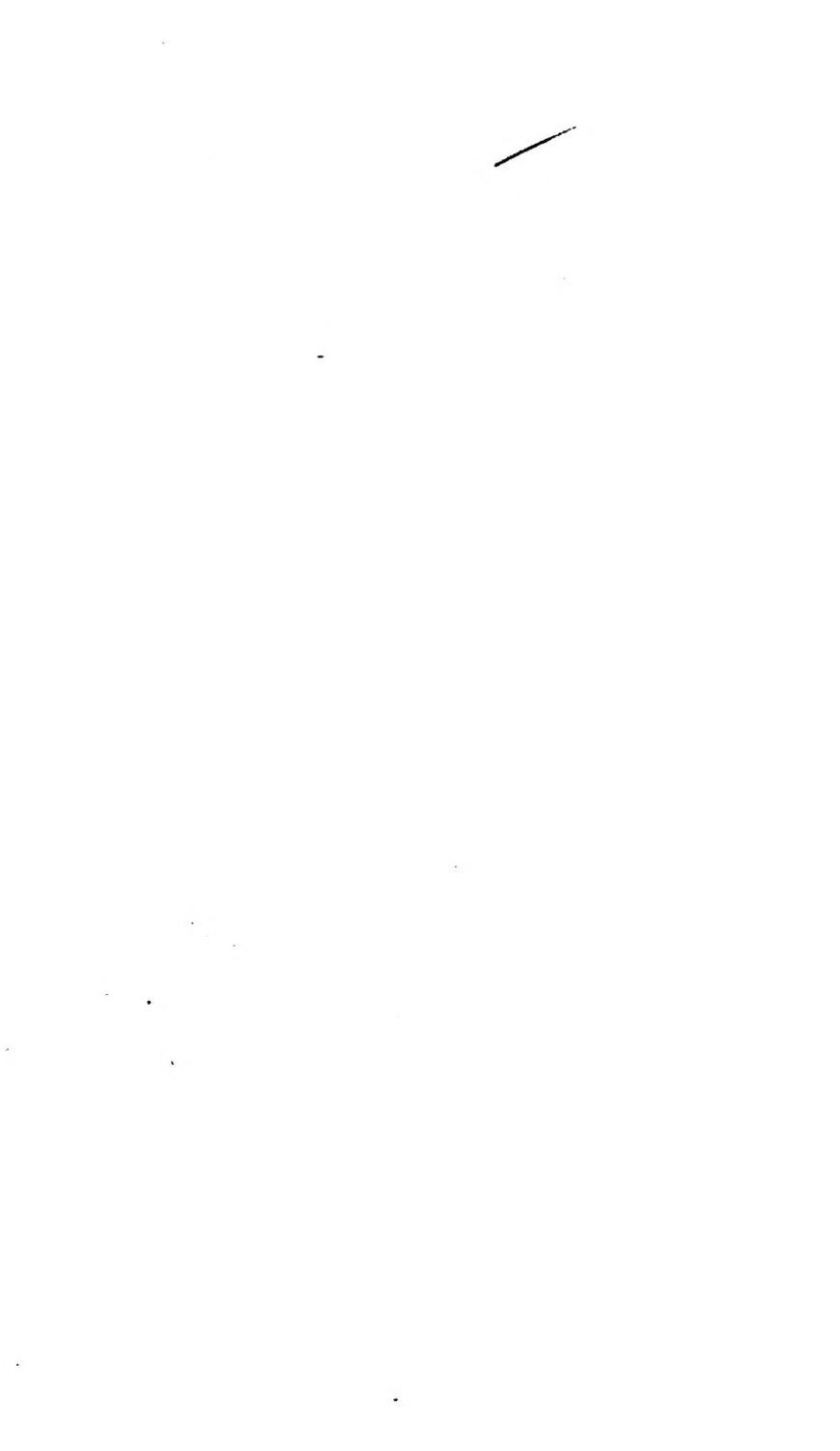


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*GO AND DO.*

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A SERMON

Preached in the Cathedral Church of Bristol,

ON OCCASION OF THE

MEETING OF THE CHURCH CONGRESS.

