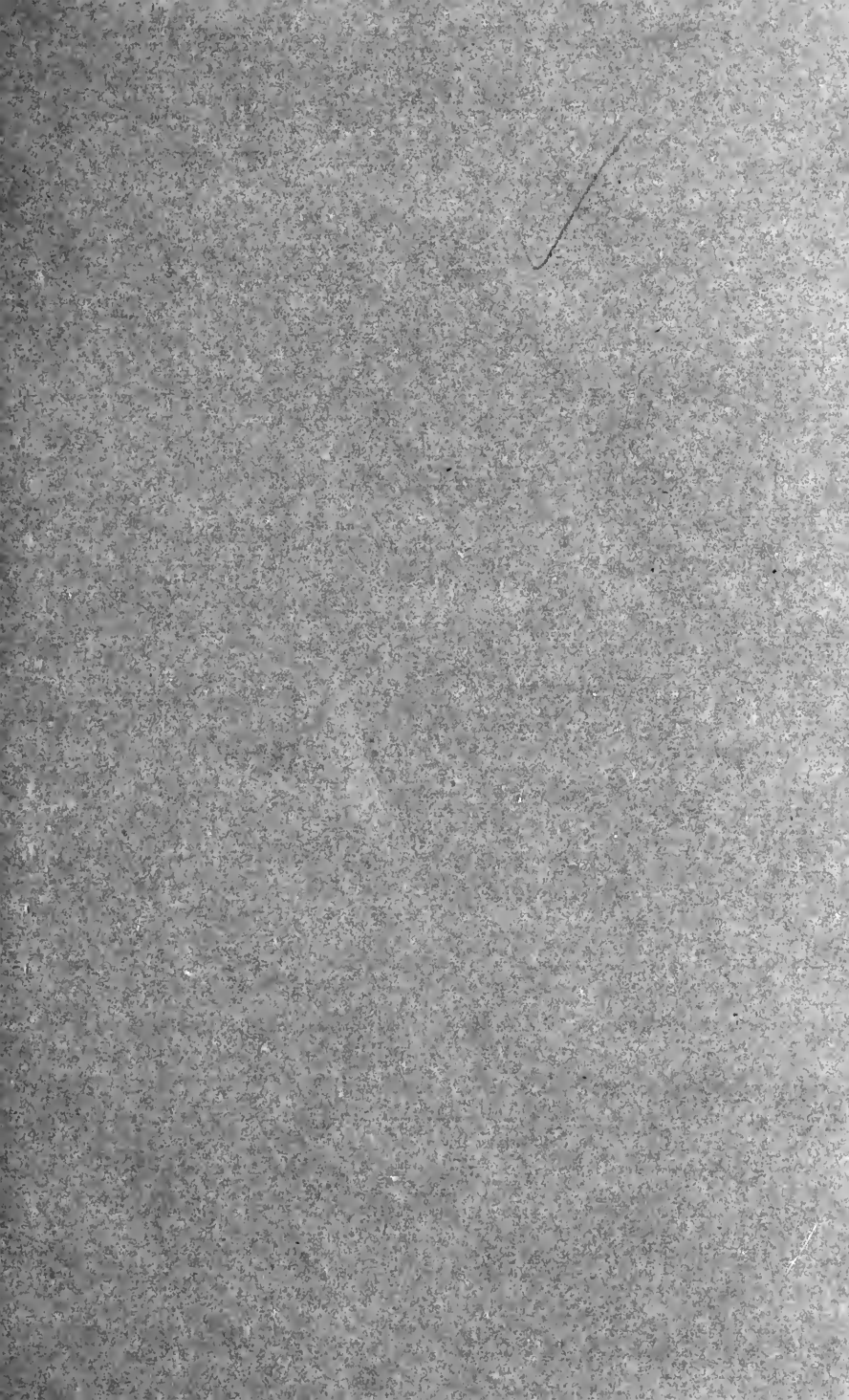
