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Priestly ideals





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# PRIESTLY IDEALS

BEING

A COURSE OF PRACTICAL LECTURES

*DELIVERED IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL TO "OUR  
SOCIETY" AND OTHER CLERGY, IN  
LENT, 1898*

BY THE REV.

W. C. E. NEWBOLT, M.A.

CANON AND CHANCELLOR OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

*"Qui ergo alium doces, te ipsum non doces?"*

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

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TO  
MY DEAR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE  
ARTHUR FOLEY  
LORD BISHOP OF STEPNEY  
WHO  
IN THE MIDST OF ALMOST UNCEASING LABOURS  
HAS LEARNED TO FIND  
HIS STRENGTH  
IN THE JOY OF THE LORD

“Opus grande ego facio et non possum descendere.”

## P R E F A C E

THESE Lectures are published in answer to a strong request on the part of those to whom they were addressed, which I did not feel at liberty to refuse. They were undertaken at a very short notice, in consequence of the serious illness of the Rev. W. B. Trevelyan, Vicar of St. Matthew's, Westminster, who was to have delivered the Lenten course of "Our Society" Lectures. They will be found to contain only simple thoughts on familiar topics, of which every Priest is bound to remind himself, more especially at a season of solemn self-examination such as Lent. They are essentially *ad clerum*, and they are designedly on subjects of practical importance, rather than of theological or doctrinal significance. There has been no attempt, except in a very few instances, to modify or adapt the plain-speaking

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which such an occasion seemed to demand. It would be well, however, if the reader were to bear in mind that the person on whom the onerous duty of lecturing his brethren falls, can only do so, with any proper regard to modesty and self-respect, if he makes it clearly to be understood that he includes himself in all the shortcomings which have to be lamented, the perils to be avoided, and the temptations to be overcome; and that he, if any, keeps constantly before him the motto prefixed to these lectures, "*Qui ergo alium doces, te ipsum non doces?*"

With this reservation, they are committed to the forbearance and kindness of my brethren, whose attendance and sympathy, in the midst of their heavy Lenten labours, were no slight encouragement and assistance to the lecturer.

W. C. E. N.

3, AMEN COURT,  
*Feast of the Ascension,*  
MDCCCXCVIII.

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\* \* \* *The Lecture on this occasion was given in the Chapter House, 68, St. Paul's Churchyard.*



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## LECTURE I.

### THE PRIEST IN HIS PRIVATE DEVOTIONS.

“Type of the wise who soar, but never roam,  
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.”

I SHALL best meet your wishes, if I mistake not, during this holy season of Lent, in trying to see with you whether the simple spiritual mechanism of our life is working as it ought to do. We shall be speaking again and again to our people, in public and in private, about Penitence and Prayer. It does not look well for a doctor to be himself afflicted with the disease for which he professes to hold the cure. It does not look well for the artist, who is teaching others the principles of beauty, himself to be unable to draw a straight line. Am I not right, dear brothers, in saying that sometimes it is a sharp pain—it

almost stops our mouths from a sense of hypocrisy and incongruity—to have to tell others how we know they may succeed, while we are only too conscious of never having, at least for some time, taken the trouble to practise ourselves the advice which we give? It is a sad thing to tell others how to pray, when our spiritual bow is all unstrung; how to be pure, out of a sadly soiled life; how to control the tongue, when we ourselves allow that unruly member to be so unrestrained; how to be active, hopeful, faithful—ah! we do not say it, but it lingers like a metallic ring round our formal sermons and our cold advice, “Do as I say, not as I do.”

And may I just say in self-defence, that if I try to enter into our difficulties fully, it is only on the always understood condition that the difficulties of which I shall speak belong to us all in common? That it is not one Priest lecturing his brethren, but one priest, if you will, lecturing on his own shrivelled arm and misshaped spiritual life; that from the needs of one, and the difficulties of one, we Priests may all of us discover how to

get our share of good out of this season of Lent, from which we hope for so much for our people.

## I.

To-day I am asking you to consider with me the simplest, the commonest thing, such as we might talk about to our school children or at a communicants' guild, and yet so important, so powerful, that we feel if we were straight and rightly furnished here, we should be a match for most of the difficulties which the hardest day puts before us. I mean our private Devotions, our hidden life of Prayer.

When Giotto was asked to give a specimen of his skill as a draughtsman, he took up his crayon and drew a faultless circle—a poor ornament for a palace, but a marvellous exhibition of potential art. We ask clergy who work with us whether they can sing, and teach, and preach, and visit, and manage clubs. Do we ever ask them if they can pray? Have we ever made this an ambition—more than to be a great preacher, to be a great pray-er?