BY

HARVEY GOODWIN, D.D.

DEAN OF ELY.

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# A SERMON,

*dc.*

S. LUKE X. 37.

*Go and do.*

ADMIRABLY as these three words express that which I desire to make the substance of my sermon, it is with some misgiving that I have chosen them for a text.

My misgiving has arisen from this, that I have feared even to *seem* to garble a sentence spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, or to use in a sense inferior to that which He intended them to bear words uttered by His most sacred lips. I shrink from the thought of taking a fragment from a sermon preached by *Him*, and making it serve as a motto for a sermon preached by *me*. But in truth I desire to use the emphatic words which I have quoted in all their fulness. I desire to attribute to them all their meaning. And I believe that so taken they will enforce with singular power the lesson, which is most appropriate to this present occasion: they will bring our minds to reflect upon the practical side of the task committed to the Church of England, and upon the duty which rests upon us to exert ourselves to the utmost to render the Church equal to her task.

For in the words of my text our Lord cut a difficult knot of Jewish divinity by desiring a lawyer to *go and do* as a certain Samaritan had done. The question *Who is my neighbour?* would have served in the hands of any other Jewish teacher as the text for a grand theological discussion: but when the question was put to *Him*, who taught with authority and not as the Scribes, He entered into no discussion, but told a simple story of a man who fell among thieves. The design of the story was to hold up for imitation the example of a Samaritan, who when he saw the man wounded and half-dead never asked the question *Is he my neighbour?* but went to him and gave him aid in his distress. The Priest and the Levite, who were probably acquainted with the arguments on both sides of the question,

determined against the claims of the wounded man to their compassion: it was the Samaritan, with whom these men would have no dealings, who shewed what they ought to have done by *going and doing* it himself. And by holding up this man and his simple charitable conduct as an example to a Doctor of the Law, our Lord not only answered for ever the question *Who is my neighbour?* but He placed the seal of His most blessed approbation upon active goodness, He asserted for Charity its preeminence in His kingdom, and perhaps He may have suggested to us that other questions would find their best and surest solution not in *speculation* but in *practice*, not in *argument* but in *doing*.

I take the words of the text therefore as pointing out the duty of the Church of England, and as limiting the deliberations of this Congress. It is of course not denied that the Church has other work besides that which is specially marked out by the words, *Go and do*: there is a faith to be preserved, as well as a charity to be exercised: there is a duty of controversy, as well as a duty of practical ministry: there must be a laborious progress of theology, bearing a certain relation to the general progress of human thought, as well as an imitation of Him *who went about doing good*. Indeed it is impossible to look at the Gospels and observe how large a portion of our Lord's own Ministry was taken up with conflict, it is impossible to remember His own emphatic declaration that He came *not to send peace but a sword*, it is impossible to read the writings of the Apostles and notice how much they are employed in dealing with the great controversial difficulties of the early Church,—it is impossible, in fact, to examine the New Testament, and not to anticipate that the life of the Church would always be bound up with strife. I do not say that we could have anticipated all that has come to pass, or have guessed that Church History would have been so sad a tale as it has proved to be; but certainly there was no ground for hoping that the Holy Church throughout all the world would ever completely realise the idea of a city at unity in itself and free from foes without, of a body of men having one heart and one soul, knit together by the bands of Christian love, all going about with one accord and doing good.

It is with no desire therefore of depreciating the import-



ance of those great questions which are now being agitated in England and in our Colonies, that I have taken a text which expels them from our thoughts this morning. I have only done that which this Congress has done, and in doing which it has in my judgment acted wisely. It is very true that there are great questions, which are just now agitating the minds of thinking men with more than usual intensity: it is very true that such questions need solution, and that he who can assist in their solution is bound to do so: but then happily we are not obliged to wait and see these questions solved, before we can go and do the will of God. It is our happiness, Christian brethren, as members of the Church of England, that we can meet on that common ground which the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer afford us, that we can take counsel together as loyal servants of the same Master, that we can honestly and heartily consult as to the steps most likely by God's blessing to strengthen our Church and make her most efficient as the spiritual mother of our brethren and as a preacher of the Gospel to the world. In confining ourselves to practical questions to be treated upon principles which we all allow, we by no means disparage other questions which must be bound up with controversy: let those questions by all means have their proper treatment, but let it not be denied that there is wisdom in keeping apart the discussion of questions, which are mixed up with no doctrinal controversies, which are darkened by no speculative difficulties,—questions, which men of different schools of thought can examine calmly and find how much of their divinity is common property,—questions which we *ought* to be able to discuss with heartiness for the common good of all, and which we *shall* be able so to discuss unless our membership in one Church and our adhesion to one body of doctrine be no better than a delusion and a sham.

