side in penitence and in the rapture of the shrift which the Great High Priest is waiting to pronounce. For lo, He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Prosaic flatness turns upon us as we paint all this. Says the cal-

culating instinct, the voice of the age, "Do you call all these the words of truth and soberness? Do you mean really and coolly on a Monday, and a Tuesday, and a Wednesday, as well as on a Sunday, to tell plain, common-sense men of the nineteenth century that you anticipate any such convulsions, and any such apocalypse as you have painted?" No, we do not anticipate any such apocalypse as we have painted, for our pigment is too colourless, and our art too poor to portray it. But here, right in the midst of us in this plain chapel, we have a rough and a naked thing, which faith's dim eye may see amongst its films, and love's vision may behold amongst its tears. That naked thing is the Cross, the Cross on which the Saviour died. Oh, but to bring my sin to touch these wounds, to bring my broken heart within the meaning of that prayer! My fainting strength accepts it, and Someone comes to me. He makes me strong in all my faintness, and declares God is love; and blackest night nor dullest hell can keep the Lover of my soul away, for even now I feel the kisses of His lips, and His love is better than wine. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

#### THE FIGURATIVE ELEMENT IN BIBLE LANGUAGE.\*

BY THE VEN. FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.,  
ARCHDEACON OF WESTMINSTER.

There is a saying of the rabbis, which, if its full significance be understood and wisely applied, is worth whole folios of their formal exegesis. It is that "The Law speaks in the tongue of the sons of men." It might seem at first sight to be the most obvious of all truisms; but many truths, as Coleridge said, are so true that they are left to lie in the lumber-room of the mind side by side with the most exploded errors. Indeed, if the rabbis had taken to heart this saying of their own famous Rabbi Ishmael, the greater part of their exegetic system would at once have been shown to be nugatory. For that system, as it gained vogue in spite of some strong protests, is founded on the principle that Scripture language is so mysterious, so unearthly, so little accordant with the ordinary tongue of men, that it may be distorted into the most monstrous meanings, and pressed into the most exorbitant inferences. The *Halacha*, or ceremonial rule of the Talmudists, treated the plainest words of Scripture as though they had been ten times more enigmatical than the riddle of the sphinx. Akiba, the greatest of the post-Christian rabbis, laid it down as an axiom that not only in every letter, but in every horn and crown of every letter, there was a mystic meaning, "just as in every fibre of an ant's foot or a gnat's wing." He taught that, "as a hammer divides fire into many sparks, so every verse of Scripture

\* From the *American Sunday School Times*.

has many explanations." He pressed the minutest accidents of the written text into interminable mysteries ; and by combining possible inferences, and drawing fresh inferences from those thus deduced, he built up a system of casuistry which has not been surpassed by the worst specimens of mediæval scholasticism.

It has been a terrible disaster to the Christian Church that she accepted without challenge these vicious principles of Talmudic interpretation. The books of Scripture were written, as all books have always been written since the world began, with the object of being understood ; and the starting-point of all real exposition must always be the sense which the words would have borne among those to whom they were primarily addressed.

Out of many dangers which have resulted from the error of literalism, let me choose two.

There is in geometry a line known as the asymptote, which continually approaches to a curve, but, even when produced to infinity, does not intersect it, though the distance between the asymptote and the curve becomes, in the course of this approach, less than any assignable quantity. Now, language, in relation to thought, is never more than an asymptote. Language and thought can no more exactly coincide than two particles of matter can absolutely touch each other. Language can never more than partially reveal the features of that Isis on whose statue was carved, "I am all which has been, which is, and shall be, and no mortal hath ever lifted my veil." A curtain of shadow must always hang between

"That hidden life, and what we see and hear."

No single virtue, no single faculty, no single spiritual truth, no single metaphysical conception, can be expressed without the aid of analogy and metaphor. As Tamblichus truly says, "Things more excellent than every image are expressed through images."

I. Now, if this be true in general, how much more true is it of any language in which we speak of God. We know that God is a Spirit ; that (in the words of the first English Article) He is "without body, parts, or passions." Except by analogy and metaphor, it would have been wholly impossible to speak of God at all in the earlier ages of the world. The only way to reveal any truth respecting Him was to do so under figures derived from the nature of man. The untrained imagination of the world's childhood could not conceive of a bodiless and omnipresent Spirit. It was necessary, therefore, for the sacred writers to speak of God as if He had a human body ; and this is what is called anthropomorphism.

The most ignorant reader is aware of the extent to which anthropomorphism is adopted in the Old Testament. Let a few instances suffice :

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gen. iii. 8).

"And the Lord smelled the sweet savour ; and the Lord said in His heart" (Gen. viii. 21).

“And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded” (Gen. xi. 5).

“And the Lord said, . . . I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it” (Gen. xviii. 20, 21).

“And the Lord said, . . . I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand until I have passed by : and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back : but My face shall not be seen” (Exod. xxxiii. 22, 23).

The world has outlived the danger of the false inferences which were once deduced from such passages, and those which speak of the eyes, the ears, the face, the hands, the fingers, of God. But they constituted a real danger to the Talmudists, who, among many other absurdities, went so far as to argue the question whether or not God wore phylacteries! Nor was it otherwise in the early Church. Tertullian almost scoffs at the notion of a bodiless deity. It is to him an impossible and unthinkable conception. “*Nihil est incorporale,*” he says, “*nisi quod non est.*” A large body of the Egyptian monks were such complete anthropomorphites that, when the truer and more spiritual views of Origen were explained to them, one old hermit burst into tears, and wailed, “They have taken my God away from me, and I know not where I shall find Him.” Even so hardy a criminal as Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, quailed before the fury of these ignorant anthropomorphite monks. His cowardice and alarm drove him into his bitter rage against the tenets of Origen, which ended in the ruin of St. Chrysostom, and occupies one of the darkest pages in the ecclesiastical history of the fourth century.

II. But if harm was done by the crude errors of the heresy which insisted on exact literalism, and declared that the Trinity wore a human form, perhaps even deadlier evil arose from the imperfection of language which is technically called anthropopathy ; namely, the attribution to God of human passions.

Thus we read in Scripture :

“It repented the Lord that He had made man” (Gen. vi. 6).

“I the Lord thy God am a jealous God” (Exod. xx. 5).

“I trod them in Mine anger, and trampled them in My fury” (Isa. lxiii. 3).

“Look down from heaven. . . . Where in the sounding of Thy bowels. . . . toward me ?” (Isa. lxiii. 15).

And these are only specimens of a large number of similar passages.

Unquestionably we make a great mistake when we press too far these dim analogies, or regard them as more than a translation into human analogies of facts really indescribable. When we speak of God's wrath, and fury, and fierce jealousy, and implacable rage, and describe His awful majesty, “Tartarean drench” of many modern sermons, or in the tempestuously incongruous language of many modern hymns, we ought to beware lest we are talking with too gross a

familiarity of Him "whose tender mercies are over all His works." When in our loose, one-sided, inaccurate metaphors we press the many passages of Scripture in which we are told that God "repented," or "changed His mind," or "regretted" something which He had previously done, we must be careful lest we wholly desecrate the conceptions of Him who is immutable, who says, "I am the Lord; I change not;" of whom we are expressly told, "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man that He should repent."

"Theology and poetry," says Boccaccio, in his *Life of Dante*, "may be said to be almost one when their subject is the same; nay, more, I say that theology is nothing but God's poetry. For what is it but a kind of poetic invention, when, in the Scripture, Christ is spoken of at one time as a lion, at another as a lamb; sometimes as a worm, at other times as a dragon, at others as a rock, and in many other ways, to recite all of which would be tedious? What else are the words of Scripture in the Gospel but a discourse of what is beyond the senses, which manner of speaking we, in more ordinary language, call allegory?"

It is, then, most necessary to carry with us into the study of Scripture the perpetual sense of the shadows, the imperfections, the uncertainties, of human language. There are hundreds of passages of the Bible which have been misunderstood by millions, misunderstood for ages, misunderstood, at times, by perhaps nearly every living representative of the Church of God. And most of these errors have risen from pressing the meaning of words too far; or from mistaking the accidents of a metaphor for its central significance; or from assuming that the same metaphor must always connote the same truths. Men ought to be very careful lest they become the mere helpless victims of many-sided phrases—such, for instance, as "inspiration," "justification," "election"—which different men use in very different senses. There is "a besotting intoxication in this verbal magic;" "a certain bewitchery and fascination in words which make them operate with a force beyond what we can naturally give account of. Words are able to persuade men out of what they find and feel, and to reverse the very impressions of sense, and to arouse men with fancies and paradoxes even in spite of nature and experience."\*

Richter described *every* language as "a dictionary of faded metaphors," and he was right. Language, like writing, began practically with hieroglyphics. It was an original necessity of speech to put everything before the eye, to paint pictures, to awaken vivid impressions in the imagination. "Language is the flesh-garment of thought, and imagination weaves this flesh-garment. Metaphors are her stuffs. Examine language. What, if you accept some few primitive elements (of natural sound), what is it all but metaphors recognised as such, or

\* South.

no longer recognised; still fluid or florid, or now solid grown and colourless? If those same primitive elements are the osseous fixtures in the flesh-garment language, then are metaphors its muscles and tissues and living integuments. An unmetaphorical style you shall in vain seek for; is not your very *attention a stretching-to?*"\*

Now, if this be true of language in general, it is specially true of the Semitic languages, and of Hebrew as their chief representative. A large part of Scripture consists of expanded metaphors, and it is throughout highly picturesque. Spontaneous imagery is the characteristic of all impassioned thought.

Take, for instance, such words as "anger," "despair," "mercy," "fear," "pride," "obstinacy," "favour." In Hebrew, anger and "the nose" are identical; despair is "a melting of the heart;" fear, "a loosening of the reins;" desire is "pallor," or "thirst," or "the caperberry;" pride, "a high carriage of the head;" obstinacy, "a stiffening of the neck;" favour, "a turning of the face;" expectation, "a stretching out of the neck." Every word is ultimately an onomatopœia or a picture. Glassius, in his *Philologia Sacra*, has collected endless Hebrew metaphors from the sun and moon and stars; from day and night, from air, fire, and water; from the human body; from trees and animals; from almost every observable fact of nature and of life. And this richness of metaphor is rendered even more necessary by the extreme paucity of roots, which gives us, for instance, the same word for a turtle-dove, an ox, a manner, and a string of pearls; and the same root for "to hire," "to exchange," "to disappear," "to be sweet," "a fly," "a beetle," "an Arabian," "a stranger," "an enemy," "a willow," "a raven," "a weft of cloth."†

How complete, again, are the pictures which bring vividly home to us the single conception of the forgiveness of sins! Our sins are as scarlet, and they shall be made white as snow; they are as crimson, and shall be as wool. Look how far the east is from the west! so far shall God remove our transgressions from us. They are as a handwriting in a book; they shall be cancelled; they shall be obliterated; they shall be torn in two; they shall be nailed to Christ's cross. Does the Hebrew poet wish to express that God will remember them no more? He represents Jehovah as putting them into a sack, sealing up the mouth of it, and then flinging it behind His back.

It is the natural result of this figurative cast of Scripture language that metaphors, which must have been plain to those for whom they were originally intended, have to us become obscure. We are no longer able, in every instance, to disintegrate what is metaphorical and what is historic. Look, for instance, at such a chapter as Ecclesiastes xii. 3-6. Is it a literal description of an approaching

\* Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, Chap. x.

† See Renan, *Les Langues Semitiques*, p. 23.

storm? or is it an allegorical description of old age? or is it, as many fathers and mediæval expositors thought, a forthshadowing of the day of the Lord? "And the grasshopper shall be a burden"—what does that mean? Is it that even a locust will be a burden too heavy for the old man to carry? or that common food will become unpalatable? or that the man will become bony as the structure of the locust? Or take the entire Book of Joel. To this day commentators are as much divided as they ever were on the question whether the "locusts" there are a mere figure for enemies, or whether they are meant to represent an actual plague of locusts, or whether they are at once real and symbolical. Or, once again, turn to the Book of Revelation. Why have men scornfully spoken as though the study of it either found men mad or left them so? Is it because the book is a cryptograph expressed in metaphors? Was it then meant to be a mystery which St. John locked up, and flung the key into the Mæander? Far from it.

Study first the general character of the Jewish apocalyptic literature as it begins to appear in Daniel and the post-exile prophets, and produces a multitude of works both Jewish and Christian down to such books as the "Shepherd of Hermas"; then read the book as it would have been understood by Jewish Christians in the days of the Neronian persecution, and was interpreted by contemporaneous history, and I venture to say that, except in a few minor details, the cryptograph acquires a meaning, a splendour, and a vividness which will put to flight the complex and contradictory masses of preposterous conjecture which have in age after age been offered as its interpretation. It will be heard as the thundering reverberation awakened in a Christian soul struck by the fierce plectrum of the Neronian persecution.

It is, of course, impossible in a brief paper to do more than touch upon one or two salient points connected with the subject. We have seen that all language is ultimately pictorial; that it has to depend upon analogies—often upon dim and remote analogies—to express all moral and spiritual ideas; that it is, in consequence, full of shadows and imperfections; that the Hebrew language and the style of Hebrew writers is permeated by metaphors; that metaphors have often been pressed too far; and that on our way of treating them depends our power of understanding large portions of Holy Writ. All that we can now further do is to gather up the significance of these considerations in a few general rules.

1. There is no basis whatever for the allegorical system of interpretation, in plain passages or ordinary narratives. To admit such a style of exegesis is to forget the very meaning and purpose of ordinary language.

From the days of Philo down to the Reformation, and even later, the fact that there are many metaphors in Scripture has been pressed to the absurd conclusion that the literal sense of Scripture is either entirely useless, or, at any rate, a matter of quite secondary con-

sideration. This is so absolutely false that from it has sprung a perfect wilderness of deadly errors. We need not dwell on it, because the phantom, which reigned triumphant through many ponderous tomes of Fathers and School-men, has at length been exorcised, and only wanders in obscure places. There are difficulties in parts of Scripture; but, as St. Chrysostom truly said, Πάντα τὰ ἀναγκαῖα ἐήλυ,—"Whatever in Scripture is essential is clearly revealed." Revelation would be no revelation if it left any fundamental truth at the mercy of exegetical vagaries. Even St. Thomas Aquinas freely admits that no argument can ever be founded on the so-called "mystic sense." If in any passage there be a spiritual sense which is not the obvious sense, no one is at all bound to accept it, unless the same truth be elsewhere clearly, manifestly, and literally stated. Emser went so far as to say that, "if the Bible were interpreted literally, it were better to read a legend of Virgil's;" to which Luther replied (in language which must, of course, be taken with large modifications, but which has a general truth), "The Holy Ghost is the all-simplest writer and speaker that is in heaven or on earth . . . His words can have no more than one simplest sense, which we call the scriptural or literal meaning."\*

2. Even where we have to deal with professed metaphor, or with allegories and parables, theological conclusions may never be based on isolated expressions or collateral inferences. The old wise rule, which has been so often neglected, was *Theologia parabolica non est demonstrativa*.

Let us take a word, a passage, and a metaphor, as beacon-lights to warn us of the dangers which we should avoid in interpreting the figurative language of Scripture.

(1.) Take, for instance, the word "hell." To millions of readers "the Bible" means no more than the Authorised Version, with its many errors and inaccuracies. They are quite unaware that the word "hell" in that version represents no less than four words—*sheol* in Hebrew; and in Greek *hades*, *gehenna*, and *tartarus*. Until recently they were quite unaware that *sheol* and *hades* are names for the place of all the dead alike, between death and the resurrection, The participle, "flinging them into tartarus" (ταρταρώσας), occurs only in 2 Peter ii. 4. No human being has ever argued that the writer's use of the word *tartarus* is anything but a general metaphor for a place of punishment, and does not for a moment involve a belief in any of the Greek conceptions of the word. How different would have been the doctrines inferred from the word "gehenna," if it had been borne in mind that it too is a metaphor, purely Jewish, derived from the polluted valley where at one time men cast the corpses of the dead! No one has ventured to push the metaphor "Abraham's bosom" into a tenth part of the extremes into which thousands have pushed the equally metaphorical word "gehenna."

\* Werke (Erlanger ed xxvii. 259). See Beard's Martin Luther, p. 76.

(2.) Now let us take a verse : " If a tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. xi. 3). The most momentous conclusions have been deduced from this verse. It has been quoted again and again, as though it were a decisive proof that after the moment of death there can be no hope, and no change in the future condition of any human soul. The doctrinal influence, therefore, has been of the most overwhelming importance. And yet this application of the text has not even the remotest connection with its proper meaning, or with the context in which it occurs. The question of man's future is not in the smallest degree upon the mental horizon of the writer. He is only illustrating our ignorance of what shall happen to us in life, and teaching us not to be

"Over-exquisite  
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils."

"In regard to those evils, the sweeping calamities that lie beyond man's control, he is as powerless as he is when the black clouds gather and the winds rush wildly."\*

(3.) And to illustrate the peril which may lie in a metaphor, let us take the word "ransom."

A metaphor may be compared to a globe on a plane of glass. It throws shadows on the glass, but it only really touches the glass at one point. To press the metaphor to all its possible conclusions would be to act as though the one point of contact were equivalent to a beating out of the globe to a flat surface which covered the whole glass. It is most needful to bear this in mind when we speak of the doctrine of the Atonement, lest we be led into false and profane speculations. For the doctrine of the Atonement is only revealed to us in metaphors; and these metaphors are not identical, and they are only meant to teach the doctrine in its bearing on the life and destiny of man. Dangerous forms of error, which would sometimes be actual heresy if they were not the issue of innocent ignorance, have sprung up from the attempt to explain what the Lord of the apostles never explained, namely, the transcendental side of the sacrifice of Christ—its bearing on the mind of God. And these errors, so far from being harmless, have had the twofold evil result of alienating multitudes from the God whom theologians misrepresented, and of giving to Christians very false opinions concerning Him. This was the case with the other metaphors also, but we may illustrate it in the special instance of the word "ransom" (*ἀντίλυτρον*). The word was meant to teach us that the effect of the death of Christ as regards man was the same as the deliverance of a captive by the payment of a ransom. When men pushed the metaphor into other regions, when, as it were, they wished to attach importance to its accidental shadows, they began to inquire to whom the ransom was paid. Irenæus suggested,† and

\* Dean Plumptre.

† Iren., *Hæc.*, V. 1.

Origen, whose mind was naturally speculative, answered, that it was paid to the devil.\* The answer awoke a few isolated protests here and there, of which one came from Athanasius; but, on the whole, it was the current view of theologians for many centuries. And yet how entirely false it was, and how dangerously unwarrantable! And how worse than unscriptural were the subsequent refinements upon it that the devil had been deceived by the incarnation into accepting this ransom! †

Yet such was the teaching of not a few great theologians, and, amongst others, of Peter Lombard, whose "Sentences" was one of the chief theological handbooks of the Middle Ages. ‡ St. Anselm, however, in his *Cur Deus Homo*, was the first who deliberately and distinctly repudiated this false theory, on the ground that "it contradicts the omnipotence or goodness of the Creator to suppose that He can recognise any right of evil or injustice in that universe which is His own;" and that "an unjust victory (like that of Satan) could confer no claims, nor could wrong, because it was successful, become the ground of an immoral right." §

I began with a wise rule of the rabbis; I will end with a no less wise Christian principle. It is equally obvious with the other, yet no less necessary and no less neglected. It is the rule of St. Augustine—*Scriptura est sensus Scripturæ*. If any one will examine the "proof-texts" adduced for endless "private interpretations" of what Christianity is and means, he will, I think, be fairly astonished at the total irrelevance of many of them. But whether a text be adduced in a literal sense when it is clear that its literal sense was never meant to be pressed, or in a mystical sense when there is not the least trace of allegory or a hidden spiritual sense, it will have no value, no cogency, unless we can prove that the words, whether plain or metaphorical, really did convey, and were meant to convey, the meaning assigned to them. "By giving Scripture a wrong sense," says Bishop Wordsworth, "men make God's Word become their own non-word, or even the Tempter's word, and then Scripture is used for our destruction, instead of making us wise unto salvation."

\* Orig., *In Matthew*, Tom. XIII. 9.

† Orig., *loc. cit.*

‡ Peter Lombard (*Sent.* II. 19): "The cross," such is his unworthy metaphor, "was a mouse-trap baited with Christ's blood."

§ See Oversham, "The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement," pp. 139, 167.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

*Lesson for October 26th. Luke xxii. 39-53. Golden Text, Isaiah liii. 3.*  
 JESUS IN GETHSEMANE.

THERE are three wonderful gardens spoken of in Holy Scripture—Eden, Gethsemane, and Paradise. The first garden has a history of sin and sorrow on our part; the second garden has a history of sorrow without sin on Christ's part; the last has neither sin nor sorrow. Lost in Eden, we were redeemed in Gethsemane, and those who are thus redeemed shall be glorified in Paradise.

Let us think then of this garden of Gethsemane of which we read in our lesson. Perhaps some of our friends, on returning from Eastern travels, may have brought to us some memorials of this garden—a memento carved from its olive wood, or some pressed flowers, or a fragment of its limestone. And perhaps you may wish very much to set your foot on this spot of earth where Jesus our Lord drank to the dregs the cup of agony. But travellers tell us that there are two rival Gethsemanes. One place, called the True Gethsemane, is an enclosure walled round by the Latins; the other is a little distant, and is walled round by the Greeks. Both of these are under lock and key, and rival guides besiege visitors and dare to make money out of the Saviour's agony. The New Testament lends no help to the keeping sacred of holy gardens or holy graves—it knows nothing of holy land or holy water. The spot is nothing—what took place there is everything. All was outward peace in this moonlit garden of olives, but a great inward fight was fought and won in its calm. The olive was the emblem of *peace*, and Jesus is our Olive, our Peace.

Next think of our Lord's mysterious sorrow. This is a subject of deep solemnity and mystery, and we must always feel how utterly unable we are to understand it fully. The sorrow was very intense. Before it was over "His sweat was as great drops of blood." This agony wrung from our Saviour a great cry—"O, my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." He calls this a *cup* of suffering, resting on the image of some potion, which, however bitter, must be drained, since such is His will who has put it into the hands. And what made this cup so bitter? The true explanation of the sorrow in the garden and the agony on the Cross is that Christ was bearing in some way the sins of a lost world. "The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Not for one moment did He say, "This cup is not Mine: let the sinner drink his own cup." "That bitter cup love drank it up." The contest is over and the conquest is won, and an angel from heaven came and ministered to Him.

It has been well said, "There will be no Christian but will have a Gethsemane, and every praying Christian will find that there is no Gethsemane without its angel."

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## NEW LIGHT ON CHRISTIANITY.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. W. SANDAY, M.A., EXETER COLLEGE, DEAN IRELAND'S  
PROFESSOR OF THE EXEGESIS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, OXFORD.

"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."—  
Ps. cxix. 18.

IN Christianity as a formulated system there are three main elements: (1) the common foundation of Hebrew religion as contained in the Old and New Testaments, but primarily in the Old; (2) a specially Christian element which is due to the life and work of Christ; (3) certain peculiar forms of expression, gradually determined upon after six centuries of keen controversy, which are to a large extent of Greek origin. Compared with these, the part really contributed by modern times is very small indeed. I do not say that modern thought is not very largely affecting our conception of Christianity; but so far it has done so only in a vague and indefinite way. The influence derived from this source has not succeeded in impressing itself upon Creeds and Articles. The really formative elements in these will, I think, be found to be those which I have just enumerated.

At the present moment attention is being turned in full stream upon the first. It is likely also, if I am not mistaken, to be directed shortly to the third. The question of the Old Testament comes home to so many that it may be described as a popular question. The question of Greek thought can hardly reach these dimensions, but it cannot fail to attract to itself the careful study of thinking and far-seeing men. It is fraught with issues of considerable importance, which will perhaps occasion some anxiety at first, but which, I believe, will be found to bode good and not harm in the end.

I am led to make these remarks by the approaching publication of Dr. Hatch's Hibbert Lectures, in which, with the boldness and originality characteristic of him, he grappled with this problem, so far as my knowledge extends, for the first time on English ground. I do not doubt that these Lectures will be found greatly stimulating to thought, though another series of inquiries may be necessary in order to complete them. What Dr. Hatch has done has been to trace broadly the transition or transplantation of certain ideas and usages from the sphere of Hellenism to that of Christianity. What remains to be done is to apply a close analysis, one by one, to the works of

the early Christian writers, so as to ascertain in what proportions the different elements of which we have spoken, and particularly the Greek element, were present in them.

A beginning has been made already in this direction in Germany, but not, I think, at all in England. It may perhaps be instructive to take a brief survey of the history of the subject and of the place at which the problem now stands. To Dr. Hatch I rather think the problem presented itself mainly as an abstract one. He had studied Philo and the Neo-platonists; he had studied the Stoics; and he observed in the Christian writers and in Christian controversies the recurrence of terms and conceptions which he had met with outside Christianity. To the Germans the problem came as in the first instance historical. It goes back, I suppose, to Baur. He definitely asked himself the question, How are we to account for that conception of Christianity which we find in possession of the field at the end of the second century, and increasingly so as time went on? Any one who looks at once with candour and with penetration at the Christianity of Irenæus at one end of the Christian world, and of Clement of Alexandria at the other, will see that there is a considerable interval between it and the Christianity of Christ and the Apostles. How was this interval to be accounted for? What shifting of elements had taken place? What was there in the one which there was not in the other? Baur, with his keen insight into the turning-points of history, took hold of this question and set himself to solve it. The solution which he proposed is well-known. It proceeded on the lines of a Hegelian antinomy: and it was to the effect that in the Apostolic age there were two great opposing forces, Jewish Christianity or Ebionism on the one hand, and Pauline or Gentile Christianity on the other; by degrees these two opposites became reconciled by dropping their distinctive features, and Catholicism, or the average creed of the Christian world at the year 200, was the result. Since the time of Baur, a number of attempts have been made to improve upon his view. In the most successful of these attempts two negative factors were recognised and one positive. The negative factors were that the writers who immediately succeeded the Apostles failed really to grasp the deeper side of the teaching of St. Paul, and that they also failed to understand the Old Testament. The positive factor was that they imported into Christian speculation the principles which they had learned in the schools of Greek philosophy. The insight into the weakened apprehension of St. Paul's teaching has been rather widely shared. It is found in writers like Neander, who made the great mistake of supposing that this defective apprehension was caused by a return to Judaism. It was not a peculiarity of the Judaizing side of the Church, but was common in greater or less degree to all parties. The bringing out of the significance of the Old Testament was due to the strongest of all the disciples of Baur, who went back upon and corrected the conclusions of his master, in a work which has done more than any other with which I am acquainted to lay the foundations of a really sound conception of

the course of events in the second century—Albrecht Ritschl. Since Ritschl published the second improved and developed edition of his work on the *Origin of the Old Catholic Church* in 1857, an excellent monograph, constructed upon his lines, came out in 1878 on the Christianity of Justin Martyr by Dr. Martin von Engelhardt. Von Engelhardt was Professor at Dorpat, where I believe that he had for pupil Adolph Harnack, and I suspect that that fertile and able writer owes not a few of his best and soundest ideas to his old teacher. Quite recently a similar monograph by Werner on the Paulinism of Irenæus has appeared under his auspices, which is, however, not perhaps free from exaggeration. By all these writers alike the element which took the place of the missing constituents of Apostolic Christianity is sought in the current Greek philosophies, either apprehended immediately or filtering downwards into popular thought. We might sum up their construction of the history of doctrine very briefly thus. Through defective understanding first of St. Paul and then of the Old Testament, and through the influence of Greek ideas, there arose the older Catholicism of the early Christian centuries which has had a continuous development down to modern times. St. Augustine (partially) and the Reformers (again partially) rediscovered St. Paul; and I will make bold to add that the full rediscovering and full appropriating of the Old Testament are the special problems of our own day.

Many will think no doubt that this is an arrogant claim. I hope it is not made in any spirit of arrogance, but simply in deference to what seem to be the actual facts. I am anxious not to go a step beyond these. Of course it is true that a large and substantial part of the spirit of Christianity was perpetuated by Irenæus and his contemporaries. In particular one primary doctrine, the doctrine of the Logos, which fell in with the prevalent tendencies of thought, was seized hold of by them with great tenacity, and developed in great wealth and fullness of detail. But when we turn to another side of the New Testament Scriptures—to St. Paul's deep and inward conception of faith, to the mingled attraction and awe with which he looked on the "scandal of the Cross," to that long series of oppositions between works and grace, law and promise, law and Gospel—in place of which we find Christianity regarded as itself merely a second revised system of law—we feel how much has been lost in the process of transmission. Even if we take a great fundamental idea like that of the Kingdom of God, which dominates alike the Old Testament and the New, we have to wait until we come to St. Augustine before it is worked out at all on an adequate scale; and even then it is not worked out exactly on the lines of the original conception. When we think of these things and of many more—the growth of the Messianic Idea, sublime personifications like the Servant of Jehovah, the use which Jeremiah makes of his doctrine of the twofold Covenant, all those wonderfully tender personal relations between God and His people implied in the Psalms and the Prophets which shrink into the cold *ὄντως ὄν* of the philosophers—when we think of all this, we

cannot help being conscious that we do indeed see them more in their true proportions than the early Fathers did.

And yet let us be just to these founders of the Church and of Christian theology to whom we really owe so much. Let us try to put in its right light the relation in which we stand to them. We think that we understand the Bible better than they did. There can be little doubt that we do understand it better. But that is not because we are great men and they are small, but because the *Bible* is great, and it has taken many centuries hitherto and will take a considerable time longer still before we understand it thoroughly. If the Jews so misinterpreted their own Bible, as they certainly did in the time of our Lord, can we wonder if those who were not Jews by birth, but brought up under very different conditions, failed to understand it? I will not deny absolutely the truth that there is in allegory; but few of us would be willing to apply it as the universal key to the unlocking of the Old Testament, as some of the best and greatest minds of antiquity were ready to apply it. The fashioning of the methods by which the secret of the Old Testament is to be approached and elicited has taken many centuries. We are not yet agreed about it; but I do not think that it is being too sanguine to feel that we are drawing nearer to it. We are beginning to feel the warmth and the life and the reality comes back to those pale and shadowy figures. Isaiah and Hosea and Jeremiah no longer walk in a *limbus Patrum*, but we see them as they were among the forces by which they were actually surrounded. We see what they were as men; we see what they were as exponents of a message from God; we see the grand and glorious ideas which stirred within them in all their richness and fulness, conditioned, yet not wholly conditioned, by the world of thought and action in which they moved. We see these ideas linking themselves together, stretching hands as it were across the ages, the root-principles of the Old Testament running on into the New, and there attaining developments which may have been present to the Divine mind—though they cannot have been present to the human instruments whose words went and came at its prompting. The famous saying of St. Augustine had a deeper sense than even he imagined for it. The New Testament was latent in the Old, not merely in the sense in which the type might be said to embrace the thing typified; the Old Testament is patent in the New, not merely in the sense in which one series of events may be said to reflect another, but by a more vital and organic connection. The further enquiry goes, the more impressively does it appear how much the leading ideas of the New Testament had their way prepared for them, and by what strict continuity of growth they spring out of the leading ideas of the Old. There is a field here which I cannot help thinking will be ploughed and worked in the near future more effectively than it has been. But this idea of the organic connection of thought with thought is comparatively a recent one; and to expect it to determine the work of the older commentators as it ought to

determine ours would be as absurd as to expect that primeval man should be equipped with the encyclopædia of science.

But if there is such a valid excuse for the great men of old as *Exegetes*, they hardly need an excuse at all in their other capacity as *Dogmatists*. If they are only judged fairly as they ought to be judged, that is with reference to their own time and circumstances, we shall be so far from scoffing at them that we shall be rather lost in wonder at the edifice which they reared. Certainly as much brain power went to the building up of this as to any of the best of our modern systems. Note the closeness and precision of thought; note the accuracy with which one detail is fitted into another; note the multitude of speculations, sometimes, it is true, resting upon mistaken premisses, but often really profound and striking, by which they are surrounded; note the symmetry and harmony of the total result as it is summed up for instance in the Athanasian Creed—and anyone who is capable of appreciating an intellectual construction, and can divest himself of his modern notions will, I think, be most powerfully affected by it. One would like as an experiment to set down some well-trained modern scholar, with no appliances but his own unaided thinking, before the problems with which the ancients wrestled, and then to compare the result, say with a page of St. Cyril of Alexandria, and I do not think that we should find the comparison very flattering to our vanity. To say that the ancients worked with the tools which lay to their hands, that they operated with ideas which were the staple of the schools and lecture-rooms about them, is so much a matter of course that but for the extent to which it has been forgotten, it would hardly need to be insisted on. With our modern machinery we can produce circles and angles more exact than many an old-world craftsman without possessing a tenth part of his skill of hand and eye.

And yet, on the other hand, I should be quite prepared to lay stress upon the fact that the formularies which were the product of all this intellectual subtlety and vigour have a value which is primarily historical and relative. They stand in living relation to the past rather than to the present. The problems of to-day have drifted away from them: and if we go to them for a solution of these problems the answer we shall get must needs be imperfect and partial. May we not say that the simile which would best describe them would be that of the stations along our old coach-roads from which the traffic has been turned into other channels? They stand as landmarks which are speaking witnesses to a bygone time, but which no longer serve for the practical uses of the present, or which serve them so far only as the present is a direct outcome of the past. A great mass of wisdom is embodied in them—the wisdom not of an individual working in his study or his cell, but the wisdom of a Church or family of Churches all bringing their contributions to the common stock, and testing each clause by the fire of an active and searching criticism. Given the premisses, and I think we may

say still that a better result could not have been obtained ; and that result has been verified by the assumption and practice of ages. To this day I doubt if any different conclusion could justify itself, approached along the same lines. So far as our problems are identical I doubt if we shall have any need, or, if we had the need, I doubt if we should have the power, to reopen the decisions of united Christendom. But the problems which press upon us most urgently are not identical : the premisses which we have to assume in dealing with them are a different set of premisses, and it seems to me wrong to invoke laws to decide cases which when they were framed were never or but imperfectly contemplated.

The practical moral which I would venture to draw from the whole situation is this, that we should not spend our time in the cheap and easy but demoralising employment of undervaluing the wisdom of our forefathers, and congratulating ourselves upon our own, but that we should rather face and grapple with the positive tasks which lie before us. We say that the ancients had a defective understanding of the Old Testament and a defective understanding of St. Paul. There are doubtless some who will need to have this proved to them ; for them let us prove it. And, having proved it, let us go on to the next step and see that we get an understanding of both these prime constituents of Christianity which is *not* defective. Supposing it to be made out that there has been in the formulating of Christian doctrine a certain encroachment of Hellenism, the true way to redress the balance is—not to disparage Hellenism, which surely had a work to do in the providence of God as well as Hebraism, but to go back to the old Hebraic foundations of our religion and lay them again more deeply and more firmly—or rather see how they have been laid by an Architect wiser and mightier than we. To do this as it ought to be done would alone be the work of any ordinary generation. How from all sides does the call come to us to be up and doing ! To us indolent dwellers in Zion who have taken our ease by our rivers that flow softly, thinking to enjoy our cakes of fine meal and our wine, though we have left it to others to cut the corn and to gather in the vintage and to bear all the burden and heat of the day. I speak not to those whose study is theology alone. The *universitas literarum* includes all the sciences : they form a single body ; and if one member suffers all the others suffer with it. Let us march altogether ; let us take our exercise altogether in the same *palæstra*—not in dilettante fashion like half-hearted competitors, but like men who are determined to run for the prize and who are prepared to undergo the requisite training before they enter for it. Then let the scholar help the theologian and the theologian the scholar ; and let the historian lend a hand to and receive a hand from both. Sometimes it is said that the subjects of study are being exhausted. And perhaps it may be so with some subjects ; but the date when anything of the kind will be true is far distant in ours. I have said enough to show what fruitful openings lie close to us. And the special beauty

of theological study is that knowledge does not lie wide apart from practice, but that in proportion as we acquire the one we ought to be building up a body of principles to apply to the other. When we go for these to the Bible we are in no danger of being disappointed. And we shall find, or I am much mistaken, that each fresh discovery gilds with some new light or invests with some new reality, truths which had seemed to be trite and hackneyed. I do not say that every discovery will be what is called, on a superficial view, a "confirmation." It may be of that sort which sends us back and back again for further enquiry. But the ultimate result must be to *strengthen the stakes and lengthen the cords*, to deepen our apprehension and to extend its application. It is no less true now than ever it has been that the surest means of religious advance is to be sought in renewed study of the Bible. What we need especially at this moment is *freshness*, a real getting at the heart of the matter instead of dallying with the outside. And I question if we shall get this in any better way than by approaching our task under the guidance of Criticism and History—of Criticism and History not, as too often, dissevered from, but united with Religion.

### MY FATHER'S HOUSE.

BY JAMES M. KING, D.D., NEW YORK.

"My Father's house."—John xiv. 2.

You are familiar with the context in which these words appear. The Saviour says, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

Some scholars declare that "the Father's house" refers to the universe of His creation—all His dominion—considering that the many mansions constitute the various regions in which His unfallen and intelligent creatures dwell. But the Lord Christ spoke of the Temple as the Father's house. In it were many mansions or apartments: one for the leper, who was healed, to purify himself; another for the Nazarite, the term of whose vow had expired, to be shaven and cleansed; another for the treasures and musical instruments of the Levites. And it is in this, I think, you will find the type which our Lord employs in the expression, "In my Father's house are many mansions."

The Temple was the home of the nation. Every one had an interest in it. But the various classes had their separate and peculiar apartments in this one common home. And the Lord hints that we shall not visit the presence of God as Gentiles did the Temple, but as Jews. We shall dwell in the courts of His house. The idea of the

text is intensely that of home. We all belong to the Father's family. It matters not whether we ignore the family relationship or not. It matters not even though we may have taken our portion of the substance and gone and expended it upon riotous living. We nevertheless belong to the Father's family. Sinfulness and disobedience do not destroy the fact of the parentage of the human race any more than they destroy the fact of the human parentage—the relationship we sustain to our earthly parents.

I want to meditate a little while to-night with you upon what the Father's house, or heavenly home, is by what human homes are.

Home, in the first place, is the place of unfettered joy. The boy at school must be restrained, and must be disciplined if he is ever to amount to anything in this world. But home, to him, means freedom from tasks and routine. The man becomes a boy again when he is at home. One of the most beautiful pictures drawn by the hand of that artist, Oliver Wendell Holmes, given us in "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," represents a man who is somewhat along in years—in middle age, perhaps—in the midst of home joys, and, looking upon the innocence of the childhood about him and the youth near him, he cries out :

"O for one year of youthful joy!  
Give back my twentieth spring!  
I'd rather laugh, a bright-haired boy,  
Than reign a grey-haired king."

But the angel says to him, "How about that wife, that in your youth you wedded, and to whom, by ties of affection you were joined?" "Oh, I wouldn't lose my wife."

"The angel took a sapphire pen,  
And wrote, in rainbow dew,  
'The man would be a boy again,  
And be a husband, too!'"

"But," says the inquiring angel to him, "how about the children that are about you?" "Oh, I can't lose the children."

"The angel took a sapphire pen,  
And wrote, in rainbow dew,  
'The man would be a boy again,  
And be a father, too!'"