A very great deal is bound up in it. It depends on that tube swaying in the current, as to how long the diver can stay in the heavy tide of sin and squalor with its dead weight of depression all round him. So long as the air comes down from Heaven in an unbroken course, he can stay some time, and work without fainting; but apart from it, he dies. So long as the air-tight globe shuts in the servant of God from the atmosphere of this world, his light can shine before men, clear and steady. It would be something if our people felt they could count on this, that in their midst was one who, having more leisure, and having been more richly endowed with the Holy Spirit, was more constantly in communion with Heaven. The parish Priest is the spiritual man *ex hypothesi*, in the place where he dwells. Just as the doctor is the representative of medical skill, the lawyer of legal knowledge, the different professional men, of different professional excellences, so we are the professional men of spiritual things. Are we in danger of throwing this splendid distinction away, while we go as far as we can to meet laymen,



just to show them that we don't belong to a sacerdotal caste; while we go half-way to meet the infidel, just to show that we are not afraid to treat the Bible like any other book; while we wish to show that we are not narrow; while above all things we wish to show what splendid power of organization we possess?

Ah! I know the rush and tear—"What time have we? The ten minutes extra I meant to have had in the early morning—why, I am worn out, I cannot get up! The time in the middle of the day—why, I have an unceasing string of interruptions all the morning through; and in the evening, after the clubs, the guilds, the meetings—what time have I? Too tired even to go to bed!"

Yes—I say nothing about myself—but is it kindness to my people? Ought they, when they come to one whom they hope to find spiritually fresh, find instead, one who gives them spiritual things and spiritual advice, but only flattened, dead, dull, with all the spiritual bloom brushed off by the continual wear and tear of a too busy

life? If time is to be economized anywhere, beware of economizing it in times of devotion. Just as the extravagant man will retrench in the money spent by him in charity, so the spendthrift in time is too often tempted to economize in his times of devotion; but it is a bad economy. It is a great thing to do plenty of work, but it is a greater thing to do that work in all the freshness of a spiritual vitality. Ah! we know—if ever we have succeeded in opening that window which looks out towards the distant mountains of Heaven, there where the breezes blow fresh across the sea, there where the sweet odours of Paradise come wafted in from the islands of the Blessed—we know the strength and refreshment of those moments spent with God. If Daniel is to brave the wrath of the king, and play the man, he feels that the window towards Jerusalem must be kept open to nerve his resolution and brace his courage.

People lecture from time to time on some of the simplest things which concern life; we are thinking this morning of that which, simple as

it is, is yet the very necessity of the Priestly life. Before I go further may I earnestly beg that we all use every effort to get those windows open, and open regularly? That we sedulously set our faces against those tall imposing buildings—splendid, artistic, almost necessary some would tell us—if they shut out “the ancient lights;” those ancient lights which were opened when we were children (perhaps we use almost the same words still in our prayers), where the sun has come in before, and will come in again, without which our spiritual life will become pale and thin? Do not misunderstand me. Are we in danger here, as in so many other quarters, of a Pseudo-ecclesiasticism? Are we getting to be slaves to Offices, beautiful and ancient, it may be, but difficult, exacting, and just wanting in that personal fervour and simple directness, which our private Devotions were meant to supply? If the Church of England puts upon us, as of obligation,<sup>1</sup> Matins and Evensong, are we wise to

<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to take seriously a letter recently sent to a Church newspaper, in which the writer says, “We are under a

add to our *obligations* a perfect network of Offices which are more than our spirit can bear? Do

canonical obligation to say the *ipsissima verba* of Missal and Breviary. Nor is there to be found anywhere in the Prayer-book or other formulary a single word to release us from this obligation, or to lead us to suppose that anything else has been substituted for them. The Prayer-book is distinctly called the Book of *Common Prayer*," etc. We are reminded of a distinguished traveller, who interpreted the fact that he was provided with clean linen to mean that he was to put on one shirt over another, simply because he had never been told when he put on clean linen first to divest himself of that which had been soiled. We imagine that the compilers of our Prayer-book, whether they were right or wrong, at least credited their descendants with some share of common sense. And when they made provision for the obligatory recital of Matins and Evensong by the clergy, privately as well as openly, did not anticipate that it was necessary first of all formally to stop the recitation of the old offices, as a matter of obligation, when they had *ipso facto* provided a substitute. It may interest some readers, who are not merely *θέσιν διαφυλαττόντες*, to recall the words of Dr. Liddon on the subject. "A complemental, yet most useful practice of the clergyman's life (if time allows) is the observance of the lesser canonical hours, and particularly the use of the service for Sext, by way of noonday prayer. *Of course* such a practice as this rests on very different grounds from that of the daily office, and even from meditation, of which the former is positively and the latter implicitly enjoined in the English formularies. It is simply an act of the individual judgment, undertaken with a view to edification. Matins, indeed, and Lauds are very fairly, and Vespers very fully, represented in