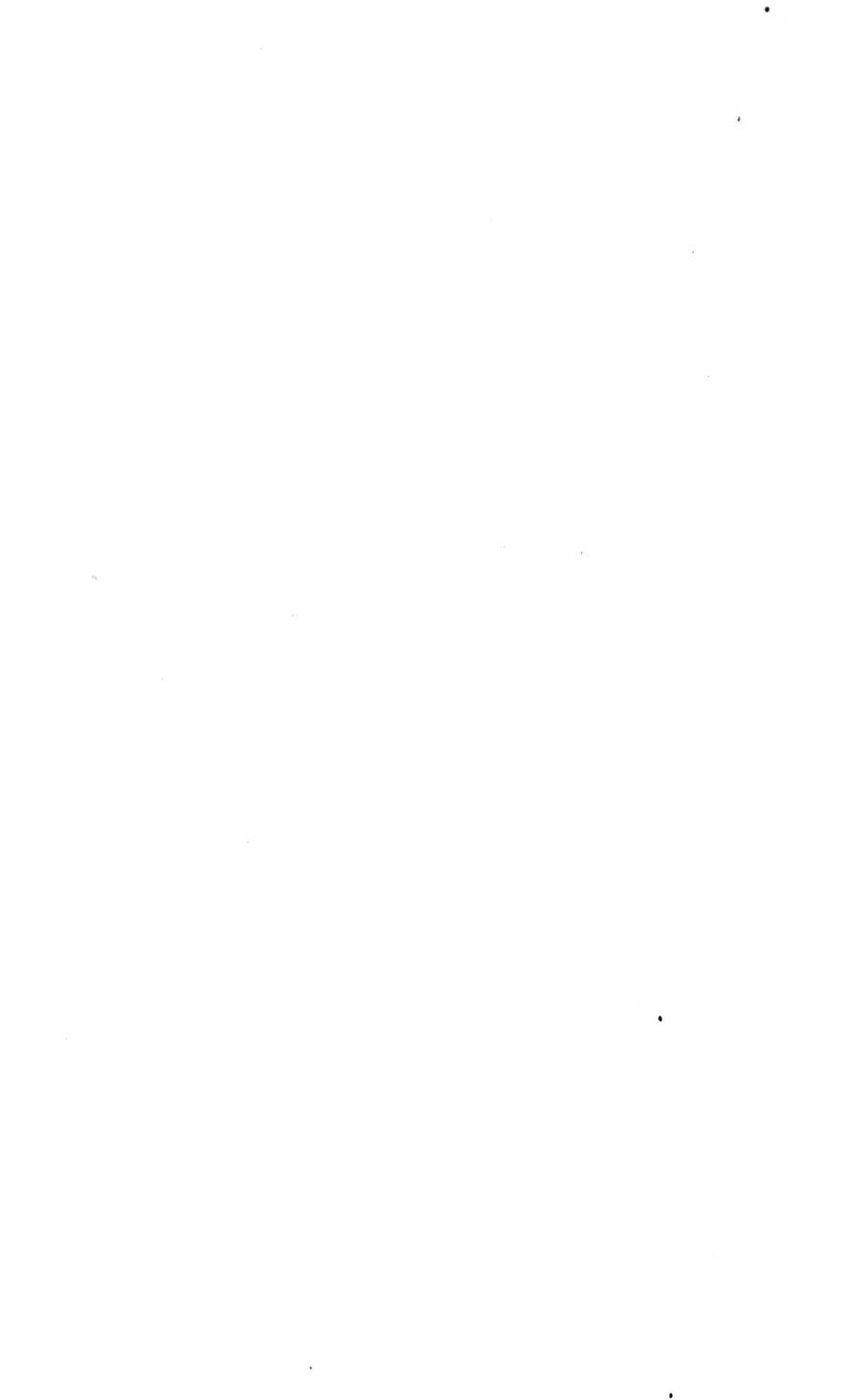