Home makes every man who is worthy the name of man conscious of a return to boyhood again. Home is the place of *pleasurable work*. There is work in this world that is not very pleasurable. The man who leaves the workshop or the counting-house jaded and worn-out, thinking that he would like to rest, comes home to go on with his toil, but in the midst of surroundings that make toil a rest to him.

Home is the place of *unridiculed tenderness*; and that means a great deal. There is a great deal of punishment that comes to man in this world by ridicule; but never any of it, certainly, ought to be in the

home. It is a place of unridiculed tenderness. The endearments of home are enjoyed without fear of the cynical sneer or the bantering laugh. It is the place where a man, who has worn for self-defence, and honestly, too, a mask during the daytime, lest others might pierce his heart, can throw off his mask and be himself again. Don't you trust a man who is never tender in his home. Such a man has in him the essential elements of dishonesty. I want to find, before I will trust a man, even in large human relationships, that he is capable of making bare his heart somewhere.

Home is the place of *free intercourse*. Now letter-writing is no small boon in this world; but after all, they are but the bare thoughts that are there uttered. It needs the countenance of the speaker, the expression of the eye; it needs the presence of the speaker, in order that free, effective communication may take place. Jesus Christ has written a good many letters to you and me. I hope that the time will come when you and I will be able to interpret them by the expression of His face. You take that letter that comes to you from mother or loved one, when you are away from home, or when they are away, and you read and interpret it in the light of the face that you know looked on it when the letter was written. Oh, for the time to come, when you and I shall be able to interpret these wondrous letters of the Man of Nazareth, the brother of our humanity, in the light of His eyes upon us!

Home is the dwelling-place of *loved ones*. There my best friends, my kindred dwell. Let us learn what the Father's house, or heaven, is from what homes ought to be. There ought to be uninterrupted peace in the home; no jealousies, no bitterness. The worst thing in this world is a family quarrel; the next worst thing is a Church quarrel; because, in connection with both, the tenderest ties and the highest possibilities of happiness are sundered and rudely torn apart. Oh, who can conceive, in connection with an ideal home, jealousies between children and jealousies between parents, and between children and parents? Who can conceive of any pure blessing entering into a home where jealousy has entered? Certainly that kind of a home is not a type of heaven.

But home ought to be a place of *implicit obedience*. The Scriptures say, "His servants shall serve him, also his children." I do not mean by that, severity, although very frequently the sternest severity is the tenderest mercy. There can be no happiness where there is no harmony. There can be no harmony where there is no law. There can be no law, producing harmony, where there is no obedience. But love is to be the constraining motive of every action in the home. "Duty" is a word for earth: "Privilege" is its synonym in home and heaven. It is better for a man to obey from a sense of duty what he knows to be obligation in this world, than not to obey at all. It is better for a man who is carnally disposed or wickedly disposed to be absolutely restrained by the strong hand of justice in law; but there is not much liberty where there is such obedience, and where there is

such a motive in that obedience as that. I conceive that in heaven and in perfect homes—approaching, at least, perfection—which are the types of the Father's house, the home in heaven, there is no such word as "duty" ever used, but "privilege." Paul, you remember, said that the soul that had in it the catalogue of virtues to which he made reference, righteousness, peace, temperance, charity, long-suffering, was above law, simply because it obeys the law. "Privilege" is the synonym for "duty" in the home that is the type of heaven.

But, another characteristic of what home ought to be is *charity*; the actions of a brother, or of a member of the same family circle, never misjudged. If there is a place in the world where a man ought to be estimated absolutely by what he is worth, without misjudgment, it is in the home circle. Gentleness and kindness ought to characterise the home circle that is to be the type of heaven. One of the most beautiful passages in all the inspired Word is that which says, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Why, it is a passage that you may meditate upon and revolve in your mind, and you will never strike the deepest depths of it. The gentleness of God making man great! Such power has in it omnipotence.

When that great modern apostle of temperance, perhaps the greatest now living, who has, perhaps, led more men than any other man who ever lived, from inebriety to Christian safety, excepting only John B. Gough, Francis Murphy, when he lay a criminal, in the cell up in Maine, with the law not yet enforced in its sentence upon him; degraded by the power of drink; when missionary after missionary and minister after minister went to his side to plead with him and see if they could not get at something that was good in him—no, it was all covered over with the power and the habit of sin, which had come to be deep guilt upon his nature. But one day a kindly man took a child of Francis Murphy into the cell of the prison where he was, and she stooped over, with the tears dropping his breast, and said to him, "Papa, we are homesick at our house without you," and what there was left of manhood and hope and divinity underneath all this over-covering debris was reached, and Francis Murphy, not long after his liberation and restoration, telling the incident, said, "Man is lost beyond the possibility of redemption, if the divinity of his nature does not listen when some child says, 'Home' in his ear." The gentleness of the child life, that had never come to be hard, was the messenger of God to get at the soul that had been thus covered up.

Another element of home, as it ought to be, is *security*. As little children who believe in the omnipotence of a father's arm, and in the equal omnipotence of a mother's love, shall we rest happy, happy for ever. A beautiful simile is used by one whose name I cannot give, giving a picture of the home without the mother's power in it: "Go into a home—pictures on the walls, elegant and expensive furniture; but there is no carpet on the floor and no fire on the hearth. That is home without a mother's warm love.

But when the mother enters, the floor is covered, and the tender and elastic return at the touch of the foot makes conscious of tenderness, and the glowing warmth of the hearth fire makes us feel that this is a type of the Father's home."

Have you ever been home-sick? Do you know what it means to be home-sick? I do. No person can describe it to you if you have not been home-sick, and if you have been no one needs to describe it to you—an experience that has in it, perhaps, more of the elements of torture than any other individual experience. You know that the Swiss soldiers are great mercenaries. They lend themselves for hire to fight for other nationalities, more than any other people on the face of the earth. And yet accurate statistics say that in certain campaigns in which these Swiss soldiers had been fighting as mercenaries, more of them died actually from home-sickness than from the shock of battle. It is recorded that if the band, in the midst of the festivities of the camp, strikes up the national air of the Swiss, the mercenary, away from home, falls into a fit of despondency for which there is no cure except a discharge from the army and telling him to go home.

It is to me simply appalling to reflect that the sinner, dying impenitent, must be homeless for ever. It is not my purpose, and it is seldom my practice, to attempt to picture what are the penalties of final impenitence in this world. But it is enough for me to know, to make me seek to avoid it, and to escape from it, that the soul that has not come to the Father's house and been adopted into the Father's family through mercy and merit in Jesus Christ, is simply to be homeless for ever, stripped of every comfort, deprived of every ray of affection. Heirship in Christ can alone prepare for the eternal home. He is the Door of the Father's house. "I am the way," He declares, "and no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." It is recorded in the twenty-eighth verse of the twentieth chapter of John, that "then the disciples went away again to their own home." The word appears very prominently in the New Testament Scriptures. It is a Christian word. Dryden says that home is the sacred refuge of our life. The derivation of the word is principally or primarily Saxon, and that embodies in it a world of instruction. It is that language that contains the thought most prevalent and most extended, concerning the redemption of the race by Christ Jesus. It is the Saxon civilisation, that is the Christian civilisation, and in its very essence it has words communicating thoughts that are not found in other languages. To be at home on any subject is to be conversant or familiar with it.

We have been using home as a type of heaven. Do you know that homes are not known in countries where Christ is not known? Do you know that in Mohammedanism the very heart and life that constitutes the central thought, the fire-place, the heart affection of every home-circle, womanhood, maternity, is yet the plaything and the gratifier of passion? So that it has come to be true that the

measure of the civilisation of any people finds its exact measurement in the character of the homes of the people. When Napoleon I. was asked what were the two greatest needs of modern France, his first response in order was, "Mothers." That simply meant homes.

Dr. Johnson says that to be at home is the ultimate result of all ambition, the end to which every enterprise and labour tends, and of which every desire prompts the prosecution. It is indeed at home that every man must be known by those who would make a just estimate of his virtue or his falsity: for smiles and embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often dressed for show, in dainty honour and in fictitious benevolence; but there is no sham, no deception, no possible cheating concerning a personal character in the Father's home. So, when these things are found in the homes of earth, as a type they are banished.

Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." How clearly that states the simple fact that heaven, the home of the follower of Christ, is where Christ's personal presence is. It is the presence of the Master that makes the heaven of which He is the centre. "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." Is not that true of the homes of earth? Was that little child far from right, who came from a very common and very neglected home, so far as the external evidences of care were concerned, and, when asked by a teacher, "Where is your home, my child?" responded, "Where mother is." So shall heaven be where Christ is.

Pardon the personal reference. I am myself a son of an itinerant minister, as well as an itinerant minister personally. The mother of the home, with us, moved the family twenty times during the ministerial career of my father. It was literally true that home, with us, was where mother was. And it is literally true to-day that it matters not how long may have been the time of abode in any locality, it is the character of the home that makes it the type of the skies.

A husband, the record says, had lived sixty years with a faithful wife. He was a man of exceeding wealth, and he erected a magnificent mausoleum in which to deposit the mortal remains of the wife that left him after three score years of united home life; and after much deliberation for determining what should be the brief epitaph that should tell the whole story upon that virtuous, noble woman's tomb, that had cost its scores upon scores of thousands of dollars, he simply wrote her name finally, and the sculptor graved this on the tomb, "She always made home happy"; and that was enough. The heart and life that could do that needed not that they should say, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." It needed not that the burial service should be read over such mortality, out of which such a spirit had gone. One sentence told the whole story.

Have you ever yearned to return home when you have been away. "I long to see home," the sailor says, tossed upon the storm-agitated deep. "I am going home," says the weary workman, oppressed with

the toil and worn by its friction. "I must hurry home," says the mother, thinking of the child in the cradle that awaits her coming. "Oh, how I long to get home," says the schoolboy, who is fretted and worried with his tasks. "Don't stop me; I am going home," says the bright and beautiful girl, who is going away from the things that constituted the grace of childhood. "Almost home," says the dying Christian; and in connection with it comes the utterance from the skies, "In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you." Oh, how that makes me think, sometimes, that Christ, seeing the narrow scope of our vision, thought that humanity would sometimes say, "Why, there have been millions and millions of people that have lived in this world. Is there room for them all?" "In My Father's house are many mansions." If there were only a few mansions I would have told you. But there are *many*. "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there may ye be also."

God grant that the personal presence of Him who uttered this hope of our race may be in the midst of every family circle represented here to-night. Yea, more than that; make His home in every heart. And by-and-bye, all this debate as to the occupations, as to the character, as to the locality of the heaven which is the Father's home, shall be dissipated in the twinkling of an eye, when, being where He is, we look upon His face and interpret His promises in the light of His smile.

## THE THREE MARYS.

BY REV. GEORGE A. GORDON, BOSTON.

"Now, there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene."—John xix. 25.

In the cathedral at Antwerp hangs Reuben's masterpiece, "The Descent from the Cross." Joseph of Arimætha and the mother of Jesus assist. Her face wears a pallor as deep as that of her Son. There is something in her soul deeper and diviner than mere sympathy. There is an identity of experience, and she seems to feel sympathy for agony, death for death. The sister may, in her expression, represent sympathy, but the Magdalene, sorrow-stricken, yet full of the sense of forgiven sin, is the impersonation of gratitude. We may find in these three Marys types of permanent human characteristics.

I. Kinship. The relationship of Mary with the Crucified gave depth and poignancy to her grief. He was her Son. We are God's offspring, sons and daughters of the Most High, partakers of the Divine nature. We are made to enter into God's thought and feeling

by virtue of this natural kinship, something as a mother and child have mutual experiences by reason of their relationship. Sin, indeed, has darkened and deadened our spiritual powers, yet we have the capacity which, renewed by grace, enables us to have fellowship with God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Think of the possibilities which this idea of identity of interests suggests. Take the realm of nature and see how we make vivid and enjoyable those objects which we invest with living attributes. We speak of a lofty mountain as a monarch and clothe its glories and its glooms with regal pomp. It is an emblem of power, perpetuity, beneficence. We turn to the humble little daisy. It seems to our fancy to picture the exposed, unsheltered, imperilled life of man. We look at the river, flowing on century after century, while men may come and men may go, and the contrast is instructive so as we clothe it with a seeming life of its own. Shelley makes the skylark a worshipper. The domestic animals, particularly the dog and horse, are humanised into companions, and so are more real to our feeling than inanimate nature. But God has, like us, will, conscience, sensibilities. He desires, loves, and hates, and so is most closely identified with us. To know Him in all His sweeping activities and adorable perfections, to be in holy fellowship and kinship is eternal life! Think of Mary at the cross, and of the possibilities beyond to her and to all of us as an ever-deepening appreciation of Christ is gained. She found in Christ's life an open door and so may we. The thought is sublime, glorious! What an epoch when this discovery is made, and what a continual inspiration it is to realize Christ's continuous alliance and help in the hour of our temptation and travail.

The soldier of Christ with this impulse gives up indecision, vain regards, personal ambition, and goes into the conflict feeling that he can do what he is called to do—yea, "all things through Him who strengtheneth him." All lower motives are subordinated to the one supreme purpose of obedience. Such an experience steadies the soul, unites its forces, as Sumpter's gun raised the patriotism of the country to a higher level by the vivid light into which it brought truths and relationships before obscured.

II. Sympathy. There was Mary, the sister of the mother of Jesus by the cross. A sister's love is reverently and tenderly shown. Mary, the mother, draws Mary, the sister, and the eyes of both are fixed on the dying and the dead Christ. Philip found Nathanael and said, "Come and see." Because Nathanael loved Philip, he came and believed. A wild youth, caring nothing for religion, in itself considered, reveres his mother's memory, checks the sneer, and often finally yields to his mother's God, led by her influence. "Come with me and I will do you good," one friend says to another. Domestic piety hallows a home, and when Christ is made to be essential to that home, the children will never cease to feel the power of parental life. How tenderly Burns describes this in his "Cotter's Saturday Night," where he says,

"The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace,  
The big ha' Bible, once his father's pride,  
He wales a portion with judicious care,  
And 'let us worship God,' he says, with solemn air."

Sympathy is a power in the heart of the man who goes forth into the world with generous spirit and observant eyes. He beholds the hard lot of many who feel that life is scarcely worth living. He sees the poverty, disease, sin, and death about him. Realising that God is our Father, we also feel the fact of our kinship with our suffering brother. Close to sympathy are the conscience and the imagination. But there is one more element.

III. Gratitude. Mary the Magdalene was bound to Jesus by the bond of grateful affection. She will, to all time, stand as the symbol of forgiven sinners, restored and ennobled humanity. God first awakens the heart to a sense of sin. "My sin is ever before me," "My punishment is harder than I can bear," are the expressions of the burdened soul. The humble publican abhors himself and feels that he is of nearer kin to the devil than to God, yet cries, "Have mercy upon me, the sinner." So the thief on the cross cries, "Lord, remember me." Do not all these represent us. Have we, like these, the joyous assurance of forgiveness? "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." Who can sound the depth of joy with which these forgiven ones ascribe the glory, honour, might, thanksgiving, and praise to Him who loved and forgave them?

Finally we see our three-fold relationship to God, of kinship, sympathy, and gratitude, and the duty of cultivating a closer and more humane feeling towards our fellow-man, for Christ's sake. Let us stand by each sufferer in his pain and see in imagination Christ suffering in His members. Remembering our own waywardness, that we all have erred like lost sheep, let us have truer and more intelligent sympathy for others in their toils, their hopes, fears, and sorrows, with more, also, of the heartfelt gratitude of the Magdalene who stood sorrowful beside the cross, yet radiant and beautiful even in her tears. We have sinned, sinned deeply, but have we not been forgiven?

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for November 2nd. Luke xxii. 54-71. Golden Text, Isaiah liii. 5.*

### JESUS ACCUSED.

Our lesson to-day tells us of the trial of our Lord before the ecclesiastical court, the great council of the seventy, with the chief priest as president. There are three parts in this trial. Before Annas first, then before Caiaphas, and then before the "morning" sitting

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

of the whole council held for the purpose of passing formal sentence.

Peter's denial took place at the first of the three. Mrs. E. Barrett Browning says that there are two sayings of Holy Scripture which beat like pulses in the Church's brow and breast. The first is "Jesus wept," the other is where Christ, denied and scorned, "looked upon Peter."

"That look of sovran love and sovran pain  
Which He, who could not sin yet suffered, turned  
On him who could reject but not sustain."

Sins, like hounds, hunt in packs; one sin brings others in its train and we find Peter *thrice* denying his Lord.

Peter's denial wounded the Lord more deeply than the soldier's spear. This was one of the bitter drops in His cup of suffering.

Did you ever think how many things Jesus suffered? We repeat glibly enough in the Creed, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate," but the depth and humiliation of these sufferings are untold. His disciples could not keep awake to watch with Him in His sore distress, and when the soldiers came they all forsook Him and fled. The soldiers mocked Him and spit on Him, and buffeted Him with their hands. There are some acts of love done to the Son of God recorded in the Scriptures. We count her blessed who washed His feet with tears; and Joseph and Nicodemus, who wrapped His body in fine linen, and some others who acquired honour by acts of kindness done to Jesus. But there are some deeds of malice recorded in Scripture to the everlasting shame of those who did them. Such were the deeds of the men who struck with the palm of their hand the Lord of glory. These men who insulted Him were the men whom He loved and still loved.

Why did He so suffer? He could have escaped from them as easily as an eagle from a flock of sparrows. Did He not say this as they bound Him in the garden of Gethsemane? But we must remember that He was God's Lamb, bound for this sacrifice by a threefold cord—the will of the Father, His own consent, our guilt. Had He broken away from this threefold cord, He could not have ransomed us from hell. But He was quiet under it as a lamb. The Spotless Lamb has been treated as if He was the blackest of the black for us. "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." Then shall we not fervently thank Him and closely cling to this precious Saviour who was brought as a lamb to the slaughter for us? He says to us, "Is this nothing to you, all ye that pass by?"

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ONE PENNY.

## THE MODERN SERMON: INQUIRIES AND SUGGESTIONS.

AN ADDRESS

*Delivered from the Chair of the London Congregational Union, on  
November 4th, 1890.*

BY THE REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

PEOPLE who are interested in the maintenance of public worship and the dissemination of Christian truth can never be indifferent to the position, the scope, and the quality of sermons in relation to the whole work which the Christian Church has in view. I do not propose to look at the sermon in the light of exceptional instances—instances associated with the most brilliant names in the history of the pulpit—but in the light of the ministry as a whole.

Whilst carefully reserving space for all that is unique and exceptional in preaching, am I too bold in hazarding the suggestion that by this time there ought to be thousands of people in our congregations who have heard preaching enough? They have been listening to preaching for half-a-century; is it not time they ceased to listen? Has preaching had its day? Has the pulpit talked all its beliefs into pithless commonplace? Is it, or is it not, too much to expect any one man to be finding ingenious rearrangements of sentences twice or thrice every week in the year, and calling these rearrangements new discourses? Is it not too much to expect any congregation to follow with spiritual profit the minister's cunning redistributions of exhausted thought and phrase? Is it not to all parties a weariness to the flesh and a trial to the spirit? These inquiries, and others of the same kind, will show the course along which my thought and interest will run. I think there is some appropriateness in my selecting this theme, because no one who knows me will suspect me of wishing to depreciate the sacred power and usefulness of the Christian pulpit. As a preacher, I have endeavoured to magnify the preacher's office. My most urgent prayers have, for a lifetime, gone forth in quest of larger power both of exposition and appeal. With my whole heart I believe that Christian preaching constitutes an unrivalled instrument for getting immediately and successfully at the attention, the interest, and the confidence of mankind. My inquiry is not whether preaching should be discontinued, but whether the

sermon, as we now know it, may or may not be modified, readapted, occasionally omitted, and, in many cases, be made more by first being made less. It is evident to my mind that the sermon may—for a time at least—have to undergo some process of modification. The perspective of its position must at least be altered. Allow me to discuss the question as a preacher, and for the moment I will ask you to judge the case as hearers.

It is a remarkable fact that, taken as a whole, sermons have not acquired for themselves a very desirable reputation. The word "Sermon" is not a general favourite with young people. As a word it does not immediately and of gracious necessity suggest brightness, music, summer, and great gladness of heart. Account for it as we may, the word sermon has become in many minds associated with dulness, prosiness, depression, and a general sense of burdensomeness and monotony. We must not confine this view to the young and frivolous. Preachers are apt to think that when their sermons are depreciated it is almost invariably by young and giddy persons, or by worldly-minded men who have no taste for deeply spiritual exercises. The humbling idea that a sermon is equivalent to dulness is a favourite one with the most staid, the most churchgoing, and the most prosperous publishers. . . .

Even great preachers may delude themselves into the idea that congregations are fond of elaborate and exhaustive preaching. They are not. They can do without it. A man here and there in the audience may like it; but as a rule it is far from being either popular or profitable. Put the matter to the vote, if you please, and I will abide by the result. The advocates of what is called elaborate and exhaustive preaching make two mistakes:—(1) They forget that a mixed audience is not as prepared to hear as they themselves are prepared to preach; in fact, hearers as a rule do not make the slightest preparation in view of listening to discourses; and (2) that people unaccustomed to prolonged and critical listening soon drop out of course, and find it impossible to take up the running. From an academical point of view the theory of elaborateness and exhaustiveness may be right; academicians are bound to take their own standpoint, and from its elevation to deliver "counsels of perfection" alike as to preaching and hearing; from a popular point of view, however, which is the view of immediate spiritual usefulness, the theory of elaborate and exhaustive preaching often ends in disastrous failure. Perhaps the greatest preachers (except on wholly special occasions) would do well to remember that after about thirty minutes of sermon-hearing "deep sleep falleth upon man." I regret that it should be so; it is an evidence of degeneracy; it is a fearful lapse from the patience of ancient days. We admit all that; but having admitted it, we must see what use we can make of it as an undeniable fact.

There are some sermons that ought to be got rid of, and the sooner we get rid of them the better. For example, there are the sermons

which might be published under the title of "The Gospel made Difficult." They are wonderful displays of intellectual energy; in fact, they are much too wonderful. The preacher becomes a gladiator, in which character he goes through an incredible process of fencing, thrusting, wrestling, perspiring, and dramatic suffering. It all ends in nothing. The public cannot follow the rushing panorama,—a marvellous procession of sights and sounds; here a profile of Darwin; there an outline of Huxley; yonder a blow at Tyndall; and beyond all this references to books with Latin titles; as the scene rushes on, sounds like the following are heard,—Basis—hypothesis—incognoscible—rationale—morale—esoteric—ethic—moral science—with a fearful rush at the Categorical Imperative. Ordinary minds give up the effort of following all this display; little children turn away from it; broken hearts sink in dismay; troubled lives are plunged into deeper bewilderment. These sermons must be got rid of, except on very special occasions,—really occasions that are very special. There is also the sermon of totally opposite characteristics and qualities: the sermon in which a young lady in the pulpit talks childishly to another young lady in the pew; the simpering, mincing, chattering sermon; a record of spiritual indigestions, uneasinesses, and conceits that enjoy themselves in the very act of self-condemnation—a recital of affected tribulations and complaints without which it is perfectly clear the reciter's own life would not be worth living. This sermon also must be got rid of. Then there is the portmanteau sermon, into which the giddy young preacher stuffs everything which he can lay hands upon. All pretty couplets, all current proverbs, all glittering apothegms, all "the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table,"—the scrapbook sermon, the ragbag sermon, the pulpit album,—the Berlin-wool-and-fancy-repository sermon. This sermon, too, must be shown the way out of the pulpit, whose purpose it dishonours. The kind of sermons that will remain will be of a quality that must eventually tell for good. Their intellectual excellence will be at once chastened and enriched by their spiritual intensity, reverence, and pathos. They will be felt to be absolutely necessary to the full religious culture of the soul,—not intellectual entertainments, but part of the very bread of life. To be this they must first of all be Biblical. Then they must be experimental. Then they must constrain men to the service which completes itself in sacrifice. Sermons that do not draw thought into conduct are always worthless. Judge the good results of a sermon by the service which it necessitates and sustains.

The ideal sermon takes, by every right, the supreme place in the whole range of human eloquence. I say the ideal sermon: the sermon towards which we must continually work; not the sermon which any one man can compose three times every week in the year. We must remember that the sermon is now powerfully sustained or contrasted by such music and devotion as must enter more and more largely into public worship, and that the music and the prayer will either help the sermon to a higher level or they

will certainly cover it with deeper humiliation. Once the sermon was the glittering point in the public service. All that led up to it was regarded as being of the nature of "preliminaries." These preliminaries were always spoken of with a kind of impatience, as who should say, "The briefer they are, the better; only let us come as promptly as possible to the intellectual display—that is to say, to the great sermon of the great preacher." Now the sermon has in many cases to fight for its own existence. The sermon can no longer take things easily. Where the music is spiritually grand and the worship is such as lifts up the soul into the very presence of God, the sermon must respond to the sublime environment, or it will fall into discredit and finally into contempt. The true preacher makes every occasion great. He feels that it may be the last. He burns to do good.

Is there a finer ideal spectacle than that of man pleading with man in the name of God? For the moment the preacher seems to be released from the bondage and stigma of human infirmity, and yet to be made stronger by the chastening of its remembered experience: the preacher seems to be standing within the glory of an opening heaven and to be putting into our mother tongue the yearning, the love, the passion of God; on the preacher is the shadow of the Cross; within him is the joy of conscious forgiveness; before him is the infinite mystery of unknown duration—Eternity, Eternity, the pavilion of God—the sphere of immortality—standing there, more in heaven than on earth—speaking in words his own, yet not his own, the messages of the Cross—now thundering the law, now whispering the love of God—commanding, expounding, beseeching; eloquent in words, more eloquent still in tears;—say if any spectacle can compare with this in the pomp of its divine authority or in the tenderness of its human purpose.

All this will be admitted ideally, yet the question will be asked, Are such sermons possible? I answer Yes and No. They are not possible to any one preacher, yet they may be possible if a right use is made of the riches of the catholic Christian pulpit. When we do with sermons as we do with hymns, we shall place the function of preaching upon a much higher level. In the service of praise we have many helpers; in the service of preaching we are thrown almost absolutely upon the ability and the health of one man. There is no need for this. We do not dislike a hymn because the precentor did not write it; we do not object to a tune because the organist did not compose it; why should we object to a sermon because the preacher is not the author of it? On this matter we must establish a larger and clearer understanding between the pulpit and the pew. Plagiarism is, of course, the trick of a bad man. Plagiarism is the word *THEFT* turned into four syllables. The plagiarist can have no true spiritual force. He speaks in continual fear of detection; and he speaks with the disability of self-contempt. You will see, therefore, that nothing can be further from my thought than to countenance the

unacknowledged use of other men's ideas and other men's eloquence. But are the great sermons of great preachers to stand silently on the bookshelves of public and private libraries? Are men of average ability to be straining themselves week by week to produce third-rate discourses, composed with reluctance and delivered with restraint, when sermons by Chalmers and Guthrie, Becher and Spurgeon, Watson and Bunting, Farrar and Maclaren, are available? Why should not great—great because useful—sermons be reproduced under proper and well-understood conditions? Why should not the poorest members of our congregations have the advantage of occasionally hearing the utterances of the greatest preachers of all ages? Are the sermons too long? then summarise them. Are they too close and elaborate in their reasoning? then take out their most striking and practical passages for public use. Give the author's name. Occasionally give a little sketch of the author's life and ministry. This I would call an honest and useful appropriation of the riches of the Christian pulpit. In this way I would endeavour to make the great preachers of all ages speakers to the passing time. In this way many distinct advantages will be realised :

- (1) Preachers will be relieved when overdriven by other work ;
- (2) The congregations will have the advantage of well-selected and profitable variety ;
- (3) Ministers will have more time for producing really useful sermons of their own ; and above all,
- (4) Ministers will be enabled to attend more fully and zealously to many departments of pastoral work.

It is in the development of such work that many of our rising ministers will find their most productive sphere of helpful service. There is literally no limit to usefulness in the pastoral sphere. Get to know your people, your schools, your families, your neighbours. Be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. Show a genuine interest in the daily life of your congregation, especially in the time of sorrow and fear, and all this will invest the pulpit itself with a blessed influence beyond the reach of merely intellectual energy and splendour. Some of the most successful ministries I have ever known have not been associated with brilliant power, but with pastoral capability, zeal, sympathy, and tender faithfulness. Throughout a long ministerial course I have ventured to suggest that, during their college career, students should be taught to preach in the most careful manner. The sermon should not be something thrown in at the end of other studies—a kind of supercargo or makeweight, something that must be casually attended to, as it were, for mere decency's sake. Six days in the week should students think about the most public part of their work. The college was built for the pulpit—taking the pulpit in this connection as the outward and visible sign of the whole ministerial idea. Do not let it be supposed that any teacher, however cruelly cursed with fluency, can run into a college occasionally and discharge

the function of pulpit training, trying to do in an hour what would require at least a week for its proper treatment. The Preaching Mind should be the leading mind in every ministerial college. I do not say that the head of every college should himself be a great preacher; but I do distinctly say that he ought to have great ideas and conceptions as to the possibilities of pulpit power and influence. In this direction he should excite the holiest ambition and enthusiasm of his students. He should make them feel that they are charged with a mission to their age, and that their right to be heard is the divine and eternal right of truth, personally and experimentally tested. Students must not worship the prim idol of puerile neatness. Nor must they be praised for clever outlines and cunning perversions of inspired meanings. Nor must they receive prizes for essays which in one act are heard and forgotten. The true sermon is a structure. It has foundations, proportions, colours, pinnacles that are seen afar. It is built up through well-uttered consonant and vowel, emphasis and tone, doctrine and language, spirit and purpose, and so built up that all that is merely mechanical ceases to be matter of consciousness, and the whole issue startles and delights by its very simplicity. Here I would parenthetically observe that students must be trained in the direction of large intelligence, sympathy with suffering life, profound knowledge of the Bible, and practical identification with the need and toil of the people. Colleges should train students towards the people and not away from them. Colleges should go to the East-end of London, not to escape the hearing of bad words, but to turn a pure language to the people. Where evil is strongest Christian influence should be intensest. All honour to the men who have gone to Canning Town to prove that literary devotion is not a hindrance to Christ-like sympathy. I would tell many pulpit aspirants that they were never meant to be preachers. I would judge my students not by their number, but by their quality. Do not tell me that you have fifty doubtful men in the college; tell me rather that you have one student called of God to reveal the kingdom of heaven to men. That one student is worth all the money that any college has cost for building and maintenance. I am aware that in thus urging continual and increasing attention to the matter of the sermon, I shall be charged with encouraging a practice that is more or less vulgarly designated by the word "shop." I always object to the use of this mean word in connection with the Christian ministry. If sermon-making were a mere mechanical process, then the word "shop" might be applicable to it. But when the preacher has to live and move and express his whole being in the study and communication of divine truth, it is false in reasoning and false in fact to accuse him of living within the narrow area that is indicated by the word "shop." The preacher's "shop" is the universe. Nothing is excluded from his purview and his use. I again and again contend that all things belong to the preacher for illustration, exposition, application, and appeal. I will not have the

preacher put upon a level with any other thinker or student. Every other range is limited; the range of the preacher is infinite.

Were I engaged in the training of ministers, I should be very severe on the misuse of texts. My opinion is that texts—pieces torn from their setting and treated as authoritative maxims—have done infinite harm to the true influence of the pulpit. Paul would be astounded, grieved, and ashamed, if he could know how some of his writings have been treated. What is true of Paul is true in equal degree of every other Biblical writer. I have often tried to imagine how the Biblical writers themselves would regard our use of their writings. The revised translations of the Scriptures has shown many a preacher the falseness of mere textual interpretations; many a gem has been taken away—many a travelling sermon has been stopped short in its mid-career. From the Bible itself I will take no instance of my meaning, lest I should be accused of irreverence; but I will illustrate it in a way which my brethren in the ministry will recognise as no stretch of mere fancy, thus:—

My text, this morning, dear friends, will be found in the Epistles of Lord Beaconsfield, number 10, line 7th, in these most beautiful words—"How are you all to-day?" This pathetic inquiry, which cannot be even read without profound emotion, brings before our minds, dear brethren, truths of transcendent import, yet truths which mingle easily and tenderly with the sanctities of domestic experience. My brethren, let us for a few moments dwell upon those precious truths, and endeavour to set them in profitable order:—

First: See how humanity is united by the exercise of the spirit of solicitude. The illustrious author of this pungently affectionate inquiry cannot rest (though rest is so characteristic of his life and so dear to his soul) until he knows exactly how his friends are. This is the spirit of solicitude. This is the spirit that cannot be content with its own lucubrations, but must go out in earnest quest concerning the welfare of others. (Here cite an anecdote, or make one.)

Second: See, dear brethren, from this inquiry, how large minds originate large interrogations. The immortal statesman does not ask, How is one of you? How is the senior? How is the junior? but with characteristic and splendid magnanimity he asks, in one bold and thrilling inquiry, "How are you all?"

Third: Observe how possible it is to be at once comprehensive and precise. The statesman, whose genius has dazzled the senates of the universe, asks, "How are you all to-day?" Mark the point of time. Mark the definiteness of the greatest minds. The writer is not content with asking, How were you all yesterday? or, How have you been during the last seven years? but with that definiteness which is characteristic of earnestness, he asks, How are you all to-day, this day, this very day, and no other day?—thus drawing down the mind to a precise point of attention and interest.

Application: Take care of yourselves, because at any moment an inquiry may come from the very highest circles, directing itself to your immediate condition; therefore be ready—be always ready—be all ready.

I take ministers to witness that this is a legitimate travesty. Hundreds of sermons on these lines are being constantly preached, and, what is most discouraging, are being constantly praised as being faithful to the text. Hearers will say, How wonderfully the minister kept to his subject! I now publicly and solemnly denounce such so-called sermons as gross misrepresentations of the mind and the spirit of God. What is it that is forgotten in many sermons? It is the context—the atmosphere—the subtle or palpable air that creates the genius and

the meaning of the whole occasion. Always examine the text in the light of the context—the part in the light of the whole. Revelation is not to be broken up into texts. Revelation is more than a series of words. Revelation is a spirit, a thought beyond words, yet needing their aid; a joy higher than man's music, a sky which no ladder of earth can scale. I would not represent Revelation as a mountain, a landscape, or even a light streaming from an unseen centre; I prefer to think of it as the HORIZON receding before the boldest approach, the guardian of every hill, the womb of morning, the undefined definition of the star-spaces, at once the visible magnitude and the unmeasured immensity—the radiant boundary of mind and destiny. Who would, if he could, cut off part of the horizon and treat it as texts are treated? Who would have any idea of the Atlantic if he saw but a spoonful of the infinite flood? Yet thus is the eternal Revelation of God often treated by merely verbal or textual preaching. A preacher may either parse a text as an exercise in grammar, or he may expound it as a part of Revelation. Parsing is but a smaller department of exposition. Texts should be interpreted in the light of general revelation—that is to say, first discover what God's purpose is, and let all texts be subordinated to its meaning. For example, God is love; then even His wrath must be an aspect of His affection. Or again, Jesus Christ came to save the world; then even unbelief shall not cause Him to fail of victory. To quote isolated texts against such central doctrine is like pointing to mountains to disprove the rotundity of the earth. Geographically, the Matterhorn is an objection to the theory of a sphere; but, astronomically, even the Matterhorn is humbly smoothed to the level of the sea. There is a geographical verbalism. There is also an astronomical exposition.

For the creation of the right kind of preaching, I am not certain that we should look to any one man or any one college. There ought to be, in addition to college training, a National Pulpit Institute, open to preachers of all communions. It should have its centres in London, Oxford, and Manchester, or elsewhere, as necessity might suggest. I do not care for a merely denominational style or stamp of preaching—as Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian, and the like. At present, it is quite easy for men who have had considerable experience to indicate the denomination to which any preacher belongs. There is no mistaking the Methodist preacher, nor is it easy to mistake a Presbyterian. The Episcopalian preacher is marked by a well-known stamp, and the Congregationalist is easily traceable. In this sacred work of studying the art and practice of communicating Christian instruction, I would bring together students of all Churches. The Institute should be open three months in the year. Chalmers should be there, and Beecher and Spurgeon. Gladstone should lecture there, and Wilberforce of Oxford, and Magee of Peterborough. In that Institute should be focalised, as circumstances might vary or opportunity permit, the finest and truest speaking power of the age. The lecturers may or may not speak about sermons distinctively; I

they will show what an instrument of good may be found in public speech; they will teach men to open their mouths and speak distinctly; they will show what the English language is when spoken in its purity; and they will redeem rhetoric from the contempt brought upon it by those who have made it little better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. I will not believe that the age of public speaking is past. It may have to change its form, but it will never lose its highest power. The eloquence of to-day is conversational in its base, and from that sensible medium it rises to do all the work required of it by controlled yet flaming passion. The supremacy of pulpit eloquence, as already hinted, lies in its inclusiveness of range. The whole artillery of rhetoric, when used with serious purpose, is in place in the Christian pulpit. Even the dangerous climax may be turned to pulpit use. It may cease to be the climax of mere words, it may no longer be the symptom of artificial apoplexy—but it will abide and work wonders in its effective use of cumulative argument and well-sustained appeal. I know of no high art that has been more abused than the art of public speaking. It needs redemption from the contempt into which it has been brought by gabbling and chattering fluency. We should now demand the eloquence of instruction; the eloquence—defiant and militant—of deep conviction; the eloquence of truth and love. The eloquence of mere sentences is dead—except amongst the very young and the extremely feeble. The eloquence which meanders with the rills, floats with butterflies, languishes in pale moonlight, plashes in crested foam on golden sands, bathes itself in crimson sunshine, and generally makes a fool of itself, has vanished into the nothingness out of which it came. Marsyas has been flayed alive by Apollo.

Preachers are often taunted because the sermons of one preacher do not always agree in matter and form with the sermons of another. Taunting should be indulged with great caution. Men who are sitting on gunpowder should be careful what matches they use; under such circumstances it may be well not to carry matches. Who are they who taunt preachers upon this ground? Journalists may have the right to do so, because journalists always agree, and have always chimed with sacred harmony since the halcyon days of the *Eatanswill Gazette* and the *Eatanswill Independent*. Doctors may have the right of taunting preachers, because the allopath would die for the homœopath, and the hydropath would gladly put them both under water. Doctors love one another with a pure heart fervently. There are no two opinions about the best ways of curing men. Lawyers may have the right of taunting preachers, because lawyers live a life as brotherly as that of Cain and Abel. They always take the same view, and they always announce it and uphold it on a purely philanthropic basis. Who are the men who taunt preachers on any ground whatsoever? It has in some way come to pass that preachers have drawn upon themselves the sneers of ignorance—not preachers of one denomination, but of all communions. A layman dining with Sydney

Smith said, "If I had a son of weak mind I would train him for the Church." Sydney instantly answered, "Your father was not of that opinion." Really, preachers are not all as weak as ignorance would make them out to be. Some preachers are nearly as mentally strong as some solicitors. Other preachers may be almost as capable as some men of business. I do not wish to go beyond the strict line of fact, yet I venture respectfully to submit that some of the more favoured and highly-educated preachers might have taken a fairly successful place as merchants. Liddon might have had mind enough to do well with sewing-machines. Farrar might have made a comfortable living in the dry goods line—a line which he always carefully avoids. We do not wish to make too much of our humble powers as ministers, yet we do not feel inclined to undervalue our election of God. We are not to be sneered out of the ministry. We are not ministers by the will of man, nor by the call of man, nor by the favour of man, but by the power of God. We do not ask for the approbation of a hostile world, but we do hunger and thirst for the love and confidence of our own people. To you we look for human comfort—"for we preach not for ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. . . . For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye have somewhat to answer them" that mock unjustly or sneer because of folly. We know our deficiencies and infirmities, but we know that the grace of God is sufficient for us. Most gladly, therefore, will we rather glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us. When we are weak, then are we strong. "If I have become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me; for I ought to have been commended of you" (2 Cor. xii. 11).