not we want to be alone with God sometimes—to talk to Him without the formal *etiquette* of an Office?

Surely it is not all a protest against self-righteous display, when Our Blessed Lord bids us, before we pray, enter into our closet! We have read before now of the strange coldness which has sprung up in courts between princes and their parents, if they only see them in the stiff formalities of court ceremonials: a life built upon Offices leaves something to be desired, and is at the best like the trim Dutch garden, where one longs for the freely-blooming freshness of the flowers, and the fragrance of their unstinted growth. I do plead earnestly for the Priests' private Prayers, lest they should be crushed out by multiplied work, or planted out by Offices, or talked out by committees. Depend upon it, dear brethren, that in many a physical break-

the English Prayer-book; so much so that the repetition of these offices in their original shape might appear to some minds to involve an act of disloyalty towards the actual services of the English Church."—"Clerical Life and Work," by Dr. Liddon, p. 39

down if the doctor came to see us, he would say, "Above all things, if you are to keep in health, you must have your meals regularly, and take sufficient time over them." In like manner, any physician of the soul would say to you this Lent, "You must say your private Prayers with regularity and devotion, and give plenty of time to them. Without this your spiritual life will faint and fail; your face will not shine; your people will not be fed with their proper food; you will be restless, irritable, discontented, wearied, with that worst form of spiritual malady, known as prayerlessness, which is the very *insomnia* of the soul."

## II.

As Priests have we measured sufficiently the intense power of Prayer? There are other forms of organization, other forms of work, but Church work ought to be thus differentiated—that it is saturated with Prayer. The congregation to whom the parish Priest preaches ought first

to have been made ready for the good seed of the Word by the earnest preparation of intercessory Prayer. The sermon itself should be not the rambling incoherency of a barren unpreparedness, but carefully built up with Prayer. Words in their Sunday<sup>1</sup> dress, not only the best words, but sanctified words. The parish difficulties, such as we encounter in visiting, in schools, in individual cases, must first be crumbled down with Prayer. Before the hand-to-hand assault, let there be the steady bombardment of Prayer. And then how often the difficulty vanishes! The way into that impregnable citadel, as we thought it, has been prepared, and the victory of persuasion has been made easy by Prayer. If only we resolved to be men of Prayer, so many of our difficulties, personal and otherwise, would vanish. Secularity, which is never far absent, officialism, an irreverent easiness, indolence,—all these things would become impossible in our own lives. The parish Priest would shed around him an atmosphere of spiritual health, and like the eucalyptus tree in a deadly, fever-stricken

<sup>1</sup> “La Poesie, c’est la verité endimanchée.”

swamp, would sweeten the air by his very presence.

But Lent is just the time to ask ourselves even closer-home questions than these. Lent is a time when our souls are on their examination, and when, like wise examiners, we take nothing for granted.

“Have I, with all my Eucharists, my Offices, my Prayers, as a matter of fact, learned to pray?” As the train of life, in all its manifold activities, rests for a moment thus in Lent, does this wheel, this master-wheel, give a true sound when we tap it? Have I, as a matter of fact, learned to pray? I suppose there is no trouble so common, especially among spiritual men, as the inability to pray; and there are few things of their kind which so revenge themselves upon us as Prayer, if we do not use it aright. For as there are few joys to compare with real Prayer, if just for a few moments we have attained to it, so there are few drudgeries to compare in weariness and distastefulness, to Prayers said because we must say them: when we want to be doing something else, and simply try to drag



the mind after us, an unwilling and impassive victim to an irksome sense of duty.