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16
EASTER JOY AND EASTER WORK.

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON

The Day of Thanksgiving

FOR THE

SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION IN INDIA.

BY THE

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SERMON.

1 *Kings* v. 4, 5. "Now the LORD my GOD hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent: And behold, I purpose to build an house unto the Name of the LORD my GOD."

"Rest on every side!" What is this, brethren, but Easter Joy? "A house to be builded unto the LORD our GOD!" What is this but Easter Work?

The special Joy of Easter is victory—not that rest which consists in never having any trials, any temptations, any enemies at all—but the soldier's rest after winning a battle; when, besides feeling himself free to repose and enjoy himself, he has the proud thought of having been conqueror, overcoming difficulties, sharing in the glory and noble deeds of many whom he knows to be braver than himself;—and, if so be, of "pleasing him who hath chosen him to be a soldier;" of receiving praise and "good marks" from his commander, perhaps some great hero. This, you know, is the soldier's joy—the joy of such as David and his men, when the Philistines and other enemies of GOD's people had been put down, and the LORD had given Israel rest: no adversary, no anxiety or fear as to what the heathen might do unto them.

When David's wars were over, this was his feeling, and that of his people; and surely it was a kind of Easter feeling: it answers well to the mind of the true Israel rejoicing in the victory of the true David:—the Christian people rejoicing in what CHRIST our LORD did as on Good Friday and Easter Day; by His Death giving a deadly wound to the great Goliath, our enemy the Devil, and by His Resurrection overcoming death itself, and “opening unto us the gates of eternal life.”

This is Easter Joy—rejoicing in CHRIST's victory at Easter: feeling glad at heart that the Saviour Who loves us so dearly, and poured out His Blood unto death for us, hath now ended His sufferings, and lives and reigns for ever:—glad at heart in the sure and certain hope, that if we go on earnestly serving Him for the short time that yet remains, we shall be partakers for ever of His joy and glory, and with us, all whom we love, except they wilfully cast away their hope. This is Easter Joy, and it ought to lead us to Easter Work; as the joy and rest of David and of the people of Israel led them to a great work of thanksgiving. What was their work of thanksgiving? It was building GOD's Temple. David, now reigning in peace and glory, when he looked round on his own house, and saw how comfortable and beautiful it was, could not be easy in his mind to think that the Ark of GOD—the token of His Presence—had no better a home than a tent, where it was to dwell within curtains. And so he purposed in his heart to build a

House to the LORD, “exceeding magnificent,” as such a building ought to be. That was to be his Easter *Work*;—his solemn thanksgiving, in return for the LORD giving him rest; and accordingly, though by GOD’S own message he was forbidden to attempt the actual building, yet for all the remaining days of his life he was greatly taken up in gathering treasure and materials: and that, under an especial blessing from GOD; for He vouchsafed to give David, by His SPIRIT, exact directions how the Temple should be built. As Moses, when he set about the Tabernacle, was warned to make all things from the pattern showed to him on the Mount, so the LORD caused David by His Hand upon him, *i.e.*, by His HOLY SPIRIT, to understand in writing the frame and pattern of the Temple, and all its furniture. What a joy and consolation to good King David, to be thus assured that the Great ALMIGHTY FATHER was well pleased with his way of giving Him thanks! Make no question of it, He will be well pleased with us Christians also, if, in our Easter joy and thankfulness, we apply ourselves to the same work.

For building—building the Temple of GOD—is the true Easter Work, just as thanksgiving is the true Easter Joy. How was it with the Holy Apostles after that first and greatest Easter? We heard in the Second Lesson for the evening of Easter Day. When the LORD JESUS CHRIST by His Death had purchased for them rest from their spiritual enemies, and by His Resurrection and Ascension had led them the way into that