Many critics of the Modern Sermon clamorously insist that it should take deeper interest in social and political events. The point in which I agree with them only magnifies the point in which I differ from them. I believe that with strikes, elections, and competing methods of government, *as such*, the pulpit has absolutely nothing to do. What it has to do, and to do at all risks, is to create an atmosphere which cannot be breathed by injustice, and which is fatal to all tricksters, tyrants, gamblers, and bad men, whether capitalists or labourers, whether classes or masses. In my judgment, that is the true function of the pulpit. But there also is its disadvantage when superficially criticised. By ignorance and impatience, partizanship is more valued than atmosphere. It seems to be more vital, more urgent, more useful, but it is not. Atmosphere is God's way; partizanship is man's. The Christian sermon should be so sublime in moral tone, so sympathetic with human need, so jealous for truth, that injustice and ruthlessness, whether in man or master, should be shamed and burned out of human thought. The sermon may thus be doing more than on the surface it seems to be doing. The quiet planet is doing more than the noisy rocket.

As to the various ways of composing and delivering sermons, a good deal is to be said for every method. I have heard men so read sermons as to convince me that reading was best, and I have heard men so preach without manuscript as to demonstrate that free speech is infinitely better than either reading or recitation. Every man must be his own judge in this matter. In adopting the conversational tone let us beware of slipshod fluency; in adopting the dignified tone let us beware of turgidity and cold isolation from our hearers; in preferring a literary style let us guard ourselves against pedantry; and in selecting a diffusive and earnest style let us beware lest we fall into rant and furious weakness. So much for incidental method, which I mean to lead up to a consideration of a practice which is known as reading meanings into texts. The practice should be most carefully guarded. We have no right to make inspired writers responsible for our suggestions. On the other hand, we should be quite as much on our guard as to narrowness as to broadness. It is quite possible that the inspired writers themselves did not know the whole of their own meaning, or foresee all the legitimate applications of their own work. It is the glory of the inspired writings that they contain in root or germ the wisdom needed for all the changing and advancing centuries of time. The Bible is a seedhouse as well as a paradise. Let it be further noted by our homiletic critics that they themselves are also the subjects of a jealous and resolute criticism. For example, there are critics who protest against the practice of reading Christ into the seventy-second Psalm. They say it is Solomon, not Christ, who shall judge the poor of the people and save the children of the needy, who shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. They protest against Christ being read into the words, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." They protest against reading Christ into the words, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." We must, therefore, be on our guard lest we unduly insist upon the letter, and thus lose the upper and more luminous meanings of the Spirit. Who knows what is in the bulb or seed until summer has read all its meaning into or out of the unpromising text? If we could imagine a man who has never seen the summer listening to a florist or a poet discoursing upon bulb or root, we should have an example of a good deal of the lifeless and unspiritual criticism which protests against reading meanings into texts. The florist is right when he takes the bulb or seed-root into his hand and preaches from it the revelation of colour and fragrance and loveliness; his eyes are anointed with heaven's eye-salve who sees in the little, colourless, dead-looking root the green spike, the blushing blossom, the minaret of bloom, the covenant of God. I would rather the texts were read upward into light than that they were read downward into darkness. It ought not to be a long way from any text to Bethlehem, and when we are at Bethlehem we cannot stop short of Calvary. I find Christ in the very first

verse of the Bible, for without Him was not anything made that was made. I do not consider this to be reading anything into the text; I rather consider it to be the due implication and legitimate meaning of the holy words. I find Christ in the transfixed and enraptured look of Abraham. I find Him in the wilderness, "for the Rock that followed them was Christ." I find Him in the Prophets as they struggled with a great unknown and unmeasured agony. I read Christ into all history, all prophecy, all music, all penitent and holy sorrow. The Cross throws its shadow over the whole tragedy of sin, and through all the tempest of rebellion it sends the assurance that, "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Charge me, if you so care, with the enormity of reading Christ into Nehemiah and Esther, Ezra and Ruth, Ecclesiastes and Joel—I find Him there, building a larger wall, conducting a grander deliverance, reading a profounder law, reaping a vaster field, rebuking a deadlier vanity, hurling through the ages the thunder of a sadder doom. I preach Christ as the Saviour of all. Not upon God, but upon man do I throw the blame of missing the heaven of holiness and the heaven of rest. Whilst we thus preach, we shall prove by many a sacred instance that the sermon contains the only true answer to the minds that ask, "What is truth?" and to the hearts that cry, "Who will show us any good?"

Yet, in conclusion, the sermon that shall answer such inquiries must be composed in full view of the Cross. On this point I wish to bear my testimony in an age of literary pretence and idolised reason. I will never consent to reduce the Cross to the level of an illustration of moral excellence—the pattern of an obedience which amounted to little more than the tragic conquest of its own reluctance. To me the Cross is not the exhibition of human submission to the divine will. It is not Man who is excelling all other men; it is God who is saving the world. I have no wish to be hard upon my fellow preachers; they will bear me witness that I have not been wanting in brotherly sympathy; but no consideration shall restrain me from saying that the minister who preaches Christ merely as the highest and sublimest moral example has no right or title to occupy an evangelical pulpit. He is a Unitarian without a Unitarian's dignity. From a moral point of view, I say, all honour to the Unitarian who uncomplainingly pays the penalty of his convictions. From a moral point of view I would go on to say, shame be to the man who submits a theory for a revelation, and who thus drags down a historically orthodox pulpit, and turns it into an instrument for the propagation of a heresy which it was erected to confute and denounce. No blessing can rest on such a ministry. It may be verbally brilliant, but in the soul of it there is a lie against the Holy Ghost. Out of our churches and colleges I would eradicate every thought that turns away from the Cross as other than the spectacle of God in Christ dying for the sins of the world. I do not want clever young men in our ministry;

I want burningly earnest young preachers. There was never so much need of them as there is to-day. In order to preach Christ they must first know Him; they must have been crucified with Him; they must have known the fellowship of His sufferings and the power of his resurrection. My young brethren, I offer you a counsel which has been dearly bought, and I pray you to receive it at least for consideration. I have seen life in most of its aspects, I have tasted the bitterest sorrow ever drunk by human lips. I have worked long and hard, and have never eaten the bread of idleness. I have known the mystery, the shame, and the anguish of sin. I have hewn out to myself cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water. Looking back upon all the chequered way, I have to testify that the only preaching which has done me good is the preaching of a Saviour who bore my sins in His own body on the tree; and the only preaching by which God has enabled me to do good to others is the preaching in which I have held up my Saviour not as a sublime example but as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

“Ere since by faith I saw the stream  
His flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.”

## THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY.

BY THE REV. S. A. TIPPLE.

*Notes of a Sermon in memory of the late Mr. Powell, preached in Gospel Oak Congregational Church, on Sunday morning, November 2nd, 1890.*

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”—Job i. 21.

THESE words were not lightly uttered. They were said by one who, with mantle rent and head shaven, had fallen on the ground and worshipped.

After all, it is not the praise of jubilant moments that is the truest, but that which is murmured low in the thick darkness, mixed with tears. Praise from those who have striven to see the silver lining of the dark cloud, the mitigating elements of the affliction. It is all very fine to sing with the linnets in the sunshine, but to sing against the weather is finer—to sing because of what reason and faith suggest, as those harpers of the Apocalypse do who stand on the sea of glass, mingled with fire, and sing to God. I have come to-day to grieve with a bereaved family, a bereaved minister and congregation, and also to give thanks.

And, first, let me grieve with you. The friendship of the man who has passed within the vale was sweet to me. I cherished his warm regard, which I returned. The consciousness of his accessibility, his

generous, warm-hearted sympathy, were among my most valued possessions. In the autumn of life old friends, like November leaves, grow fewer and fewer. We can ill spare him who has gone. The death of those we love and honour is hard to bear. It is absence for evermore. Nothing is much harder to bear, yet it is not all sad. The shield has another side, and we may say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." We trust in God, whose order runs through all, and rules the apparent disorder, and *He* has taken away. "The Lord hath taken away" helps us to say "blessed be the name of the Lord."

Everything around us looks mournful in the fall of the leaf—all is fading and vanishing, and the odour of death is in the damp air. Yet Nature in her bright tints seems to say, "Isn't it beautiful?" This decay is a happening fit and seasonable. And every fading and vanishing face is a bright advent. It is well, though it look ill to us; and it is always opportune, however bad it seems to us who remain. Believing in God and in immortality as we do, it is the quite best thing for them. They have died in a full age, however premature. The cruel displacement is a meet placing. Character gets its meet environment. God in His wise government brings punctually the change of air which his soul requires. This life of ours is no longer suited for his, and he is taken to a higher, with its own delights and exercisings.

But what of us who are left? We are painfully deprived.

"He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak."

That is the misery. But there are mitigations.

I. Our true possession in them remains untouched. The portion of the heart, that is the true possession—not what we see and hear. This affection is mine still. Death has but refined and sublimed it. They are no longer capable of service to me; but should I value them for that? No, no; it was for their affection. They are not gone from us; they are given to us as we never had them before. How sacred the loved dead have grown to us! They have risen and ascended for us. Their failings are effaced. Had we ever discerned so much beauty in them before?

"I combed and combed his curly head,  
He looked so grand when he was dead."

The ancient violin-makers wrote of their work, making the wood speak, "Being dead, I sing more than when I was alive." These words might be written over our graves: "I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive." It is a common practice. Every good point in their character glides out to view like the constellations out of the night sky. I know what you will say—that it is an illusive glamour. No, not so. May it not be that this idealising touch of death reveals that which we had missed before? We can see now the beauty that was not able to shine out

in them before. It is the real man we see now. We are more just, on the whole, to the dead than to the living. We did not discern the latent angel in them which, thank God, is ever before our Father in heaven. Would that we could, when they were alive, judge in this way, and so be juster to them. By idealising freely we become successful detectives of hidden virtues. Let us be bold and loving enough to imagine good when only evil is apparent.

II. The true-hearted and beloved are still with us as regards their influence. In this respect we have lost nothing, but perhaps gained something. Sometimes the pity is that one cannot escape from the influence of one's ancestors, and get clear of the black drop in the blood which we inherit. But a brave, upright, holy life is more quickening in its effect when that life is over. The thought of such has had a restoring, wholesome moulding influence. The influence of my lost friend's worth is not lost—it lingers on. It abides to-day in the house when the chair is empty; it is felt in his children's houses, and it will abide.

In conclusion, do not let us doubt for a moment that they themselves live. *They*, not their influence only. I never doubt that. Extinction at death is altogether too poor and low as the solution of the mystery of humanity. To me it is an impossibility to believe *that* of the soul developed in long evolution, to think that *that* is the end of the greatest work the great Creator ever made. To believe what some call Nature, what I call God, should be so foolish and wasteful as to throw away the only great thing, evolved at such tremendous cost—to extinguish the conscious soul, that subtle and wonderful essence which took the Creator ages to distil, is an impossibility to me.

Death means life. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for November 9th. Luke xxiii. 1-12. Golden Text, verse 4.*

### PILATE.

The Romans had taken away from the Jews the power of life and death. Therefore a prisoner convicted by a Jewish Ecclesiastical Tribunal of a capital crime had to be handed on to the Roman Governor, who alone had the power of putting a man to death. No punishment less than death would satisfy the malice of these chief priests and elders; so they led Jesus to Pilate, who happened at the time to be in Jerusalem.

Thus the saying of Jesus, signifying *what* kind of death He should

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\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

die, was brought to pass. Had the Jews put Him to death, He would have been *stoned*, but it was necessary that He should be crucified.

It was probably between six and seven in the morning when they conducted Jesus, bound with chains, to the residence of the Governor. What a spectacle that was—the Jewish nation leading their Messiah to ask the Gentile to put Him to death! It was the hour of the nation's suicide. Pontius Pilate had been governor of Judæa for six years. He hated the Jews, and they returned his hatred. He was pleasure-loving and a time-server. The smile of the Emperor Tiberius was his brightest sunshine, his frown the blackest night. Pilate feared nothing so much as the loss of his place as governor. The Jews knew the man they had to manage, and saw the weak place in his breastplate.

Pilate seems to have known something of Jesus. "He knew that for envy they had delivered Him," and perhaps Jesus had been the subject of conversation in the palace between Pilate and his wife Proculi. Jesus witnessed a good confession before Pilate, and showed him that His claims were spiritual, not political. He was the King of Truth. Poor Pilate! he was impressed by his prisoner, and felt He was innocent. But Pilate lacked the moral courage to release Him. How wretched is that man who is afraid to do the right!

"Pilate, a stranger, holdeth off; but they,  
Mine own dear people, cry, 'Away, away!'  
With cries confused, frightening the day.  
Was ever grief like Mine?"

Pilate was reluctant to condemn Christ. He sent Jesus to Herod to get rid of a troublesome case; but Herod sent the prisoner back. Pilate tried to slip out of his difficulties. Have *we* never acted in a similar manner? When we saw that it was our duty to take a certain step have we never thought, "I will wait, in hopes that some circumstance may arise to save me from this trial." God usually defeats these plans and makes us take a decided part either for good or evil. We feel compassion for wretched Pilate, as he runs to and fro, seeking some new way of ridding himself from his difficulty. He threw away the golden opportunity of defending the most glorious of beings, placed for a season beneath the shelter of his arm. There is a way of escape for every tempted soul, and Pilate might have escaped. Can the events of that day have ceased to haunt him during the remainder of his life? Calamity soon overtook Pilate. Two years afterwards, he lost the favour of the Emperor, and was banished into a distant province, where, it is said, he put an end to his own life. It would have been good for him if he had never worn a royal robe, nor seen the Son of God.

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NOVEMBER 13, 1890.

ONE PENNY.

## “DARKEST ENGLAND.”

*A Sermon preached on Thursday, November 6th, 1890, at Manchester Cathedral, by the*

RIGHT REV. WALSHAM HOW, D.D., LORD BISHOP OF WAKEFIELD.

“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”—  
Matt. xix. 26.

THIS is said, as you will remember, of the difficulty of attaining salvation by those whose hearts are set upon riches. They are the words following the story of that rich young man who had not the courage, or self-sacrifice, to “sell all that he had, and give to the poor.” But I want to take the words to-day quite generally. I want to understand them as setting before us a great principle which should guide us in our thoughts and actions as regards the work that God calls us to do in the world.

Now we want to better the world, we want to banish, for instance, as one of the very simplest things and objects which we must set before ourselves—we want to banish the curses of vice, drunkenness, immorality, cruelty, injustice. We want to raise men to higher ideas of what life might be; of what they might be; of what the world might be. There is no man, whatever his creed, or even if he have no creed if he have any generous love of his kind, who does not desire, in some way or other, to better his fellow-creatures.

Now, in order to point my lesson at the very first, I will tell you a saying of a poor drunken soldier, who came to one of the hard-working clergy in East London to ask his help in conquering the temptation to drink. The clergyman asked him whether he had ever taken the pledge. “Yes,” said the soldier, “again and again, and broken it.” He asked him about his companions, his occupations, his amusements, and the like; till at last the poor man, growing somewhat impatient, exclaimed, “Sir, if religion will not do it, nothing will do it!”

Now is not that very much the same thing as my text says? Was not there true wisdom in that poor man’s exclamation? Well, there are some men, you know, who tell you that religion has had its day. “It has done its work. It was a very good thing in the infancy of mankind; indeed, probably no great amount of advancement and

civilisation could have been attained without some religion or other. There have been many sorts of religion, some better, some worse; but, on the whole, it has been an elevating influence in the history of the world; but in these days—well, we have become too enlightened. We are not going to be slaves any more to that old exploded superstition." So men speak; and they talk of religion cramping men's minds; they talk of "emancipation," "freedom from the shackles of these old, worn-out illusions." As if the Lord Jesus had never said anything about freedom, emancipation, and slavery. What did He mean when He talked of the "truth which shall make you free"; the truth that He came to proclaim, the Truth that He *was*? I look round in the world, and I see two men; one of them a slave to drink, like that poor soldier that I spoke about. He tries now and then to break his bonds, and then he binds them round himself again; and is a faster bound slave than ever; he cannot get free. I look at another. I see a man who has known the slavery of sin, and who, by the grace of God, mind you—by the power of Jesus Christ, mind you—by the teachings of religion, mind you, has burst these bonds asunder, and is a free man now; who sins no more, holding himself in subjection, and is master over himself. And you ask me which of the two is a slave, and which a free man. I do not think anybody would have much difficulty in answering that question. Talk of slavery to that old superstition! If Jesus Christ cannot make men free, I know not what freedom is.

But then there are some, you know, who will not preach a gospel of unbelief, but who, nevertheless, preach a gospel of self-indulgence, "eat, drink, and be merry"; that is the thing that will help you to get rid of all those cares and troubles and miseries of life. Poor fellows! would to God that they knew some higher and better way. I am very sorry for them; I cannot judge them, for I do not know what their training and influences have been; but I never saw the miseries of the world washed away yet in oceans of pleasure.

Well, but there are other things offered us as solutions of our hard problems, as the true ways in which to better mankind. One of these plans has been set before us quite lately, and is now, as you all know, exciting a great deal of interest in those who have any care for these things, the propounding by one who has had great experience in organisation. I suppose that the plan that is set before us will be felt by many to be very attractive. I do not know whether it is capable of realisation, in whole or in part, or not. I think it will be very difficult of realisation. But, surely, we have no right at once to disparage or condemn such a plan, although it may not be after our own hearts, or set before us by those whom we would entirely trust. Nevertheless, it is one of the remedies proposed, and there are plenty more. There are political plans, social plans, philanthropic plans; perhaps this great plan that is now occupying so much attention partakes in part of each of these, and some believe in one and some in another.

Now do not think for one moment that I despise or scorn any plan at all which has for its object the bettering of the poor and suffering of those classes, especially upon whom the circumstances of life press most roughly. No, I honour all genuine, earnest, honest endeavour; and I do not want all the work to be done only in my own way. God knows the task is so huge, so difficult, so complicated, so manifold, that one welcomes anyone or anything that seems pushing, however feebly, the right way; and I think there is much to be done politically, socially, philanthropically. We must not sit down contented, my friends, without trying to banish the social wrongs, or bitter distress, anywhere, if we can in any way improve things. I hold that the politician has a noble field of action before him if, instead of aiming at party triumphs, he would endeavour to attain the object that there should be no more room for anything which would prevent us from grappling with the plainest principles of improving the social conditions of life for every man.

I think the social reformer has a great and blessed work before him if he can only make society purer, better, cleaner, holier than it is. And I think the philanthropist has a better work to do if only he will be careful, lest in removing one evil he does not bring in some other perhaps worse than the one removed.

But just think how very much has been done. Think of the wonderful changes in this century, for instance. Take the laws of the land. The penal laws for the punishment of criminals at the beginning of this century were simply a disgrace to a civilised nation, characterised by nothing but cruelty and injustice. It makes one almost ashamed of one's country to read about them. Look again at the state of our prisons, workhouses, factories, mines. Why, the change is something enormous for the better. Led, of course, as the movements have been by some great self-sacrificing spirit—by a Howard or a Shaftesbury—what triumphs have been won for the workers of the land, whom we ought to care for. Look at education. I am not ashamed to speak of the Church as leading in the van, and marching in the front of the great army of those who have gone forward in the work of education, who have had to fight the battle long ago. I speak of myself, as a country clergyman, for twenty-eight years fighting the battle for the education of our labourers against the prejudices and the selfishness and narrowness of those who ought to have helped us.

Look, again, at philanthropy. There was never a time when there was more real, true, personal interest taken in the poor and the suffering than at the present time. We are advancing slowly, but perhaps none the less surely for that. Now, my friends, do these changes content you? Have you no higher aim than this? What if all that has been dreamed of by the politician, the social reformer, the philanthropist, what if all were attained? What if we had a perfect system of law, securing freedom and right to every man? What if we had society regulated in any ideal fashion which you like?

What if money were freely lavished, or, perhaps, somewhat more equally divided—what then? Would it be a paradise on earth then? Well, now, just use your common sense. Visit the homes of our land, rich or poor; they are very much the same in this respect. Am I right or wrong in saying that you will find in the homes of our land a vast amount of suffering—not pain or sickness, but much worse things? You will find bitter disappointment, the stabs of ingratitude, the misery that comes from perfidy and wrong-doing. You will find many a heart very sore with these things that are lying so very heavily upon it, grinding into it day by day. Do these things come from bad laws, or unequal social conditions, or the lack of money? Oh, no! You know the causes; you know very well that the misery of the world, nine-tenths of it, comes from selfishness, and cruelty, and ill-temper, and vice, and frivolity, and drink, and gambling. What can we do with all these? It breaks one's heart, when one is working, planning, hoping, to see these ugly things dragging down again, thwarting all our endeavours, making all in vain. We want to see these people happier, but with all this moral evil I do not think there will be much happiness. Even well-meant efforts seem all in vain. Now, how shall all this crushing load of misery and discontent be lifted from our people? I answer in the words of my text, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." "If religion will not do it, nothing will do it!"

But while a great many people will not agree with me in that, they believe much more in other remedies. Now do you think the matter out: are we agreed that at least morality and virtue, kindness, unselfishness, sacrifices, sweet temper—to speak of some of the plain ones—are we satisfied that these are the conditions of happiness? But these things, do not come quite naturally, do they, to everybody! They are graces to be taught, cultivated, and practised. Why should men take the trouble to cultivate, and practise, and win these graces—I mean, of course, on the supposition that we have nothing to do with religion? "Oh!" say many, "we are bound to seek the greatest good of the greatest number." Very well; now I think that all right. Schemes of improvement do really, in the long run, "seek the greatest good of the greatest number." But think of this as a motive. I have had great advantages, a good education, and the social position which I hold, and the influences surrounding me for good all my life long, for which I thank God; and therefore such an appeal might have some force with me. I do not say it would have an overwhelming force, but it might have some force, with educated people who are thoughtful about these things, and have learnt, instinctively almost, from the genial converging influences of all their culture, to think a little about others. But take some poor fellow—that poor drunken soldier that I spoke of, or any wretched man that you meet in the street, and you see him the worse for drink, perhaps; or you know, at any rate, that he is leading a godless, profligate life. You say to him, "My friend, this will not do! You are leading a

godless, profligate, and unhealthy life; a life which will do you and others much harm. You are bound to seek the greatest good of the greatest number." What a farce! Does any sane man think that that motive is going to tame the passions, and banish the selfishness, and put a check on the self-indulgence that is working such havoc amongst us on all sides? Will the wisest legislation which the wit of man can devise do so? Will better social regulations, if we could get them, do so? Will improved dwellings for the poor do so? I am all for these things, I long to see better dwellings for our poor classes. I long to see the laws of the land made more and more perfect, and I long to see many a change in the social relations of our land. But will these things banish all the wretchedness and selfishness and misery of the world? Ay, men may plan, but if I am asked what is going to better the world I have no answer but my text. But it is when the grace of God is in the heart, melting its stubbornness, moving the will, rooting out self, it is when sin is grieved over, hated, relinquished; when God is feared and obeyed, when Jesus is known and loved and trusted, it is then that joy and peace are known. Men cast about, they tell us, for a new basis of morality. There is no basis of morality that has the faintest chance against the selfishness of man except religion. Look at the philosophers; see what a great ideal they had, what noble sentiments are to be found in their writings. Now, I ask how much good did they do? They might teach a few disciples, men of high and noble impulses, but could they touch the masses; could they elevate the tone of society? You say "Christianity has not made the world good yet." I know it, but what multitudes it has made better and purer! What multitudes there are who, in these days even, lift up their voices and echo the words of the great penitent of ancient times, who tells us, in his visions of the light, and joy, and peace that came to him with the knowledge of his God and Saviour: "Too late have I found Thee, O my neglected Good!" And he tells us how he quaffed every cup of pleasure, how he tasted every philosophy that the wit of man could devise, and yet there was no virtue and no happiness. And that prayer of his that has come down to us is all so true: "Thou, O Lord, hast made me for Thyself, and my heart knoweth no rest until it attain to Thee."

And what are these clergy that we are trying to send out into our great, overwhelming, over-crowded parishes, what are they doing? Why do we send them? What is the meaning of these? Why do we ask your alms to-day for multiplying the number of these who go forth to our parishes as ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God? Is it not simply to proclaim the truth that there is no remedy for the misery of the world, for bettering our future, except in the faith of Jesus Christ and the blessed Gospel, which they proclaim in His name? Yes, it is so! There are plenty of other gospels preached—gospels of culture, of education, of art, of music, even gospels of recreation; but I do not know any

gospel that is really going to shed light on the dark places of our land, and to lift our people into a brighter, freer, more beautiful atmosphere, except the one old, old Gospel of Jesus Christ. I have spoken about bettering this state of our people here below, I have spoken about this life, for godliness, religion, "has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." But if in this life only we have hope in Christ, "then we are of all men most miserable." Oh, my friends, is this life all that we have to speak about? No! These mysteries which so perplex us will still be mysteries to man's narrow reason; still there will be dark things he cannot understand; but what is there that shall cast a bright ray of light upon many of these mysteries, and say where the highest is to be found? What is there save religion? Sorrows and sufferings will continue; we have no pledge that they are to be banished from this world so long as it lasts. But what is there that can cast a blessed ray of light, and hope, and peace, even of joy—for I have seen it again and again upon the poor, suffering soul, so that the eye lights up in the moment of excruciating pain when One Name is spoken? It is religion; the name of Jesus Christ. And so we trust in God. "I should have utterly fainted but that I believed verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. There be many that say"—some say it very sadly, some mockingly and tauntingly, but "there be many that say, Who will show us any good?" I answer, in the grand old words of the Psalm which sum up that which I have tried to teach to you this day: "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me."

### A TALK ABOUT BOOKS.

BY PROFESSOR HENRY DRUMMOND.

WHEN the Secretary of the University Union asked me to come here and deliver a lecture to the Melbourne students, I felt myself at a loss how to reply to him. When I left Scotland I had no intention of delivering any lectures, and I made no preparation for such an emergency. The fact is, I only came to Australia with one barrel loaded, all the shot for the other being in a box at home. That is why I am not going to give you a lecture. I am only going to "talk about books."

And I want particularly to talk to the "duffers." Most speakers are in the habit of addressing themselves to the brilliant students. I don't want to do that. I wish to talk to the duffers, because while I was at college I was a duffer myself, and I therefore sympathise with the duffers.

In a certain library I know of in Scotland, the books are divided into two great classes, which are in cases on opposite sides of the room. Surmounting the shelves in which one class is ranged, there

is a stuffed owl; while above the other there is a bird known in Scotland as the "dipper." These birds are symbolical of the two kinds of books. It is about the second class, the "dipper books"—the books that may be dipped into—that I am going to speak.

The owl class are uninviting in appearance, and require the reader to burn "the midnight oil." The main value of these books is not in what one gets out of them, but the mental discipline which is got from them; and no man will ever come to much unless he occasionally goes laboriously and conscientiously through the "owl" books.

In general literature, an example of the "owl" books would be Gibbon's "Decline and Fall"; in poetry, "The Ring and the Book." Each of these leaves behind a sense of power and grasp possessed by the writer. And so with all these great books. In philosophy one might class Butler's "Analogy" among them; in theology such a book as Dorner on "The Person of Christ," or Müller on "The Doctrine of Sin." They all leave upon the reader an impression of the size and power of the human mind. I don't think it is necessary to know many of these, but every "duffer" ought to read one or two of them during his college course.

A man is made partly by his friends, partly by his college books; and many a man is entirely shut up to the first, many a man to the second.

If you will allow me to be slightly autobiographical, and tell you in a very easy way the books that were useful to me, this is what I now mean to do.

I think every student should form a library of his own. It doesn't matter how small. During my college course I gathered such a library. It occupied the mantelshelf, yet I owe more to these books than to all the professors. I would especially urge this upon medical students. Medical men are probably the most illiberal class in the world. They know all about bones, and not one in a hundred knows about the literature of his time.

I remember the very first book which I ever bought, which I shall call No. 1. It was a volume of Ruskin—only a book of selections—which cost 4s. 6d. When I look back upon it now I can name with perfect clearness what I got out of that book. Ruskin *taught me to see*. Men are born blind, as blind as bats or kittens, and many men may go through their whole career without ever opening their eyes. I should have done so, too, if I had not encountered Ruskin. It only requires the idea to be put into a man's mind.

It is astonishing to see how few men see the world in which they live. I begin my class every year by an examination, not to prove knowledge, but to prove ignorance. I give an examination paper, consisting of about a dozen questions on the most elementary things that everybody ought to know. There are a number of questions which involve the use of the eyes. For instance, one question at my last examination was, "What colour are the stars?" Some would say white, others red; but stars are all colours.

Ruskin will help a man to the use of his eyes. Anybody can be put up to this in a few minutes. Go out into the country on Saturday, and stop at the first ploughed field. At first you will see nothing but an ugly ploughed mass. When you look again, it is a rich amber colour, with probably two feet of coloured air moving over it. The ploughed field is really a glowing mass of beautiful colour. When I was a little boy, I wondered why God made the world so dingy. I saw in Ruskin that the colours as they are in nature are most perfectly beautiful, and that by no possibility can they be changed to advantage.

Then look at the boulders, with their forests of lichens and mosses. Try to think what like naked rock is. There are few places on the world's surface where the earth's bones stick out, and there is nothing more appalling in the world. Ruskin calls mosses and lichens "God's first mercy to the world." Don't look at the general effect, but look at the individual. Look how exquisitely coloured they are; look at the imitation of crystallization; look at the finish upon their most minute parts; and look at the stability of these things. They are as delicate as a little cigar-ash. The sun shines and scorches them; the wind blows and moves them; the frost bites and chills them; the rain falls on them, but never washes them away.

I should have gone through the world and never seen them at all had Ruskin never taught me to look. He taught me to look at the trees when the leaves were off, and to see as much in them then as when the leaves were on.

One of the advantages this gives a man is the possession of a great many new adjectives, and it is a man's adjectives to a large extent that bear witness to his intellectual power. A lot of men go to hear a sermon or a lecture. Some say, "It was very nice;" but the thoughtful man will say, "It was a discerning sermon," or "a well thought-out sermon," or "a weak sermon." Now there is nothing that will supply a man with adjectives so much as nature. What should we know of the word "awful," if it were not for thunder? Ruskin says, "No one knows what tenderness is until he has seen a sunrise." The best idea that one gets of tenderness is the delicate light of an autumn sunrise.

Let me simply say that if any one of us has not discovered the world in which he lives, he ought to get some book that will help him to do this.

The second book that I bought was Emerson, and I used always to take credit to myself that I had discovered Emerson. My fellow-students wouldn't read him. They always read Carlyle. But I couldn't read Carlyle then. If I did read Carlyle, I felt as if I had been whipped; while, after I read Emerson, I felt that I had been stroked down.

I think a man should read the books that help him, it doesn't matter what reputation they have got. I think a man should discard the books that bore him. I think what Emerson does for you is to teach

you to see with the mind. Emerson never proves anything. He never works out logic. He just looks at truth, and says what he sees, and you see that what he says is right. Emerson was one of the purest and most unworldly men who ever lived. He lived the ripe scholar all the time. He never came down and mingled with the world and took off his gown. And there is a scholarly purity and unworldliness about his work.

He teaches, for instance, the great truth that a man ought to rely upon himself; that God has given him a certain number of talents, and that is his equipment to go through life on. He has to stand upon his own instincts, and to be perfectly contented to be what God has made him to be, and not anxious to be anybody else; and this makes a man perfectly satisfied to be even a "duffer."

The next set of books on my library shelf were one or two novels, the novels of George Eliot, which were much in vogue during my college course.

I owe a great deal to George Eliot. She opened my eyes to the meaning of life. I don't think there is any better reading in the world than a good novel. In reading a good novel, you are living with good, interesting people who do you good. I was kept going the whole winter because I fell in love with one of George Eliot's young ladies. Well, I should say to a student that second or third on his list of books should be a few really first-rate novels.

George Eliot had a great message to the world, and she deliberately chose the novel form as the form in which she could teach the world. I used to like Besant and Rice in those days; since then, of course, I have tried to read more carefully.

I suppose the greatest novelist at the present time is George Meredith. I suppose George Meredith belongs to the same class of novelist as Victor Hugo, where you get George Meredith and more besides. "*Les Misérables*" is perhaps the greatest of novels. You have a great novel of this country which is like it—"His Natural Life."

Next to my novels I had one or two books of humour, which I think is a good addition. My favourite then and now is Mark Twain. I don't know any books in our language which quite touch the American humour in its dash and piquancy.

Some of you may remember the story of the two Chicago safe-agents who were travelling in the train together. Each man took to praising his own safe. One of them told how in a great fire in New York a large building had been burned down, and when they examined the place afterwards they found one of his firm's safes in it. When they opened the safe all the documents in it were unharmed, not even scorched. They also found in it a kitten, which had been accidentally locked in. The kitten was alive and hearty, and not a single hair on that kitten was even scorched. The other agent merely smiled contemptuously. His safe, he said, had been subjected to as severe a test as that. His firm had taken one of their safes, and

locked a bantam rooster in it. Then they piled a huge quantity of dry resinous wood around and over it. Upon the mass they had poured several gallons of petroleum and then set fire to the whole. The fire was kept going for two days, and was then allowed to die out. They opened the safe, and they found that the poor little bantam was dead. "Yes, sir, the rooster was dead. But, by gosh, sir, when they picked him up they found why. That chicken had been frozen to death!" The first agent took up his carpet bag and left the train.

I think the very best book of humour that has ever been given to the world is Mark Twain's *Selections of American Humour*. That book contains "The Blue Jay." I wish I had it here to read to you.

Mark Twain is not the Bohemian that people are apt to imagine. In his work he tries to be useful. He is a most respectable and esteemed citizen of Hartford in Connecticut. He lives in one of the finest houses I ever saw. In America he is universally esteemed for his kindness to the poor and to people that are down.

Some men are absolutely without humour, and as I mention this I am reminded of a story of Dr. Marcus Dods, who is one of my most esteemed and familiar friends. He is one of the most solemn and stolid of professors. He never moves a muscle when he is preaching, but stands squarely in the pulpit, with his hands by his side, from beginning to end, and betrays no emotion or passion. One of his friends said one day, "I think, Dods, you would preach a great deal better if you would try some gesture. Get your hand out, and show the people that you are not a corpse." Well, next Sunday Dr. Dods tried a gesture. He got his hand straight out in front of him, like that, and he never got it in again all through the discourse. When I told this story to my class one day, one student seriously asked, "Why could he not get it down?" It is superfluous to say that that student is an example of a man devoid of humour.

I must conclude by referring to one or two books which satisfied another part of my nature. I suppose I am not out of court in referring to those books which satisfied the higher part of my being. I think a man should be developed in his whole manhood. Well, I picked up a book at a bookstall, and, after reading a page of it, carried it home—a volume of Dr. Channing's. Channing taught me, I think, to believe in a God. I had always been brought up to know there was a God, but I did not like the idea. I had much rather there had been no God. But when I read Channing's book, I saw the character of a Deity put in such a way that I was glad there was a God.

To the next book on my list I owed the impression that God was a man. Of course He was more than a man, but He was a man. I got that from one of F. W. Robertson's books of sermons. It was a new revelation to me when I knew that Christ had been a man. I went to Robertson of Brighton's life, and I learned what freedom meant. Robertson was a British officer, and one of the noblest and truest of the spirits of men that ever lived. He did not care what he said, so

long as he spoke truth; and my first glimpse of liberty in the intellectual life I got from reading "Robertson of Brighton."

I will just say that I remember that, one day, when my college course was just finished, I looked over the list of the names of the authors in my library, and I was thunderstruck to discover that almost every one of them was a heretic. *I hadn't sought the books out, they had found me.*

I don't think a man need be afraid of what are called dangerous books. I have learned far more from authors who did not altogether hold opinions as I held them than from those who coincided with me. I don't mean that one does not owe very much to one's fellow-believers; but for the real nutriment of my college life I must express my obligations to such men, and that has taught me toleration. I wouldn't ask you to read any one of these books. Most of them are second-rate books. I was only a second-rate student, and I didn't presume to tackle the first-rate books. But I wouldn't advise anyone to read fifth and sixth-rate books.

I need not remind you, in sitting down, that the greatest book of all is the book of human life, and that life is the great teacher which will teach us far more than all we get in books.

I shall close by inviting any of you who may come to the old country to come and see me, and I shall introduce you to my class of books. I have been received with unusual courtesy, and I feel almost a personal friend of many of you. I know some of you are coming to the old country, and I hope you will look into my house in Glasgow, and get whatever help and benefit a Scotsman can give you.

## PULPIT PRAYERS.

BY THE REV. W. H. HARWOOD, OF SUNDERLAND.