But the questions may arise,—What can a voluntary gathering of Clergy and Laity, such as that which constitutes a Congress, really effect? How can our meeting here and in other great towns help on the work of God? Are we not taking the place and in appearance usurping the powers of bodies legally constituted and having more power of action?

In endeavouring to answer such questions as these, I should

be content to take in the first instance that which may be regarded as not the highest ground, and to learn wisdom from those who have less important purposes to compass than ourselves. If we find it practically conceded, that Congresses are efficient in helping forward the various branches of human science and increasing the attention given to subjects of great human interest, then we may well believe that the same method of procedure will be found valuable in carrying out the work of the Church. Without attaching any invidious application to the words, we may remember that the children of this world are wise in their generation: and when we find that Congresses are held year by year for the Advancement of Science in general, of Social Science and Medical Science in particular, of Archæology, and perhaps of other branches of human knowledge, it seems almost evident that there must be something good in the nature of a Congress: and if there be something good in the nature of a Congress, it is obvious that our own age, in which the difficulty of locomotion has been almost annihilated, is suitable beyond all previous ages for developing the good which a Congress involves. But to be more particular, let me refer you to the Meeting or Congress for the Advancement of Science, which lately took place at Bath. Most of us will remember that in the infancy of the British Association it had to endure much newspaper raillery and many disparaging remarks: and we all know that now its position as an important engine of scientific progress is universally recognised, and that no one cares to expose his ignorance by jesting at its operations. The Association deserved success: it has realised, more than ever had been realised before, Bacon's magnificent, though in its details impracticable, scheme of a general combination of minds for the unravelling of the secrets of nature: it has formed a centre, to which men can bring their contributions, at which they can exchange their thoughts: it has stirred up zeal: it has called attention to points of scientific interest in different localities: and it has extended the influence of English men of science beyond their own land, brought them into contact with foreigners, and tended to give to the science of England a higher standing than it had before in the scientific scale of Europe.

Now there seems to be no reason why a Church Congress

should not operate in a similar manner with regard to those great subjects in which the Church of England is concerned.

It can hardly be a fruitless work to bring together men of different modes of thought and placed in different circumstances, to discuss the great practical questions which must interest them all: the Bishop and the Priest, the clergyman from the large town and from the village, the Member of Parliament, the employer of labour, the lawyer, the architect, and the musician,—laymen of all ranks and tastes, may bring their contributions to the solution of the problem, How can the Church of England most completely meet the wants of the nation? How can she be most thoroughly furnished for doing the work of her Lord? And even that result to which I referred in the case of the Scientific Congress, that bringing together of England and the Continent, may have its analogue in the case of our Congress: it may at least do *this*; it may help to spread upon the Continent a better knowledge than now exists of the character and constitution of our Church: nothing can be more certain than that the knowledge on the Continent of the Church of England, her principles, her worship, her Prayer-book, is almost indefinitely small: it may be our own fault that this is so, but the fact itself can hardly be denied: and if the result of public discussion of the Church's work and the Church's wants, should be the publication of the fact that we have amongst us a Church pure in its descent and primitive in its constitution, free from those evils which many earnest members of the Churches in communion with Rome deplore, and at the same time free from extreme Protestant exaggerations of doctrine and of primitive simplicity, then I must believe that such a result will tend to that better understanding and more perfect intercommunion of Christians throughout the world, to which we cannot fail to look forward with hopeful longing prayerful hearts, though it be still in the dim future.