Here may I put in a plea at once, that Prayer may be reckoned more as a part, and a very real part, of our work? We can see the popular estimate of Prayer in the old conception of a Cathedral body like this. Few officials, at all events, in old days would come to church unless they were paid for it. "The Canon in Residence" only came in at the last moment, and went away at the first opportunity, when his month of residence was over, just putting in an official *minimum* of service. Every one thus, as it were, giving his pound of flesh and no more. We still feel the effects of this system. People think, if they don't always express it, as they see the large body of Cathedral clergy, "How can you find time for your long services? I should like to go to church and say prayers myself, but business must be done." Well, that Priest at all events will not do much good who does not recognize Prayer as his business, and his first business. The church is his office, his seat in church is his clerk's-desk. Prayer and spiritual duties are the very first

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charge upon his time. And however much a layman may be forced to regard such things as a *πάρεργον*, to the Priest certainly they are the very essential *ἔργον*, which he is set to fulfil. Think of our Divine Master spending whole nights in Prayer! Think of the exhortation of the great St. Paul: "Pray without ceasing!" Unless we realize this, unless we recover this sense of the dignity, the absolute essential necessity of Prayer, we shall lapse into a slough of committees, and the Church will become what the old Empire used to conceive it to be, an eccentric form of a burial guild, an inconsequent *Ἐταιρεία*, always troublesome, probably also dangerous to the State. It is sad to see the large municipal buildings rising in our large towns, from which all signs of Christianity are excluded, and mythical shapes raised in their place, where the architecture requires some form of ornamentation. Take care, lest we be organizing the Church and leaving out Prayer, its chiefest ornament!

But this brings us to the very heart of the question. Without doubt, a great deal of that

which passes for Prayer is sheer waste of time, simply because it is not Prayer at all. We cannot wonder if some people refuse to recognize Prayer as work, when they only know it as the feeble pattering of unreal words. It would do us all good to read, during this Lent, the chapter which deals with "Prayer" in Dr. Liddon's "Some Elements of Religion."<sup>1</sup> "Let us examine," he says, "the idea of Prayer, which is taken for granted in such language as the foregoing. Is it true that Prayer is, as is assumed, little else than the half-passive play of sentiment which flows languidly on through the minutes or hours of easy reverie? Let those who have really prayed give the answer. They sometimes, with the patriarch Jacob, describe Prayer as a wrestling together with an Unseen Power, which may last, not unfrequently, in an earnest life, late into the night hours, or even to the break of day. Sometimes, with St. Paul, they refer to common intercession as a concerted struggle. They have, when praying, their eyes fixed on the Great Intercessor in Gethsemane; upon the drops

<sup>1</sup> "Some Elements of Religion," Lect. V. p. 171, by Dr. Liddon.

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of blood which fall to the ground in that agony of resignation and sacrifice. Importunity is of the essence of successful Prayer. Our Lord's references to the subject especially imply this. The Friend who is at rest with his family will rise at last to give a loaf to the hungry applicant. The Unjust Judge yields in the end to the resistless eagerness to the widow's cry. Our Lord's blessing on the Syro-Phœnician woman is the consecration of importunity with God. And importunity means, not dreaminess, but sustained work. It is through Prayer especially that "the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." It was a saying of the late Bishop Hamilton, of Salisbury, that "no man was likely to do much good at Prayer who did not begin by looking upon it in the light of a work, to be prepared for and persevered in with all the earnestness which we bring to bear upon subjects which are, in our opinion, at once most interesting and most necessary." He shows to us, in fact, that Prayer is, and must always be, a very serious task; something which will

make us tired; something which must have an honourable place, and not merely be taken up when we have nothing better to do. "Prayer," says Coleridge, "earnest Prayer is the most severe of all mental exercises."

If we recognized this, it would help us to feel more its dignity, it would give us a greater sense of its importance; but also it would lead us to take more trouble about it. Why are we so tormented and distracted in Prayer? Why does it effect so little? Why do we feel so lifeless about it? Is it that we have not put our strength into it? Think of those three powers—the intellect, the affections, and the will! Surely it would be one very real help to earnest Prayer if we prepared for it more than we do. It is a saying, attributed to a well-known master of the spiritual life, that if he had only three minutes in which to pray, he would devote two of them to preparation. The Bishop of Truro speaks of "the introit" to Matins and Evensong, as well as the introit to the altar.<sup>1</sup> In our public worship, at all events,

<sup>1</sup> "The Parish Priest of the Town," p. 179, by Dr. Gott.

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we have the form of this preparation for devotion, in the pause and silent kneeling which is made by every one when he comes into the church. Shall we not find that here, as in so many things, *πλέον ἡμῶν πάντος*, and that if we commenced with an earnest preparation in our private Prayers, it would carry us through all the difficulties of weakness and distraction?