*At Streatham Congregational Church, Streatham Town Hall.*

Thou Who desirest most of all the love of the creatures whom Thou hast made, teach us how we may love Thee. For Thou art not far from us; Thou art close at hand. In the act we may do, in the service we may render to many in Thy name, in all that is holiest and best and noblest in our life, there would we express our love to Thee, and not alone in this act of worship. Grant, we pray Thee, that all our life may be lifted up to the level of this act of devotion. Not here alone but every day let us be Thy servants indeed. Inspire us by Thy gracious Spirit to all compassionate love for men, to all earnest desire to do Thy will at all times and in all places, and so may we all who here worship Thee this night be stronger for service,

truer in our relationship to men, nearer to Thyself because we have thus spoken to Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We bring to Thee many lives, but one need. The end of all our striving and aspiring, what is it but Thyself? If we have Thee, the many-voiced prayer that rises to Thee will be answered, the needs that we cannot interpret into language will be satisfied, we shall go hence stronger for our life, readier for service. Fulfil, then, O God, we beseech Thee, this supreme need of life to each one of us. Teach us first of all how great that need is. Help us, that we hunger and thirst after Thy presence and Thy blessing. And when Thou hast aroused within us a deep, passionate desire for all that is godlike, then come to us, we pray Thee, and nourish the life of each one of us, and make our lives strong, and pure, and beautiful in the grace of Thy love. For we are Thy children, having each our own place in Thy thought, in Thine ambition. Thou hast some place for us to fill in the great plan of Thy doings, some desire concerning each one of us. Help us, that for all our inspiration we go back to this beginning of all things, that we derive our light, our help, all the teaching that we need day by day, first of all from this supreme fact of our faith, and then, having this standard by which to measure all things, help us that we become helpers of others, showing to them the reality of that which we have received from Thee. Guide us, we pray Thee, as we endeavour to think rightly of Thee. Thou hast made our lives so complex, we cannot tell why; Thou hast made misery and error possible, we cannot tell why. All we ask, is that we may have strength freely to believe in Thy goodness, that the one reality high over all may never be taken away from us, but that when life is darkest to us we may still believe that Thou art, and that because Thou art, the triumph of all that is good and true is ensured at last. We have not believed in Thee; Thou hast been to us a name and only a name; we have not made Thee the supreme guide and ruler of our every-day life; we have not lived as though Thou hast been in the cries of our fellow-men to us, in the claims of all those who are nearest to us; we have thrust Thee afar off, and now and again and again only bowed to Thee in the act of worship. We pray, O God our Father, that Thou wilt teach us how truly Thou art in our life day by day, that Thou wilt help us to walk in the strength and in the beauty of this belief in Thy presence, that we may learn that Thou art the beginning to us of all that is truest and best in this life of ours, that as we grow into all knowledge and all beauty we grow nearer to Thyself. We thank Thee for all that Thou hast taught us. We thank Thee for the great compassionate story in which we find the revelation of Thy character and of Thy purpose. We thank Thee for all in it that comes so near home to our own striving, so that we learn each one for himself the lesson Thou dost teach us, that we may realise that when we need Thee most Thou art nearest to help us. We pray that we may

never in our prayer and our worship be selfish in Thy sight. We would live for those who have the first claim upon us. We would live for those into whose dark lives we can bring brightness, into whose limited life we can bring some larger knowledge of what Thy purpose is and of what Thy desire is. Teach us, we pray Thee, how near to us our service may be, how close at hand is the duty Thou dost desire for us, not afar off, not in imaginings; but in the duty that we can do, in the helpful human service that we can render, Thou dost desire that we should serve Thee. Again, we pray that Thou wouldst teach us all the secret of the true religious life, that we may set forth in the eyes of men the reality of that which we profess. We pray this night for the many who need our prayers and our sympathy. We cannot come to Thee without bringing with us the worst, the vilest, the most evil of men who are about us. Thou hast made them to be our brethren, and we cannot escape from our kinship with them. Create, we pray Thee, in the heart of each one of us the true spirit of Christ, the spirit that recognises gladly this great fellowship of human kind, and that seeks to fulfil all that is meant in that fellowship. We remember, O God our Father, the many this night who curse Thee, the many who curse and blast the lives of their fellow-men, the little children in whose veins is poison, and who have commenced their lives with bitter thoughts of Thee, and with vilest thoughts of all that life means. Have compassion on us, as we confess the evil that is so close to us, that while we are here in comfort and in contentment, so many are drinking the bitterest dregs of life, when they have never tasted the sweets of it, when they have come to choose evil before they have known the good. God help those who cannot help themselves, those to whom the good, true life is impossible, and whose life is cursed at its very beginning. And may we so arise in this day to the work that is before us that this shame may cease from us, that the pictures of life that burn into our thoughts to-day may become impossible, and that no longer the cry of the outcast child may reproach all our religion and teach us the emptiness of many things that we have professed. Oh, that we may be the Church of the living God indeed, that all mere form of profession may pass away from us, and that the love of God may glow and burn within us, and that we may desire nothing so much as that we may be Thy servants here in the midst of men. Teach us how, here to-day, we may realise all that Thou hast had to say to us of the great future that is beyond. In all that we are undertaking guide us; the little here, the little there, make up the great sum of Thy ministry to men. Teach us the part that we may play, the place that we may fill, and help us so to live that when our life shall cease some place of usefulness may be vacant, some memories that shall inspire men may be left behind us. Be with all who shall minister and who shall hear in this place. If it be Thy will may this become a centre of help, of life, of teaching to many who have need of Thee, and so may those who have responsibility know that Thy hand is

with them. We pray Thee to-night to be our Helper. Make us to know something more of what Thou art, of what we may teach men of Thee, and so may we go hence with a larger conception of what our life is, and of what Thou dost desire us to do in it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## THE CHOKING OF THE WORD.

BY REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.

"And these are they which are sown among thorns, such as hear the Word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful."—MARK iv. 18-19.

Four sowings result in three failures. That is Christ's estimate of what was likely to be the issue of His work. He does not tell us the relative areas of the different lots of the field, and so we cannot enter upon any arithmetical calculations, but He does tell us that at every stage of growth there is a danger.

The first phase of the parable illustrates the danger that first emerges. The seed cast upon the trodden path never gets into the ground at all. The second, that sown on the rocky soil, does get rooted, and it is beginning to grow. And this third has got considerably further on the way to growth, has successfully come through the earlier dangers, but just as it is coming to perfection it, too, succumbs and fades.

I. What are the thorns? Jesus Christ puts three things which, in another of the versions of the parable, are even more distinctly exhibited as being three different forms of one thing; "the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things," says Mark. Luke, on the other hand, puts it "the cares and the riches and the pleasures," and then a phrase which includes all the other three, "of this life." So these three, unlike as they look, down at bottom are one thing, in a very important respect. All three—gnawing anxiety, full-fed confidence, and hungry longing after possible and material good—are the three heads of the one hound, barking and yelping in different keys, but all expressive of the same tendency and disposition. I might use the metaphor of the thorn otherwise than Christ meant it. African travellers tell us that when they are on their journeys, the thing that they dread most is that thorny plant which they call the "wait-a-bit thorn," that lays hold of a man as he passes and keeps him from advancing, and makes the march slow. These are the thorns that check and retard us in our Christian progress.

II. Note the growth of these ugly things. The evil thing grows spontaneously, whilst the good is exotic, and wants cultivation. There is a struggle for existence, and if we sit with our hands in our

pockets and let the things grow as they will, the worse growth will master the better.

III.—Note the slow, impenetrable, stealthy, certain, choking of the Word. A swift-growing, thick-stemmed plant rises by the side of the tender green spikelets, shuts them in on each hand, takes all the goodness out of the soil, excludes from them the blessed sunshine and the quickening air, so that the divine growth becomes pale and withered, and the spikelets droop, and there is no healthy green tending to ripeness in it. And after a bit it is dead and gone, choked by the slow process. The thing meant is this, a gradual drawing away of interest and love from God's Gospel and from religion. If the house is full, Jesus Christ has to go to the stable. If the great bulk of our love and all our effort, and all our interest runs in the one direction, there will be none left to run in the other. And if we let the weeds grow there is nothing left for the good seed to grow in or to grow by. The silent ebbing out of the life from the religion of multitudes of professing Christians is pointed at very solemnly in these words.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for November 16th. Luke xxiii. 13-25. Golden Text, Isaiah liii. 8.*

### BARABBAS AND JESUS.

What guilt there was in the short answer the people made to Pilate's inquiry! "Barabbas." It was the name of a murderer, yet they preferred that murderer to Him who came to give life to the world.

Look, first, at the choice. I. Who was rejected? One was rejected who was absolutely faultless. The judge said of Jesus, "I find no fault in this man." The centurion said, when all was over, "Truly, this was a righteous man." The traitor Judas, with the thirty pieces of silver, like thirty fiery serpents stinging his heart, dashed them on the marble floor of the temple, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed *the innocent blood.*" Here we see Barabbas and Jesus before the world, for the world to settle which of the two shall be kept back from the cross. There stands perfection, in the form of Jesus; but the reply is, "Not this man!"

One was rejected who had wrought for the world the greatest wonders of kindness. He had brought health to the sick, food to the

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\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

hungry, and the Gospel to the poor. Many of the multitude surging round Pilate had received great benefits from this prisoner's gracious hands. But they choose "not this man."

One was rejected who loved them; knowing all their want of love to Himself. He was not only loving, He was love. If they would have come to Him, He would have given the Jews eternal life, and His great grief was that they would not come. All love asks for some response, and so it was with the love of Jesus. But they cry, "Not this man."

II. Who was chosen? "Not this man, but Barabbas."

*Bar* signifies "son," and *Abbas* was the Greek form of the Hebrew word for "father." So this man was the son of some distinguished father. We are told that his first name was Jesus, and as Jesus was a common name at that time it was quite likely. He had turned out badly, and now was in prison as the leader of an insurrection, and as a robber and murderer. There he stands! "Dangerous" is written on his face—robber, plotter, murderer. But he was preferred to Jesus. Barabbas was released, and we know not whether he ever believed in Him who was led to execution, when he himself was permitted to live. There have been many as guilty as Barabbas who have believed.

Do we ever reject Jesus for Barabbas? Yes, when we prefer any bad habit or passion to Christ. If we prefer any treasure to Him, that thing is our Barabbas. If we know that the sin we cherish is a robber and a murderer—robbing us of peace and killing our souls—and refuse to give the evil thing up to be crucified, and will rather give up Christ, that sin is our Barabbas. This choosing faculty which God has given to us is one mysterious and awful. Whether we have heaven or hell is the result of the soul choosing, "not this, but that." Ask the Mighty Spirit, who is ever waiting to help and enlighten, to help you to make a right choice.

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## FOLLOWING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*A Sermon preached on Sunday, November 2nd, 1890, at Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge by the*

VEN. ARCHDEACON FARRAR, D.D.

"Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord : look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged.—Is. li. 1.

I FEEL the honour and the responsibility of being appointed to address you as the Lady Margaret Preacher, on this day of the Commemoration of Benefactors; and though I may well be humbled to think how many wiser and worthier than myself have spoken before the University on these occasions during nearly four centuries, I will endeavour to deal, simply and directly with some of the thoughts which this day and this audience suggest.

I. A classic Cambridge poet, alluding to the founders of our Colleges, speaks of

"Great Edward, with the lilies on his brow  
From haughty Gallia torn ;  
And sad Chatillon on her bridal morn  
That wept her bleeding love, and princely Clare,  
And Anjou's heroine, and the paler rose,  
The rival of her crown and of her woes,  
And either Henry there,—  
The murdered saint and the majestic lord  
That burst the bonds of Rome."

Our founders and minor benefactors were very various. Among them were the Princes and Princesses who founded St. John's, and King's, and Queens', and Trinity College; the noble ladies who founded Clare, and Pembroke, and Sidney Sussex; the ecclesiastics and private gentlemen who founded Peterhouse, and Trinity Hall and Caius. Though no Cambridge college was founded by a canonised saint, yet at King's College, as at Eton,

"Grateful Science still adores  
Her Henry's holy shade."

That saintly King, in choosing arms for his college, designed, by the azure colour of the field, to denote the perpetuity of his foundation; by the three roses argent, his hope that the college might bring forth the choicest flowers; and by the chief, containing portions of the arms of France and England, "to impart something of royal nobility, which might declare the work to be truly regal and renowned." And

in the Lady Margaret, who founded this preachership, we find an example of the noblest womanhood. She lies in Westminster Abbey, in her nun's dress, with her worn face, this descendant of the thrones of France and England, this kinswoman of thirty kings and queens. Bishop Fisher, in his funeral sermon, said that "everyone who knew her loved her, and everything she said or did became her." She told the warring monarchs of Europe that, if they would give up their quarrels and join in a Holy Crusade, she would accompany them as their meaneſt attendant. And what an example have theſe our benefactors ſet to the world of the conſecration of wealth to the cauſe of God, and the ſervice of humanity! They might have devoted their riches to private aggrandiſement, and have died uſeleſs and forgotten. Better counſelled in their munificence, they held that it was a deed more worthy their high vocation, to leave of their earthly goods for the promotion of ſound learning and religious education. Could they have carried aught away with them? "Are there pockets in men's ſhrouds?" Is it no high reward for the right uſe of riches, that the Lady Margaret ſhould have "founded two ſocieties—St. John's and Chriſt's Colleges—which, after having graced the University for more than three centuries with many a diſtinguiſhed name, are ſtill contributing with undiminished efficacy to its reputation, adornment, and uſefulneſs?" May we not, then, claim ſome of our founders, even though uncanoniſed, as being among thoſe "nameleſs ſaints," in whom is the "healing of the world?"

II. When we conſider this fair crown of colleges which encircles our University, if we notice the different poſition of their founders, we are ſtill more ſtruck by the diversity of the religious opinions which marks their riſe. Some of them, like Jeſus College, and Corpus Chriſti, and Trinity Hall, were of monaſtic origin; others ſprang from the Reformation; one at leaſt—Emmanuel College—was cloſely connected with Puritanism. Antagoniſtic in their ſources, how are they united in their reſults! Does not the fact teach us that, in things human, there is no finality? The words "for ever" are mighty words, but they are vain and preſumptuous, and they are not for man to uſe. "Thoſe who truſt in the words 'for ever,'" ſaid a good Lord Chancellor, "and forbear, from timid ſuperſtition, from marching on, will find that there are two other words even more ſad—"too late." The notion of infallibility about things whereon Chriſtians diſagree is no more than an enchanting egotiſm. It is childiſh for us to claim that divine prerogative. Nor are ages any more infallible than individuals. How many of the wiſeſt of our ſons have pointed the leſſon? They have taught us, as the great Biſhop Butler ſo aſſiduously taught, that all things in the choir of heaven, and the furniture of earth are proofs of human ignorance; that what we know is little, what we are ignorant of is immenſe.

Hence, "Non progredi eſt regredi." Except where there is death there muſt be growth; except where there is torpor there muſt be progreſs; except where there is ſtagnancy there muſt be ſtorms.

"Truth," says our wise poet, "is compared in Scripture to a fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition." Changelessness in human affairs means nothing better than a mouldering apathy. The Cambridge man who does not learn at least tolerance for opinions can hardly have looked thoughtfully at "the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged." What are opinions in comparison with action? Opinions vary from age to age and from man to man; conduct, character, holiness, these are infinite in their value, eternal in their permanence.

Does not one of the wisest and most eloquent of the fathers say *πρῶτις ἐπιβασίς θεωρίας*? Did not the great modern religious reformer say, "How far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love?" "Whatever is right, whatever is wrong in this perplexing world, we must be right in doing justly, in loving mercy, in walking humbly with our God; in denying our wills, in ruling our tongues, in softening and sweetening our tempers, in mortifying our lusts, in learning patience, meekness, purity, forgiveness of injuries, and continuance in well-doing."

1. Let us learn, then, from the noble and holy deeds of men whose opinions were antagonistic and very fallible. Are we, for instance, to blacken and denounce the Monasticism which bequeathed to us some of our great foundations? It had its defects, its errors, its degeneracies; but was it not a nursing mother of saints of God? Dominated still by the thoughts of All Saints' Day, may we not ask who were St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Benedict, St. Edmund of Canterbury, St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bonaventura, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Hugh of Aralon, St. Thomas à Kempis, Savanarola, Fra Beato Angelico da Fiesole? Were not all these monks or friars?

From whence went forth St. Patrick, St. Columbia, St. Columbanus, St. Augustine of Canterbury, St. Willibrord, St. Boniface, St. Anskar, to convert Ireland, Scotland, France, England, Germany, Denmark? Was it not from monasteries?

Who gave us Westminster Abbey, and the Cathedrals of Canterbury, Ely, Gloucester, Peterborough, Norwich, Durham, Winchester? Were they not Benedictine monks? Must we not admit, with the great Leibnitz, that "he who is ignorant of, or despises their services has only a narrow and vulgar idea of virtue, and stupidly believes that he has fulfilled all his duties towards God by some habitual practices accomplished with that coldness which excludes zeal and love?"

2. But because we are thus prepared to do justice to the purer elements of Monasticism, must we therefore join in the disloyal provincialism which in a Reformed Church considers it a fine thing to denounce the Reformation? Is it nothing that, here at Cambridge, the Reformation gave us the royal and religious foundation of Trinity College? Was not the England of the Reformation the England of

the new learning, the England of a more splendid individuality, of a larger freedom, of a richer life? the England of Queen Elizabeth and the defeat of the Invincible Armada? the England of Spenser, and Shakespeare, and Raleigh and Hooker, and Bacon? the England, above all, of the open Bible, when "the sweet odour of the returning Gospel embathed men's souls in the fragrancy of Heaven?" Charity may make us shrink in these days from characterising Romish errors as "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits"; or from speaking, as in the Royal Charter of Trinity College, of "the nefarious and enormous abuses of the Roman Papacy," yet we may surely say, as in our Convocation Prayer, that "ad amussim sanctae Reformationis nostrae, errores, corruptelas, et superstitiones olim hic grassantes, Tyrannidemque Papalem merito et serio repudiavimus;" and all surely, even Romanists must see in the Reformation a great and a blessed movement for the purification of the Roman Church itself, as well as in the divine education of the world.

3. Nor need we less rejoice that Puritanism had its share in completing the circle of our foundations. Cambridge will teach us to rise to truer conceptions of history than are to be found in the shallow and worldly scorn which is heaped so often on the Puritans. Among other immortal contributions to the life, the thought, the manners, the morals of England, did not Puritanism give us its high sense of self-respect; its energy of noble individualism; its conviction of the indefeasible religious privileges of man as man; his immediate, independent, unimpeded access to God? Did it not give us its potent allegory in the "Pilgrim's Progress," its pathetic appeal in Baxter's "Saints' Rest;" its glorious epic in Milton's "Paradise Lost" Did it not furnish in such men as Colonel Hutchinson, of Peterhouse, its type of the perfect gentleman, and the humble Christian? Did it not give to modern history its passion for liberty; its sense that "mankind has a nobler destiny than to make the footstool of a few families"; its Pilgrim Fathers, its New England of the Western world? Is it not significant that each phase of change has its own mighty exponent, as though to show us the fundamental majesty of religion under various aspects—Dante, the supreme poet of Catholicism; Shakespeare, giving voice to the Renascence, and to some of the deepest aspects of Reformation truth; Milton, the God-gifted organ-voice of England to be the proud and virginal representative of the loftiest Puritanism? Our opinions are not infallible. They change and must change.

III. But the lesson of a wise and noble tolerance in judging of opinions is closely connected with the duty of loving sympathy for men. To create gaps and chasms in history which separate us from this or that age of our fathers by the discontinuity of fierce aversions, is even a smaller evil than the almost universal lack of charity in speaking or thinking of men. Cambridge, too, like Westminster Abbey, should be "a great temple of silence and reconciliation, where

the discords of twenty generations lie buried." Let us dwell on the greatness and goodness of "famous men, and the fathers who begat us," rather than on their differences and human frailties, and mutual persecutions, and all their "glimmerings and decays." Of all tempers that exist among mankind, surely the vilest, and the most serpentine is that which delights in criticism and depreciation. If sensuality belongs to the beast within us, malice, and envy, and lies belong to the demons. To revel in "the loathsome and lying spirit of defamation, which studies man only in the skeleton, and nature only in ashes," may be the glory of the worldling, but it is the infamy of the Christian. Here, in the quiet light of history, we may read that many, who in their lifetime hated and denounced each other, who embittered each other's brief, sad lives, and would even have burnt one other, were yet the common servants of one dear Lord. "The meek, the just, the pious, the devout," said William Penn, "are all of one religion." How bitter have been the mutual animosities of schools, and parties, and rival churches! Yet here surely we may honour, and reverence, and love alike such Romanists as Fisher and Morton; and such Protestants as Ridley and Latimer; and such Anglicans as Andrewes and Cosin; and such Latitudinarians as Whichcote and Tillotson; may we not see in them all the beauty of holiness, and pray God that He would make us mindful to follow their good examples? How fully may they have learnt beyond these noises,

"That all their earthly creed was not correct,  
That God is not the leader of a sect!"

Once in the French wars, an English frigate meeting another, each mistook the other for a French man-of-war. They fought with each other furiously, they injured each other desparately, in the darkness. Day dawned, and lo! with salutes and bitter weeping, amid the dead and the dying and the shattered debris of the fight, each recognised the English flag flying over the other, and found that they had been injuring their common country, slaying and shattering their friends and brethren. Ah! let us not make the same mistake in the twilight of our earthly opinions.

When we are tempted to shoot out our arrows, even bitter words, against those who differ from us, let us remember how we must weep and blush for such base and ignorant railing when we see them, shining in the light of their Saviour's presence, God's chosen saints before His throne.

IV. And surely it is one of our high privileges here, that, in this place, the great and the good seem to us not only as leaders far above us, but also as brethren and familiar friends. Our loftier brethren they are, yet one with us in blood. Our homes are their homes; we live in their rooms, read the same books which have been in their hands, look out with them on the same moonlit courts at night. "Our walks have been conscious of their soliloquies, our hearths have been consecrated by their presence." We are drawn to them here by

closer links of human sympathy. We mingle with the sweet company of the poets, not as they sat with their garlands and singing robes about them, but in the familiar kindness of daily life. We sit with Cowley by the river side, in the gardens of Trinity, and see George Herbert, not yet disillusioned of the world, brightening its courts with his gracious look. We are with Crashaw at Peterhouse, or Gray at Pembroke, or Wordsworth at St. John's; and at Jesus College we see Coleridge in the splendour of his young genius, "life's fiery pillar moving before him, the dark side not yet turned." We think of the many pure and beautiful friendships here begun. We think of Francis Bacon unfolding to Lancelot Andrewes the germs of his "Instauratio Magna"; of John Pearson mourning for young Edward King, and laying his poetic flower side by side with the immortal wreath of John Milton,

"Upon the laureat hearse where Lycid lies ;"

of that unknown friend who entering the bedroom of William Paley, bluntly denounced him as a fool for his frivolity and idleness, and nerved him for the high effort which saved him for the Church and for the world. Surely you, whose privilege it is in life's happiest morning, before the gathering of those clouds which darken for so many its sombre close, must sometimes think of your predecessors in these courts which they hallowed by pure and noble lives—of Jeremy Taylor, as Bishop Rust describes him "in his pure youth, with his florid and youthful beauty, and sweet and pleasant air, like some young angel newly descended from the visions of glory;" of John Ray, "sicut alter Salomo cui forsans unico secundus;" of Isaac Newton, who, as men said, had the whitest soul they had ever known? Must not these also be counted among Cambridge benefactors? Do we not pay our finest honours to the dead when we follow all that was good in them? Does not that youth best show his gratitude to those who have helped him in the past, who in pureness and kindness strives to hand on to the future the burning torch of knowledge and of holy life?

V. May I for a brief moment speak of one or two such Cambridge men?

1. Beside the western door of Westminster Abbey is a little-noticed slab of marble, to a youth of 21, who died a poor curate at Hoole, and yet who in so short a life had detected the long inequality in the mean motions of Jupiter and Saturn, discovered the orbit of the moon to be an ellipse, determined the motion of the lunar apse, suggested the physical law of its revolutions, and predicted from his own observations the transit of Venus, which he witnessed with a friend on November 24, 1639.\* He observed it in one of the intervals between three full Sunday services. Not for a moment did he neglect his humble parish duties for his high philosophical researches. Putting in the fore front the simple service for rustics in the poor

\* Epitaph of Jeremiah Horrocks in Westminster Abbey.

country church and far below them the discoveries which were to immortalize his youthful name, he wrote in his journal that he could not complete his observations "ad majora avocatus quae ob haec parerga negligi non decuit." Could there be a nobler example of "high humility?" Did he enjoy the beatitude of the poor in spirit—this Cambridge boy-clergyman and boy-philosopher, to whom that modest tablet was not erected till two hundred years after his death, but who died the year before Newton's birth, or might have rivalled great Newton's aetherial self.

2. Once more, think of Milton at Christ's College, as Wordsworth describes him,

" I seem to see him here,  
Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress,  
Bounding before me yet a stripling youth;  
A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks  
Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,  
And conscious step of purity and pride."

Has he not left to all English youth for ever, the highest example of stainless chastity; of honest haughtiness and self-esteem, of the pious and just reverence which a man ought to have for his own person? What high teaching should be more precious to the youth of Cambridge than that "he who would be a true poet ought himself to be a true poem?" that "every free and gentle spirit ought to be born a knight"; that "the glorious privileges of sanctification and adoption make him more sacred than any dedicated altar;" that "he that holds himself in reverence and due esteem, both for the dignity of God's image upon him, and for the price of his redemption which he thinks is visibly marked upon his forehead, thinks himself both a fit person to do the noblest and godliest deeds, and much better worth than to deject and defile with such a debasement and such a pollution, as sin is, himself so highly ransomed and ennobled to a new friendship and filial relation with God; that

"Virtue could deem to do what virtue would  
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon  
Were in the flat sea sunk."

3. Time would fail me were I to attempt to speak of many more—of Isaac Barrow "gazing here on the bright countenance of truth, in the mild and dewy air of delightful studies;" of William Pitt learning here from Thucydides and Demosthenes the lessons which enabled him to stand so proudly at the helm of England when she was labouring in the crimson waves of war; of William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, the liberators of the slave; of Henry Kirk White the student poet, and Henry Martyn, the fervent missionary, the glory of St. John's. And the long line has not failed. I might, among many others, speak of him whom this year took from the Church which his labours had strengthened and adorned; that great Bishop of Durham (followed, thank God, by no less great a Cambridge successor) so strong and gentle, so calm and wise, so learned and generous, whose study lamp, when I was an undergraduate, I used

to see burning in his window, night after night, far on into the small hours, while he was patiently accumulating those vast stores of learning which were to enrich his age, and while, in a youth of noble aims, he was entering upon that path of the just which is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

VI. To be among those who were so great is the glory of the fewest; but the very humblest of us, and the most commonplace may have the higher glory of the good. If yesterday was All Saints' Day, to-day is the day of All Souls. The most ordinary youth who faithfully sets before him this high ideal, may be, in his generation, though utterly unknown, a benefactor to his college hardly less worthy than those benefactors whom we commemorate to-day.

VII. I am bidden to ask your generous gifts to-day for the Barnwell and Chesterton Clergy Fund, in which the late Bishop of Durham took so keen an interest. If any words which I have said to you have touched but one resonant chord in your hearts, I need not pause to urge on you so clear a claim as that of a charity needed to support the struggling churches of Cambridge. You will fulfil the lower duties if I can stir you to the larger aims. And, though I fear to trespass unduly on your attention, bear with me kindly while I speak to you a few last words. Young men of Cambridge, your privileges are also your responsibilities; your blessings involve your duties.

To-day I would say three things: Be fearless; be fair; be true. If you go hence to lead unworthy lives; lives which sell themselves for applause, success, and gain; lives which trim the sail to every veering breeze of popular approval; if you go hence to follow the vulgar standard of the world, whether secular or professedly religious; to plunge into the brawl of parties, to disseminate the lies and feed on the garbage of base gossip, your sorrows will not only be overwhelming, but ignoble and deserved.

If you go hence in the high spirit of duty and of self-sacrifice, to take up the cause of the oppressed, to maintain truth against unrighteous convention, boldly to rebuke vice, to dash your unarmed and bleeding hands against the teeth of lies, whether in the world or in the Church, then you may suffer indeed, and be persecuted, and seem to fail, and men may speak ill of you, and you may be as Christ prophesied, hated, haply, of all men for His Name's sake. Yea, the whole world may turn for you into thorns; and yet, serene in your integrity, you shall still be undaunted, and not all unhappy. I set before you no delusive mirage. The sands of the wilderness scorch the feet, though there lies strewn thereon the manna which is angels' food. You may have to learn by bitter experience how muddy are the depths of human meanness and injustice. Will you be such cravens as for this cause to shrink back? "They say!" What say they? let them say. Be fearless: and next be fair to your fellow-men. Oh seek the truth; love truth; tell truth, and shame the devil. The fewest are just and candid, and fair in their estimates. Men are too careless to aim at justice; too little charitable to desire it.

The common, vulgar, all but universal way, is to snatch up, for party or private purposes, the first base or blunt weapon which secret envy or malicious smartness puts in easy reach. Men enjoy the fancied superiority implied in their mean repetition of some venomous jibe. All they care to know of some men is some smart epigram, to repeat which will make them seem clever and superior. Have not many even of you been guilty of this cheap injustice? Have your voices never been heard among those which bellow in the shade to swell the chorus of injustice or of hate? Does not our own Verulam tell us that that which bringeth lies into favour is a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself; so that to all the vulgar, and they are many, "the mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure?" Oh, if there be anything noble or generous in your youth, train yourselves even now to be just, to be fair to all men. I linger—forgive me, because I am speaking to the trustees of posterity: but take from another, if you will not from me, this last advice—Be true.

Live thus, in the light of the example of Christ your Saviour, and by the aid of that Holy Spirit which is never denied to them that ask Him, and then, whatever befalls you, from the storm without, you shall ever be able to turn to the sunshine within. Ye shall possess your souls; ye shall have yourselves for a better possession and an abiding. And what will any calamities have been to you, any more than to all these saints of God in whom we rejoiced yesterday, or whom we commemorate to-day, when—knowing even as also ye are known, accepted in the Beloved, your sins washed away in His blood, the dross of all human frailties purged from the fine gold of souls perfected in Him—the solemn agony of all life's suffering for His sake is over; and, with a rush of tears, happier than earth's most passionate bliss, you hear at last the words which—settling all cavils and all controversies for ever—shall repay ten thousand times every effort made humbly and earnestly in the cause of God and of His Church, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

## THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

*A Sermon preached at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, by the*

REV. PROFESSOR PAGET, D.D.

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I have written unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."—I JOHN ii. 12-14.

1. WHEREVER we look in the wide scene of human life we seem to

mark two elements or factors working out the will of God. The ceaseless drama of history, however great or humble may be the stage on which we see it played, constantly betrays in its course the presence of two forces, animating the action, meeting in its critical points. Let us try, speaking broadly, to distinguish them. On the one hand there is the force of such convictions, affections, antipathies, associations, habits of mind as belong to those who have already given their distinctive impress to a period which is now passing away. It is not that their work, or even the greater part of their work, is done ; it well may be that "they shall bring forth more fruit in their age ;" and perhaps in the years that remain to them their influence may be, if they will have it so, stronger than it ever has been before. But the stage of life which bears their stamp, and in which their characteristic powers told most freely and evidently, is receding further and further into the past : and to their eyes, at all events, the retrospect of their life looks more than the prospect in this world. Then on the other hand there is the force of their convictions or intentions whose distinctive work lies for the most part before them, or is but just beginning. They are looking forward to a time in which they shall win out of the new conditions of their age a new triumph because of the truth : a time which shall be characterised by the ideas that seem to them the noblest and most just, even as the past was either characterised or redeemed by the truth their fathers saw ; a time in which they shall find their scope, achieve their task, say what they have to say, and dedicate what they have to spend. For with them there is, or should be, the gladness and confidence of morning ; and with whatever thankfulness, and reverence, and admiration they may look back to the victories of the past, the victories which have won for them the very ground on which they stand, still they know that it is only in sham fights that men can simply mimic former victories ; that it is on other fields, amidst other difficulties, and, it may be, with other weapons that their battle must be fought, and their service rendered in the cause of God and of His truth.

Such are, I think, roughly stated, the two great tendencies or currents of influence which are always telling in the course of human life. Still more roughly it might be said that they are the tendencies generally characteristic of the old and of the young : the elements which they respectively contribute to the development of history. The distinction is such as one can often see, real and deep, though not marked by any sharp, precise line. Differences of training and temperament often take the place of difference in age. The boundary is indefinite, and there is constant interaction over it ; for the scenes of history succeed one another like dissolving views, and the lineaments and colours of that which is passing away can be traced long after that which is coming in has begun to gather strength and clearness. Hard outlines are seldom true to nature ; yet, when we stand back a little and try to get a broad view, we can scarcely doubt, I think, that two such currents are acting on the affairs of men ; and as we

watch the surging tide of change, whether in the leaping waves or in the multitude of swirling eddies, we see that human history is for the most part *τόπος ἐπιθάλασσος*, a place where two seas meet.

II. Surely, then, if it be true that at point after point in the world's course, in its preparation for the second coming of Christ, there are these two forces to be felt telling on the way things take : if the two groups of characters and convictions which I have tried to describe are always present in that silent and unconscious conference of mind with mind, where the drift of human thought and opinion is decided—then we may be confident that there must always be a work for each to do, a gift for each to bring, towards the fulfilment of the will of God. He maketh the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to praise Him ; so long as it is day we must work the works of God, each according to the powers he has gained, the light that he has seen, the experience that has trained his judgment and disciplined his will. So long as it is day each must do all he can of that which he can do best, and it may be that no man knows when he can do most, when the gift that it is his to bring may tell most for the cause of God and for the good of man. But we can be sure that there is a true part for us all to bear at every stage of life, whether we be young or old : a contribution that we have to make, being what and where we are, to the welfare of the world : an offering which God, who has placed it in our power, looks to us to bring. And we can see, I think, how large a part of the worth and happiness of a man's work, both in his earlier and in his later years, depends on his bearing towards that tide of life, that drift of feeling and conviction which is not his own. The relation between the generation that is passing away and that which is coming on is always full alike of difficulties and of opportunities on both sides ; and there is a deep pathos in the frequency with which the opportunities are missed and the difficulties aggravated. Let us keep our minds back from any thought of judging where the blame should fall ; let us only think how pitiful it is when those who might enrich and gladden and invigorate each other's lives (each bringing what the other lacks, each thankfully welcoming from the other's hand what lay beyond his own reach), instead of this stand off and look askance with mutual distrust or fear, or even scorn, letting themselves fall back, after only a half-hearted effort towards sympathy, into that despondency or impatience or suspicion, which blocks with an ever-increasing barrier all the ways of mutual understanding and influence. We may recall the great disasters which in bygone ages have been thus wrought : but to some extent we may see the same dreary misconception and misuse of the relation between old and young going on in many fields of life. We may see it in the history of a nation ; or of the Church ; it has been prominent among the causes of religious discord and divisions ; and I venture to think that it has sometimes cost much waste of time and strength in our academic and collegiate life. And often surely the same tragedy is going on in the life of many a home ;

and nowhere perhaps is it more pathetically played; as father and son, or mother and daughter grow conscious, sometimes with silent pain and sometimes with scarcely veiled resentment, of an ever-widening severance, a perpetual and almost irrevocable ebbing of sympathy and trust. I think that there can hardly be a sadder thought to realise than that; for all the while the years are passing by so swiftly, and the help that each needs from the other, the joy that each might minister to the other, is wasting away unused, unsought, until it is hopelessly too late to seek it; wasting like water that sinks into the desert sand, while but a few yards off the traveller lies down despairingly to die of thirst. Is it not true, brethren, that there is no relation of life in which men have greater need of help and guidance and self-discipline than in this of which I have been trying to speak: the relation between that which is passing away and that which is coming forward; between that which the young are apt to call old-fashioned and that which the old are apt to call new-fangled? It is difficult indeed. But the grace of God is given for the hallowing, the illumination of every relation of life; and it is the very work of grace to transform difficulties into opportunities. So let us try to see how this difficulty is touched by the light of the Christian faith.

III. In the passage which I read for my text, St. John is, as has been well shown, halting for a moment and calling vividly before his mind the characters and positions of those to whom he writes. He is about to close one part of his letter with a great appeal for unworldliness; and he stays to consider on what grounds he can presume a readiness for that appeal in those to whom he sends it. Twice do they seem to stand before his gaze; each time he sees them first as one group, then as parted into two: each time he marks first a warrant for his confidence that is common to them all, and then the special warrant that he has for making his appeal to the older among them, and to the younger. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake:"—there is his first ground of hope about them all, both old and young; but in either of those two classes he marks a distinctive note that promises an answer to his words. "I write unto you, fathers, because ye know Him that is from the beginning." "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one." Again he seems to see them standing all together, old and young, alike his little ones in Christ: "I have written unto you," he says, changing the tense, it may be, as he resumes his writing after some interruption. "I have written unto you, little ones, because ye know the Father," and then, just as before, he turns first to the old and afterwards to the young: he repeats to each the peculiar claim on which before he had rested his appeal: "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know Him that is from the beginning:" "I have written unto you, young men, because"—and here he lingers on his former words, and ampli-

fies them, as though with something like that special love and eagerness with which a parish priest thinks of those who are giving to their Lord the full vigour of their early manhood—"because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one."

Let us try briefly to gather up the teaching of this passage: necessarily foregoing the consideration of many points of very suggestive detail. And first let us mark the thoughts that rise in St. John's mind as he regards separately the elder and the younger among those to whom he is appealing.

(a) Each class, then, stands before the Apostle bearing its distinctive gift, characterised by the peculiar power which lifts the standard of its hope and effort, and binds it to hear and to obey Christ's bidding. There is first the matured discernment and experience, the steady penetration of the old. They "know Him that is from the beginning." Faith has made them clear-sighted, and experience has deepened and confirmed their intuition; they have learnt what it is that is really going forward under all the apparent confusion and disorder of the world: and Who it is that through the strife and din ever has been, ever is carrying on the work of love: and knowing Him they have found the clue to life, and grown surer of its meaning, and less likely to be led aside from the true aim of effort and self-concentration. Others may be impatient of the twilight, others may lose heart when hopes prove false, or may sacrifice the greater to the nearer object: but he who knows Him that is from the beginning will endure as seeing the Invisible:

"He holds on firmly to some thread of life—  
(It is the life to lead perforce).  
Which runs across some vast distracting orb  
Of glory on either side that meagre thread,  
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet—  
The spiritual life around the earthly life:  
The law of that is known to him as this,  
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here."

And then, on the other hand, in the young there is the glad enthusiasm of consecrated strength, the glow of victory and enterprise. "They are strong, and the word of God abideth in them, and they have overcome the evil one." The natural vigour of their age is lifted up and hallowed and assured in the warfare to which Christ has called them: they will not "faint and be weary," for they "renew their strength" in abiding communion with the Eternal Word: and in the thrilling sense of conquest they are sure that greater is He that is in them than he that is in the world. The fresh and bracing air of triumph fills their hearts with hope; they rejoice in this, that the spirits of evil are subject unto them: they are confident of mastery in Christ's name "over all the power of the enemy."

(b) Thus, then, in the prerogative graces of the old and of the

young, St. John sees ground for making his appeal with a good hope. He looks to that which God the Holy Ghost has made of their age and of their youth, and he is not afraid to bid them to further ventures for Christ's sake. As they stand apart he has been insisting on their distinctive powers; each has that which will give penetration and definiteness to the appeal as it falls upon his ears; each has something of his own, something in his own experience and consciousness which quickens a distinct receptive faculty, something which will wake and stir at the Apostle's words. But beyond and above these separate gifts there are the two great master truths to which he points as dominant alike in the experience of all; the truths that, high and steadfast as the arch of heaven, span from end to end the Christian life: those strong supreme convictions which are the light and strength of every age, availing most of all, wherever they are ruling a man's heart, to guard him from the things which make us slow to hear God's voice, and dull to see His way in the various relations of this earth. "Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake," and "Ye know the Father." These are the all-controlling, all-transforming truths for every period and every task in life; in their light the Christian course begins, they give the strength of perseverance, they sustain the glow of eventide; many things change around a man as he advances in his journey through this world, but as he draws near its close, weary and travel-stained, he lifts his eyes to those same heights on which they rested as he set out in the freshness of the morning. No change has told on them, only it may be, by the divine mercy, he sees a little clearer now the forgiveness of sins and the Fatherhood of God. And thus it is that when he speaks of these St. John makes no distinction between old and young; these are truths whose power he presumes in all who are Christ's; truths in whose ever-remembered presence all must stand and work together, as forgiven and as children.