rest, and by the sending down His HOLY SPIRIT had given the signal for their work to begin, and furnished them with the counsel and strength to do it: what did that work prove to be? It was *building*, my brethren, building up not a Temple of hewn stones and planks of cedar, but a Temple of sanctified souls and bodies—living stones, one by one builded into the glorious and beautiful House, which is the mystical Body of CHRIST, even His Holy Catholic Church. This was the work which the Apostles set about, as soon as ever they were themselves filled with the SPIRIT, and so made entirely partakers of our LORD'S victory. Like their forefathers, the children of Israel newly delivered and come home from Babylon; because they were thankful, they arose and builded. How did they build? First they built up themselves, going on in all holy practices by which the HOLY GHOST taught them that He would make perfect what He had begun in them. "They continued stedfastly in" their first "doctrine," in "fellowship" one with another, and "in breaking of bread" and in the "prayers" of the Church. By these, the blessed Apostles and their companions builded up themselves day by day in their and our most holy faith; and they kept on also building *in* others.

Take notice of this, brethren, it was not enough for those first and best Christians to be always building *up* themselves, trying to abound more and more, they could not be content without building *in* others also. "Continually in the Temple, and from house to house,"

—both in public services and in private intercourse—
 “they ceased not to teach and to preach JESUS CHRIST.”
 They knew that for this very purpose they were called
 —not only that they might walk themselves in the
 light of the LORD, but that the same light shining
 before all the brethren might win them also to glorify
 the FATHER through Him. So earnestly and well did
 they begin building, that on that one day of the
 Church’s birthday,—*i.e.*, on the first Whit-Sunday—
 there were added unto them and unto CHRIST, by
 Holy Baptism, three thousand souls—three thousand
 living stones, builded into CHRIST’S Spiritual Temple,
 in the course of that one day.

What was Easter Joy then, the same is Easter Joy
 now; and what was the first Christian’s Easter Work
 then, the same (can you doubt it, my brethren?) must
 also be your Easter work and mine, now and every
 year that we are spared to see another Easter. What
 though it be now 1800 years since the good tidings
 went forth, “CHRIST is risen, and His SPIRIT is come
 down: believe in CHRIST, and ye shall receive His
 SPIRIT,” yet our LORD’S Blood has not waxed cold,
 nor is His Arm shortened that He cannot save. Our
 need is still what it was, born as we are each one of
 us in sin, and beset with endless temptations; and
 blessed be His Name, His Love is also unchanged. If
 therefore we rejoice in JESUS Risen, He expects us to
 show our joy, as the Holy Scripture taught those first
 Christians to show it, by building up CHRIST in our-
 selves, and by building others into CHRIST.

And this year, brethren, we seem to be especially reminded of that which in all years alike is our Easter duty, in that GOD'S Providence has called on us at this particular time to join with our Queen and all our fellow-countrymen in thanking Him for mercifully delivering us from the miseries and dangers of that sad Indian mutiny—the most heart-breaking, in many respects, of all the trials and troubles with which it has pleased Him to visit our land, as far back as the oldest of us can remember. And GOD forbid that the youngest of us—that any of our children, or children's children—should ever have to witness or hear of the like! But the more fearful it is to think of, the deeper surely should be our gratitude to God for having heard the prayers of His unworthy servants, and restored that unhappy land to something like peace and security, after so many months of cruelty and horror.

And may we never forget that it is His doing, not man's! If Governors and Commanders were wise, it was He Who put the wisdom in their hearts: if soldiers were brave and faithful, He helped them to be so: if weak women and children, if sick and dying persons endured like martyrs the worst that man could do unto them, to His Good SPIRIT be all the glory, Who endued them with martyr's faith and patience. And who knows, brethren, how much of the present deliverance may be due to their earnest prayers, continually offered up in their affliction and agony, which prayers themselves were taught them by the same HOLY SPIRIT?