Surely one great help would be to put ourselves at once in the presence of God; to try and realize the court of God, what it is and what it means. To put before us God the Father in all His greatness, God the Son at His right hand, and God the Holy Ghost; to try and realize, if it may be, the awful solemnity of that Presence before Whose glory angels veil their faces and the Prophet Isaiah could only feel his own uncleanness. To remember the transcendent business which is being transacted at that court; that even while we speak one of the souls that are ceaselessly leaving the body is coming before Him; that He is receiving, even then, the last prayer for pardon, the last cry of despair, the agonies of the tempted,

the strong intercession of the saints, and the pure prayers of little children. If Prayer is not to be an empty speaking into an empty desolation, we should realize the awful meaning of that phrase, "The provocation of their offering."<sup>1</sup>

I have not ventured to touch on the question as to how far religious pictures and religious emblems are useful as a help to Prayer. I should imagine that this is a question which would be answered differently by different individuals. But I do think that we want to fill out, to people, to make definite, the Unseen world around us. Some people are best helped in their private Prayers in this way, by an absolute blank before them; to some people, again, nothing is so helpful as the open sky and the green grass (I am speaking now of helps only, —helps to private devotion), and I suppose we ought to watch jealously any tendency even in the use of the Blessed Sacrament itself, for this purpose, which would make it hard to realize God without some outward form to help us. We want more and more to make the spiritual the more real, the

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xx. 28.

inward stronger than the outward; to feel that this whole world around us is a great sacrament, whose inner presence is God.

### III.

If we can rescue Prayer from its degradation and elevate it to its proper dignity, we have again further to ask ourselves, "Do I assign to it sufficient time in my active life, in my busy day?" The times of Prayer may well form a distinct subject of inquiry in our Lenten self-examination. I suppose, generally, we should wish that our day should be more or less pervaded with Prayer; and to this end we might well set up certain great fortresses, as it were, of stated times and acts of Prayer, and for the rest let ejaculatory Prayers be a vigilant patrol to drive back the spies of the enemy; and so draw a *cordon* of Prayer round the day. Of these fortresses of Prayer, I suppose it is impossible to over-estimate the quiet strength of the early morning devotions. It is the Nazareth before the ministry. There is a great strength in



that time spent before Divine Service, before meeting our friends, before reading letters, before the world has been able to penetrate within. This is no slight part in the evil of late rising, that it curtails the preparation and the calm strength of the morning devotions, and sends us out hurried and unequipped, with a sense also of having been already worsted in an encounter, to the unknown battles of the untried day.

The other great fortress will be set up in the quiet Prayer at night, with its own sense of sadness and failure, with its own sense of rest and forgiveness, when the disciple comes to Jesus to tell Him what he has done, and what he has taught. Here, again, there is a practical strength which no one would lightly forego. It is the death-bed of a day with its own confession of sin, its special commendation of the soul to God.

“ Abide with me when night is nigh,  
For without Thee I dare not die.”

Between these stated times, there will at least be the halting-place of an earnest midday devotion, and it is possible (as St. Ignatius advises, in

overcoming some sin), the special midday examination. And might we not make more use of ejaculatory Prayer than we do? Would it not be possible to utilize the hour of dressing with its obvious symbolism, to remind us of Baptism and self-dedication? Would it not be possible to utilize the last moments of the day in Psalms and verses of hymns; just as He, our Redeemer, when He hung upon the Cross, used those verses of the Psalms which served to give expression to the mysteries of that awful hour? Would it not be possible to let the clock each time that it strikes call us to Prayer; as in the beautiful example we have in the horology of Bishop Andrewes? Thus to fall back upon God will help us in many a trial, and when temptation is upon us. Our Lord and Saviour used the texts of His boyhood to repel Satan; so the very familiarity of the hymns which come to our lips will bring to hand readily the weapon which we need.