IV. The forgiveness of sins: the Fatherhood of God. Can it be, brethren, that in the constant recollection, the advancing realization of these truths, we may find the help we need in that frequent difficulty of which we have been thinking? Is it thus that we may learn to do our true work in every stage of life, and to be wise and just and generous towards those whom the broad difference of age or temperament may tempt us, if we are careless or wilful, to think irreconcilably and impenetrably unlike ourselves? It is so easy, on either side, to acquiesce in such differences as insuperable; it is so hard at once to bear one's own witness to the truth of which one's self is sure, and yet to persevere in courageous generosity and trustfulness towards those whose thoughts and ways belong to another generation than one's own. It may be that from those two great truths, in whose light St. John forgets the difference of age and youth, some help may come; help, perhaps, only the deeper and surer for coming indirectly; for telling rather on ourselves than on our difficulties. In our own hearts, or in the history of the past, we may discover some of the faults that

darken counsel and make men prone to misunderstand and to suspect each other; such faults as pride, impatience, wilfulness, despondency; or, issuing more or less from these, that fear of being beaten which makes men withhold the opposition which they should have offered; the dread of being wounded or of seeming slighted; the exaggeration of fragments till they seem the whole truth: the disinclination to keep judgment in suspense: the failure to allow for that which may be hidden in the unexplored: the love of symmetry or paradox or epigram: reluctance or prevarication in acknowledging one's blunders. Surely we may be stronger to resist such things as these if we realize the seriousness and urgency that is disclosed in human life since Christ was crucified that man might be forgiven; and the strength of hope that should abound in those who know the Fatherhood of God. "Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake:" the words recall us to our deepest need, our uttermost unworthiness: but they recall us also to the Cross: and there falls on life an awe in which the thoughts of self-esteem and self-assertion, of vanity and petulance, die down for very shame. "Ye know the Father:" infinite in power and in wisdom and in goodness: ever watching over this world, and working out in many ways the will of love:—how then is it possible to be faint-hearted or despondent, or to doubt that in the coming years His glory shall appear as in the ages that are past? Let us fasten our thoughts upon the Cross of Christ and lift our hearts to our Father which is in heaven; and we may find it easier with reverence and self-distrust simply to do what work we can, to be patient under the discipline of incompleteness and obscurity, and to hope that much which we think strange and unpromising, much even which, so far as we can judge, we feel bound in duty to resist, may have its hidden purpose and value in His sight. And as the evening of life falls on us, He will guard us from the true sadness of old age: from

" The inward change  
On mind and will and feelings wrought;  
The narrowing of affection's range,  
The stiffness that impedes the thought;  
The lapse of joy from less to less,  
The daily deepening loneliness."

He will save us from all this: and, if it please Him, give us grace to say our *Nunc Dimittis* with unfading hope: thankful to believe that our eyes have seen His salvation, and that He who has shown us, unworthy as we are, some fragment of His work, may grant to those who shall come after us to see His glory.

SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL  
LESSON.\*

Lesson for November 23rd. Luke xxiii. 33-47. Golden Text, Isaiah liii. 6.

THE THREE CROSSES.

Martyrs have generally been led together to the stake, and have enjoyed in their dying moments the sweet society of the righteous. When Ridley and Latimer were led to the stake they spoke brave words of cheer to each other. Ridley said to his comrade, "Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flames or else strengthen us to abide it." And when the lighted faggot was laid down at Ridley's feet, Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out." And so with words of comfort and prayer they left the world. But the glorious Son of Man was conducted to the cross in company with two criminals. Thus Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled, "He was numbered with the transgressors." No men who ever lived died in such remarkable circumstances as these two thieves. On that central cross there hung One who was dying for the sins of the world. On one side of Him hung a man dying in sin—a cold, hard-hearted wretch; on the other hand a sinner, dying in faith and in hope.

Let us take, first of all, he who is here mentioned first. "One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Christ, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us." This man, dying because of his crimes, has no melting in him, no relenting; and in the very act of dying rails at his Redeemer. And thus he died, stout, and hard, and firm, in the face of the atoning Redeemer! We can die also, just as hard and firm in the face of the Redeemer. Sin, that terrible, stubborn thing, refuses to know this Christ and resists Him.

Look at the other cross. "The other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done nothing amiss." Notice that this good robber, this *bonus latro*, was convinced of his sin and ill-desert "justly." A story tells us that his name was Dysmas, and that he once saved the Virgin Mary and her Child from his comrades during their flight into Egypt. He may have heard Jesus teaching in former days. "Doubtless the cross aided his penitence; on the *soft* couch conversion is rare." After his grand acquittal of Jesus he prays, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." John Calvin says about this dying thief, that "never since the world began was there a more remarkable instance of faith." How difficult it was to say "Lord" then; yet, in all the dimness and confusion, his eyes were opened to see that this crucified One was a King! What did Jesus say? "To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." A great French preacher, Bossuet, says: "'To-day!' what promptitude! 'With me!' what company! 'In Paradise!' what repose!"

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

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## THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

*A Sermon preached in Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, on Sunday, May 18th, 1890, by*

THE REV. A. F. KIRKPATRICK, B.D., REGIUS PROFESSOR  
OF HEBREW.

"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."—St. Matthew v. 17.

VERY full of wondering thought must those ten days have been during which the Apostles tarried in Jerusalem, waiting for "the promise of the Father." The Ascension had removed the visible Presence of their Master from their midst; Pentecost had not yet endowed them with the power by which they were to interpret His work, and bear witness to His name even "unto the uttermost part of the earth." They were alone; but He had promised not to leave them orphans: the Resurrection had taught them to trust Him, and they could return from the Mount of Olives "with great joy," the joy of thankfulness and the joy of hope.

"Those days were spent in the temple, blessing God" (St. Luke xxiv. 53), and in unanimous, persistent prayer (*ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ*.—Acts i. 14); and must there not have been mingled with those prayers many meditations and questionings of retrospect and prospect as they reviewed the completed life and work of the Lord, and contemplated the world-wide commission which He had entrusted to them?

Among those meditations must not the great question of the relation of the new order to the old, of the Gospel to the Law, of Christ to Moses and the Prophets, have held a foremost place? We know that the interpretation of the things that were written in all the Scriptures concerning Himself was one of the first subjects of the teaching of the risen Lord (St. Luke xxiv. 25 ff 44 ff); we know that the manifold fulfilment of those Scriptures was the first subject of the preaching of the newly-illuminated Apostles (Acts ii.—iv.), and is it not a natural inference that the same subject, of vital importance at

that critical moment, occupied their minds in that solemn interval of reflexion and anticipation?

That question has not lost its importance or its interest: and it does not seem inappropriate that to-day, when we stand, in a manner, between the old order and the new, we should once again turn our thoughts to the subject of "The Old Testament in the Christian Church," and re-examine the fundamental principle which determines and regulates its use, its interpretation, and its authority.

For there is a vague sense of uneasiness abroad, a kind of suspicion that the Old Testament is on its way to become a discredited, and therefore disused book. "A theory," we are told, "is already propounded both in private and in a naive, simple way in sermons, that the Old Testament is of no particular moment, all that we need being the New Testament, which has been defended by our valiant apologists and expounded by our admirable interpreters."

"Quite a dangerous neglect of the Old Testament," writes another, "that unique literary monument of the past world, has characterised Christian thinking all too long. I have even heard of a prominent Nonconformist minister so preferring the New Testament to the Old in reading lessons, as to use in public no part of the Old Testament except the Psalms. And even where the Old Testament has not been ignored, too frequently its poetry has been spiritualised beyond recognition, and its prose has been wholly removed from its historical setting; whilst as for its magnificent prophecy, it has been rendered unintelligible by crude extravagance."

Such neglect of the Old Testament, if statements like these are warranted, is an unfaithfulness to the teaching of Christ and His Apostles which can be nothing less than disastrous, my brethren, both to the growth and establishment of our own spiritual life, and to the building up of the Christian Church.

Partly it may be due to the feeling—in itself true and right—that the New Testament is the charter of the Christian Church, and demands our first and most careful attention; that its teaching is at once more spiritual and more readily intelligible; while the Old Testament is vast and vague and obscure of interpretation.

But dare we neglect a whole region of our inheritance because some pains are needed to explore it and labour in it before we can reap its harvest? Can we be content with the ground which seems—but only seems—to be ready to yield fruit of itself, without our effort?

Again, the neglect may be due to a reaction—in itself a natural and healthy reaction—from that unlimited license of interpretation, which has converted the Old Testament into something little better than a field for the exercise of a curious ingenuity, and has pointed the contemptuous sarcasm of the epigrammatist. Men have invented their theories of the double, the triple, the quadruple sense of Holy Scripture, nay, they have lost themselves in a whole "forest of senses;" they have imposed their own arbitrary meanings on the sacred text, instead of striving patiently and prayerfully so to train and educate

the ears of their understanding, that they might hear the voice of God speaking to them through its words.

But misuse cannot justify disuse.

Mainly, however, just now the neglect of the Old Testament is, no doubt, due to a vague feeling that the so-called "higher criticism" has raised a host of questions about the date and composition and character of the books of the Old Testament, which must be settled before we can use it again with any confidence; or which, it is supposed, have been already settled, or are on the high road to being settled, in such a way that the Old Testament must be thrown aside as a discredited book.

Such an attitude is inconsistent with the courage which is born of faith; it is a distrust of the promise that the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration those ancient Scriptures were written, is still present to guide us into all the truth; it is a neglect of the apostolic precept to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good;" and if in every age "the removing of those things that are shaken" must needs be a process of trial, its issue is the firmer establishment of "those things which are not shaken."

Under these circumstances then, it is well for us to re-examine the fundamental principle which our Lord Himself lays down, and which the Apostles throughout assume, respecting the interpretation and authority of the Old Testament. There are two distinct methods, distinct but complementary and not contradictory, in which the Old Testament may be studied. We may follow it along the line of its growth and development, or we may look back upon it as a completed whole.

We may trace the gradual progress of God's revelation of Himself and His purposes; we may enquire what special elements each successive age, each inspired writer, each turn of Israel's fortunes, contributed to the growing sum of revealed truth; we may observe the patient and manifold preparation for that central event of the world's history, to which all prophetically pointed forward. Three Sundays ago you listened to a masterly sketch, drawn with a few firm strokes, of the varied characteristics of the Old Testament from this point of view. Need I say that this method of study is indispensable? We must take each volume in the "Divine library," and investigate its origin and its character and its historical significance for its own age, with a treatment which will be bold because it is loving, thorough because the subject is worthy of it.

But this method of study is not by itself enough. There is a danger of limiting ourselves to literary problems; of confining our attention to the primary and original meaning of the books for the times in which they were written; of considering processes rather than results. We may be like a geologist visiting a cathedral, who is too much interested in determining the quarries from which its stones were brought to let the completed whole take his spirit with its message of beauty and devotion.

For in all that manifold variety of the Old Testament there is an essential unity. It was one God who spake in many fragments and in many fashions through Law, and History, and Prophecy, and Psalm: and that message is of one origin and piece with the New Testament, for He is the same who "at the end of these days spoke to us in His Son," and the Spirit of that Son was already working in those prophets of the ancient time (1 Pet. i. 11). There is a continuity and a unity, not only between the several books which form the two Testaments, but between the Testaments themselves. The many "Books" (*Biblia*, plur.) of the two Testaments form but the one "Bible" (*Biblia*, sing.).

The Old Testament leads us up to Christ, and Christ takes it and puts it back into our hands as a completed whole. He bids us study it as "fulfilled in Him, and "put ourselves to school with every part of it." The old lesson-book is not to be thrown away or kept as an archæological curiosity: it is to be re-studied in this fresh light of further knowledge: and it is of this specifically Christian interpretation and use of the Old Testament that I wish to speak to-day.

"Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets." There were some, it seems, who expected the Messiah to abrogate the ancient law, to abolish the old institutions, and to promulgate a wholly new constitution for His kingdom. There have been those within and without the Christian Church, who have virtually or explicitly maintained that He did so, in the teeth of His own emphatic assertion, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."

"To fulfil." Do we not often limit the idea of "fulfilment" to what are called the typical and prophetic parts of the Old Testament, and regard the fulfilment as just the counterpart of the type or prediction, as the reality of which the reflexion only had hitherto been visible? But "fulfilment" is far more than this. It is the completion of what was before imperfect; it is the realisation of what was shadowy; it is the development of what was rudimentary; it is the union and reconciliation of what was isolated and disconnected; it is the full growth from the antecedent germ. Christ came to disengage eternal truths from the limited forms in which they had hitherto been expressed; and He bids us look back upon those limited forms in the light of His teaching and work, and discern the eternal truths embodied in them. The Old Testament was not as it were the scaffolding necessary for the erection of the Christian Church, needing to be taken down in order that the full symmetry and beauty of the building may be seen, and only to be had recourse to from time to time when repairs are needed. It is an integral part of the structure. "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. ii. 20).

How could it be otherwise? we ask with reverence. It was God who spake "through the prophets," it is God who speaks "in a Son." Every divine word must be of eternal import. God's truth does not

vary : there is no mutability of purpose in the eternal present of the divine mind. As in creation, so in revelation,

“ Was, and is, and will be, are but is ;

\* \* \* But we that are not all,

As parts can see but parts, now this, now that,

And live perforce from thought to thought. . . .

Human words, even inspired words, can express no more than some infinitesimal fragments of the infinite mind of God. They must necessarily circumscribe and limit the infinite. But any worthy conception of inspiration must include at least this, that the inspired words so correspond to the truth which they reveal that they are capable of disclosing more and more of it as men are able to receive it.

Man can only be educated by degrees. The childhood of the race, like the childhood of the individual, must be taught as it could bear it. But the lessons of childhood grow with advancing years. Words cannot continue to mean for us only what they meant at first. They must expand with the expanding mind.

God's great Book of Nature remains unchanged ; but it speaks to men with different voices in successive ages. A Copernicus, a Newton, a Darwin arises, and points out new laws which co-ordinate and explain phenomena, and Nature's lessons can be read more clearly. The words of the poet, the works of the painter, contain and teach more of truth and beauty than poet or painter knew or intended themselves, for the intuition of genius perceives truth unconsciously, and records it for those who come after to interpret.

So the old words of Revelation, because they were the reflexion of the divine mind and will, contained a larger meaning than was at once perceptible ; and Christ has come, and “ fulfilled ” them, infused new force and meaning into them, shewn us how they express more of the “ grace and truth ” which He came to bring in all its fulness. It is not that the words “ palter with us in a double sense : ” it is that the Word of God is “ living and energetic,” possessed, in virtue of its essential nature, of a springing and germinant vitality.

We are familiar with the idea of the “ fulfilment ” of prophecy, though that idea is often unduly limited. Prophecy is not “ inverted history : ” it was not a reflexion beforehand by which men could foreknow what was to come : it was but as the seed out of which plant and flower and fruit were to be developed. Prophecy kept men's eyes fixed upon the future ; it created a sense of need, it stirred deep and earnest longings ; it stimulated hope. And then the fulfilment gathered into one unimagined reality all the various lines of thought and longing and hope, in a completeness far transcending all anticipation. The fulfilment could not have been conjectured from the prophecy, but it answers to it, and shews the working of the one divine purpose, unhasting, unresting, to its final goal of man's redemption. “ Fulfilment ” does not exhaust prophecy. It interprets it, and gathers up its scattered elements into a new

combination, possessing fresh and abiding and ever increasing significance.

But "fulfilment" is not limited to prophecy commonly so-called. When Christ said that He came to "fulfil the law and the prophets," He doubtless meant to include the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures. For all those Scriptures, as the utterance of divine truth through human instruments, awaited a fulfilment, and it is as interpreted by that fulfilment that they are commended to the study of the Christian Church. Their permanent function is not "simply to point to Jesus Christ as the Saviour of both Jew and Gentile": they are still the living source of instruction for us. But if we would understand the principle of their interpretation, we must study the illustrations which Christ Himself gives of what He meant by "fulfilling" the law and the prophets. In them we see how He pierces through the outward form to the divine truth of which the outward form was but the vehicle, how He discloses and affirms the inward spirit, how He raises all to the higher level of His own teaching.

Had the law forbidden murder? The prohibition rests ultimately on the principle of mutual love, which must exclude even the spirit of hatred.

Had the law condemned adultery? That is but one limited application of the principle of purity, which must govern not merely action but thought.

Had the law prohibited perjury? Fidelity to an oath is but one small part of the universal duty of truth between man and man.

Had the law enforced a rough equality of justice by way of restraining revenge? The true restraint of revenge is to be found in the conquest of evil by self-sacrifice.

Had the law allowed a limitation of love to countrymen and friends? Human love is the reflexion of divine love; divine love is universal, and human love must henceforth be universal too.

Thus in each case the underlying principle is seized and enforced, and carried to its full development. The imperfect morality of an earlier age is left behind: the limited rules which were all that men could bear at first, but which were designed to raise them to higher things, are extended and expanded: a new and generous spirit is infused into the outward form.

Mark the emphatic assertion of the universality of this fulfilment. "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." There is no distinction of ceremonial and moral law; no classification of precepts according to their supposed importance or insignificance. All is the reflexion of divine truth; all has its appointed purpose; all is to find its fulfilment. We may not be able to see the significance of every element, any more than the naturalist can trace the use of every physical organ, but the general drift and purpose of the whole are clear.

And for the Christian Church this is the canon of interpretation for

the Old Testament. Very simple yet very comprehensive it is, this principle of the spirit of Christ entering into the old order and "fulfilling" it; yet how strangely Christians in almost all ages have ignored it. What scandals, nay, what monstrous crimes, would have been avoided had it but been realised that the Christian Church can never find authority in the Old Testament for any act that is at variance with the spirit of the Gospel.

When we turn from our Lord's teaching to that of His Apostles', we find everywhere that the Old Testament is accepted as the natural inheritance of the Christian Church; we find the old words used with all the fresh intensity of meaning with which the new revelation has shown them to be instinct.

The life and death of Christ have given a deeper insight into the holiness of God; a new standard and motive for the holiness which He desires in man. Yet the Christian's call to holiness can still be enforced by an appeal to the authority of the old scriptures. "It is written, ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 16).

Old promises can still be urged as the ground for trustful contentedness (Heb. xiii. 5, 6); but do they not come with all the added force of Christ's own teaching and example?

The old exhortation which bids us see the loving hand of God in the discipline of chastisement is still valid, but it receives new illumination from the revelation of the fatherhood of God in Christ (Heb. xii. 5, 6). Old warnings of the certain punishment which awaits a contemptuous and wilful disregard of God's working in the world, are still significant, and they come with augmented emphasis under new circumstances (Acts xiii. 40, 41).

Old laws of divine government are still in force, but it is in the higher sphere of spiritual experience that they find their application (1 Cor. i. 19; iii. 19, 20).

Words which of old affirmed the principle of stability for the life of nations expand and convey a spiritual meaning and express the essential principle of the inner life (1 Rom. 17; Gal. iii. 11).

But what need is there to multiply instances? The whole Old Testament is regarded as transfigured, deepened, spiritualised, not by the arbitrary imposition upon its words of a sense which they do not bear, but because in the clearer light of Christ's "fulfilment" of that old dispensation, they can and must convey to us more of that divine truth which at best they can but partially and imperfectly express.

This principle of "fulfilment" is a far reaching and fruitful principle. Apply it to the teaching, of which the Old Testament is full, concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment, "the cardinal elements in the determination of man's spiritual state," concerning which the Advocate comes to convict the world (St. John xvi. 8). The old words cannot for us have simply their "original" sense; they must speak with new depth and solemnity to those who have seen the condemnation of sin, and the standard of righteousness, and the declaration of judgment

set forth in the life and death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. iii. 25, 26).

Those glowing words in which the Psalmists express their calm confidence in the loving care of God, their passionate yearning for a closer approach to His presence, their wonderful sense that man's only true happiness consists in fellowship with Him, though athwart it all lies the dark shadow of the breach of that communion by death—a shadow which in moments of exultant hopefulness seems to be dispersed by a ray of the coming light, only to return again with all its chilling horror—those marvellous outbursts of praise, in which all creation is joined in one jubilant harmony of adoration; do they not all flash and sparkle for us with a new glory in the light of Christ's revelation of the Father? since "the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true;" and that dark shadow of death has been for ever banished since He "has overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life."

Christ puts the Old Testament into the hands of His Church and bids her interpret and use it as "fulfilled" in Him. The truth is simple and familiar, and yet it has seemed worth while to offer it once more for your thoughts to-day; because, as it seems to me, it is just the truth which will enable us to look with calmness and patience upon those critical investigations of the Old Testament which are causing pain and anxiety to many who love God's Holy Word. It is independent of those investigations; it rises above them into a higher sphere: it is not antagonistic to them, nor they to it. Critical research must be fearlessly, honestly, and patiently pursued; we must be prepared loyally to accept its proved results when they have stood the test or searching cross-examination. "We may hope for the time," wrote our great teacher twenty-six years ago, and the words are not less needed now than then, "when the student of Holy Scripture will look for what it contains, and not measure its contents by preconceived notions of the manner and form in which its lessons must have been given." But critical research cannot shake or overthrow the certainty that our Lord bids us study the Old Testament for our spiritual instruction, as "fulfilled" in Him: interpreted, spiritualised and endowed with living force and power in the light of the revelation which He came to be and to manifest.

This view of the Old Testament excludes the opposite dangers of abuse and neglect.

I. It secures us from the danger of confounding the Testaments, and supposing, as some have done, that all Christian doctrine is contained already in the Old Testament. We shall not appeal to the Old Testament for the proof of distinctively Christian doctrines, though the light reflected on it shows that much which could not have been intelligible at the time was implicitly contained in the inspired message. On the other hand, we shall not suppose that anything unchristian can possibly be sanctioned by the authority of the Old Testament. That is not our danger now; but it has been an

error fruitful of evils in past ages. It is, we are told, even now a danger among new converts from heathenism.

II. It guards us from the danger of neglecting the Old Testament. We dare not disregard what Christ has "fulfilled," and stamped with His approval; what His Apostles, learning from Him, bid us use, and set us the example of using. We read the Old Testament as "fulfilled" in Christ, and just because it is "fulfilled" we know that it still awaits fulfilment, and we are strengthened to believe that it will yet receive that fulfilment; that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away" from it, "till all things be accomplished." Is there anything so animating to Christian hope as the study of the Old Testament in the light of the New?

These things, brethren, are not a vain thing for us, they are our life. "Wherewithal," asked the Psalmist of old, "shall a young man cleanse his way?" and the answer is still valid, "Even by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." The true aim of every life must be that service of God which includes and consecrates the service of man; and it is the purpose of Holy Scripture, in all its manifold variety and fulness, so to educate you, "that the man of God may be complete, completely furnished unto every good work."

## KEPT FROM THE EVIL ONE.

*A Sermon preached in the Wesleyan Centenary Chapel, Boston, November 16, 1890, before the Mayor and Corporation.*

BY REV. THOMAS PUDDICOMBE.

"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them from the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one."—John xvii. 15.

This chapter is the true Lord's prayer, the prayer which Jesus offered, and which we are permitted to hear. It is the Holy of Holies of the Gospel, in which the glory of God is revealed to the eye of faith more perfectly than to Moses on Sinai, or to priest in the ancient temple. The glory of God—it is the inspiring thought of the whole prayer and binds it into unity. In the first words the keynote is struck: "Father, the hour is come: glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee." Throughout His course on earth, now regarded as ended, the Son had glorified the Father by sinless obedience. He now prayed to be restored to His native glory, "the glory that I had with Thee before the world was," that the Father's glory might be more clearly seen among men, and that He Himself might possess increased power for spreading the heavenly kingdom. The few men who stood round Him were, so far, the chief result of

the Saviour's work. For these, therefore, He prayed. First, that they might be kept in the midst of an unfriendly world, and then, that they might be consecrated and fitted for their great mission of bringing the world to believe in the Father and the Son. Then, as His thought ranged through the coming ages, His desire went out for the whole body of believers in all the generations, and He asked that they all might be one in the Father and the Son. Finally, all is crowned with the calm and confident claim, as of assured triumph: "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

Right in the heart of all, the very core of the prayer, lies the twice repeated petition: "Keep them in Thy name . . . keep them from the evil one." Keep them in their simple faith in the Son whom Thou hast sent, and in the Father whom He has revealed. Keep them from the snares, and deceits, and allurements of that spirit of evil, who like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

Jesus might well pray for them. In a few short days He must leave them. They would be as sheep in the midst of wolves. Defenceless and unskilled, how would they do when He was gone? When He was gone! But, why not go too? Would He not take them with Him, take them right away from a world so hard and unsympathetic, so antagonistic, which cherished such dark and murderous thoughts? Might they not adorn His triumphal entry into the heavenly places, and there be exhibited as trophies of His work among men? No. It could not be. They were not ready to go. Like their Captain, they must be perfected by the stern discipline of suffering. And the world could not spare them, much as it hated them. They were the hope of the future. The success of the Redeemer's kingdom was bound up with them. So reading, it may be, their half-formed thoughts, the Saviour said: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them from the world."

With what tender solicitude does He add: "But that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one." Such a prayer could not have been unavailing. Dwell for a moment, then, on their after history. Interpreted by the event, what does this being "kept from the evil one" mean? Were these men to be free from the ills to which all are liable? Were they to be exempt from bodily weakness and sickness? to know nothing of false words, hatred, loss of goods, persecution, violent and cruel deaths? These are the things men call evils; things to be dreaded, to be avoided at all costs. But those first disciples of Jesus Christ were not kept from these. Persecution and suffering came upon them more than upon most men. They rejoiced in it. They counted it their honour to be sharers of that cup of which their Master drank so deeply.

Wherein then were they kept? They were kept in their loyalty to Jesus. Kept in the confidence that He came forth from the Father. Kept in obedience to His will. Kept in fellowship with the

unseen Father through the Spirit. Kept, by the same Spirit, in power to do right; in power to live not according to the customs of this world, not seeking its rewards, not courting its good opinion, but as children of the unseen, whose real treasure is above, whose real life is hid with Christ in God.

Leaving those for whom it was first offered, let us now think what bearing this prayer has on our own life and conduct. We have been slow to receive its teaching. For it is hard to get a thought into men's minds, that is to get them to act upon it, when they do not wish to receive it. To borrow an illustration from a great writer, take the words of our Lord to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world." Jesus declined to use force, declared that His kingdom was of another order from the kingdoms of this world, with their glittering pomp resting on force of arms. So it stands written, and so during all these long centuries it has stood written: "My kingdom is not of this world." The Church of Christ was unwilling to receive this, even acted as though the very opposite were true. When the opportunity presented itself it seized the sceptre which was dropping from the enfeebled hand of the temporal sovereign, mounted the throne of all the Cæsars, ruled by force, became a great world power, a kingdom of this world. Yet there, unaltered, were Christ's words; an eye, it has been said, silently regarding the Church. Have we even yet received them, with our pride in numbers, in wealth, in stately buildings, in respectability, learning, prestige? While we thus rest in all that is visible, can we be said to have understood, to have taken to our hearts, the saying of Jesus: "My kingdom is not of this world?" So difficult it has proved to get this truth really believed and acted out.

So with this prayer of Jesus: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them from the world." The followers of Jesus have not understood it, have not believed it. They have thought, only by getting away from this wicked world can we be safe. They have tried this plan, by anticipation condemned in these words, they have fully and completely tested it. It has failed, and the truth of our Lord's words has been confirmed by a sad and bitter experience. In the early Christian ages men began to betake themselves to desert places, to caves and woods, that they might escape the temptations of common life, and give themselves uninterruptedly to communion with heaven. Then the monastic system arose, and that false idea of the religious life. The "religious life" was not possible to all, but only to those who retired from the world, and within the holy calm of monastery or convent, exclusively followed the exercises of devotion, or went forth to perform deeds of charity. Such was the accepted meaning of the "religious life" during the Middle Ages. How terrible was the penalty exacted for going contrary to the words of our Lord! That which was to have been a refuge from evil, the home of all that was pure and heavenly, a witness for righteousness, a hand stretched out to help the fallen, became a byword, a reproach, a sink of iniquity,

corrupt, abominable, not to be tolerated by the world itself. The condemnation of the monastic system is written large upon the page of history, and it is written in letters of fire!

Well, it may be said, what has all this to do with us? These are not the thoughts we are thinking; we have no wish to enter either a convent or a monastery. Probably not, yet how common among us is this longing to get away from the world. How ready we are to put our failure to live a true, faithful, earnest, Christian life upon our surroundings. The man of many affairs, whilst admitting that he has grown worldly, unspiritual, careless about the life eternal, thinks it enough to throw the blame upon his calling. Has he not daily to go out into the world, to be in it, to mix with people of the world, to do as they do, if he would earn his bread? The mother sometimes feels that much that is noble, spiritual, holy in her nature is being trampled in the dust by the hurrying feet of crowding duties and thronging cares. But she hastily banishes the thought and concludes it must be so! The youth is half-conscious that there is a higher, purer, truer life than the one he is leading; that he has not fulfilled the vows with which he set out; that he has not been faithful to the holy light that has sometimes shone within; that he has not obeyed the voice which he has heard, which singled him out, and called him by his name. But how could he, in such unhelpful circumstances, thrown into the midst of such companionships? Some are ready to blame the "spirit of the age." Their loss of faith, their lack of fellowship with the divine, their powerlessness in the face of temptation—all this is due to the spirit of inquiry which is abroad, and which demands that everything should be verified. Musical even in despair they sigh for the past, for the ages of faith—as though faith was ever anything but a victory over the visible, a grasping of the unseen:

Oh, had I lived in that great day,  
 How had its glory new  
 Filled earth and heaven, and caught away  
 My ravished spirit too!

No thoughts that to the world belong,  
 Had stood against the wave  
 Of love, which set so deep and strong  
 From Christ's then open grave!

In the light, then, of this almost universal restless longing to get away from the world, at least, from *our* world, how instructive is the prayer of our Lord: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them from the world"—"I do not ask special favour for My disciples, that they should dwell in a seclusion which no temptation can penetrate." Not in that direction are we to look for deliverance. "But that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one." This is the heart of the prayer. This is the Master's intense desire concerning His own. And what He so intensely desired for us should be our

law and guide. Will you look at it and see what it has to say to us?

“Keep them from the evil one.” *Then the disciple of Jesus is in danger.* Christ does not make light of the dangers which beset His disciples in this world. He had met the tempter and defeated him, but He knew the craft and cunning with which he lies in wait to deceive, and this prayer is a cry of warning. St. Paul does not underrate our peril: “For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” The noble and the good of former days unite in declaring that this world is to the servant of Christ an enemy’s country. There is the god of this world, the powers of this world, the men of this world, the things of this world—all in their degree fight against the man who believes in Jesus. As an old writer has said, this world is like a chess-board, you cannot make a move in any direction but the devil instantly sets out some creature to attack you. Let us then wake up and not cherish a false security. Did you fancy that things were somewhat changed now? That the world had lost something of its old hatred to Christ and His servants? That the devil himself was less alert, less full of malice and evil, perhaps after all not so black as he has been painted? Oh, be not deceived! Your daily papers will tell you that he is a liar and murderer still as he has ever been. And do not imagine that he tolerates the religion of Jesus Christ any more now than formerly. A religion which means outward decency merely, a kind of bowing homage to some form of Christianity, with such a religion he may but little interfere. But a religion which means believing that Jesus came forth from the Father, that He has made known the Father’s love, and that by His death He has reconciled us to God, against this he brings to bear his subtlest attack, his most fiery darts, his most mighty engines of destruction.

“Holy Father keep,” do Thou keep them.—*Then the disciple cannot keep himself.* The Saviour did not turn to those who stood round Him and bind them by strong vows to remain faithful when He was gone. He knew their weakness, and He looked away from them to God’s strength. It is well for us to know our weakness. We cannot keep ourselves. We have no strength to meet the attack, and no skill to evade it. How will you do? Will you resolve sternly to resist when next you are tempted? Such resolves have been made, as in a soul’s agony they have been made, and they have gone down before the fierce onslaught like lead before the blow-pipe, or they have yielded to the gentle wooings and insinuations of the evil one. Be not too confident, that is, not self-confident. Peter’s brave challenge to man or devil to make him desert his Master was but the prelude to his fall. Put away all confidence in yourself and listen again.

“Father . . . keep them.” *Then the disciple may be kept.* Here is

everything to encourage. The Father whom the Saviour has made known, and whose word we have received, and in whom through Christ is our trust and confidence, He can keep us. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." "He is able to keep you from falling." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them." "If God be for us who can be against us?" The servant of the Lord can live anywhere where God puts him, and flourish there. He is not a hothouse plant, but will grow in any climate, and is an evergreen. The brightest characters have shone out in the most unlikely times and places. The glory of God is shown in keeping His people. Amid abounding sin He has kept them pure. In days of blasphemy and general disaffection He has kept them faithful. Always and everywhere it is His glory to keep them.

Only let us remember for whom it was Christ thus prayed. It was for those who received Him, for those who believed that He came forth from the Father, for those who kept the Father's word. Yes, let us keep the Father's word, hiding it in our heart, obeying it in our life, and we have nothing to fear from man or devil, the Father will keep us. And what is the Father's word? "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." Do you accept Him? Do you? All is summed up in this: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" All is summed up there. It is the difference between faith and unbelief, between living for the world and living to do the will of the Father, between the future being dark and the future bright with a glorious hope. Do you believe in Christ? If so, then all is well, the prayer of Christ shelters you. If not—what will you do? May God the Holy Spirit reveal Him to every heart, and help each to cry, "Lord, I believe—help Thou my unbelief."

#### SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for November 30th. Luke xxiv. 1-12. Golden Text, 1 Cor. xv. 20.*

#### JESUS RISEN.

The Bible tells us of many remarkable mornings. But what were all the great mornings in history compared with the first Easter morning when the Miracle of miracles was wrought! It happened very early in the morning, so early that "it was yet dark." You would have wondered what could have taken three women out of their homes at that early hour; but yet you need not wonder, for

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

they were dear friends of Jesus Christ's. They had loved Him when He was living, and when they saw Him nailed to the cross, and left there to die by inches, it almost broke their hearts. They were last at the cross and first at the tomb. While the men were scattered, all the women were firm and faithful. These women inherited the promise, "Them that honour Me, I will honour," for while this morning is remembered, they will be.

Let us look at them on their journey to the tomb. They were coming to put sweet spices round about where His body lay—but they suddenly remembered a difficulty. They did not know about the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, or their difficulty would have been, "How shall we pass the guards?" But they knew about the heavy stone in the mouth of the cave, and they looked at each other and said, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" What could three weak women do with a great stone? Was the case hopeless, and did they turn back? No, love never turns back. It drew them like an irresistible magnet, and they still held on, "faint, but pursuing." So they went on to the very grave, and found to their wonder that the stone was already rolled away. All through that cold, dark night the Roman guard had watched the tomb by the light of a large fire, and when morning drew near, as they looked to the east for the first signs of the coming day, suddenly an earthquake shook the ground. An angel with shining raiment rolled away the stone and sat down on it to wait. When he turned his face towards them it shone like lightning, and the soldiers fell down and lay with their faces on the ground. When they looked up again, the grave was empty, for Jesus had risen from the grave, to live for evermore.

These women wanted to show their love for Jesus, but they imagined that a great stone lay in their way. So there are always difficulties in the way of doing good. When you want to do anything wrong the road is oh! so easy; but as soon as you want to do something right and good, then a steep hill starts up before you—the Hill Difficulty. What are you to do? Turn and go back? You must just go on, and you will get over the highest hill, and will find the heaviest stone cleared out of the way when you get up to it. A boy once almost quite lost heart about his arithmetic book. He looked at it in the middle, and then at the end, and then he shut the book and looked to see how thick it was, and he thought it was hopeless. But he mastered it all by just facing his difficulty and going straight over it one step at a time.

Remember that Jesus is not dead, but living, and that He has all power. You can always depend on Him to help you when you want to do good.

## A BALL, A DOLL, AND A MAN.

(From the *Pansy*.)

One day in Chautauqua, N. Y., Professor Drummond, of Scotland, told us this true story about a ball, and a doll, and a man. A great steamer had started from Liverpool for New York. Among the passengers was a little boy and his sister. One day the boy lost his ball overboard; he rushed to the captain, begging him to stop the ship and get it. The captain laughed, and told him it would never do to stop a steamship for the sake of a ball. The boy argued a little, and grumbled a good deal, and told his sister that he believed the reason the captain did not stop his ship was because he could not; he believed it was wound up some way, so it would have to keep going until it run down, or else he would never have left a great splendid rubber ball like that in the ocean.

Two days afterwards the little girl's dolly fell overboard. She ran crying to the captain to beg him to stop the steamer. "That won't do any good," her brother shouted to her; "he can't stop it; don't you know about my ball?"

But the little girl made her pitiful prayer to the captain, who ran to the engine-room, peeped down, and saw the dolly within reach. "Wait a minute," he said to the little girl, and the ship went steadily on its way; but in a few minutes the captain came back with the dolly in his arms, all dripping with salt water, but safe.

Only the next day there went a cry over the deck of that steamer, "Man overboard!" Instantly a bell rang in the engine-room, short sharp orders were given and obeyed, and the great ship stood still in mid-ocean, while the life-boat was launched and slipped out after the drowning man. Then there was one very much astonished boy on board! As soon as the steamer reached New York, or as soon afterwards as possible, the boy received a handsome new ball from the captain, with a note expressing his regret that he could not accommodate his passenger and stop the ship to get the one left in the ocean.

I wonder if you could think why Professor Drummond told this story?

"To please the children," one little girl said when I asked her, which was a good answer, but he had even a better reason than that; and he pleased the grown people too. He told it to illustrate different ways in which God answers our prayers. The captain thought it not best to stop his great ship for the sake of a ball, yet the boy received from him in due time a newer and better one than he had lost. It was not necessary to stop the ship in order to answer the little girl's prayer; she begged him to do it, but that was because she did not understand his power to save the dolly without that; the thing she prayed for she received, though not in the way she asked.

Yet the moment came when—because a human life was in peril—even the great engine had to be silenced, and the course of the steamer changed, because the captain had power to do it.

I wonder how many Pansies who read this will understand how it applies to prayer? Please each sit down next Sunday in some quiet corner and think out the "How?"

Then if you feel like it, write and tell me about it. Tell mother and father any way.

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ONE PENNY.

## THE ETERNAL LOVE OF JESUS.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. JOHN ROBERTSON, OF EDINBURGH.

*Preached in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, on Sunday morning,  
November 23rd, 1890.*

"Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."—Revelation i. 5, 6.

JOHN is in Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ—blessed reason for being anywhere. His feet are on the silver sands of the Ægean Sea, and it is the hour when thought is born. The sunset is casting the long shadows of the headland into the ocean, and John in his exile is taking a walk with his God in the cool of the evening. And his heart takes its flight to Ephesus where his flock is; and from Ephesus takes its flight to heaven where his Saviour is. And what was that? Was it the wind lifting up the sand of the sea-shore and playing with it as with an Eolian harp? or was it the moaning of the waves round yonder cliffs? or was it the scream of yon sea-bird? or was it the echo of the revelry in the fishing village of Patmos, for a wedding was to-night?