Moreover a Church Congress ought to be a great engine for the production of a wholesome influence on public opinion. The power of public opinion is one of the most remarkable phenomena in the present condition of our country: nowhere is public opinion so potent as in England. Anyone, who has a truth to tell, whether in science or in commerce or in politics, cannot complain that his thoughts have not free action: and

however unpopular a truth may be, still it will gain ground bit by bit, until at length it becomes victorious. Now the great verities of the faith are of course beyond the atmosphere of public opinion, they are simply to be maintained and transmitted as a great treasure which God has given us: but the practical working of the Church of England, her modes of operation, her ministerial efficiency, are matters concerning which it is highly desirable that public opinion should be informed, and upon which it should be brought to bear. And I would venture to say, let us not be afraid of public opinion: let us strive to clear away anything which may be justly criticised: let us fight against our own abuses, if we feel them to exist: let us be zealous in reforming, if reform be required: let us strive to see things as they are seen by honest and devout men, and so we shall gain for our Church that which eventually forms public opinion, the opinion of the wise and good. I am convinced that nothing can more effectually strengthen the hands of the Church of England and increase her usefulness, than the propagation of the belief that there is nothing in her system of which she is ashamed, that she has no class feelings or class interests, that she has no darling and time-honoured abuses which she desires to retain, and that she is as anxious to get rid of demonstrated defects and weaknesses as her best friends can desire.

Nor should it be forgotten that in a Church Congress there is a special advantage arising from the intermixture of Clergy and Laity in one body. No one doubts that in the practical working of the Church the advice of the laity is most valuable, and their cordial co-operation indispensable: but the precise manner in which the lay element should be permitted to influence the direction of the Church's course is not so obvious. Some time ago much was said about the introduction of a lay element into Convocation; but on the other hand the opinion seems lately to have gained ground that Convocation ought to remain that which it constitutionally is, namely, a Convocation of the Clergy, and that lay influence should be brought to bear in some other way. I need not refer to the attempts which have been made to introduce that influence: all that my present subject renders it necessary for me to say is this, that in default of any more regular and constitutional scheme for bringing the clerical and lay mind into co-operative contact for the benefit

of the Church, nothing can be more hopeful than the opportunity for joint consultation which this Congress affords: here is a common ground upon which clergymen and laymen may meet, and upon which they may discuss in brotherly wise the best plans for carrying out those evangelical works of piety which both have at heart.

And in this view of the subject I may remark that advantage is to be found in the migratory character of the Congress. As the Scientific Association, to which I have already referred, finds an advantage in holding its meetings sometimes here and sometimes there,—as the stir given to thought is thus greater, and as different localities suggest a prominence for different subjects, Newcastle calling attention to coalfields and mines, Bath to hot-springs and their causes, so it may be well to remember that different parts of English Christendom may be stirred successively by visits of our Congress, and that different localities exhibit different phases of Church feeling, different forms of religious want, different conditions of Christian activity, and different relations of the Church to other Christian bodies. And so, if we wish to measure the needs and the effectiveness of the Church of England, if we wish to know what she is doing, what she has yet to do, and how she is to do it, our investigations can best be carried on by meeting for consultation sometimes in the North and sometimes in the South, sometimes in a University, sometimes in a large manufacturing town, sometimes in a seaport, sometimes in a district where Church feeling is strong, sometimes where it is weak, sometimes in towns where traditions are all favourable to the Church, and sometimes in those modern hives of industry, in which the influence of the Church is scarcely felt and which yet cannot properly be said to be *lost*, because (as has been well observed) they have never yet been gained.