I have left to the last one form of private devotion, about which I would gladly be allowed to say a word; I mean systematic devotional Meditation. There are few religious exercises so

helpful, few so neglected, even by the Priest. And yet, those who use it know how extraordinarily valuable and blessed an aid it is. More than other devotions, it helps us to speak to God in our own language, and tells us "the manner of the God of the land." It opens up to us the heart of Scripture, and shows us what God's Holy Word really is, and what it was meant to say to our soul. And further, for those who have to preach, it supplies a persuasiveness which nothing else gives. When we have learned to meditate, then we can make Holy Scripture our own, and bring out new things from our treasury, not well-worn platitudes which we have adopted without thinking, and repeat without meaning. If any say that Meditation is difficult, that is the very measure of its importance; perhaps if it were not so valuable, it would not be so difficult. If any say he has no time, surely it is his duty to make time to wait upon God. If any say he has no natural aptitude thereto, he has no audience to please except himself. In one sense, Meditation is preaching a sermon to one's self; in another sense, it is talking with

God, without the restraint and formalities of a stated book of devotions. I would earnestly plead that Meditation should be a part of our daily routine, with perhaps stated exceptions when, on certain days, its place may be otherwise occupied. I would plead that the subject of Meditation should generally be the Holy Scriptures. I would suggest that we should take one book of the Bible at a time, and work through it, taking one verse or one passage a day. So we should be saved from the daily difficulty of having to select; so we should be saved from the snare of favourite texts; so we should find that all Holy Scripture is auriferous, and that every text will give up its gold, if we labour long enough and hard enough. So our text will come to us each day like a message from God. This is my lesson to-day; this is what God has to say to me to-day; these are my day's orders; in this I shall find the day's watchword. And so, having fixed our time and resolutely shut our door, we kneel down and pray to the Holy Spirit; we read our text, and think it out, and pray over it, and resolve over it, and perhaps formally pick the

spiritual bouquet, which is to last us through the day. The following may perhaps serve as examples of Meditation on verses of Holy Scripture. The first on a difficult, the second on a more obvious text taken out of the Gospels.

#### MEDITATION FOR HOLY SATURDAY.

“Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden.”  
—ST. JOHN XIX. 41.

I. Contrast the wild turmoil of Calvary with the peace of “a garden.” And consider the first Adam bringing in sin into the world, in a garden.

And now the Second Adam, Himself sinless, submitting to the penalty of sin, in a garden.

“Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished” (Wisd. xi. 16).

II. “In the place where He was crucified.” By my sins wast Thou crucified, O Lord.

Still in that place of sin there is a garden, planted with good seed, Education, Grace, Good Resolutions of Lent.

This garden must be weeded, cleansed, made soft and open, ready for the Easter Sun.

“Break up your fallow ground” (Hos. x. 12).

III. “In the place where He was crucified.” In the hearts of my people, which seem so hard, there is a soft place, prepared by Grace, sown in the past by good influence.

“I have planted, Apollos watered” (1 Cor. iii. 6), and God will give the increase.

Calvary shall not produce despair. I will still look for the garden.

IV. “In the place where He was crucified.” Close to the scene of my own death, with all its terrors, there is the Paradise of God.

“Our Master hath a garden which fair flowers adorn,  
There will I go and gather both at eve and morn;  
Nought’s heard therein but Angel hymns with harp and lute,  
Loud trumpets and bright clarions, and the gentle, soothing  
flute.

“The lily white that bloometh there is Purity,  
The fragrant violet is surnamed Humility:  
Nought’s heard therein, etc.

“But still of all the flowers, the fairest and the best  
Is Jesus Christ the Lord Himself, His Name be blest.  
Nought’s heard therein, etc.

“O Jesu, my chief good and sole felicity,  
Thy little garden make my ready heart to be;  
So may I once hear Angel hymns with harp and lute,  
Loud trumpets and bright clarions, and the gentle, soothing  
flute.”

“God Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man; without which buildings and palaces are but gross handiworks.”<sup>1</sup>

#### MEDITATION FOR THE BEGINNING OF LENT.

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.”—ST. MATT. iv. 1.

I. “Then”—*i.e.* after His Baptism, after the glorious manifestation from Heaven. In the full glow of God’s glory.

Times of spiritual blessing may be followed by times of distress and temptation.

Look back, my soul, to Confirmation, past Communions, past Retreats, past Lents.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. x. 12).

<sup>1</sup> Bacon’s “Essays,” xlvi.

II. "Jesus." The sinless God is tempted, therefore no one is exempt.

"My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation" (Ecclus. ii. 1).

The Saviour is tempted; all who work for God must expect the fiercer trials.

"Mighty men shall be mightily tormented" (Wisd. vi. 6).

Distinguish, however, temptation and sin.

And remember, "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 to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13).

III. "Led up of the Spirit." Examine commentaries, and see whether He was led by His Spirit, or by the Holy Spirit.

Deciding for the latter, notice "Lead us not into temptation," and, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (St. James i. 2). *"Οπου δ' ἄγωνες ἐκεῖ καὶ στέφανοι.*

IV. "Into the wilderness." The best place in which to meet temptation.



Consider the wilderness of Lent, and of self-denial.