It is the echo of the heavenly harping that John hears. There come struggling by the stars into this dull, foggy, sin-laden atmosphere four bars of the divinest music that he ever heard. And he catches them, for he has got an ear, John, for the heavenly harpings. He catches the lilt, and going home he bends over the growing manuscript of Revelation, and with his stylus he puts down what he heard for his own practising, and for yours and mine. This is what they are singing on high, and what we are training for here. "Can you play the fiddle, John?" said the minister to the northern boy. "I dinna ken, sir; I never tried," said he. "Ah, my boy, if you never tried that difficult instrument you may just as well say you cannot do it." So, so, if you never tried to hum over on earth the bars of this song that they sing in heaven, you cannot do it, that is all. You cannot take your place in heaven's choir without the practising. The Conductor will look after that. He is not to have

His name and fame bespattered through you. You will have to get it up on earth; you will have to practise it, and have all your mistakes over before the Conductor taps with his baton for the orchestra of heaven to take their places and sing to His glory.

That is what we are all doing down here; you and I—blessed be God—are humming in our closets, are humming in our places of business, in our offices, this glorious song. And there are some of us that have already caught the highest, purest notes of it, and the Lord has said, "Make way for this man. Have you got a place in the front rank, ye heavenly singers, for this saint that caught the high note?" He is ready for the promotion, and he has gone home. Or it is some poor bedridden saint. In her trouble and pain she caught it, and it was reported to the Lord that there was a fine voice on earth, that a fine singer had been discovered in the furnace of time. And the Lord said, "Send for her, I have got a place for her if she has got a voice that can sing perfectly, as ye say, this song. Make way." And they are all coming home from the streets of time, they are all taking their places with confirmed singing powers, with all their mistakes over; and how they sing it on high!

Suppose we try this morning to hum over the bars, and may God help us with the harps of our souls to sing it sincerely, if not purely; to sing it willingly, if not holily. But the Lord help us to sing it purely, and willingly, and holily, for His name's sake.

The first bar is this: "Unto Him that loved us." Can you sing that? This is, in the first place, the source of salvation for eternity. "Unto Him that loved us." When God set out for His journey of redemption He must have looked round the shelves of glory for what to take, as some of you starting on a journey, pack your bag or portmanteau. Certain things you take with you for the journey. So with God. There are the thunders of almighty power. Is He to take these? No. He became man—poor, feeble man, and the thunders slept till He came back. Is He to take the glory above the sun's strength? Is He to take the robe of uncreated light? No. He strips Him of the visible Godhead. He lays aside the uncreated shekinah manifestation, but He takes something—something that heaven can give and that earth needs. He dips His almighty heart in love. He cannot do without that. The hope-springs are dried up, He will not get love enough, so if He is to bring love He must get it before He starts. And so in the counsels of eternity the chalice of His heart is filled with love, love which is salvation. And so He comes with the only qualification for His great work that He sees needful—love in His heart.

Now earth had seen love a million times before, since Adam had whispered the story of his heart's adoration into the ear of Eve. A million times this earth had witnessed a heart beating with love. And what about that? Wherein is Christ's love different from the love that the sun had looked down upon for a million times a million? Love had been reckoned with before.

It was in Leith, and the sailor had never had this feeling prior to a voyage before ; he never had this chill presentiment of coming disaster creep over his heart ; and he bids his wife and bairns good-bye up there in the attic, and he comes down to the first landing-place. It won't do ; back again for another kiss, for another twining of his eldest born round his neck, for another look into the dear eyes. He never did this before ; he bids them farewell again. Down to the street this time, out among the gas-lamps, but he does not get round the corner ; he must go back. And the wife hears his step coming up the stairs, and a chill for the first time creeps into her heart. She never saw him like this before. He could take his farewell and go singing down the stairs to the sea ; but not so to-day. And he says, "Oh, wife, I have just come back to get a kiss of the bairnies. I feel very strange bidding you good-bye ; I never felt like this before." And so he goes through it again, and the little ones twine their arms round his neck, and they say, "Good-bye, papa ; bring some nice things from the foreign land to your little boy and your little girl ; good-bye !" And at last he gets on board, and the boat rocks at the pier of Leith, and at last takes her way. And the wind rises and the waves put on their white caps and roll, and they climb up to see what the big vessel is like, and they signal to the great heaving deep to prepare for the struggle, and a leak starts, and the vessel, reeling and rocking before the tempest, goes with a shudder to the deep. And they take from the ooze and mud of that foreign shore the limp, lifeless body, and they part the yellow hair of the Scottish sailor from his white brow, and they bury him on the foreign shore. The widow, with her sad weeds upon her, is wearing herself to the very bone to rear the sailor's lads and lasses in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

That is human love. What is it when death interferes with it ? Why, man, you have to leave your loved ones, you have to leave the sunshine of your home, you have to go down to the deep, you have to list to the flapping of the sail and the clanking of the oars in the rowlocks, you are going away from home, and hope is going away from you. Alas for love, if thou wert all and naught beyond ! When Christ came with His heart of love, there was a grim chuckle in hell. "We have seen love in the human heart before," and the grim angel of death fluttered his black wings, and said, "I'll settle it. Has the strange mysterious man only brought love with Him ? I have annihilated love a million times, and I will do it for Him also." And the men surrounded Him, and the traitor's kiss was planted on His cheek, and the priests got hold of Him, and the soldiers took Him away, and they put Him up on the cross. And true, His head did bow in death, and His pale lips say, "It is finished." And true, they did bring Him from the cross, a limp, lifeless body. The arms hung by the side, and the head fell on the breast of the bearer. They put Him into a grave and rolled a great stone there, and they went about, saying, "He is dead." O love in the Saviour's heart, thou art blotted

out after all! Death has interfered with love. And on the way to Emmaus there are two disciples. They are very downhearted this morning. They are saying one to the other, "What an awful thing! We trusted it had been He who should have redeemed Israel, and to-day is the third day, and He is in the grave." Was He dead? The Divine sleeper stirs in His sleep. A tremor of returning life runs through His frame. He rises and calmly puts aside the cerements of the grave, and on the Sabbath morning He is risen. Death has lost its power, and with the love in Christ's heart death has been defeated. "O grave, where is thy sting?" Where is it? Christ hath brought immortality to light. And it is that love that you and I need this morning, the love that death has no power over, a deathless love, and love that is to exist and be strong when yonder sun flickers out into eternal midnight. It is that love that my longing soul craves for, and it is that love that is in Christ's heart. It is a deathless love; it is a love that you can allow yourselves to sail in. Human love!—why, we dare only creep from headland to headland; we cannot launch out into the deep, for death is nigh. How many go forth in the morning that never come back at night! But in Christ's love you can let your soul go. You can sail into the mighty ocean assured that there is no limit, that there is no further shore to it, that there are no shoals to tear the ribs of the vessel of your heart asunder. The deathless love of Christ, can you sing it? "Unto Him that loved us" with a deathless love.

Ay, but there is a worse thing than death about love. He had breathed his pledges of devotion into a trusting ear, and had brought a blush to one cheek, and he had vowed to be true. He is going away to America: he is to make his fortune in that big land, and as soon as he gets a nest cosily and comfortably prepared he is to send for her. "Never fear, I'll be true." And he did set sail, and he did get on, and eyes—not fairer than the eyes he had left behind—of an American girl were turned on him. He saw not her, but her purse, and he saw the chance of promotion. He would wed, not her, but the old father who had the business. And so the letters homeward descended very rapidly from "Yours devotedly and eternally, and for ever and ever and ever," at last, to "Yours truly." And what was it in that morning paper, as she turned the leaves thereof, made the lassie fall as a huddled heap at the feet of her mother? It is this: "On such and such a date, in such and such a church in New York, So-and-so to So-and-so." Poor lassie! go down to the grave now with a broken heart. The parents can hear the drip, drip, drip of the heart's blood to the last. He is faithless, his promises are false. And that is human love. You cannot ride the water on it, as we say in the north; you cannot trust very much. Blessed are ye if you have got a love in the human heart that you can trust fully and unreservedly. How often have vows been like the shifting winds? How often have promises written in blood disappeared as if written in water on the sea-shore?

And so, Christ, Thou hast brought many promises—that is true; and many pledges of undying affection—that is true. But the world—this grim, heartless world—has heard vows before, has received promises and pledges before. O Christ, what about Thine? “God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent.” “Hath He said and shall He not do it? Hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?” Is there any other attraction on the other side that Christ hath loved beyond my poor, sinful heart? Are not the fields of glory blooming with a thousand flowers that would be proud to be worn on Thy breast? Wilt Thou be faithful on high, O Christ? Thou didst come to me a poor sinner, and Thou didst cast Thy mantle of love over me, and in the silence Thou didst breathe affection to my heart, and Thou hast won it. Art Thou to be faithful? Is not Christ yearning and longing for the day when He will welcome you to glory? Christ’s humiliation is not yet ended. His service of heart is not yet by. He is sad and weary with longing for the day when He will present me, faultless, before the presence of His Father with exceeding joy. He is faithful, beloved. Never fear. He can get no brighter eyes meeting His than your dim, bleak, reek-filled eyes on earth. The Lord has loved you with an everlasting love. A mother may forget, yet not I, He says; a lover may be false, yet not I. I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Can you sing it yet? Is it not a glorious love—deathless, faithful, abiding, unchanging amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds? The love of Christ will outlive the sun; the love of Christ will be strong in mighty current when the stars, the last of them, pull a veil over their faces and die. The love of Christ is the one eternal, abiding, almighty force in the universe. Can you sing it? “Unto Him that loved us,” with a deathless, undying, unchanging, abiding, eternal love, to Him “be glory and dominion for ever and for ever.”

Then, in the second place, we have in these four bars of heavenly music, the fact of salvation in time. The first was the source of salvation in eternity; the second is the fact of salvation in time. The stream runs from the hillside to the valley, and it gets deep, and wide, and broad, and the masts of the navy of a commercial city are reflected in its fair bosom. So with the love of God. It came rushing out of the pearly gates a mighty torrent, and it came down to the valley and expanded there into a broad lake, and the love has become a fact in time. And the way it has become a fact is this: The love has washed us in the precious blood of Christ—strange effect of love, the washing; strange result of the affection of the Lord. The washing—you, mother, can understand it. Your little son has been out all the summer day. He has had splendid fun. Oh, what enjoyment! And he has stayed out till the shadows have fallen, and he is very tired, tired even of amusement. He comes into the house where love is, and what does love do? Oh, he is very sleepy; just let him go to bed. “Mother, I am awfully sleepy; I am not for any supper;

indeed, I am so tired." But love has something to say, love has some action to go through, before the dirty little boy can get between the clean sheets. Love draws out the bath into the middle of the floor, and love puts the towels there, and love puts the soap there, and love catches hold of the little fellow's collar, and in spite of grumbling, in spite of the little fellow's bad temper—for he is sleepy, God help him—plunges him into the bath, and love takes him out spluttering, but clean.

So with God. Oh, how foul we were, how the streets of time had left their defilement on our spirit. What must love do in the first place? "Oh," says one, "love will just please wink and take us, bad as we are, into heaven; love will open wide the pearly gates, and let us all as we are, unwashed, foul, unclean, into heaven." Would love do such a thing? How can a soul in all its vileness get into heaven without washing? That is the problem that God had to set to solve. How can man be just with God? How can the sinful soul get into heaven without washing? Nay, nay. There must be ablu-tion, there must be washing, and what is to do it? A thousand rivers—have they water enough to cleanse a sinful heart? What is necessary? What did God find and feel to be necessary? What is that awful tinge that reddens the waves of the laver of regeneration? What is this mysterious chemical, Thou, God, art putting there? Why this agony of Thy beloved Son? Why the open side, why the pierced hands and feet, why the blood? "Without shedding of blood there is no remission," says God. Do you think that God would have shed the precious blood of His Son had it not been necessary? Was it superfluous? Was it a mere superfluous reddening of the laver? It was necessary, God saw it.

"What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

And that is what love did. If you turn to the Revised Version, you will see that the wise men of the West have wisely put the word "loosed" for "washing." It is the same idea, but more vigorously expressed. Sometimes when the dirt sticks you take pumice stone, or something that will rub or scrape. And so the Greek word shows that God's washing is so effectual, the blood of Jesus is so effectual in its cleansing, that it is more like cutting-off, it is more like excising and putting aside. The word is a strong word—loosing, cutting us out from our sins by His precious blood. And in this washing the very skin is gone. You must be clean if you have gone to the quick, and if God's washing has rubbed the very skin off it is all right. There is no room for more defilement. The Greek word then is, "Unto Him that looseth us from our sins with His own blood." When you English folk hunted away our Bruce, you were not content

with your own great, grand, glorious plains, you would have liked our mountainous little country, but you did not get it! Bruce stood up, and you went after him, and you put his own bloodhounds on his track, and with nostrils bent to the ground they followed their royal master, unaware that they were tracking him to his death; and you came after, and you urged the hounds. Bruce heard the distant baying of his own beloved pack behind him, and the attendants said, "We are done for, the English have unleashed the hounds, and they are on your trail, and they will betray your hiding-place." "Stop a bit," says Bruce, "it's all right." There is a stream flowing through the forest, and he goes to it, and he plunges into the stream and wades three bowshots up, and then into the depths of the forest. The hounds come up to the bank, tracking step by step their beloved master. But no further. "Urge them on and see your hounds over that little brook, and get up the trail." They cannot. You may urge them, and you may whip them, you may lash them, you may spear them, but they are done for. The trail is broken. The stream has carried the scent of the king far downward. And Bruce, one day soon after, puts the crown of Scotland on his own brow. So my sins, urged by the devil, came behind me a yelling pack. I felt their hot breath as I fled, and they vowed to have me. But a stream, not glassy and clear, but red with the blood of the Son of God, came up to my feet. I plunged in, through God's grace, and I can stand on the other bank and defy every hell-hound of my past to touch me. That is it. The scent is lost, blessed be God. The trail of the past—where is it? It is broken in the blood of Christ.

"I plunged and am cleansed, I plunged and am free;  
I plunged in the crimson tide flowing for me.  
From sin and uncleanness exulting I stand!  
And point to the prints of the nails in His hand.  
Oh, sing of His mighty love,  
Sing of His mighty love,  
Sing of His mighty love,  
Mighty to save."

Can you sing it, the glorious second part of this glorious song?

Then the third bar, you notice, is this—the effect of salvation on man. "And hath made us kings." We crouch, a slave to the cross, but we give three leaps for it, and tread to heaven with the tramp of a king. The cross gives dignity, the cross gives royalty, to the same heart. Christ crowns us when the heart accepts Him. We are kings, and we have a country. We are not like John Lackland, for a king must have a kingdom. We are kings from the cross, and what is our kingdom? It is our heart, our own soul, that is our kingdom. "I thought God promised us a land," lightly said a doubting, unbelieving soldier to his comrade, as they crossed the Jordan; "I thought this was the promised land, our land, and here we are preparing for battle. Why are we not going into the vine-

yards to eat and drink our fill? Why are we in armour—why has the word come to up and at them? This is our land. Are we not over the Jordan?" They had, as soon as they were at the other side of the river, to take sword in hand, and from point to point, from city to city, on to Jerusalem, they had to conquer their own land. So with your heart. It is the promised land, it is the possessed land, but you have to fight for it. You have, as a conqueror, to make the plains of your own soul reverberate with your tread. Joshua said of the five kings, "Just put them into the cave alive, and don't waste time over them," and they put them into the cave of Makkedah, and pursued the foe till sunset. After they had wiped the sweat from their brow and the blood from their swords, they came back. "Now," says Joshua—and it is Jesus, the Old Testament Jesus in holy symbol that we see—"Now," says Joshua, "roll away the stone of the place," and they rolled away the stone. "Bring the five kings out," he says, and they come out. How crest-fallen, how slave-like, how puny they look! "Now," says he to the captains of the host, "come near and put your feet on the neck of those kings." And they came near and put their feet on the necks of these kings. So says Jesus to me when He forgives me, when He washes me in His precious blood, when He looses me from my sinful past. Old habits, come out! old sins, passions, lusts, come out! "Put your feet on the necks of them," says Christ, and I, by the grace of God, put my feet on old habits, old sins, old passions, and am king over my own heart. "And hath made us kings."

What is the last? for it is time you were at your dinner. You will dislike the sermon if I keep you too long, and I have one head more. The last bar is the effect of salvation on God. "And hath made us priests unto God and to His Father." So God is not done with priests? That is true, but the priests no more enter the house of the new testament, because the glory of the Lord is filling the Lord's house. We have no use for a priest with his robes, and yet God says that salvation brings to him a priesthood, a service acceptable. What is that? It is not the sacrifice. The smoke has curled away into the blue air of Palestine for ever. The red flame has run along the caves of the Temple and it is in ruins. What has the priest to do with God? All through the night in that holy house there were relays of priests to keep up continuously the song of praise to Him whose shekinah is in there behind the quivering curtains. And all through the night the priests in solemn tone would sing to God—

"Thy foot He'll not let slide, nor will  
He slumber that thee keeps;  
Behold, He that keeps Israel,  
He slumbers not nor sleeps."

And it is this part of the priest's service that God accepts and needs

to-day. It is the profession of adoration, it is the song of praise from my heart that He cannot get from the harps of heaven. It is this that you and I should just tell Him more, that we love Him. You know they say a Scotchman never tells his wife he loves her till he is just dying. Well, it is a pity, a great pity. In this world he would be happier and she would be happier, if he would tell his love into the ear while it can hear.

He was a rough fellow, Jack, the terror of the Aberdeenshire village. A ne'er-do-weel, in every scrape he, always in trouble, always in hot water, the terror of the whole country-side, rough, swearing Jack. His mother's heart was nigh broken over it, and she was a widow, and he her only son. And he slipped out one night and took ship at Aberdeen without telling his mother or anybody. He went away to Australia, and into the bush went he, lived a rough godless life as a gold-digger, and at last one day he is a millionaire, a rich man, unspeakably rich those nuggets have made him. And a great rush of emotion comes to his heart. "I'll away home; I'll make mother proud of her boy now. I will buy the estate beside the village, and I'll take dear mother. How she has borne with me! How she will be proud when I come in the carriage for her and bring her to the mansion, and say, 'These broad lands are mine and thine, dear mother.'" And all the way home he was pacing the deck, and he was saying what a surprise it would be to the old body! How proud she would be, and how the villagers would wonder that the ne'er-do-weel had turned out pretty well after all. Who is this that comes staggering into the peat firelight of the old kitchen in this neighbouring farmhouse? What drunken, staggering man reels his way to a chair at the fire? The assembled household look in wonder upon him. He left a beardless young boy; here is a brown-tanned foreigner. "Don't you know me? Where's mother?" Approaching the village, he had come in sight of that saddest of all sights, and that is too frequent in our beloved Scotland—two bare gables, as if in bitter mockery, appealing to a dumb God on high, who witnesses evictions and yet is silent. The fields and the little croft have been added to the big farm. "Mother! I'll take you on the morrow and show you where mother is." And he came to the churchyard by the river, and his friend said, "Just in yonder corner, Jack; you see where the lilies are; we planted them for your sake—just there." And the friend heard this before he turned away, where angels would fear to tread—the strong man flung himself on the grass and said, "O mother! I did love you, mother!" But mother was away. "Jack, you lost the chance, man. She pined visibly for her boy. There was no letter. No; you were too late, Jack." And the friend catches sometimes a sigh, a far-away look in the face, and he is silent with amazement to know that Jack is back to the green grave, back to the lilies, is back to the dear mother who never heard from her wilful boy. "O mother, I did love you." And yet he did lose her.

So the Lord Jesus, beloved, is longing for you and me, in time, while we have the opportunity. His ear is bent down; He is longing for you and me to say—

“My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,  
For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign;  
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou:  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I will trust Thee in life, I will trust Thee in death;  
I will praise Thee as long as Thou givest me breath.  
And I'll say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow:  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.”

Go home to your own room and kneel down, beloved, and say in this holy priesthood: “Lord Jesus, I adore Thee, I love Thee; to Thee be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

#### PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

O God, we hold up this morning unto Thee the pastor of this great flock, who bears in his body for their sakes the marks of the Lord Jesus. And now that he has fainted by the way, through the excessive labour of this place, through the strain on body, on mind, and on spirit, the Lord grant that the rest may do him great good, that the freedom from the visible strain of this work may bring to him rest of body and mind, that so nature may recover itself. O our God, we know that his thoughts are with his people to-day, and we would make it our united prayer that Thou wouldst heal and restore him speedily, that Thou wouldst, as we pray, make him well. The Lord put away all pain just at this moment, and the Lord clear away all clouds on the spirit that physical prostration must bring. The Lord make him glad and happy in his spirit this morning; bless him, and bring him back vigorous and strong.

And now, Lord, wilt Thou be with us to-day? Unless Thou dost speak to us we would rather be dumb. Unless we get the message whispered to our hearts, O Lord, let us not speak. But is it not Thy house, this? is it not Thy day, this? is it not Thy book, this? is it not Thine ordinance, this, the preaching of the word? By whatever lips, Thou wilt bless; and we lean back on that promise. Though the great preacher be away, the great preacher's greater Christ is here. Make manifest Thy power in weakness. Make manifest how it is the Holy Ghost that after 'all takes the word and sends it home to heart and conscience with demonstration and irresistible power.

We thank Thee for the great fact on which we rest our souls amid our shifting feelings. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us

all. He hath made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled unto God by His Son, much more shall we be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement.

We praise Thee for the pardon of all our sins for the sake of Christ Jesus. We praise Thee that Thou hast said, "Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and say unto her she hath received of the Lord's hand double—double for all her sins." There is a great margin in Thy work, O Christ, there is an infinite merit in it. It was God's death for man's sin, so we need never fear that our accounts will bring into difficulty the bank of grace. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. So let Thy people realise their privileges this morning. Redeemed not with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, let us this morning get a fresh sense of pardon, get a fresh sense of the forgiveness of our sins. Oh that it were with me as in days past, is the cry of many of us. Oh for the new love again, for the fresh enthusiasm of our young love! The Lord baptise us all into fresh faith and new love through this service, for His name's sake. Amen.

## GOD'S MANIFOLD MERCIES.

BY REV. J. C. M'CLINTOCK.

*Psalm cvii.* 1-9.

THE whole Psalm must be read and considered in order to reach a proper conception of the theme which inspired the pen of the writer, and produced what Dr. Lowth terms "an idyl" surpassing the masterpieces of Theocritus, Virgil, or even Aeschylus himself.

1. It begins with the summons to give thanks, verse 1. "It is all we can give Him," says Spurgeon, "and the least we can give; therefore let us diligently render to Him our thanksgiving." This is not the only call in the Scriptures to give thanks. A score of times the Psalmist challenges men to the performance of this duty, and he sets the example, and furnishes us the words for our gratitude to express itself in song after song of praise. Nor is the duty rested alone on Old Testament precept. It is not less a Christian duty,

most assuredly, to recognise the mercies and the loving kindnesses of God, than it was under the old and shadowy dispensation of the law. "In every thing give thanks," is the high measure of Christian duty laid down by the Apostle, 1 Thes. v. 18. "Be ye thankful"; and "in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." As the greatest mercies of God are found clustered about the cross, and expressed in the gift of His Son, so the warmest recognition of them, and the heartiest praise and gratitude for them, belong of rights to those who have their lives brightened by the sunshine of Christianity. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift," 2 Cor. ix. 15.

2. We have the foundation and reason for thanksgiving, "For He is good, for His mercy endureth forever." The one hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm takes up this thought and runs it as a refrain through the whole texture of the song, as though to connect every act of God's providence in nature and in the history of His people, with His abounding mercy as its source. And is it not so? . . . What have we that is not of mercy? Mercy has been defined "favour to the undeserving." According to this definition, all the joy and comfort, all the common good, and all the daily supplies of life, as well as the gifts of grace, are mercies; for we do not deserve any of them!

Dr. William Adams quotes Carlyle as saying that a man should put himself at zero, and then reckon every degree ascending from that point as an occasion of thanks. "Precisely on this scale," adds Dr. Adams, "do the Scriptures compute our mercies. Demerit places us at the very nadir. Every step we take from the point where conscious unworthiness would consign us, should call for an offering of gratitude, whatever envied heights may tower, unreached, above us." If "it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed," as Jeremiah says, then every ray of beauty, and crumb of good, and note of joy that God has added to our existence here, and every hope that He has kindled and assured for the future, are so many additional mercies. And who can count the number of them? Never through the long years have they failed us. "His mercy endureth for ever."

3. The psalmist fills the song with particular illustrations of the goodness, and proofs of the mercy of God. They may, in his thought, have been taken from the history of Israel, and have been temporal and external, rather than spiritual. "But these things are an allegory"—they have a spiritual side, and they fit the experience of God's redeemed ones now.

(1) There is the case of the wanderers led through the wilderness, and delivered from their deep distresses, verses 3-7. Is any way more dreary and distressing than the sinner's way? or any deliverance in answer to the cry of distress, a greater mercy? We can thank God for that mercy.

(2) Then we have the captive, sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, bound in affliction and iron, verses 10-14. Does not the bird sing when the bars of its cage are broken, and it soars away free to its forest home? Out of how many "tight places," prisons, houses of despair, places of spiritual bondage, as well as places of temporal difficulty, has God released during the past year? Shall we have no song of praise?

(3) Then comes the case of the sick man, drawing near to the gates of death—looking into the blackness of the tomb, verses 17-20. But again the cry of distress is heard, and God spares the rod His children deserve—spares, and heals them. How many of us find a transcript of our past year's experience in this part of the song? And even though we have not suffered, all the more the reason for gratitude, for we have had just that much more that we did not deserve!

(4) The next illustration is drawn from the great sea, and God's providence over "them that do business in great waters," verses 23-30. The spiritual correspondence here, too, is evident. So for the final illustration, in the common, general providence of God over all the events of our lives, verses 32-43. "Oh, that men," that we, "would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

## MR. HORTON ON RITUALISM.

On Sunday morning the Rev. R. F. Horton took for his text, Gal. v. 1: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." He said that the liberty of which the apostle speaks is not freedom to sin, but freedom from contracted and imperfect forms of religion. Christ has purchased this freedom for us with a great price; if we reject it we reject Him. If we elect to be Christians in bondage, we cease to be Christians at all. All religions are at first closely implicated with the rudiments or alphabet of external forms. They have their holy places, their sacred buildings, their priesthood, altars, and sacrifices. But as the alphabet is useless unless it leads you on to ideas, truths, and facts, so the rudiments of religion are useless unless they lead on to the things for which alone they exist. It was necessary that the race should go to school and begin at the first class; but it was necessary also that they should pass out of it. The education of the race reached a turning-point when Christ came to the world. He came to disentangle us from the weak and beggarly elements, and to make it possible for us by simple faith in Him to become the sons of God. After the

ascension of Christ the world gradually drifted back to the old pagan rudiments. Slowly the votaries of the Christian Church were led back into the very heart of heathenism. St. Paul's complaint against the Galatians was that they had fallen into this error as Christians. They had renounced their freedom to go back into bondage. The very point against which the epistle speaks, the keeping sacred of times and seasons, has been adopted by the Christian Church all over the world. The year has been divided into periods; fasts and feasts have been ordained; Lent must be kept strictly, and afterwards there is a return to the ordinary course of life. St. Paul speaks sternly, because when you introduce distinctions of times and seasons, you strike at the root of spiritual life, which should be a calm, sweet, equable walk with God; the life of a child in its Father's house. In England to-day we are in danger of going back to outward ceremonies. We have seen our Metropolitan Cathedral re-decorated, just as if a building could ever be consecrated, and as if every idolatrous thought were not a desecration of the House of God. Ritualism has ever tended to prevent the formation of Christ in the heart. Therefore let us have no tampering with it, but remembering that God desires the service of children—not of slaves—let us stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ hath made us free.

## SERMONETTES FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON. \*

*Lesson for December 7th. Luke xxiv. 13-27. Golden Text, Verse 26.*

### A SPRING WALK.

Has any one who loves Jesus ever read the account of this walk to Emmaus without wishing he had been there? How delightful it must have been to hear the Lord explain in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself! But He has promised His Holy Spirit to enlighten us when we search His holy word, and there are things concerning Himself in *all* the Scriptures.

During all that Sunday (which was the Jewish Monday) the disciples and friends of Jesus were meeting each other and talking over the strange rumours and stories of the day; for Jesus had also appeared to Peter, but we are not told where it was; and in the afternoon of that day He appeared to one called Cleopas and his companion. They were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a little country village about eight miles westward over the hills towards the

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

sea. In this quiet country walk, with everything beautiful in the April spring-time, they saw none of the beauties around them, for their hearts were full of sorrow, thinking that the death of Jesus had put an end to all their hopes. What a comfort it sometimes is in times of sorrow to open one's heart to those whom we love! These two disciples talked of their sorrow, and whilst they were walking and talking, Jesus Himself joined them. They did not know Him, and Mark says, "He appeared in another form." When the disciples had told Him their sorrow, our blessed Lord shows them that the very things which shook their faith were the things which proved that the crucified Jesus was the Christ. As they listened, their hearts glowed with joy at what He said. They walked for two hours, and the afternoon was far advanced before they reached the white houses and lemon groves of Emmaus. Our Lord made as though He would go further, but they urged Him to stay, "Abide with us." The red sun sinking over the hills of Ephraim told them it would soon be dark, and the Stranger accepted their invitation and sat down to their evening meal. Taking up bread, the Stranger blessed it and brake it and held it out to them, and we read that as soon as He had done this their eyes were opened, and they knew it was Jesus Himself. Perhaps they had seen the print of the nails on His hands as He uplifted them. Then He vanished out of their sight. There are two lessons for you to think about.

I. "They constrained Him" to abide with them. The Lord likes to be entreated by His people. Had they not invited Him, Jesus would have gone past. Whenever we return to our homes, let us make the same prayer, "Abide with us." No home can be really sweet in which Jesus does not abide. Where He abides, there are peace and love and joy.

II. Think of how Jesus was with these two men and taught them. Remember that whilst you can never see Him, yet He will give you views of truth and golden openings of heaven in a companionship closer even than they had.

For though His face we cannot see,  
Nor touch His human hand,  
He dwelleth with the pure in heart  
Of every clime and land.

*Lesson for December 14th. Luke xxiv. 28-43. Golden Text, Verse 13.*

#### JESUS MADE KNOWN.

During the course of the Resurrection day, the Lord Jesus appeared to several of His people, either alone or when two or three were together. But He crowned the joy of the day by showing Himself in the evening to a larger assembly.

I. The company in the upper room. After Cleopas and his companion had experienced that bright apocalypse, "The revelation of Jesus who was dead, and is alive for evermore," they returned to Jerusalem, and went direct to the well-known trysting place. There they found the ten apostles (Thomas was absent) and others gathered for their evening meal. Through all this exciting day some of these simple people believed, and some could not believe, though they tried. Simon Peter had come in, "fire and water in his eyes," saying "he had seen the Lord." And now these last comers "told what things were done in the way, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread." This was the company, full of mingled hope and fear, faith and unbelief, when Jesus appeared.

II. The fast closed doors. The same fear that shut the door would securely lock it. The Shepherd had been slain, and the trembling sheep were fearful and timid. They had heard their Shepherd say, "This is your hour and the power of darkness."

III. The greeting of the Master. As they discussed the one subject, Jesus Himself stood before them. Though giving to them the old-time greeting, "Peace be to you," it did not calm them; the chill of a great fear fell upon them as they gazed, and they trembled. "Why are ye troubled, and wherefore do reasonings arise in your hearts?" asked Jesus. He then stretched out His hands, drew back His robe from His feet, and uncovered His side that they might see the wound-prints. It was enough, and their hearts passed from an extreme of fear to an extreme of joy. Then Jesus asked them for food, and when they gave Him some of the remnants of their own meal, He ate before them. He did not need earthly food in His resurrection life, but by this simple act He put another seal upon His true humanity. He was still the "Son of Man," interested in all things belonging to us.

Why did Jesus come back to this world again before He entered His glory? *One reason* was to show that He loved us still, and that He was not in such a hurry to leave this bad world. *Another reason* was to show for certain that He had risen from the grave. He had said He would rise, and He showed Himself to witnesses that they might witness to everybody that He was risen. If Jesus did not rise, then we shall not rise from the grave. That would be a sad thing. *A third reason* was because He wished to show that He was the very same Jesus. He showed that He had got the same body—He showed the five wounds, and He twice ate before them. He showed that He had the same heart. He loved them and He comforted them, and taught them, and said He was their Brother just as before. These are some of the reasons of His showing Himself during the Forty Days.

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ONE PENNY.

## THE TRUE CONCEPTION OF GOD.

*A Sermon by*

THE REV. W. H. HARWOOD, OF SUNDERLAND,

*Preached in Streatham Town Hall (Streatham Congregational Church)  
on Sunday Evening, October 19th, 1890.*

“One generation shall praise Thy works to another.”—Psalm cxlv. 4.

I SPOKE this morning of the unalterable association between the service of God and the service of humanity, and the place that that association ought to take in our endeavour to restore the power of religion in the midst of men. I wish to speak to-night of a kindred subject, the conception of God that we present to men, a conception that shall be worth handing down from one generation to another.

There is one period in our English history that will provide us with a partial illustration of the idea that seems to be present in the Psalmist's mind. The part the bards and ballad-singers played in the military and heroic records of the past, I think, roughly indicates the desire that is present in the mind of this Psalmist. Those deeds which made a great part of the history of men in those days were sung and told by the privileged bards and musicians who wandered about the country. The national spirit was largely fostered so, and many a winter's night, when hours were long because work was little, none would be so welcome as the bard of the district. Many a youth first learned at his father's hearth the stirrings of ambition, the movements of chivalry, as some ballad-singer told the story of some past conquest, or the deeds of some hero whom he himself had known, and whom he revered. And so the record of all noble deeds went down the generations, one generation speaking to another of that which had been done. And even to-day, in this age of printed books, something of the same service is being rendered. What are our biographies; what are many of our histories; what are many of the most stirring utterances of our poets and singers but the utterances from one generation to another of that which has been strong and heroic in human life? Whatever may have been the place of the hero—the battlefield, the library, the school, the church—whatever has been worth telling has been told, and the generation following has heard it.

I imagine that the Psalmist desires in some fashion that some such recognition may be made of the doings of God, and that the conception which men may have of God may be worth thus handing down. His ambition is that the idea of God may be so beautiful, so full of power and of truth to men that it shall become the favourite theme of the praise-makers of each generation. Minstrel never sang of deed of prowess, poet never sang of deed of deliverance with greater enthusiasm than men of the spirit of the Psalmist would show as they speak of the records of what God is and of what God does. A conception of God worth handing down—that, I think, is the theme of this part of the psalm.

Need I say that this ideal, that I suppose is in the minds of most of us, stands out from a background of fact that is very dark and very different? Shall we not all admit that the conception of God that exists in the ordinary mind of the ordinary worshipper is so meagre, so dull, that it rouses no enthusiasm. There is nothing in it to hand down to men. Should we be far wrong if we said that the average conception of God is upon that level? There are other things in the lives of men in our churches that are worth handing down; their business success, their social charms, their political influence and power; but their conception of God, as evidenced in its effect upon their own character, is not worth speaking of to those who come after them. Now, I think that if we consider the average conception of God held by those groups of men in any part of our religious history whose conception has been worth remembering, the value is not so much in the idea of God as in the intensity with which they hold the idea. That is true within certain limits. Men have had very different conceptions of what God is, and yet they have been alike in this, that those conceptions have been found worthy of a place in religious history. For instance, there have been men who have with intense power believed and uttered simply the spiritual side of religious truth, men who have put social and political and intellectual considerations out of the question, and with an earnestness at white heat have demanded the application of certain religious truths simply to the spiritual side of man's nature. Narrow as their conception was, and wrong as some of us believe it to have been, the intensity of their belief made a theme that was worth handing down from one generation to another.

Over against them there are those whose belief has been more ethical, personal. Some of the best of them, perhaps, have been found in this nineteenth century, men who would have no religion that could not go about in common garb, men who would believe in no faith that was not as much at home in the market, in the senate, in the home as in the actual Church itself. Their larger idea of God has made an anthem of praise, their conception is worthy to be told as one generation passes after another.

And so there are many possible distinctions in this conception of God. The point is not simply the difference of idea: the intensity,

the reality of the belief that men hold, that has made the name of God to be a song in the midst of the generations.

I understand the author of this psalm—for, as we have seen to-day, that which is true once is always true—the author of this psalm takes his stand in the midst of all religious men of all times, and out of a large spiritual faith and deep human sympathy that rings through the psalm he looks upon his own vision of God—a vision as free from sectarian prejudice as it is full of a devout faith—and he cries with something of the profoundest enthusiasm: “Could men but see God as I see Him, could the vision of His works but burn in their imaginations as it does now in mine, the generations would take up the song, the conception of God would be the dearest heirloom that men could receive from those who had gone before.” He calls, in effect, upon all who make the Church of God to cultivate those conceptions that should be worth telling to others.

We must ask, then: “What is the Psalmist’s own conception? Is it worth telling?” I think, if you will study this beautiful poem that we have read, you will feel that the author of it has the exact qualities of the religious poet. He observes, he apprehends, he looks all round the picture. The psalm is a beautiful mosaic of human life, a harmonious song that is made up of the minuter details; all in his mind conspiring to speak of the presence of God there. He sees God in the provident hand in nature; he sees Him in His compassionate forgiveness; he sees Him in the majestic overruling of human history. The whole spirit of the psalm is a healthy conception of God, of God not in part of life, but in all life, Who cannot be separated from any part.

Now, I think it is needful to the understanding of the psalm and its lesson that we should realise that the religion of separation has no place whatever in the spirit of it? The conception of God here is not of a being whom men can obey while they separate themselves from all human interest. It is a conception of a God who brings men back again into human interests, and uplifts and dignifies all that they have to do day by day.

Unhappily, as I ventured to say this morning, this spirit of separation has largely entered into our life and has hindered wonderfully the progress of our faith. I repeat that monasteries are not the only places in which men may shut themselves out, religiously, from the common interests of mankind, and, ostrich-like, escape the duties and dangers of life by hiding their eyes from them. When we look at the monastery, perhaps we are carried away by its romance. You saw it on your holidays nestling in some hillside, having no harsher sounds about it than the water and the song of birds, and you were fascinated by the picture. Surely, you said, here a man may concentrate his thought upon God and become a religious character. I say again, as I said this morning, the thing is an impossibility. A man contenting himself simply in his own life cannot serve the Christian

God, cannot realise what the Christian faith is. It is worse when a man, touching men at every point, meeting them day by day, at home, in society, in the market, even then shuts himself up in some isolated thought of God and makes no attempt to make men feel the reality of that in which he believes. The man or the woman who in the name of the Son of Man, in the name of Christianity, of religion, of humanity, can shut himself in a mere ascetic refusal of all human pleasures, who will have nothing to do with worldly affairs except, perhaps, to make money, in which he may be an adept, who will turn from all enjoyments that his own jaundiced judgment cannot approve—such a man, I say, presents a travesty upon the faith in which we profess to believe. He may boast of his Protestantism; whether his place be in the cloister or in the conference, whether it be in the monastery or in the prayer meeting, the attitude of such a man is false and is cowardly. He who runs away from his human responsibilities and duties and sets up for being a greater saint than other men is contradicting in every line that which Christ has commanded him.