Once more, I think we may justly regard our Congress in its bearing upon those who are distinctly hostile to the Church. It is painful to speak of *enemies*: loving the Church as we do, we would wish to believe that every one loved her: nor ought it to be forgotten that amongst those who nominally dissent from her, there are many who pray for her peace, and who regard her as the great bulwark of sound religion in our land: and I suppose that even they who would pull her down as a national establishment would still say that they sought her

good, and that what we might call *destruction* they would rather describe as *liberation*. Nevertheless, it is a fact to which we cannot shut our eyes, that there is a party in England who earnestly desire to throw the Church down from her present position, to change her foundation as an establishment, to confiscate her revenues, and to put her on the level of a voluntary association. Now it is not inconsistent with Christian principle to shew a determined front to those, who, having these views, *may* be and *must* be termed the Church's enemies: if we fight for the established Church of our country, it is no selfish war in which we are engaged: we fight for the continuance of a blessing, which by God's grace our fathers have bequeathed to us, and which we desire to bequeath to our children even in fuller measure than we have received it ourselves. And the most effectual mode of defending our heritage is to shew such unanimity of purpose, such a condition of preparation against assault, such heartiness of determination, and such a state of discipline, as shall overawe the enemy: the most effectual protection that England has found against invasion has been her Volunteer Army, which has rendered any attempt at invasion hopeless: and so a Congress, conducted with spirit and unanimity, working towards great practical ends, appealing boldly to the Christian intelligence of the country, may be a great instrument in God's hands for Church defence, by shewing that the heart of England is with the Church, and that hostility is fruitless.

But I must not weary *you*, Christian Brethren, with remarks, which, after all, will be chiefly applicable to those who question the utility of our Congress, rather than to you who shew by your presence that you are prepared to forward the work which lies before the Congress now assembled. I would venture however to add—indeed it would be very wrong not to add—that I know no reason why we should not in this our Christian Congress expect that blessing, which our divine Master promised in all its fulness and generality to two or three met together in His Name. It may have seemed to you,—and I have myself admitted,—that I have taken not the highest possible view of the position and functions of a Church Congress: I have argued from the analogy of secular associations, and have treated the machinery of the Congress with reference to its

apparent fitness to bring about certain results in accordance with the ordinary rules of human consequence: but I have not done so with the intention of excluding a higher and more divine view of the aids and appliances which the Church has at her disposal. I know that Christ our Lord said, not only *Go and do*, but *Go in My Name*: I know that He has promised to be with us *always, even to the end of the world*: I know that the operation of the Holy Ghost is necessary to infuse unity and strength, and the spirit of love and of a sound mind, into any congregation of Christians, and therefore into our Congress. God forbid that I should encourage a low or secular view of the work before us: rather I would endeavour to press the highest possible view of our Congress and its work. I would say, let us pray earnestly for the outpouring of the Spirit upon us, let us think of Christ as Himself present amongst us, let us guard against any rashness of expression, any folly or intemperance of language, any irritability of temper, any party spirit, any uncharitable feeling, which may be unfit for the presence of Christ, and therefore damaging to His Church and His cause.

I pass on to say a few words concerning the subjects which may be profitably brought before a Church Congress, and concerning some of those which will be discussed here.

The subjects are indeed abundant. Questions strictly doctrinal are excluded by the first principles of the foundation of the Congress. Then there are certain questions, which, though in one sense practical, do nevertheless so inevitably run into the domain of doctrine, that it is difficult to classify them: I refer chiefly to questions of ritual observance. But in addition to questions which are purely or partially doctrinal, there is a large class which to members of the Church of England are and must be purely practical. For instance, we are all agreed that an increased supply of well-qualified and well-trained clergy is necessary for the due performance of the work of Christ in this land: we should probably be all agreed that this increase of clergy ought to include Bishops as well as Priests and Deacons: and it is clear that the increase of the number of clergy involves increased means of support, and so the wide question of the best method of increasing the revenues of the Church devoted to the support of the Clergy

is a very useful and practical point for the consideration of our Congress. With regard to Priests and Deacons, the question is chiefly one of money, and ought not in this wealthy country to involve much difficulty; with regard to the subdivision of Dioceses and corresponding multiplication of the Episcopate, there are no doubt difficulties of another kind, but they are difficulties concerning which our Congress may very well hope to elicit the opinion and general feeling of earnest members of the Church, and so to hasten the time when the question of subdivision shall be seriously entertained by those who have power to solve it.