This Indian deliverance, then, like all the great deliverances which our God at any time bestows upon His people, may be looked on as a kind of faint image or shadow (as David's victories and the peace which followed were a type and shadow beforehand,) of our Lord's all-redeeming victory which He won for us by His Death and Resurrection, and of the Peace assured thereby to all true members of Him. The mercy to our country calls for something like Easter Joy; and by the same rule, He expects of our country, and of each one of us, something like Easter Work. As David and Solomon felt in their hearts that now the Lord had given them rest, they could not do less than build a House unto His Name: so it seems at this time impossible for a true Englishman to help feeling that the English nation, and all Englishmen, are bound to do their very best to build up God's Spiritual House, the Church, both here and in India, and wherever He gave them a chance. We have but too much reason to fear that one reason why God sent upon us all those sad calamities was the great irreligion of our countrymen in India, their too much indulgence of sinful lust, and the too great neglect of all care for the spreading of the Gospel, both there and among us at home. If, now that He has taken off His hand, we go on just as we did before—"after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds and our great trespass, seeing that Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this; should we again break Thy Commandments, wouldest

not Thou be angry with us till Thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?" So the good and earnest Ezra—that true Patriot and Reformer—mourned in his prayer over his countrymen; fearing that after all they would refuse to learn righteousness from the judgments and mercies of their God. I wish it may not be so with us Englishmen in our great and remarkable trials. I wish it could be said that our nation grows in faith—in religious reverence to God and His Church,—at all after the same rate as He multiplies His mercies towards us.

But what is the use of just *wishing*? let us up and be doing: let us all be earnest and busy, each one in his own place, in building up the Church of God—the proper employment of hearts thankful for Easter blessings. Our Queen and our Bishops have directed us this day to say in our prayers to ALMIGHTY GOD—“Grant, we beseech Thee, that every renewal of Thy loving-kindness towards our country may lead us to unfeigned thankfulness, and dispose us to walk more humbly and obediently before Thee;” which is the same in meaning with the prayer which the Church puts into our mouths twice every day of the year—“That we show forth His praise not only with our lips, but in our lives.”

You say those words, at least you say Amen to them, very often indeed. What if you were now to try and say it more in earnest than ever you did before? Does any one here doubt, that if he were to do so it would be a very blessed thing to him? Do

you think, brethren, that David and Solomon, now in that other world, wish that they had laid out their money, their time and skill, in the works and pleasures of this world, instead of planning and building that beautiful Temple to the glory of God? Do you think—nay, God forbid that such a thought should find room in any of our minds—that the blessed Apostles and other members of that first Church in Jerusalem repent, where they now are, of having given themselves up altogether, body and soul and spirit, to waiting on their LORD? Do you think they wish any of their goods back again, which they sold—all that they had, and gave the produce to the Church and the Poor?

Well then, this is what you will do, if, as Englishmen, you would follow David in his way of thanking God for victory and peace; and still more, if, as Christians, you would follow CHRIST'S Saints in their way of keeping Easter. You will put by foolish fancies and trifling objections, and difficulties which in fact are no difficulties at all, and you will set yourself to build up in earnest that holy Church and kingdom, which you know your Great FATHER and SAVIOUR has most at heart of all the things in this world, and which He would have you seek first, and attend to before everything else.

Do not say, "How can we build? we who are neither rich, nor great, nor learned—it is idle to talk to us of bearing a hand in so great a work." There was once a person who might have said so,—if ever

any one might—a very poor desolate woman, who found herself at the place where offerings were being made for building up the House of the LORD, and she had one farthing ($1\frac{1}{2}d.$) in the world: she might have well thought with herself, and I dare say she might have found many to encourage her in the thought—“What is the use of my offering so small a sum? it will go no way towards the work, but it would buy me a morsel of bread.” She might have thought this, and who durst have blamed her? But no! her heart was so full of love—so enlarged by the SPIRIT of GOD, that she offered her two mites, though it was her all, and went her way home to serve GOD as she might; little imagining what the SON of GOD was saying of her, that she had in His sight put in more than all the rich men, because it was all she had—all her living: and so her praise is in the Gospel, and shall be to the end of the world. Only think what that poor widow would have lost, had she thought, like one of us, that it was not worth giving at all, when she had so little to give—that she might as well keep it, so far as it would go, to lay it all out upon herself. Is not the same GOD, think you, beholding you, Who was beholding her? Has He not the same power and mind to bless you, and make what little you can give to Him, or do for Him, go a very great way?