“O Lord, Who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights,” etc. Collect for first Sunday in Lent.

V. “Of the Devil.” Consider his titles—“Devil,” “Satan,” “The Serpent,” “The Father of Lies,” “The Roaring Lion”—and from the titles of the enemy, learn the nature of the conflict.

Resolution: “Whosoever I call upon Thee, then shall mine enemies be put to flight: this I know; for God is on my side” (Ps. lvi. 9).

Do let us remember that spiritual power and spiritual excellence stand before everything else. That our greatest glory and joy must be to be ecclesiastics, vigorous, active, spiritual men. If people took as much pains in making themselves spiritually proficient as they do in making themselves intellectually so, the Church and the world would be very different. Men ought to be able to feel that in the vicarages and clergy houses of the land there lives a race of men in very close contact

with God, ready to watch the questions of this world, its social and political difficulties on the side of God, ready to administer and skilfully apply the spiritual remedies so carefully placed in their hands—men who speak what they know, and testify what they have seen.

Prayer may have seemed to be only a homely and simple subject; we share its power with the devout layman, with the pure child. But nevertheless, if we had only learned to pray, it would mean an incalculable difference in our own lives and the lives of others. Surely Prayer seems to string together the different periods of our life with a continuous thread as nothing else can do. It may be, as with the cottage built into the walls of the palace, we still preserve our boyhood's prayers in the selection which we have each made for ourselves. They are the sword of Goliath to us, wrapped up behind the ephod. We slew with it our boyish giant, and there is none like it now. And when we come to die, we lean upon the familiar words with which we have so often gone to rest, and say for the last time, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

## LECTURE II.

### THE PRIEST IN HIS CHURCH.

Lo, on the top of each aerial spire  
What seems a star by day, so high and bright  
It quivers from afar, in golden light.  
But 'tis a form of earth, though tinged with fire  
Celestial, raised in other days to tell  
How, when they tired of prayer, Apostles fell."

THERE are few possessions which we so much cherish as our parish churches. Wherever we go about the country, we know that it is the rarest thing in the world to find a church in which there is no object of interest.

More often we find buried away, in quiet nooks, bits of beauty, records of self-denial, touching memorials of former piety; and we feel what our parish churches have been in the past, and what, please God, they will continue to be to our people. And here in London we know what a power the

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actual church—the material church of bricks and mortar—is in a parish. It is a centre of unity in the dread selfishness which is so characteristic of a great city. It is a bit of beauty in a land of squalor, a centre of patriotism, something to be proud of, something to work for. It is a sympathetic voice to remind men of the universal love of God. It weeps when they weep, it smiles when they rejoice, it weaves itself into their joys and sorrows until it becomes a part of their lives. The parish Priest must feel this to be no mean privilege, no unimportant detail, that he is the custodian of the parish church ; to keep it in repair, to enlarge it, if need be ; yes, to keep it clean—emphatically ; to beautify it—most certainly. The parish church should represent in this the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband. We need to feel more than we do the educational power, the elevating power of simple beauty, where sin is everywhere so ugly and God is everywhere so beautiful, in the spirit of that great hymn which, after exhausting all themes of adoration and praise, simply

expends itself in this: "We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory;" "Gratias agimus Tibi propter magnam gloriam Tuam."

Only let us remember that it is of the greatest importance ever to bear in our mind that we are the custodians, the trustees of the house of God, which belongs to the parish. We ought to do all we can to respect the reasonable sentiments of the people, and readily repress our own individual likes and dislikes.

It is a pitiful thing to see a man driving away his people, or alienating their affection from the parish church, because he dislikes this or that arrangement, harmless in itself; or because he likes a particular form of ornament, or insists on having a Litany-desk, or a particular chant, or a particular kind of music.

I think music has a great deal to answer for in the present day. Our organs get larger and larger, more noisy and obtrusive, filling up space better employed in other ways, mutilating chapels and architectural features, and, in the end, sacrificing everything to artistic display, until, in the enforced

silence of the congregation, we have only a musical version of the old duet between the clergyman and the clerk, which, in the early days of the Oxford Movement, we made such a point of destroying. Most certainly congregational worship is being more and more invaded by the musical tyranny. How few churches now give the congregation the opportunity of joining in the singing of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis!* The dull, interminable, and noisy anthems are listened to in mute patience, or accepted as a musical performance. And the worship of the Altar is so overlaid with noisy and elaborate settings that there are too evident tokens of weariness and distraction. No! As the parish Priest learns sternly to repress his own æsthetic tastes, or, at least, govern them by the needs of his congregation, so let him not hesitate to keep his choir in due subservience to edification.