I wish to say emphatically, that in the spirit of the psalm we are reading, there is no such suspicious element. It is a healthy all-round love, and a sense of God's presence there, a psalm of which the most advanced nineteenth century Christian need not in any sense be ashamed. For this Psalmist sees God where some of us even to day do not see Him, in nature. God speaks through all physical life. "The eyes of all wait upon Thee; Thou givest them their meat in due season." That utterance, that to him in his limited knowledge, had so great meaning—oh, the infinitely greater meaning to us! The little child in your house says: "God made the world," and it is quite satisfied that it has solved all problems. Those simple four words in the lips of a scientist, of a Darwin, branch out into a hundred new meanings and possible developments. The presence of God in nature ought to be part of the music that the Church of God renders, in this age of a larger science and understanding; and yet, how many of us, even our Churches, are frightened at any mention of the thing. Have some of us grasped the most elementary thought in all religion, that if there be a God of faith He must be the same as the God of all knowledge, of all attainment in science, that the truth in all revelation must be the truth concerning Him Whom you see in sky and sea, in all the wonders of life about you? And yet men to-day will speak with something like a sneaking contempt of all endeavour to understand what God does in this part of His world. I know good people yet who think the decoration of a church to be one of the greatest sins in the world. I will not for a moment quarrel with any man in his conviction, but may I ask this one question: "Have we any right to rob the Creator of this part of His praise? Have we a right to make that dull which God has made eloquent with the acknowledgment of His power?" I fail to see why the exact teaching of knowledge—why the museum,

for instance, might not, within proper limits, be part of the work of the Christian Church. I trust the day is coming when men will go as truly with reverence in their endeavour to understand what nature is as they profess to go to-day into the study of theology. You shut out great possible thoughts of God when you consign this part of the revelation of Him to a lower place, and will let it have no part in your worship.

I say this strongly, dear friends, for this reason, that many of the young men in our Churches are being taught, directly and indirectly, that this branch of the growth of life, if it is not anti-religious is, at least separate, for religion is no part of their growth unto the knowledge of God. We must alter that, and speedily. Teach men that God is the first word and the last word in everything that is beautiful and orderly. The sublimest picture that you ever saw upon canvas was in God's mind before it was in the artist's. The most beautiful music that ever thrilled you through and through, was a thought in God before it entered into the mind of him who, you say, created it. Everything that is best in our life is of Him. Nature is a shrine of His worship, a side chapel in the great cathedral of service that we may render Him. Can there be a conception of God that is worth handing down that does not include this? The old Catholic idea is right, though many of its developments were wrong. The Church—it was a narrow conception—was the patron and centre of all knowledge and of all art. The musician, the poet, the student, found their home in the abbey, in the ecclesiastical establishment. Our business is to begin at the other end, not necessarily to bring all these things into the Church, but to bring a reverent belief into all these things. The State and private enterprise are doing much. We have still a duty to teach the young people of our Churches that God, the Infinite Creator, is as truly in these growing wonders that open upon their vision as in that great Name through which, and in which, we worship Him.

The generation demands this side of our utterance of what God is. Men are being taught—and I speak from knowledge of many of our nothern towns—that knowledge in its very nature is anti-religious. We need to teach men that nothing is so religious as the reverent humble growth into a better understanding of what God is, and of what God is doing. And the Psalmist comes near to something we saw in the New Testament this morning—God not in nature alone, but in humanity: "Thou hearest the cry, Thou satisfieth the desire of those who fear Thee."

Are there not conceptions of this word Saviour, Salvation, that are not worth handing down? Are they not so selfish, so limited in their area that they arouse no enthusiasm in men, that they have nothing to say even to the dullest nature? Start with the conception of a God who seeks to work out in humanity His own purpose, and the word "Saved" is the highest word that a man can speak. Think of what we mean by redeemed man. Let him stand before you. He

was a man careless of physical law, he neglected and violated the very first principles of his relationship to God's commandments. Weakness and disease threatened Him. But he has come to obedience, and though he be a weaker man for the rest of his life, because of his past transgressions, you may see even in that physical life the signs of a great restoration that is going on. He was an ignorant man, he had no desire to understand life; he has come to learn that knowledge is God-like. I have seen an old pitman, sixty years old, trying to learn, like a little baby, the alphabet, that he might learn in this Book something of what God had to say to him. It is a parable of what men do all round. The quickened heart, the deepened desire after goodness means, wherever it is true, the quickened intellect. A man desires to know more that he may love God more, and wherever you find the true, honest life you will find it growing in that direction also. Here was a man poisoned with the love of evil; his judgments were perverted, his passions given to that which was contrary to all right and goodness. There has grown in his life a desire to know God and to serve Him in all things; the quest of truth and of righteousness for God's sake. I ask you whether one such man would not be an infinite gain from every possible standpoint? Bring into his life those conceptions of what God wants of him, body, mind, spirit. Is not the saved man the redeemed man, the herald of all that is best for human life? Ought it not to be he, and no other, who puts himself at the head of men and says to them: "Follow me"? In the way to all that is best for your life, all round that life and not in any part of it, we claim that what happens thus in the smaller circle ought to happen in the larger circle; that what God means in this age is order for disorder, beauty for violence, goodness for evil. I went a year or two ago to try and find one of the rookeries behind Drury Lane that I had explored with a friend years before. I could not find it. The whole place was changed. For great, horrible, broken-down houses, great open spaces; for filthy dwellings, terraces of clean-looking mansions. The touch of the philanthropist had been there, the old order had given place to the new. It is a parable. Bring into your conception of life your conception of God. Start with a belief of a God Who is in humanity and seeks to work in humanity; come to the aspirations and desires of men with this vision, and you are bound to be a helper of men.

Are we not reproached every day? Is the life that you live often in the sermon on Sunday the life that you live when you read the newspaper after Sunday night? Are not the two often one to another as separate planets: the one concerned with theories and speculations that are high above our life and above the cares of our life, problems that nobody wants to solve; the other full of the stormy out-cries of to-day, the demands of men—demands that they cannot interpret for themselves—for something juster and better than they have known? Dear friends, our work and our bitter conflict to-day

is to break down that separation, to teach men that God is in that outer circle of the newspaper as truly as in this inner circle of the actual worship of the Sabbath Day. And when the triumph comes, as it shall come, happy shall be he, who out of his self-sacrifice and self-denial has had some share in bringing about this better day that is coming—and that, God knows, is such a very, very long time coming—so far beyond his thought and desire.

These are not days of despair. I think the days were never so hopeful if only we are strong enough. Men are craving for something, they hardly know what. We have a message for them if we will deliver it. The great, passionate, just Christ is, I believe, that which men want if they can only see. Let the Churches stand aside if need be; let all the creeds fade if need be, if only thus we can get the vision of the Cross back again, and when we have got it back men will begin to feel what they felt when He Himself spoke and ministered to them. God is not the vague dream of selfish worshippers; God is the real King of those men who profess to believe in Him.

To bring God into man's present conception of life is our duty. I have ventured many times, and will many times again, to use two illustrations, because they have come within my own knowledge, perhaps in the knowledge of many here. A poor half-starved woman, oppressed, cries to God in her garret for help and comfort, and she gets the comfort and nothing else. She has to go back again next week, and next month, and next year to her unjust wages and the wrong that she receives from men. Why, why is it that with the Church of God in England that woman gets nothing but comfort and not the righteousness she ought to have? A man goes forth, and that night a woman begins a life of shame, and you say: "When the judgment day comes it will all be put right!" Why wait till the judgment day? If God were in our hearts and consciences as a living reality, we should make the judgment day now, and that the smart of that sin should go where it should go; and that the oppressor as truly as the oppressed, the sinner as truly as the one sinned against, should feel that the God of the Churches is not afar off, but very near at hand, the helper of those who need Him. Dear friends, it can only be through great sacrifice that this can be done, and that is why, and why alone, one trembles. Shall we be equal to it? If the spirit of the early Church could get into our Christian homes to-day, if the broader conceptions of God that we hold could be as real to us as their narrower conceptions were, we should change the face of this land in a quarter of a century. Shall we be equal to it?

I claim some young life here to-night for God and for Christ and for men. For manhood or womanhood will never find its true expression until, in the spirit of Christian unselfishness, you can arise to this work of teaching men that God is, and that God is love. And if out of your sympathy you can bring some dark sinful life to believe in the goodness of God and to desire it, you will have done

a work that will be worth living for, a work that will make the record of a lifetime, and that will go down to the generations that follow you an anthem of thanksgiving that you have ever lived. Shall we not try so to present God, so to believe in Him, that in our little circle, as truly as in the greater one, it shall be true that "one generation shall praise the works of God to another;" ?

## VINET AND LIDDON.

BY REV. PRINCIPAL KING, D.D.

Vinet was born toward the close of the last century in Lausanne, one of the most beautiful cities in Switzerland, or indeed, in the world; having at its feet the blue waters of the lake of Geneva, and in the distance, but in full view, the majestic and snow-clad peaks of Mont Blanc. He received his education in his native city, which then, as now, was the seat of an ancient school of learning. He was destined to the ministry by his father, but having early displayed literary and philosophical abilities of a high order, he was, at the age of twenty-two, appointed professor of the French language and literature in the University of Basle, receiving ordination as a minister of the Gospel about the same period. In that famous border city, even at that early date the scene of zealous missionary enterprise, Vinet continued to teach from 1819 to 1838. There probably he formed those decided spiritual views of religion which are found in all his discourses. In 1838 he was recalled to his native city as professor of theology; a position which, first in connection with the ecclesiastical establishment, and afterwards with the newly-formed Free Church of the Canton de Vaud, he occupied until his death. He was in his day a prolific author, giving to the press as many as twelve or fourteen volumes on various subjects of a literary, philosophical, or religious character. It is his sermons only with which we have to do here. These were given to the public at various times, and comprise in all several volumes. A large number of the most striking of them has been made accessible to the English reader in two volumes, entitled respectively, "Vital Christianity" and "Gospel Studies."

The sermon must take its character to a large extent from the audience to which it is addressed. Its form, its contents even, must be governed in some degree by the needs, the tastes, certainly by the intellectual and moral appreciations of those whom it is designed to help. Vinet addressed himself largely to men of culture, many of whom were either uneasy in their hold on the Christian faith, or had actually relinquished it under the influence of the materialistic and sceptical thought of the age. It was his aim to recover for them their impaired or their lost religious convictions. This aim he seeks to accomplish by calling attention with rare and penetrating insight to the spiritual in man, and to the

adaptation of the Gospel to all its deeper needs and its loftier aspirations. The worthlessness of all material splendours; the insignificance of all merely intellectual achievements, the transcendent glory of the moral and the spiritual above all triumphs of intellect, as seen in the widow's mite cast into the treasury, in the box of ointment broken by the hand of prescient love on the Saviour's person, in the tears of penitence washing His feet; the mystery of human sorrow, the boundlessness of human aspiration, the blending grandeur and beauty of the Saviour's character, the power which belongs to the heart—to love—to apprehend and to verify the Gospel; these supply him with the lofty themes on which he discourses with marvellous force and eloquence. Without being formally and directly an argument for Christianity, these sermons are only the more really an apologetic of the most effective kind; one by which the faith of many a hesitating believer has been greatly strengthened. A brief quotation will be of more service than any description in enabling you to understand and appreciate this characteristic of the discourses of Vinet: "Humanity hath separated itself from God. The storms of passion have broken the mysterious cable which retained the vessel in port. Shaken to its base, and feeling itself driven upon unknown seas, it seeks to rebind itself to the shore; it endeavours to renew its broken stands; it makes a desperate effort to re-establish those connections without which it cannot have either peace or security. In the midst of its greatest wanderings humanity never loses the idea of its origin and destiny; a dim recollection of its ancient harmony pursues and agitates it; and without renouncing its passions, without ceasing to love sin, it longs to re-attach its being full of darkness and misery to something luminous and peaceful, and its fleeting life to something immovable and eternal. In a word, God has never ceased to be the want of the human race. Alas! their homage wanders from its proper object, their worship becomes depraved, their piety itself is impious; the religions which cover the earth are an insult to the unknown God, who is their object. But in the midst of these monstrous aberrations a sublime instinct is revealed; and each of these false religions is a painful cry of the soul, torn from its centre and separated from its object. It is a despoiled existence which, in seeking to clothe itself, seizes upon the first rags it finds; it is a disordered spirit, which, in the ardour of its thirst, plunges all panting into fetid and troubled waters; it is an exile, who, in seeking the road to his native land buries himself in frightful deserts."

But these discourses are much more than a powerful argument for the Gospel; they are a singularly beautiful exhibition of its contents and of its spirit. They are the former mainly, indeed, in virtue of being the latter. They are not less adapted to transform a cold, inert faith into a devout and living homage than to conquer doubt or to replace unbelief by faith. They are distinctly evangelical, brimful of Gospel truth, but it is Gospel truth in its great principles rather than

in its minute details—Gospel truth on its ethical more than on its doctrinal side, in its spirit more than its letter. And they are instinct throughout with warm Christian feeling. The emotion, indeed, is not loud and vehement, it is calm and repressed rather than stimulated; but it is there all the same; now tender and regretful, now elevated and joyous, always deep and healthful. The reader of these discourses feels himself to be in contact throughout with a man of broad views and of warm human sympathies. The harsh and narrow dogmatism which so often repels the inquirer on the threshold is conspicuously absent; but it is not replaced in Vinet's case, as in that of many preachers of liberal culture, by mere humanitarian ethics or weak sentiment. The Cross, with all its offence, if with all its mysterious power of attraction, is there and is central, as it should be. "Stripped of the great fact of expiation," says Vinet, "and all that cluster of ideas connected with it, what, I ask, is Christianity? For ordinary minds, an ordinary morality; for others, an abyss of inconsistencies."—Again: "It is not so much the Gospel that has preserved the doctrine of the Cross as the doctrine of the Cross that has preserved the Gospel." "All the might, all the reality of Christianity in each Christian is there and only there. Even the lessons and examples of Jesus Christ, in order to become living and fruitful, require a ray darted from the Cross."

But these discourses, marked by such uncompromising devotion to the distinctive truths of the Gospel, are worthy of our attention not only because of what they say, but even because of what they do not say. Their reticence itself is instructive. Rather desiring complete agreement with D'Aubigne, Gaussen and others of the Geneva school, in the details of Christian doctrine than actually attaining it, the preacher scrupulously abstains from statements which might present the appearance of a greater degree of accord with these distinguished exponents of evangelical thought than he had really reached. Indeed there is scarcely any feature in these sermons more marked, as there is none more worthy of imitation than their severe truthfulness, their prudent reserve, the determination of the speaker everywhere manifest to keep utterance well within the limits of conviction and of feeling. "We have forbidden our words," he says, "to transcend the limits of our personal emotions; an artificial heat would not be salutary." "Feeble, I address myself to the feeble, I give to them the milk which has nourished myself. When some of us become stronger than the rest, we will together demand the bread of the strong." Hence the entire freedom from cant, the naturalness, the wise and attractive reasonableness of the discourses composed in such a spirit; contrasting, oh, how strongly, with the wild extravagance, the vulgar exaggeration, the frank egotism which is displayed by more than one prominent pulpit of our day. Surely popularity is purchased at too great a cost when it involves the sacrifice at once of the sacredness of the sanctuary and the self-respect of the preacher.

There is still another characteristic of Vinet's sermons too striking

to be passed over even in this brief estimate ; they are marked by a certain tinge of sadness—marked, not marred ; it is in part even the secret of the charm which they have for the sensitive reader. For the tone of melancholy, if one must designate it by such a term, which pervades them, is that of a pure and gentle spirit saddened and chastened by the sight of human sin and human suffering. One has only to listen to its strains to confess their spell. “Every soul, doubtless, carries within itself a treasure of sorrow. It is even a condition of our nature that in all our joys, even the most intense, I know not what, sorrow ever mingles, as in a song of gladness, a hollow murmur or a stifled groan. It might be said that the very voice of joy awakens in the depths of the soul a slumbering grief ;” or again : “Life is passed amid temptations to joy incessantly repressed. Joy has moments, sorrow the whole of life. That is a moment of joy when a cherished hope is realised ; that is a life of sorrow when we feel that the successive realisation of all our hopes has not filled the infinite abyss of the soul. That is a moment of joy which gives us the smile of a beautiful day, the sun so pleasant to behold, the free development of any of our powers, the feeling of existence in the plenitude of health ; that is a life sorrow which hurries promiscuously to the abyss before us our good and our evil hours, our pains and our pleasures, nay more, our soul itself ; for the thoughts and affections of which it is composed precede us to the tomb, while of all that we possess and all we have been we can retain nothing, no, not even our most cherished griefs.” Or once more : “From the very sources of our happiness spring forth bitter sorrows. Our most tender attachments arm death with some of his sharpest darts ; for although St. Paul hath said with truth that the sting of death is sin, it is true that this sting multiplies itself and makes sharp points of all the flowers with which we deck our heads. Every crown of flowers, sooner or later, becomes a crown of thorns.” And what depth of reflective thought, as well as tenderness of plaintive sorrow have we not in these words : “To blunt the sting of grief, time is better than pride ; for time wears out everything. But it wears out the soul as well as all the rest. The power of forgetting is only a weakness. Life thus becomes less sorrowful, but it also becomes less serious, less noble.”

It is almost unnecessary to add, after what has been said and what has been quoted, that Vinet has found warm admirers in every country which his works have reached ; not only in his native Switzerland, but in Germany, in France, in England, and in America. His sermons are not indeed popular in the ordinary sense of the term. They are for the most part religious essays or meditations. They are made to be read and re-read. That is perhaps their defect as sermons. They have to seek and to select their audience, but they hold it without difficulty when once found. How indeed could it be otherwise with discourses which exhibit so rare a union of intellectual and moral excellence, such originality of conception, such depth of insight, such

elevation of sentiment, such precision and beauty of expression, such wealth of imagination, such warmth of affection, such tenderness, such humility. Add to this a personality singularly bright and gentle, enriched with the best culture of France and Germany, and adorned with "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," and it cannot surprise us that Vinet has won a very high place in the esteem and affection of thoughtful Christians in Europe and America. Years before I made my first visit to the continent of Europe he had passed out of life, but at one point and another—in a lovely chateau, the home of a refined Christian family, on the slopes of the Jura, and in the midst of a quiet Moravian community in Germany—I met those who had known the man as well as waited on his teaching, and had cause to note the warm and reverent affection with which they cherished the memory of his blending genius and goodness. For myself (if I may be permitted a personal allusion on this occasion) I confess I owe more to Vinet for intellectual stimulus and spiritual help than to any uninspired teacher.

In passing from Vinet to Liddon we encounter many striking contrasts; the one philosophic and critical, the other authoritative and dogmatic; the one timid and self-distrustful, without the courage to open his mouth even once in the beautiful and spacious cathedral of his native city, the other to the last filling with his ringing voice and his stately periods the far larger St. Paul's; the one carrying conciliation to the verge of compromise, the other dogmatism to the verge of defiance. Each was in a manner true to his nationality; in the one the light touch, the airy brilliance of the Frenchman, in the other the vigorous directness, the robust self-assertion of the Englishman. In Liddon we miss the philosophic insight, the subtle beauty, the sweet persuasiveness of Vinet, but we find in him, on the other hand, a massiveness of thought, a grandeur of statement and an authoritative-ness of utterance which Vinet cannot claim. Enquirers after truth will linger over the pages of the one—the mass, even of the thoughtful, craving, above all else, certainty in regard to spiritual things, will hang on the lips of the other, or, as death has now sealed these, will turn to the writings in which the author expresses his unshaken faith in the great Christian verities.

In addition to his great Bampton lecture on the "Divinity of Christ," Liddon published from time to time several volumes of sermons, some of them preached in Oxford before the University, and others in St. Paul's Cathedral. Those in which, so far as my acquaintance goes, he is seen at his best are found in the two volumes entitled, "University Sermons" and "Some Words for God." But while naturally of unequal merit, they are all strong, and, bating their sacerdotalism, true to Scripture teaching and strengthening to faith.

At the time of his death, a few weeks ago, Liddon stood by almost universal consent at the head of the English pulpit. Whenever it was known that he was to preach, the great cathedral was filled with an audience embracing indeed all classes, but in which there were

sure to be found many men of liberal culture, and among them some of the leading intellects of the day. Young men of education waited with eagerness on his ministrations. Many Londoners had for years never missed an opportunity of hearing him; and his popularity seems to have continued without diminution to the last. What was its secret? No single explanation, we may be sure, will suffice. There must have been more than one element of power in the preacher who could attract and retain through so many years an audience so large and of such a character.

In accounting for this success we are safe in giving a foremost place to the prominence which the great and supernatural facts of redemption, and the doctrines which grow out of these facts, received in his preaching. These are not simply pre-supposed, argued, defended; they are proclaimed, and proclaimed with an authority which comes not from the speaker, but from God who has put His word into his mouth, and with an enthusiasm which is born of his own assured faith in their verity. He is not a philosopher propounding a theory, not a critic enquiring into the truth of a system, not a mere moralist enforcing a code of ethics; he is first, and before all else a preacher, a man with a message which he has received, in which he believes, which it is his to expound and apply, but in any case to proclaim, and to proclaim in the very terms in which it has been given and with all the marvellous significance attaching to it. Not his to reduce by a single hair's breadth the vast proportions of the truth, not his to tone down the dimensions of the supernatural, whether as displayed in the Saviour's incarnation and Godhood or in the sinner's regeneration to newness of life; his rather to assert and to emphasise it, wherever Holy Scripture teaches him to find its presence, whether in creation or in redemption; sometimes, perhaps, as in its sacramentarian views, to discover and assert its presence where it is not.

Liddon's preaching is thus distinctively doctrinal, even dogmatic. The great common-places of religion,—God and eternity, sin and grace, redemption and atonement, death and judgment—are neither ignored nor thrown into the background. On the contrary, they are constantly upon his lips. They form the staple of his discourse. The only effect on the preacher of the destructive criticism or of the impudent denials of the time—and it is unmistakable—is to compel a deeper and truer conception of these essential and eternal verities, to stiffen the grasp with which they are held, and to intensify the emphasis with which they are proclaimed. It should be added, as all important to an understanding of his success, that these verities, so often superficially viewed, assume a deeper significance, become invested with a more solemn grandeur, in the hands of this great preacher. Set in the light of his powerful intellect and glowing imagination, they are seen to possess larger proportions, to have deeper and wider implications in the principles of human reason and the facts of human experience, than had been previously discerned;

while ever and anon there flashes out some allusive phrase, or some flaming metaphor, which at once widens and illumines the spiritual horizon, or opens out in it new and boundless vistas for thought and fancy to explore. As the result, the hearer is both confirmed in his faith in revealed truth and made to feel its possession to be a more than ever inestimable treasure.

I cannot doubt that these qualities in the sermons of Canon Liddon supply the main explanation of their wonderful power. Something no doubt was due to the speaker's fine presence, to his powerful and melodious voice, heard distinctly at the farthest point in that vast building, to his passion born of deep conviction, to his massive and stately oratory, and to the unique and attractive personality which was behind the words and lent them weight; but after due allowance has been made for all these, it still remains true that what more than all else gave this far-famed preacher the power to attract and to retain his crowding audiences, was his strong grasp of the fundamental verities of the Gospel, his deep and devout insight into their meaning, and the assured and assuring confidence with which he never ceased to proclaim them.

One point more, and we take farewell of Liddon. I have spoken of the vein of melancholy which is so frequently met with in the sermons of Vinet. A similar tinge of sadness appears, though perhaps less obtrusively, in those of Liddon. With all the strong, personal faith which they express, they cannot be spoken of as predominantly hopeful. There are frequently forthcoming in them, not only the sad vicissitudes of human life, its inconsolable griefs, but also the weary struggle of the faith, its dark outlook, the possibility of partial and temporary defeat even before the hour of final triumph. The sorrow, the unrest, the oft-baffled endeavour of the age is again and again sympathetically reflected in the words and the tones of the great preacher; and just therein lay a part of his charm. You know the spell which is exercised over us by the pathos of the plaintive song, by the notes of the minor tune, even by the hues of the fading year. You know that that joy is ever the most attractive in which is heard a faint undertone of sadness, as that beauty is the most fascinating in which is seen a tinge of melancholy.

### A PULPIT PRAYER.

BY THE REV. E. GRIFFITH-JONES, B.A.,

*Mount View Congregational Church, Stroud Green, Sunday Evening,  
December 7th, 1890.*

O Thou most hidden and most manifest, veiled from eyes of flesh, but full of clearness to them that are pure of heart, we pray Thee, grant that all clouds may be removed from 'tween us and the light of Thy countenance, that though darkness surround us round about, may

the glory of the Lord shine in our hearts. We bless Thee for that inner light which Thou sent with us into the world, the light by which we learn the way of life, and which points out to us the duties and privileges of Thy service. And we would pray that as star answereth unto star, and across wide wastes silently and effectually the brightness flies until it rebound in glory from that which can throw it back, so may the immeasurable distance between us and Thyself be bridged over by that light which is truly the light of life.

O Lord, we to-night pray Thee, wilt Thou by that power which Thou hast over human wills and hearts, so touch us and so overwhelm us, that we shall not be able to give way to any wandering thoughts, we shall not be able to show outward formality and inward hollowness, but that we shall be forced to worship Thee in spirit and in truth.

We thank Thee for this institution of Thine house, for the communion of saints, and the work of the ministry. We thank Thee for all the benefits which we are able to confer upon one another. We bless Thee that as we give we receive, as we throw ourselves away we find ourselves, as we give up our life we realise it, because it is Thy service. And we pray Thee to-night and all other times that as we are gathered together in Thy name, that Thou mayst be here in our midst. Speak to us, O Lord, that word of life that we are waiting to hear. Whisper to us that word of consolation which many perhaps have come here to listen to, and grant that there may be to those in perplexity and fear and doubt something that shall be suggested to their inward mind, which shall bring light in the darkness, which shall resolve perplexity, and which shall bring harmony and peace into the life that is unrestful and troubled.

O Lord, we would again pray Thee to hallow and sanctify our union together, and to grant that we may be strengthened in the inner man so to fulfil our relationships together that we shall never fail therein, but be able to do the work of God in simplicity and in effectiveness.

We pray Thee to grant Thy blessing upon this congregation to-night. Bless those who are going down the hillside into the valley, whence there shall be no uprising in this life. Wilt Thou bless the aged and those who feel that their steps are growing short, that they have not many to make before they vanish into the darkness from our eyes. And we pray Thee that as Thou canst renew the youth of all those who trust in Thee, that Thou mayst make them feel young in heart, full of faith in man and in God, that while they have the wisdom and experience of age they may also have the vitality and hopefulness of youth. God grant that as the dimness settles upon their eyes, and as weakness lays hold of their physical members, they may feel inwardly that there is no fading of their faith, that there is no fear before them, but into the valley shine Thou, and may a fringe of light gild even the darkness of death.

We pray for those who are in middle life, and who have the

peculiar and special temptations of their position. We would pray Thee that the multiplicity of their cares and their business anxieties may not be permitted in any way to cloud their interest in Thy things, in the things of God, but that while they are vigorous and steadfast and honourable in all their relations to those around them, may they retain their simplicity, may they retain their faithfulness, may they retain their keen and unfading interest in all that pertains to the spiritual life.

We would pray especially to-night that Thou wouldst bless the young people that are here. O Lord our Father, we bless Thee for that young man Christ Jesus, who was so full of love to all the world that we can go to Him in all our troubles and difficulties and temptations; and though we be inexperienced, and though we be weak, and though we be passionate, and though we be wayward, may we be strengthened inwardly and outwardly to meet the necessities of life, and made pure and bright and sanctified vessels meet for the Master's use. Wilt Thou bless all those young people here who may be in special danger and difficulty. The Lord be with them and guide them; the Lord cause the light of reality to shine upon life that they may not mistake the glamour and the seeming beauty and the perplexing sweetness of many things that appeal to them, but may rather look for those deeper and abiding sources of joy and comfort and strength which shall remain when the fires of youth have grown cold and vitality is fading away.

Wilt Thou bless all Thy people gathered together to-night wherever they may be. Wilt Thou endue Thy ministers with righteousness and outspokenness of mind, with insight into those truths which shall be meet for Thy people to hear, with clear, unfading attention to the way of life and to the truths of the Kingdom; and grant that to-night Christ may be preached so that men in listening shall feel that He is no figure of long ago but a present Saviour, kind and gentle and sympathetic and sufficient for every man and every woman.

The Lord be with us, we pray: be with us in the after service, when we shall sit for the first time together around the table of Thy love. O Lord, we would pray Thee to-night especially—as we have never before experienced perhaps—that it may be made a reality to us, which shall be more to us than words can express, and lift us out of the visible into the invisible, from the temporal to the things which are eternal and Divine. Receive us and bless us, inspire us, and forgive our sins and imperfections, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

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## THE DISCONTENT OF THE TIMES.

A THANKSGIVING SERMON

BY THE REV. R. S. STORRS, D.D.,

*Preached in the Church of the Pilgrims on Thanksgiving Day, November 27th,  
1890.*

"All rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

"All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

"Moreover the profit of the earth is for all; the King himself is served by the field.

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this also is vanity."—Eccl. i. 7, 8; and v. 9, 10.

A VERY learned, thoughtful, and elegant writer, with some of whose books many of us are no doubt familiar, delivered a lecture recently in this city upon the present period as characteristically "an age of discontent." It was not my good fortune to hear the lecture, nor even to see any full report of it afterward; and of course I have no criticism to make upon any positions which he may have taken—no attitude to take, in fact, either of condemnation or of commendation, toward anything which he said. But the title of his address struck my eye, and awakened some thoughts in my own mind which are of interest to me, which may possibly be of interest to you, or to some of you, and which have seemed to me not altogether unsuitable to the present occasion.

Undoubtedly it is true that there is in our time a widespread spirit of discontent. I do not mean particularly among those who have always been poor, and who are now as poor as at any time, who are perhaps hopeless of anything better in the time to come; certainly not among the vicious and drunken, whose discontent or discomfort does not stimulate keen sympathy in us, nor among those who are chronic grumblers whatever happens, and whose discontent has only a personal significance. But that to which I refer prevails widely among the sober and industrious classes, the men who daily labour for daily wage, who have families dependent upon them, and who have, perhaps, some small properties in hand—a class which is always a

most important and often a controlling element in modern society. Among these this spirit of discontent widely obtains, and it is this which I have in mind. It is not the bitter cry of the outcast poor of which I am to speak; but it is the continual and perhaps widening restlessness of those who are comparatively prosperous, but who have not achieved their desires and plans in the acquisition of worldly goods.

Perhaps the fact of this discontent becomes the more striking because it contradicts what seemed to be years ago a reasonable expectation, that the increasing abundance of opportunity for labour, the diminishing price of commodities, the higher rate of wages paid, with universal freedom and almost universal education, or means of education, would bring contentment, tranquility, and quietness of spirit, among the very persons and classes in whom this temper of discontent now makes itself seen, a temper which we hear expressed upon the platform, which we see indicated in journalism, and which we meet not infrequently in personal conversation. The facts to which I refer do not seem to have excluded such discontent as I have intimated. The experience of this perhaps widens, rather than is limited, as the years go on; and there is certainly a force here, and a tendency, which we shall do well to recognise, and, if we may, to analyze.

What are the sources of this discontent among these who seem, and who are, comparatively prosperous in their affairs? It does not grow, of course, out of any severity of oppression experienced by them, either social oppression or governmental oppression. No oppression is possible in this country such as existed in France, for example during the last century, the records of which is left on the annals and laws of the kingdom, a not exaggerated picture of which is presented in Carlyle's "History of the French Revolution," or in the wonderful "Tale of Two Cities," by Charles Dickens. No oppression of that kind is possible among us. It has almost ceased to be conceivable in this land of freedom and of peace. No oppression is here known such as was known in Naples and the Sicilies under the Bourbons and the Popes; none such as is known to day in large parts of Russia, and especially, perhaps, in Poland; none such as is known among the Christian populations under the dominion of the Sultan; none such even as was known in England in the beginning of this century, when labour was severely restricted, when wages were so low that one could hardly live upon them at all, when taxation was enormous, and when nearly three hundred offences were by law punishable with death. We look upon these facts as spectres of the past, with which at present we have nothing whatever to do, except to wonder at them, and to rejoice that the age in which such abominations were possible has long passed away. It is not in consequence of any severity of oppression that the present discontent exists and widens, nor is it in consequence of any contrast between what the present offers and what the past did offer in the days of our fathers, or even in our own earlier times. The contrast, on the other hand, is

altogether in the opposite direction. As I have said, commodities are cheaper now than ever before, while the prices of labour are higher than before, and opportunities are multiplied for remunerative industry. If we go back to the time of our own childhood, forty or fifty years ago, we see a vast change for the better. If we go back one hundred years, or two hundred years, comparison almost ceases to be possible; it is simply an absolute contrast which appears between what then was and what now is. Those who established this festival of Thanksgiving in our country, and those who early maintained and rejoiced in this festival, lived in poorer houses than the poorest known among us. They were oftentimes clothed in raiment which the very beggars now would despise; and they fed upon the foods which never appear, some of them, at least, upon our tables. They had, as we should say, a hard lot. They were down on the bare surface of the earth, struggling for life; and yet in the midst of all their poverty, with apparently hopeless discouragement before them, they sang and gave praises where now is this spirit of angry discontent. They triumphed in God in spite of hardness; and they lifted this festival of Thanksgiving, now become national in its range, like a tropical palm amid the icy hills of New England—in the autumn of the air gathering to give thanks to God for their scanty harvest, and to consecrate themselves in their weakness and poverty afresh to his service.

No, it is not any contrast of what is with what has been which arouses and maintains this feeling of discontent; nor is this the consequence of any special commercial panics. There have not been many such in recent years, and those which have occurred have been chiefly local. There has been none, perhaps, like that of 1837, for example, when all the banks suspended payment, when States as well as persons were insolvent, when bankruptcy was almost universal, and when property seemed for the time to be wiped out from the face of the country. Nor has there been a panic recently like that of 1857, which many of us clearly remember, or that of 1869, nearer still, when money seemed impossible to be got, and when all credits, even the strongest and solidest, were shaken or overwhelmed.

And it is very observable that this spirit of discontent comes to light most distinctly in times of commercial prosperity. The murmurs which sometimes fill the air in periods of prosperity are stilled when a great commercial storm sweeps across the land; they are no more heard than the voices of conversation, or the outcries of pain, are heard in the midst of the rush of a terrific storm in the air. It is in days of prosperity that men are discontented with what they have, are eager and sometimes angrily eager for more; when the great commercial houses go crashing to the earth there is no sign of discontent among those who are not themselves involved in the catastrophes. Those commercial panics, which sometimes certainly have reached out to, have enveloped and impoverished multitudes of far distributed households, are not the cause of this present and recent discontent.

Nor does it come from any fear of what the future may bring us, or may bring to those in whom this special temper is apparent; because here again all tendencies are in the opposite direction. The industrial classes, even in England, to a great extent—but here eminently and controllingly—have the command of legislative action in their own hands; and they are perfectly aware of the fact. It is not the great capitalists of the country who can direct legislation into particular channels. If they ever try to do that, they have to work secretly. If it were understood that they were generally conspiring for that end, the public sense of the country would so rise against them as to make their efforts wholly futile. The industrial classes either put into position, or displace from position, those who make the laws; and laws which give security to labour, which multiply market for its products, which assure to it its ample and prompt reward, are as certain to be ordained and enforced as the sun is to arise from the horizon to the zenith. It is not any fear of what the future may bring in the way of oppressive legislation—any fear of calamities not experienced, but possibly to be experienced in after time—out of which this temper of discontent arises. And yet it exists; and, if it does not come from either of these sources, whence does it come? If it is not in consequence of any severity of oppression, or any sharp contrast between what is and what used to be, or any effects of commercial panic, or any fear of the future, how comes it that it is distributed so widely as it is?

There are four facts which we have to recognise, I think, in order to obtain any fair and clear explanation of it. One is, that the wealth of all civilized countries, and pre-eminently of this country, is immensely and rapidly increasing in recent years. In our own country it comes, of course, from the opening of mines, from the perfecting of mechanism, from the coal fields and the cotton fields, the sugar plantations and the oil wells, and from the multiplication of railroads stretching over the whole extent of the country and almost of the continent. And so it increases—this public wealth—with enormous rapidity, in vast ratio, and to an extraordinary and unprecedented extent. Remember that in 1880, for example, the assessed valuation in thirty-eight States of this Union was nearly twenty-three thousand millions of dollars, the true valuation being, of course, more than double, or between fifty and sixty thousand millions of dollars. Remember that in 1888 a part of the States, only, reported more than thirteen hundred and sixty millions of dollars in the Savings Banks, due to more than four million depositors. Remember that in 1880, at the last census preceding the recent one, the value of farms in the country was over ten thousand millions of dollars, and the manufacturing capital was nearly twenty-eight hundred millions of dollars. That in 1887 the capital of the railways—the stocks and bonds—in this country was upon one hundred and fifty thousand miles of railway, eight thousand three hundred and seventy-eight millions of dollars; that in 1887 there were thirty-three millions of gold produced

in this country and fifty-four millions of silver; or an aggregate of eighty-seven millions, and more, of the metals which represent wealth, and which in circulation produces wealth. Remember these facts, and then you understand how it was that two years ago there were imported into this country ten and a-half millions worth of precious stones; while in the same year there were imported of silk materials and fabrics fifty-three and a-quarter millions of dollars' worth.

I need not multiply such examples. We all know that there is an enormous lift in the wealth of the country, unexampled, perhaps, in the history of the world, and making this rapidly the richest nation on the face of the earth. The same is seen to a large degree in England, for example, or in France, or in Germany. The same even, to a lesser degree, in Italy or in Austria. Wherever Christianity goes it carries riches in its train, by the push which it gives to human enterprise, and the education which it gives to human faculty, by the public spirit and the domestic spirit which are nurtured by it. "As poor," said the Apostle, "yet making many rich"; whether he had material riches in his eye or not—perhaps he had not—his word was true. It applies, in even the physical sense, to every community in which the ministry of the Gospel goes on. Preaching the Gospel is the means of accumulating and augmenting the riches of the world, through its influence upon the spirit and character on the life and the minds of those who receive it.

So it comes to pass that this enormous multiplication of wealth in our own times, within this country, has gone on in other lands as really, if not as swiftly as in this. We are to bear this in mind; and then we are to remember, of course, that the instances are not infrequent—perhaps they are becoming more frequent all the time—in which immense and shining riches are attained by those who do not acquire them by productive labour, or by the quiet prosecution of any branch of honourable commercial work, but who acquire them, as we say, not uncommonly by "luck"; and men call such persons especially fortunate who have attained great wealth as in a moment. "Luck" sometimes means, of course, the improvement of a fortunate opportunity which comes to some in distinction from others. But sometimes, it has been a process certainly involving fraud, involving an iniquitous disregard of the interests and rights of others, involving a fierce selfishness which has overridden all rules of kindness or of morality. So it has occasionally come to pass that men have suddenly become possessed of enormous wealth, uncounted millions. The humble mechanic, or dealer in hardware, the surveyor of land, or the captain of a tug boat, are able after a little, to build palaces for themselves which outvie the palaces of the nobility of Europe; they are able to outmarch the possessions of vast hereditary estates, in the purchase of jewels, pictures, and ancient heirlooms; if they wish, to marry their children to the representatives of the most ancient and the highest nobility. They are able, if they choose, to be served upon gold plate; to ride across the continent in their own luxurious

palace cars; to circumnavigate the globe in steam yachts, fine as a jewel case, elaborate as a breast pin, and mighty as an ocean steamer. All the mastery and privilege of wealth have suddenly come to them. They can ransack the world for the objects of their desire. Yet it is only a few years between this position of supremacy in wealth and that position of humble daily labour which before was familiar. These instances, no doubt, have been occurring always in the history of the world; more or less, we know they have, as in ancient Rome, or as in the later France, or in England. But they occur more frequently among us; and men starting from very humble positions in life make themselves suddenly conspicuous and magnificent to the amazement of the country, by these immense and immeasurable resources of riches.