The education of the clergy is as important as their sustenance: it becomes perhaps daily more important: and any one who has given attention to the subject will be aware of its difficulty, and will know that it is much more easy to complain of present deficiency than to say how the deficiency can be best supplied. The discussion of this question in a Church Congress can scarcely fail to be profitable.

Then from the living minister we may pass to the material fabric of the Parish Church. Very much has been done, as we all know, in the last quarter of a century towards making our Parish Churches decent and even beautiful; and the work is still going on as rapidly and as vigorously perhaps as can be desired. But the increased zeal respecting Churches and the increased love for Church worship has raised some important questions. The most important is one which is of no great interest to many of our old parishes, with populations nearly stationary, in which there is abundance of Church room for everybody, but of enormous interest to new parishes and populous districts, where the Parish Church is entirely insufficient, and where the pew system has virtually banished the poor. Are our Churches to be entirely free? Are pew-rents to be admitted in any, and if so in what form? Are we to trust for the support of free and open Churches mainly to the Offertory? These and many cognate questions demand discussion: they are not party questions, and are altogether unconnected with minor differences amongst Churchmen as to doctrinal views: they may very well and profitably be discussed by a body of Churchmen whose only aim and end are to make the Church the instrument in God's hands of saving souls alive.



That portion of our Service also which is left very much to the discretion of the minister and people, I mean the musical portion, may properly come in for discussion. It is a part of our service which just now is exciting special attention, and there seems to be an almost unanimous effort to repair the strange and woful neglect of Church music in days gone by: it is a subject which pre-eminently requires the application of good sense, enlightened taste, and technical knowledge, and I think we may look for useful results from the discussion which it calls forth in our Congress.

The Parish School supplies another crop of questions ripe for inquiry. The education of all ranks of society may fairly be regarded as a matter of interest to a meeting of Churchmen: even the highest class of education has lately been thrown down as a subject for public discussion: middle-class education also has been brought into new and very just prominence: while the education of the poor, ramifying as it does into minor details, complicated as it is by its connection with the operations of the Committee of Privy Council, and practically thrown as it is in nine cases out of ten upon the energy of the clergyman, affords numberless questions upon which fair public discussion can hardly fail to bring forth good fruit.

My time will not allow me to touch upon all the subjects which I find in the programme of this present Congress, much less to speak upon other subjects which at some future time may be rightly proposed for discussion.

The Foreign Missions of the Church of England, and the supply of Missionary Candidates, were sure to find a place: the same may be said of Home Missions and Lay Agency. The Synods of the Church, and the cognate subject of Ruridecanal Chapters, may very well claim a share of our attention. The mutual relations of the Church in England and the Church in Ireland are at this present time of more than ordinary interest, and demand examination. And certainly Associations for aiding Disabled Clergymen, and the Widows and Children of the Clergy, cannot fail to receive at our hands a kindly discussion. Nor can I refrain from expressing my satisfaction that the social hindrances which exist to the spread of Christianity are to be brought under our notice, because I am sure that some of our best efforts in educational and pastoral work are at present

neutralised by social hindrances over which the clergyman has no direct control.

There is just one subject which I would venture to suggest as suitable for a Church Congress: possibly it may come indirectly within the scope of our present programme. I mean the actual condition and the possible improvement of our Cathedral foundations. Our Cathedrals have already been subjected to a hasty, and I think most persons will now admit a shortsighted and imperfect reformation: the position in which they have thus been placed makes the careful consideration of their case all the more necessary: that which has been done already and done imperfectly may possibly render more difficult a well-considered revision of their purposes and uses, and may stand in the way of a wise and enlightened reform.