Observe—there are two ways in which you may build for GOD, and you must practise both, or you will not succeed in either. You are to build *up* your-

self in your most holy faith, to become a more and more perfect member of CHRIST'S Body ; and if you are in earnest doing this, you will of course long to build *in* others into the same Body. I say you must practise both these, or you will not please your SAVI-OUR in either of them.

Of course, there is none of you but will at once allow, that offering alms, or any other outward work, will never bring glory to your GOD, or save your soul, except you be really endeavouring daily to draw nearer to GOD in holy obedience : “ Though I bestow all my goods to feed the Poor,” or to benefit the Church, “and have not charity”—true dutiful love of GOD, “it will profit me nothing ;”—of that you are quite sure, you all know it very well. But there is another thing which you do not know : very few of you seem to have more than a very dim notion of it ; namely, that your love to GOD is unreal and cannot be depended on, unless it urge you to win others to love Him also : as it is written—“ Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” I say, this is a necessary token of a heart truly converted and turned to GOD. “ This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth GOD love his brother also.”

If you love your brother, can you possibly help desiring his eternal good ? and if you truly desire it, will you not, when occasion serves, put yourself a little out of the way—make some little sacrifice to promote it ? Depend upon it, if you see people, young or old, rich men or working men, turning away with scorn

when they are asked to offer something for Missionary work, those persons are not in the right way as to the salvation of their own souls. Think what ye do, when CHRIST—(for in truth it is He)—when CHRIST comes knocking at your door, and vouchsafes to call upon you for aid in building up His Spiritual Temple, and you answer “No!” or give no answer at all, but make as though you heard Him not. Even if there be no scornfulness, no wilful disrespect, yet such behaviour is a bad sign of your love to the souls for which CHRIST died, and to CHRIST Himself. For be sure you cannot really love one without loving the other.

Consider what the HOLY GHOST teaches, in the Old Testament and in the New, about persons caring or not caring for Jerusalem, how the LORD regards them as caring or not caring for Him. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.”* And Isaiah says, “The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish:” and those who “forget His holy mountain,” are reprov'd as “forsaking the LORD.”† And He invites His people to Him thus: “Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” None, you see, are called to the glory

* Ps. lx. 12.

† Is. lxx. ii.

and consolation, but those who really rejoice with Jerusalem and mourn for her.

And in much the same way He speaks of the Church in the New Testament—"Feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own Blood." "He loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,—that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." And the dearest lovers of CHRIST were such as "rejoiced in their sufferings for the Church."* If then, you care not for the Church,—if you turn a deaf ear when there is reasonable hope and serious talk of spreading the Gospel,—I am afraid it will appear by and by that you cared very little for CHRIST.

Well may an Englishman's heart ache, when he thinks of such sayings, and compares them with the way in which the Church and the Prayer Book have been too commonly treated among us of late years.

The remedy for this evil state of things requires, indeed, much patience: but it is sure, and cannot fail, for each one of us. It is simply this—let every one mend one, and all will be mended. Do you strive and pray each one of you to build up CHRIST in yourself, and in all whom He puts within your reach: give gladly some little, as He shall enable you, when He

* Col. i. 24.

asks your aid in His Missionary Work. And take courage, for He dearly loves when humble and holy persons come to Him and try to bring others : such persons as the holy S. Philip, one of this day's Saints ; CHRIST permitted him to find Nathanael, and promised them the sight of heaven opened, and " the Angels of GOD ascending and descending upon the SON of MAN," and upon those whom He comes to save. This promise is for you, and that for ever : for the least and lowest of you, that will truly try to build up CHRIST in himself and in others. When will the World, the Flesh, or the Devil, do half as much for you, serve them as devoutly as you may ?