Still another fact is that there is a growing tendency, apparently, in this country, to make wealth hereditary in these vast masses of it; and to transmit it from one generation to another, to a third, a fifth, and a sixth, perhaps, in unbroken amount, and even accumulating all the time. The expectation of the law is that estates, particularly if of enormous amount, are to be broken up with the death of him who has been first to possess them. It is felt to be in the interests of the public welfare that they should be. But, on the other hand, the tendency now is, as I have said, to carry them on through successive generations, and so to build up by degrees an hereditary aristocracy of wealth—an aristocracy not founded on great deeds for the State, in council or in arms; not founded on great character, and pre-eminent wisdom, for civil and military affairs; an aristocracy founded simply upon skill and luck in trading or in speculation; which, therefore, stirs no awe or reverence toward itself; which excites envy, perhaps, certainly wonder; but which does not impress the public mind, especially does not impress the classes whose discontent we are considering with any sense of superior virtue, or even of superior capacity, in those who are its representatives. This tendency, as I have said, appears to be on the increase in the country rather than to be diminishing; and vast fortunes, suddenly acquired, vauntingly exhibited, and carried on through successive generations, become a real menace to our civilisation.

Then it is to be observed, as a fourth fact, that in consequence of this immense increase in national wealth, of this vast and sudden accumulation of property, and of this tendency to transmit immense possessions to generation after generation, the popular estimate of wealth in this country has become enormously exaggerated. It is higher, by far, than it ever has been before—higher, certainly, than in the days of our fathers, when wisdom, high character, were reckoned as the chief goods in public men, or in private life; higher than in the days of the Civil War, when men honoured heroism in spirit and in action, when they wanted the largest power in council or on the field—a power disciplined in tactics, but especially a power for the grand strategy which was to move vast masses of men, and

make them converge upon the point of decisive attack. Character was honoured then—the spirit which was ready to risk everything for the rescue of the nation. But now in place of that has come this immensely exaggerated popular estimate of wealth. Perhaps it is natural in a country like ours, where there is no kingly estate, where there is no hereditary nobility, where there are no fixed distinctions of rank, where there is no legal class privilege. At any rate, it exists, and more and more it widens in the land, so that the doings of the rich man are chronicled in the papers; he is pointed out to those who are strangers in the city as being the real king in his community; his death flings such a shadow over the city, and over the land, as the death of a great philanthropist would not, or the death of a great statesman, or of one who had rendered great historical service to his country.

This exaggerated estimate of wealth is to be taken into account in connection with the forces which I have before referred to, and then the four facts stand before us together. The immense and rapid accumulation of wealth in the country; the vast, sudden acquisition of wealth by individuals; the tendency to transmit it unbroken through successive generations; and the inordinate estimate of it on the part of the whole people, taking the place of reverence for high character, or of popular honour for large wisdom and large moral power.

Here, then, we get a glimpse of the secret of the existing discontent—not among the hopeless poor, not among the drunken and vicious, but among those who are industrious, sober and temperate, who desire for themselves and for their families a prosperous though a modest advance in the things of the world. There is a wide feeling that the industrial classes are not gaining their fair share of this enormous and rapid accumulation of wealth. It may be unintelligent, but it exists. Two dollars a day, three dollars, four dollars, five dollars, how small they seem in comparison with these prodigious increments of private and of public property. The small saving of a few dollars a month, how almost pitiful it looks in comparison with these vast and rapid accumulations. The small interest of the savings bank, three per cent. perhaps, how almost microscopic it seems in comparison with the huge interest of which men hear, though of which they have probably no personal experience, where stocks are doubled in nominal value, are trebled, quadrupled, and are still all the time paying high interest even upon the ultimate nominal amount. Men become discontented. You cannot help it. It is human nature, and no man can expel human nature from populations, even with pitch-forks. So it is that the man who had been content with his modest shelter, when he sees the new and showy palace rising in front of him begins to grumble. He is discontented with the simple household equipment which before he enjoyed, when the palace of one who started on the same level with himself in respect to property is filled and glittering with all objects of luxury;

when he trudges along on foot in the mud, you cannot very severely blame him if he wishes sometimes that it was equally possible for him to ride in the carriages of the newly-made rich, which go flashing by him. Man is so made that he desires that which others attain, and he is restless, not, certainly, to pillage it from them, but to get an opportunity for himself to do the same thing which they have done. Man, let us not forget, is a creature of aspiration, whose desire naturally outstrips his attainment. That is the order of the human constitution; that is the way in which God built man, to make him at last the lord of the earth. Your horse is contented with his daily food, his comfortable covering, and not too much work. Your dog is contented if he is well taken care of, and now and then caressed; he wants nothing beyond it. Man, when he gains one level wants immediately to attain a higher. It is the birthright of his nature; it is the prophecy of immortality in him; it is the aspiration which God created in him, and by which He is pushing him forward and pushing the race forward toward better ages in the future.

So it is that a man is not contented with his small wages, with his modest house; he wants to build another and a larger; he wants to equip the house with better furniture; he wants more ways of enjoyment, more power of entertainment, more facilities of travel, he wants a social position above the present through which he can come into contact with other more enlightening and stimulating minds than he now meets. You cannot blame him for it. He sees others surpassing him in attainment of goods upon which their desires are alike eagerly and vehemently fixed; and he is discontented until he gets the opportunity to spring level with them, and to go with them abreast in the great race.

Then it is an added grievance to many that the small property of the industrious, slowly and sometimes painfully acquired, is peculiarly precarious. Savings banks, of course, have done an immense work at this point in relieving a tendency which otherwise might have become too strong to be controlled; in administering comfort and quietness of mind to increasing multitudes. I do not know, but it is the very best thing that the Savings Bank system has done, in all the hundred years of its operation in England or in this country. It has given men and women assurance that small savings would be securely guarded at a minimum of cost, and would yield a moderate but a secure interest to those making deposits; and as long as one is content with the small interest, he has a refreshing sense of quietness and of safety, but the moment he becomes dissatisfied, and wants a better interest or a larger, he is hopelessly at the mercy of persons whom he does not know, and of events and tendencies which he cannot foresee, and cannot control.

The rich man may distribute his investments in many quarters, making profit and loss-balance each other, and bringing out the average on the whole on the right side; or if the rich man is in trouble,

he may find plenty of able assistants and helpers behind him—as the Bank of England has lately advanced fifty millions or more of dollars in co-operation with other bankers, in order to protect the credit of the Barings—doing it not out of benevolent sympathy, but out of the instinct of self-preservation, in a desire to avert the wide calamity of such a tremendous shock as the downfall of that house would have been. The poor man has nobody to help him; he cannot watch the market, even; he is really and wholly dependent upon the advice of others. When stocks fall, he holds his little proportion until he is frightened, and then sells at a sacrifice; or, perhaps he holds on to the end, and loses everything. There is that in this sense of precariousness in property where the property is small, which becomes an added grievance to those who have been acquiring property with great labour and long self-denial. My friends, the very saddest thing about great commercial reverses when they come is the remorseless swing and sweep with which the little properties solely acquired, transmitted perhaps to widows and to orphans, are swallowed up and lost in the tremendous maelstrom of the event.

Then it is to be remembered, as well, that all the teaching of democracy—the elementary teaching of democracy, as embodied, for example, in our Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal, and have equal and inalienable rights to the pursuit of happiness—tends to lift men who are willing to work, eager for it, willing to save for the benefit of those coming after them; but it makes them certain that they have a right to provide for their households as well as for themselves, and to give their children a better opportunity in life than they themselves have had. When, then, they see others able to do this rapidly, on the largest scale, and find that they cannot do it themselves, that they are fatally hindered in their effort to do it, affection, parental and domestic love, comes in as a fresh power of discontent; a power that works inevitably toward murmuring and dissatisfaction with the existing order of things. It is love, and not mere greed; it is affection, and not mere mercenary ambition, which is at the bottom of very much of the existing discontent. A man feels, as I have said, that if he is equal before the contemplation of the law when he stands beside others equal before God the Creator and God the Governor, equal before the Cross and the Judgment Throne, he must have equal rights in the world; not to the property which others have acquired, but to the opportunity to acquire such property for himself, to give to his household the advantage of it.

You cannot avoid the influence of that teaching of our whole constitution of government, and that teaching of Christianity itself. When the merchant and his drayman stand side by side before the ballot-box, each having his vote; when the man building the stately mansion, and the humblest mechanic at work upon it, are equal before the law, and before the Divine tribunal; when the great statesman or capitalist, who owns a large part of the territory of a district,

is equal before the law and before God's Throne with the humblest man who tills his field, you must expect, as human nature is made, that the humble man will wish the opportunity to do what the other has done, or will wish the opportunity that his children after him may be enabled to tread in the same distinguished and lofty path.

These are some of the causes of the discontent which we recognise. In the face of the great accumulations of national wealth, of the sudden acquisition of enormous riches by individuals, of the tendency to transmit them through successive generations, almost in direct consequence of these facts, the inordinate estimate of wealth has come to be general, almost universal, and the industrial classes feel that they do not get their fair share of it; they feel that their small investments are peculiarly unsafe and uncertain; that they cannot gratify the new desires which rise always with success; that they cannot make sure of the prosperity which they wish for the families that come after them; and that while they, in contemplation of the law and of the Gospel, are naturally equal with all those to whom this vast success has come, they have no real chance for an equally shining and splendid success.

There is the secret of the discontent. It is a discontent which works into manifestation on every side. As I have said, you hear it in conversation, you hear it on the platform, you meet it in the press. It is not a sympathetic temper; but rather an aggressive, self-assertive temper, which works toward making the day of labour an eight hours' day; toward organisations of labour that shall be wide in extent, and weaponed with strikes. It is the same force which works toward novel experiments in social custom and legislative enactment; the same force which prompts the alliances of farmers and others to control legislation; the same force which pushes toward making silver equivalent to gold in purchasing power—which is simply another way of trying to swim up Niagara. It is a temper which, unquestionably, unless there can be just education of it, with direction of it to better methods, threatens in a degree the future prosperity of the country. And yet some things are to be remembered. For instance this, that it is not a temper—except in individual instances—of jealousy or of rage. It is a temper simply of unsatisfied aspiration. Desire outstrips success; that is the whole of it. The Nihilist element rarely appears—never, as born in this country—and where it does appear the police and the military always can take care of it. It isn't a Nihilistic fury—it is not an anarchical and destroying force—this discontent to which I refer; it is simply unsatisfied aspiration. And we are never to combat that, or to be frightened because of it. It is generically the same force which took our ancestral pirates and painted savages and built them up into Christian commonwealths. It is precisely such unsatisfied aspiration which has been lifting the race forward, from the advent of Christ till this hour. It is just this unsatisfied aspiration which God has planted in its element in the human soul, and to which He presents

the hidden riches of the earth ; locked up behind deserts and seas, and lodged under mountain crests, which a man must work for that he may gain them, but which he can gain if he will patiently and courageously work.

That is the power that has moulded civilisation. That is the power with which history is filled ; and we are not to quarrel with it because it appears in a way just now to give us perhaps a temporary and timid discontent. If there was wrath in it, if there was anarchical ambition and destruction in this discontent, then we might dread it ; but as it exists among the industrial classes of the time, and of the land, it is the desire for a success not yet attained, and that has always promise in it, and not threat.

Let us remember as well that moral influences come in properly, to give men at large a nobler estimate of the real good of life. I know that men of the world sneer at the idea of ever persuading the population of a country like this that wealth is not the chiefest ideal. If it cannot be done, then our ruin is not remote ! I believe that it can be done ; that men can be made to feel that domestic comfort, personal happiness, culture of the individual and of the household, are not dependent upon wealth as an indispensable external condition. The greatest men by whose advent our history has been signalled have come from humble cottages ; small villages among the distant hills have sent senators and great representatives into Congress, have put leading soldiers at the head of our armies. Men may be led to feel that wealth is not necessary to domestic happiness, or to domestic education ; that character is greater than wealth ; that the true riches are those of the spirit—that those are the only riches which history recognises and celebrates ; the only riches which are dear to God's mind ; the only riches which can be carried forward into the illustrious immortality. The Gospel works, of course, always in that direction. It bears upon its very front the motto : "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Sometimes men hate it on account of that very motto ; but there it stands blazing in lucid letters before the world for ever ; coming from the Divine mind which gave the Gospel to the world. In it is the secret of all noblest prosperity and progress.

And there is no greater duty resting on Christian men and women than to take that motto of the Master, and transmute it into character, and illustrate it in life. I would send the Gospel to every distant island of the sea, make it at home on every remote and darkened shore ; but I would count this a duty prior even to that, and supremely in importance—that men and women living in our time, and themselves prosperous, should illustrate in character and in life that divine maxim ; should regally show that wealth if it comes is to be used honestly, nobly, beneficently, but that wealth is *not* the chief good of human life ; it is only an instrument to that which is better and higher, and "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Let us rejoice that our institutions of government are the safest in the world because they give free opportunity to this force of unsatisfied aspiration to press forward in its own direction. The law requires that it be done peaceably, that it be done benignly, with no injustice or injury to other people; but then the law leaves every man to be the architect of his own fortune. It sets before him "an open door," and says, "Go in and out, and find pasture where you can." That is the safeguard of our institutions. It is upon that right of every man that the whole structure rests. It is that right which constitutes the solid corner-stone of our fabric of government; and the edifice will never fall or tremble while that corner-stone and firm foundation remain unchanged. Liberty gives security. You explode dynamite or gunpowder in a tight box—and you have made the box of iron, perhaps, to make it strong—yet the explosion tears and splits and rends, in spite of all your guards. You explode the gunpowder on the open floor, in the open air, and it leaves a smoke and a scorch, perhaps, but nothing else. So it is that this discontent should lead us to recognise more clearly than ever the wisdom of our institutions of government, to value them more highly, and to be more grateful to Him who gave our fathers the wisdom and the counsel from which they have come.

And let us gladly anticipate the time when man's ambition, not being so concentrated, as often it is now, on the mere external good of money, and of what external things money can purchase, but being concentrated on the higher goods, which are intrinsic, which are spiritual, which are immortal—when this aspiration shall lift society toward the higher levels, and the better times for which the noblest aspiration looks and longs. Ah, my friends, we are not to quarrel with this discontent, which is simply desire outstripping achievement. We do not quarrel with the steam force because it beats against the cylinder head, for that is the force which is to drive the vessel onward, or to propel the mighty train. We do not quarrel with the strong wind which strikes our sails upon the sea. We do not wish to be upset; but within the limit of security we rejoice in the wind because it carries us forward on our path. We are not to quarrel with this unsatisfied desire, which reaches after something better than has yet been gained. It may incommode us sometimes, it may sometimes, possibly, make us timid; but it is the power which is to carry persons and households, the people and the nation, forward, and still forward, to the illuminated ages of universal attainment of the highest good, and to the final universal content! God grant it, and to Him be the praise!

## THE INSCRIPTION OF SILOAM.

BY PROFESSOR J. RENDEL HARRIS.

THE famous inscription of Siloam is known to all archæologists as one of the most precious monuments of the early history of our race; and its indisputable evidence has thrown much light on the state of civilisation in the earliest times of the Jewish monarchy, on the development of the Jewish literature, and on the genesis of the Western alphabets from their common Semitic ancestral form.

When we say that all archæologists know the worth of the Siloam stone, perhaps we might go on to say that by the workings of a kindly Providence we are all of us becoming archæologists, especially in Oriental matters; for the right understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the right estimation of the Jewish literature and ethics, are more and more seen to depend upon that revived sense of the life of past ages which comes to us more keenly in the study of archæology than by any other means. It may be assumed, then, that any new information with regard to this important monument will be welcome, even though it should seem to be of the nature of a tragedy.

Up to the present time, the story of the Siloam stone has been rather of the nature of a romance; it often happens so in archæological work, and perhaps this makes the study so much more attractive to ordinary minds than that of philology. The romance of the search after a lost root or a lost linguistic form is nothing compared to the concrete excitement provoked by the discovery of an inscribed stone from a vanished temple, or a piece of the wall of an ancient city. Imagine, for example, the excitement of M. Clermont Ganneau when he saw protruding from the ground the stone inscribed with Greek letters, which had once formed a part of the fence between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Israelites in the Jewish temple. Or take the case of Mr. Wood, the explorer of Ephesus, when he found the first tokens of that great temple of Artemis, which had been so long sunk deep below the surface of the marshy soil on which the first builders had placed it, that it might enjoy immunity from the shock of earthquake. No less interesting than these, nor less valuable from a scientific point of view, was the accidental discovery of the famous Siloam inscription, by the boys in Jerusalem, who wandered from the pool of Siloam into the southern end of the ancient tunnel that connects the pool with the Fountain of the Virgin in the Kedron Valley, and detected the incised letters upon the side of the tunnel not far from its entrance.

This was ten years ago. In February of 1881, Professor Sayce made his copy of the inscription by candle-light, and a paper-squeeze of the inscription was taken, as well as a plaister cast. Finally, the inscription was treated with hydrochloric acid by Professor Guthe in order to dissolve out the lime which had settled in the deeply

incised letters (an unfortunate proceeding, according to my judgment). Copies of the plaster cast of the inscription have found their way into the West; and the original mould from which they were made is in my possession (the artist who made it caught a fever from working in the foul air of the tunnel). So that we can say that we are very well placed for a knowledge of the inscription, and may console ourselves over that fact, for now we come to the tragic part of the story—the inscription itself has disappeared!

In order to explain more fully about this piece of vandalism, let me now communicate some bits of information which are not generally known.

For some time past there have been rumours in Jerusalem of the discovery of a new Hebrew inscription, which may be thus translated:

“This channel (or drain) was made at the command of ninety, and labourers ninety, and the outlay ninety: remember thou wilt find before thee ninety, and behind thee ninety: take it, and thou shalt raise it to a river, and the work is strengthened from Mount Qarha from thy work to the place which men will call, and thou shalt remember it, Shiloah.”

Now this inscription evidently has reference to the tunnel of Siloam. Further, it is a forgery. The author of it has fortified himself for the work by a study of the famous Moabite stone, in which he found a word which has never yet been satisfactorily explained; namely, the word “Qarha.” We find Mesha, king of Moab, recording that there was no cistern in the wall in Qarha; but no one seems exactly to know what “Qarha” means,—whether it was a place or a citadel, or something different from either. Accordingly the author of this inscription of which I have given the rough transcript, will have the doubtful word to represent a mountain connected with the Siloam tunnel in some mysterious manner, perhaps because of the mention of a cistern in Qarha.

The reports which were current in Jerusalem showed that the Moabite stone had something to do with the “find;” for it was reported that the stone was a new Moabite stone in the possession of a certain wealthy Greek. It may be doubted, however, whether the wealthy Greek wished the Moabite stone to be mentioned in the matter. His object was something quite different. It is suggestive enough from the transcript that we have here an attempt to complete the Siloam inscription, which is known to be imperfect and illegible at the end, the concluding sentence being generally given as follows:

“And the waters flowed from the channel into the pool for a distance of one thousand cubits, and [a part of] a cubit was the height of the rock,” etc.

Now, it would seem that the forger of the new stone, seeing that the tunnel inscription had ended incompletely with numerical details of the work, was disposed to fill up the lacuna with statements about the number of men employed, and other similar matter; all of which is very clever, but absolutely useless unless the actual Siloam inscription were removed from its place, so that no tests for the newly-

read letters might be employed. A horrible suspicion of vandalism thus rises in the mind. But we are moving too fast; let us return to sober history.

The reports current in Jerusalem said that the stone was in the ancient Phenician character. This was what might have been expected. Phenician alphabets are a speciality amongst the forgers of inscriptions in Syria (only they make mistakes sometimes; I myself was offered some Phenician inscriptions by the youth of Sidon, in which the artist had mingled early forms of the Greek alphabet, evidently from some Western hand-book, in which the two languages were compared as to their early alphabetic forms).

To bring the matter to a point, a correspondent of mine succeeded, on the 18th of last October, in getting an introduction to the wealthy Greek of whom report had been speaking, and an invitation to examine the newly-discovered stones. Accordingly, he paid a visit, and, by good luck, the Greek was away from home, and his wife was well pleased to show the inscriptions.

First and foremost (*horresco referens*), there was lifted on the table an ancient stone with Phenician characters, which a glance showed to be nothing more or less than the great inscription of Siloam. Next came the Phenician inscription of which we gave a copy above. An examination of this stone showed it to be a forgery. Where the copy has a Hebrew *p*, the stone had a *b*. The Arabs cannot pronounce a *p*; with them *Tripolis* becomes *Tarabulus*; and a steam-boat (*vapour*) is *baboor*.

It was clear, then, that the stone was a forgery of some Arabic-speaking person, and was meant as a pendant to the Siloam inscription. My correspondent tells me he returned to Jerusalem, and lost no time in making the necessary visit to the tunnel of Siloam. Every evil suspicion was verified; the inscription had indeed been removed. As my correspondent was coming away from the examination of the tunnel, he met Fra Lièvin, the famous Franciscan archæologist, the authority of authorities on all Jerusalem antiquities. To him he communicated the discovery; and the reply which he received was, "Mais c'est un vandalisme!" ["Why, that is vandalism!"]—a sentiment in which I think I may assume that all scholars will join.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.\*

*Lesson for December 21st. Luke xxiv. 44-53. Golden Text, John xiv. 3.*

### JESUS' PARTING WORDS.

During these forty days the Lord often had conversations with His disciples. Before His resurrection the disciples were very slow to

\* These Sermonettes are original or abridged.

understand very simple truths. When the Lord had said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," Thomas had replied, "We know not whither Thou goest, and how *can* we know the way?" But now the disciples understood His instructions, because Jesus *opened* their understandings. No other teacher possessed the power of opening the understandings of his pupils. Jesus still exercises this power. He bestows the Holy Spirit. The Bible perplexes those who are not taught by Him. The Lord conversed with His disciples not only about His own past sufferings, but also about their future labours. He told them what they were to preach, and where they were to preach.

I. What were they to preach? Not vengeance, but mercy, "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." The gifts that sinners need are repentance and pardon. To be pardoned without repentance would be no blessing. Repentance simply means a change in the state of the mind—a change from the state of mind that will not believe to a state of mind that will; from the state of mind that does not love God to the state of mind that does. No true penitent shall be without the pardon and remission of sins.

II. Where were the apostles to preach? Among *all* nations, but they were to *begin* at Jerusalem. The murderers were to have the *first* offer of pardon. When Napoleon was once urged to visit Jerusalem, he answered, "Jerusalem does not come within the line of my operations." But Jerusalem was the starting-point and centre of Christ's operations when He began the conquest of the world. The Apostle Peter, speaking to the Jews of the Divine order by which the first place had always been given to the Jews in the history of Revelation, says, "Unto you *first*, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you."

"At the village of Bersham, near which I reside," says Williams of Wren, "there is a foundry for casting cannons. After they are cast, they are tested by the founders, who first of all put in a single charge, and then a double charge, and if they bear that without bursting, they are pronounced fit for the battle-field." The Gospel was a new and untried instrument. It had to be tested, and where was there a more fitting place than Jerusalem for making the first experiment? If the sinners of Jerusalem could be converted, then no sinner need despair. And what was the result? Peter tested the new gun, and three thousand were converted in one day.

Let us remember that this Divine charity does not begin far away, but "begins at home." We are to witness for Jesus, and we are to begin at our Jerusalem—just at home.

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## THE NATIVITY OF THE REDEEMER.

*Preached in the forenoon of Sabbath, 21st December, 1890.*

BY THE REV. THOMAS COCHRANE,  
*The Pleasance Church, Edinburgh.*

“Unto us a child is born,” etc.—Isaiah ix. 6.

THERE are three great and marvellous epochs, in connection with the wondrous scheme of Redemption, the memory of which will never be effaced, either in time or eternity!

These three noted epochs, haloed by a peerless circumstance and glory, need it be affirmed, are the birth, death, and resurrection of the Redeemer; and these amazing events and ever-memorable epochs in the history of the redemption of the Church and people of the Lord, all over the far-reaching realms of Christendom are regularly and stately commemorated, even as they have been in ages past, and will be in the years to come. These are events the Church of Christ will not, cannot permit to die! Hence Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, when the eye of the Christian world is turned to the cradle, the cross, and the sepulchre of the Redeemer, respectively, while the heart throbs, in unison with the earnest gaze of faith, and, in imagination, we visit the manger, where the infant Redeemer was cradled; the cross, where He suffered, the just one for the unjust; and the open sepulchre, whence He rose, triumphant over death and the grave—a conqueror mighty to save!

We do not, now, propose to enter upon the consideration of these great events, generally; but to draw attention, especially, to the first of these, which the Christian world is now commemorating, and to meditate, briefly, upon the nativity of our Redeemer—gazing with rapt and holy wonder upon the manger-cradle, and uniting in holy adoration with the angel hosts in the heavenly song—

“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Goodwill toward men!”

Who is He that is born in Bethlehem? Who is He that is thus born in Bethlehem? Who is He that is cradled in the manger?

The answer we give, not in our own words, but in the language of God's holy book; and thus we read, Isaiah ix. 6—"The mighty God! The Father of Eternity! The Prince of Peace!"

And why, then, in yon manger, in such poverty, did the Virgin Mary bring forth her "first-born son"? The answer should come home with power and deepest pathos to every heart, and thrill and penetrate every affection and emotion within us. He was born, and He was thus born and thus cradled, because "He became poor," that we "might be rich;" and He thus came "to seek and to save that which was lost;" "foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

Here, then, and now in thought let us visit the stable, and look into yon manger! Lo! there a babe in helpless infancy! Behold! the evidences of poverty, that meet us at every point of view! See! the swaddling bands, in which the infant lies; how truly and clearly they indicate the deep depths of humiliation, in which that babe was born; and when we realize or attempt to realize the heights of exaltation from which He came to earth, and strive to fathom or conceive the unutterable and inconceivable depths of His humiliation—from the cradle to the cross, and from the cross to the sepulchre; and when, yet again, we attempt to solve the problem, and resolve the reason and ground as to such humiliation, we shall be led heartily and adoringly to join in the angelic song—

"Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Goodwill toward men!"

Look, yet again, at yon cradle-bed! See there, not only the evidences of poverty, but the manifest tokens of the weakness of infancy—the feebleness of humanity in all its utter helplessness. That infant cry how feeble; that infant arm how weak! How unable to do anything to overcome the utter incapacity of infancy! There lies the "child born," the son of Mary "given"; and, as regarded mere nature, His holy human nature, there might be, we suppose there would be, no difference outwardly between this babe and any other, save that every part of the physical framework was perfect, and that there was no inherent sin; but yet that "holy thing" was called "*The Son of God*," and "*THE MIGHTY GOD was still His name*." Ay; and while the arm of infancy was, outwardly, like any infant arm (the arm of a true and proper humanity), the arm of Divinity was poising the mighty worlds that roll in the dim distance of an unexplored and inconceivable immensity—ruling over all, in the kingdoms of Creation, Providence, and Redemption, and swaying that sceptre of universal love, on account of which the adoring hosts of heaven were singing their grand new glory song, and the Magi, laden with their free-will offerings, were being attracted by the star, which had been trimmed, like a lamp in heaven's azure vault, to tell where the Saviour was born!

Surely there is something here worthy of "Everlasting remembrance;" surely there is here the manifestation of a love, whose "breadth, and length, and depth, and height" pass all knowledge! Mystery there doubtless is, for "*great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh;*" but while great is the mystery, as great are the mercy, the grace, and the love; and we will sing again "a new song to the Lord," and swell the angel chorus—

"Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Good-will toward men."

Another key-note still we touch, evoking sweet and solemn harmony.

Why was "the Son of God" a babe? Why born in the flesh at all? Why the poverty of His birth—the helplessness of His infancy—the feebleness of His human nature? We can only answer—in order that He might be the Saviour! It had been humiliation deep enough to come to earth, in such a condition at all; it had been a stooping from infinite heights of glory to depths of infinite humiliation, even to be born, as born the Saviour was; but when you try to realise the fact that yon infant arm was yet to be nailed to the accursed tree, and when you attempt to conceive that yon radiant infant brow was yet to be wreathed with thorns, and His blessed side pierced with the soldier's cold and cruel spear, you find beneath that depth so deep, as manifested to the eye, a lower deep of sorrow and suffering, a pathway to the tomb, all traced and tracked by the blood of His atoning sacrifice, and you realise in these words of inspiration a deeper and fuller meaning (Is. liii. 4), "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," and "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." What heights of glory were His! what depths of humiliation did He fathom when in the deepest depths thereof He cried, "I am a worm and no man." "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by; behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow?"

If, then, the birth of Christ Jesus were in order to His being the Saviour of men; if His birth were in order to His life of holy obedience and death of agony and shame in the room and stead of the guilty: and if these were in order to man's acceptance with God, when justified by faith in the obedience and work of a risen and exalted Redeemer, surely we have cause again, and anew, to sing the angel's song—

"Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Good-will toward men!"

We wake again a new or higher key to praise the Redeemer, "almighty to save."

Over every birth-place and cradle-bed since the fall, with conspicuously few exceptions, you may write the words—

“Born to die!”

The few notable exceptions only confirm the rule—“all have sinned”—all must die!

Look, now, at the cradle-bed of the Redeemer. Surely, if ever there were to be exception, it would be here! No, it could not be—it must not be, here! The very ground of a world's hope—of man's salvation—was based on the doing, and the dying, of Him who lay a babe in Bethlehem; for, in taking the sinner's place, He must bear the sinner's doom; and in bearing our sins, and the full penalty thereof, He bore these sins away, “as far as east is distant from the west.” The preceptive and penal obedience of the Saviour thoroughly and completely meet the requirements of God's holy law and infinite justice, so that He is “The Just God” while justifying the ungodly who believe. Through, or by, the manger in Bethlehem, let us look to the cross on Calvary, yea, to the crown of glory, where-with the Redeemer is now crowned in Heaven above; and as we stand with upturned gaze to glory, let us strike anew a grand keynote to the praise of the Eternal Trinity:

“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Good-will toward men!”

Every cradle tells of a grave; for every birth we have a death; and for every death we find a place of burial. Now, even so here; we stand by the cradle to-day, and we look through, or by, it to the cross, and beside the cross, or near it, we have the new-made tomb of “Joseph of Arimathea,” where leal and true disciples lovingly and tenderly laid the blessed body of Jesus Christ. He died! He was buried! It was no dream, no myth, but a solemn reality—death and sepulture, as really and truly as ever happened to mortal man, obtained in this case; and if so, in the death of Jesus have we not the death of Him who, by His dying, overcame death; and who, by His being laid in the grave, after being proved to be truly dead, gave evidence that by His death there would be ground of hope for the very chief of sinners, for the death of Jesus was the death of Death; and, if so, on account of Death, dead and buried, we will raise our loud acclaim with the angelic throng—

“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Good-will toward men!”

Once more we unite in praising the name of our God and glorious Redeemer.

If the cradle lead us to the cross, and the cross to the sepulchre, that tomb we find open and empty! The Saviour could not be holden of death. He died, but revived, and rose again, and we now look into

“the place where the Lord lay.” Lo! it is empty. “He is not here, but is risen”; but, if risen, then death is robbed of its sting, and the grave of its victory, and the tomb is open for every believer; for “now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.”

Here, then, as we stand around the Saviour's cradle, we have abundant cause to raise—and shall we not sing as we have never sung before?—our songs of gratitude, “unto Him that loved us;” and join in the angelic song, with hearts of truest, heartiest thanksgiving:

“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Goodwill toward men!”

On all these grounds, and on every other ground, implied in or suggested by the subject before us, let us swell the chorus of the Saviour's praise! Surely we have the very highest grounds for remembering the Advent of the Redeemer; and, so, we look to His cradle, His cross, and His tomb. We see the babe of the Advent, when “low lay His head among the beasts of the stall;” we follow Him through life, and see Him, when He had not “where to lay His head.” The world that had no room for Him in the inn, at His birth, had no home for Him during His life. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” We follow Him to Calvary, and behold the blood of His cross, the grand panacea for the sinner's guilt and the world's woes! We solemnly stand by the tomb, and o'er that open grave we behold the dawning of hope and a blessed immortality! Nay, through the cradle, we not only look to the cross, but through the cross to the crown and the throne, and behold the Saviour crowned with “many crowns”; for, “because He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, God, also, hath highly exalted Him, and hath given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!”

Here, then, and now, in spirit, we begin the doxology of the sky: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

“Who is He, in yonder stall,  
At whose feet the shepherds fall?  
'Tis the Lord! O wondrous story!  
'Tis the Lord, the King of Glory;  
At His feet we humbly fall;  
Crown Him! crown Him Lord of all!”

## READING.\*

BY THE REV. THOMAS CHAMPNESS.

WHEN Paul the aged wrote to his young friend Timothy, he bade him give attention to reading, and showed his own practice by asking him to bring the books. If you are not a reader, those who hear you preach lose by listening to you; for while it is true that some men have read what has prevented them from becoming useful because of the way their minds have been lifted out of the groove of everyday thoughts, it is quite as true that some of us are weaving cotton when we might have had silk, and others are letting the shuttle cross the warp with nothing in it!

We have had letters on this subject, and some young men write to ask what they should read. Our reply is—Read that kind of a book that is somewhat foreign to your natural bent. If you are imaginative and poetical, read Butler, Pearson, Wesley, and other writers that will call the reason into the field of action. If you are logical and calm, read poetry and works of imagination. Pollok, Young, Herbert, will do you much service in making what your preaching needs. You are sure to read that which your mind loves: we say read till you like that which at first seems irksome.

Read only what you can digest. In reading you must feed the soul as you ought to feed the body—slowly, and with the things that nourish. Poisonous books, like poisonous food, must not be touched. But there are other books, harmless it may be, but nothing in them that you can assimilate. All you read which cannot make material for thought, and be of use to your preaching, is like some kinds of food, pleasant it may be to the taste, but nothing in it to make bone and muscle.

You will do well to keep a Bible on your table, with wide margins, where you can write the place in any book that illustrates a text. In this way men who began the habit when young have, by the time they are forty years of age, made a commentary simply invaluable. It is easily done, and in the course of years gives you the help of all the books you have ever read towards making a sermon.

Of course you think as you read. If you do not think, do not waste your time in reading. You could use it much better in other ways. As you grasp your author's meaning ask yourself the question: "Is this true? Can I reply to this? What can be said against it? Have I met with this idea before, or is it something new?" Ponder the style. See if you could amend it. Put the thought into your own words, and you may fill your pockets with coins with your own image and superscription. Weigh the adjectives, see if you

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\* From "The Young Preacher's Guide." *Joyful News Depot*, Rochdale. Sixpence.

have another that is more fitting. You will find some authors use gold when silver would have done, aye, and done better. And there are others who use copper when more precious metal is within their reach, and the subject is worthy of the finest of the gold. Weigh the metaphors, and try if you can recollect them being used before, and where? By following this plan you will add largely to your own treasure house.

Some preachers, when they have read a book, preach it. Mr. Drummond's book has made hundreds of sermons. It has done for some pulpiteers what the Roman Wall has been doing for those who wished to build without taking pains to quarry their stone. Those who know the Roman Wall can point to the stones in many a north country farm-house. After all, it is only wearing stolen clothes, if we may be allowed to change the figure.

The Bible must be first or nowhere in the life of a preacher. It was the book which at the beginning of our days took hold of our mind. Well do we remember how its stories, leaving so much for the imagination, caused us to paint mental pictures of the events of sacred history. Even yet we love the stories of the Old Book better than any other part of it, and believe that in the other world one of our first employments will be to seek out its heroes and heroines, and to tell how much pleasure and instruction we have learned from the tale of their lives and actions.

## SERMONETTE FOR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

*Lesson for December 28th, Review of the Quarter's Lessons. Golden Text, Hebrews v. 8.*

### THE FINISHED PICTURE.

IN the church of St. Mark's at Venice, high over the main door in the inside, there is a large picture of Jesus seated upon a throne, with His mother and Mark standing beside Him. It is a wonderful picture, made of many pieces of coloured stone and glass—red, blue, yellow, green—fitted so closely together that the joinings cannot be seen, and the picture looks as if it had been painted with a brush upon a background of gold, and set in a frame of red marble. Through this door the young people come, and as they enter they turn and look upon the figure of Jesus shining and sparkling in gold above them, and read these words written upon the red marble fillet:—“*Who He was, whence He came. . . . Do thou remember.*” So in our lessons for the past year we have seen who Jesus was and whence He came; we have followed Him over the green hills and by the blue Lake of Galilee, and the end is “The Finished Picture” looking out upon us from that background.

We have seen Him in His boyhood and in His manhood, toiling as

a carpenter in the village shop of Nazareth. We have seen Him lay aside His tools, never to take them again, to be a teacher of the will of God to men. He walked from village to village and taught, and wherever He went He was kind and gentle, healing the sick, and speaking loving words to little children. After a little over three years of teaching, His work was finished, and His time was come to die. We have seen how He was crucified while still a young man—thirty-three years and four months old. Then we have seen His glorious resurrection and ascension to God's right hand. And now, dear children, what is He to you? Whether you are a gentle girl or a valiant boy, His life and death are all for you as though there were none else but you in the world. The smallest child can believe in the beautiful life of Jesus, and have faith in what He said, and can try to be patient and gentle as Jesus was. Jesus loved little children dearly, and clasped them in His arms and blessed them, and set them before His disciples as examples of the kind of minds that have Heaven about them. Are not you going to love Him in return? He calls for your love and trust. Listen to His words as they are read to you. Listen to His voice within you, guiding you into right. Pray to Him to help you to obey, and to give you more of His Spirit. When you are in doubt, ask Him to tell you what is right for you to do, and do what His voice in your conscience tells you is right. The more you do right and refuse wrong, the easier will it become to you, and the Holy Spirit within you will grow stronger, and your little lives will become purer and more like His. Living thus, you will by-and-by rejoice that by early turning to Jesus your life has not been spent in gathering a heap of gold, or in idle pleasure-seeking, or in doing or saying harmful things; but that, by following His love, truth, and peace, you did what in you lay to leave in the world a little more of the flower and seed of goodness and beauty, grown openly, scattered freely in the name and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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#### TO OUR READERS.

As the contents of THE BRITISH WEEKLY PULPIT are of permanent value, the numbers are usually bound in volumes. But the exigencies of a weekly publication, involving varieties of type, headings, and the like, somewhat mar the appearance of the books. It has been resolved, therefore, to discontinue the weekly issues, and to publish the PULPIT henceforth in yearly volumes. The fourth volume, containing many of the choicest sermons preached during 1891, will be published in

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