It seems to me, I confess, that there is no department of the Church's work, in which advantage might not be gained from temperate and earnest discussion in meetings of our Congress. I will add that I should be very glad to see the influence of the Congress brought to bear, not only upon the improvement of Church work, but upon the abatement of Church abuses. It is no grateful task to speak of Church abuses: but there is one, for which the Church is by no means responsible, and which yet is so hideous and so mischievous, that I cannot refrain from directing attention to it. I refer to the present practice with regard to the sale of Church preferment. The thing itself probably cannot be got rid of, and under suitable conditions may be just and holy: we have recently seen an Act passed to enable certain livings in Crown patronage to be sold, and few persons have regarded the measure as otherwise than good and useful: but when Church preferment,—which after all means the cure of immortal souls,—is trafficked in according to the grossest and most vulgar principles of auctioneering and by means of puffing advertisements,—when we find in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* the merits of the various livings in the market set forth in accordance with the most worldly estimate of their value, and frequently with the addition of a mysterious hint concerning the probability of early possession, it is difficult not to feel angry and impossible not to feel ashamed. Here is a foul spot upon the Church's white robe: would to God it could be washed out!

But I must conclude. And I will do so by returning upon the words of my text, and saying, *Go and do.* Go and discuss the practical needs of the Church in an earnest, practical, and brotherly way. Depend upon it, we have a strong cause, and God is with us. It is easy to draw deplorable pictures of the condition of the Church, of the condition of the people, of the condition of religion amongst us: and I do not say that these deplorable pictures must be altogether false; but I do say that other pictures may be drawn, quite as true, only taken from a different point and with different lights and shades, which may well rejoice our hearts and give us good hope for the future. Never I believe was there a time in our Church's history, when there was more steady work going on in our parishes, more purity and holiness of life amongst the clergy, more zeal and self-devotion amongst the laity, more earnest desire to make the Church of England what she pretends to be and may be, the spiritual mother of the nation. Of course our age has its peculiar trials, its peculiar difficulties, (it may be) its peculiar sins; we have new evils, new dangers, new problems to solve, in addition to those which have been bequeathed to us by ages gone by; and of course the world the flesh and the devil are as active as ever, and there is abundance of unbelief and cold-heartedness and want of Christian love: but still I feel most deeply that there is a bright side of the picture, and that we should be wanting in gratitude to that God who has cast our lot in the middle of this wonderful nineteenth century, we should be wanting in Christian discernment and in Christian courage, we should be wanting in faith and in hope and in charity, if we did not acknowledge with all our hearts that our days are, in a very true sense, *good days*, days full of hope, days in which we have every encouragement that God can give us to work His work manfully and well. Therefore let us *go and do*: and let us pray that the effect of our gathering together in this Congress may be to warm our hearts, to encourage sympathy and mutual love; to stir us up, both Clergy and laity, to greater zeal and more persistent effort in doing the work of Christ.

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# THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.

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## A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL OF

ST. MARK'S COLLEGE, CHELSEA,

APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup>, 1865.

BY THE

REV. DERWENT COLERIDGE, M.A.,

RECTOR OF HANWELL, AND PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL;  
LATE PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARK'S COLLEGE.

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themselves Christians, this great work of Christian charity could never languish for want of means. If every one who was in easy circumstances would devote one-tenth of their yearly income to acts of piety, for the relief of the temporal or spiritual necessities of their fellow-men, how different would be the aspect of our country! How few could there then be who would say, 'There is no one who cares for our souls—none who feel for our straits and necessities!' And yet, this proportion of their annual revenue was the very least amount which Jewish charity allowed to be enough to satisfy such calls. If those who stint the measure of their benevolence, with the view of amassing a fortune, and accumulating wealth to aggrandise their family, could but feel what a drag this weight of wealth, thus gotten, must prove to their heavenward ascent—in the path of godliness here, as well as in the path to glory hereafter—they would be fain, before it was too late, to lay up their treasure in heaven, and to make themselves an everlasting Friend, by a righteous use of the mammon of unrighteousness. But there is another sacrifice besides that many may offer, and which many, we rejoice to know, are willing to offer—and that is, the chastening influence, and the fostering care of sisterly love, which may cherish the good seed implanted in the penitent heart, so that it shall bring forth fruit unto everlasting life. May such gentle and winning guidance ever be found to conspire with the movements of the Holy Spirit from above, in enabling the returning wanderer to be steadfast and unmovable in her Christian profession; that, having escaped from the sore bondage of sin, she may rejoice evermore in that liberty which is the privilege of the children of God, and may be among those who shall chaunt the new hymn of praise to Him who hath redeemed us by His blood!