There is, of course, this side to musical worship, in which we rejoice to recognize it as the offering of the most perfect vocal and musical production that can be realized, to the King of Beauty. That has been the function of our cathedrals and great

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centres of musical art; but it is disastrous, if we are going to allow the people to be driven out of their share of Divine worship by a musical performance which is neither beautiful in itself nor devotional and helpful to the worshippers. It takes us a long time, all of us, to realize how selfish we are. It takes a long discipline and some experience to be sympathetic with those who are repelled by what we think to be beautiful; who are hindered by what we find helpful; who regard as a wicked waste of money what we think to be an edifying symbolism; who are perplexed and puzzled by our fine words and theological terms, which we thought to be so helpful and precise.

More than we think, more than we care to think, the people and their devotions are the real ornament of the church. Nothing will make up for it; we can be nothing else than miserable if we find more candles than communicants in our church, a big choir and an empty nave, our own shibboleth echoed by a few and the rest puzzled and unedified. The church is the church of the people, the only bit of beauty which some of them

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possess, the only property in which some of them have a share. They do not like to be hustled and puzzled by our ever-changing eclecticism, or by the last fashion which catches the restless fancy of the parish Priest. Think only of the tender memories which lie buried in those walls, of the many broken hearts, and earnest longings and heartfelt resolutions which have wound themselves round the fabric, the services, the hymn-book, the very aspect of the building! "A tiresome conservatism," do you say? Perhaps; only be tender. There are roots which are struck down into the earth there, in soil which you deem miserably thin, perhaps poisonous. You put them into a richer soil, you put them into a hot-house, they wither and die. They were growing among cinders and rubbish, but there was a soil there, and a grip of it which in our folly we have got rid of, and do not know what to put in its place. Old customs, old beliefs, old prejudices, any soil in which roots have struck down,—they may have to be cleaned, to be replenished, reformed, but, depend upon it, it is a bad policy to cast them away altogether. In this



connection the following statement of Cardinal Newman's may not be out of place:<sup>1</sup> "It is not difficult to determine the line of conduct which is to be observed by the Christian apologist and missionary. Believing God's hand to be in every system, so far forth as it is true (though Scripture alone is the depository of His unadulterated and complete revelation), he will, after St. Paul's manner, seek some points in the existing superstitions as the basis of his own instructions, instead of indiscriminately condemning and discarding the whole assemblage of heathen opinions and practices; and he will address his hearers, not as men in a state of actual perdition, but as being in imminent danger of 'the wrath to come' because they are in bondage and ignorance, and probably under God's displeasure, that is, the vast majority of them are so in fact, but not necessarily so, from the very circumstance of their being heathen. And while he strenuously opposes all that is idolatrous, immoral, and profane in their creed, he will profess to be leading them on to perfection, and to be

<sup>1</sup> Newman, "The Arians of the Fourth Century," sect. iii. p. 85.

recovering and purifying, rather than reversing the essential principles of their belief.

“A number of corollaries may be drawn from this view of the relation of Christianity to Paganism by way of solving difficulties which often perplex the mind. For example, we thus perceive the utter impropriety of ridicule and satire as a means of preparing a heathen population for the reception of the truth. Of course it is right, soberly and temperately, to expose the absurdities of idol-worship; but sometimes it is maintained that a writer, such as the infamous Lucian, who scoffs at an established religion altogether, is the suitable preparation for the Christian preacher,—as if infidelity were a middle state between superstition and truth. This view derives its plausibility from the circumstance that in drawing out systems in writing, to erase a false doctrine is the first step towards inserting the true. Accordingly the mind is often compared to a tablet or paper: a state of it is contemplated of absolute freedom from all prepossessions and likings for one system or another, as a first step towards arriving at the truth; and

infidelity represented as that candid and dispassionate frame of mind, which is the desideratum. For instance, at the present day, men are to be found of high religious profession, who, to the surprise and grief of sober minds, exult in the overthrow just now of religion in France, as if an unbeliever were in a more hopeful state than a bigot for advancement in real spiritual knowledge. But, in truth, the mind never can resemble a blank paper, in its freedom from impressions and prejudices. Infidelity is a positive, not a negative state, it is a state of profaneness, pride, and selfishness; and he who believes a little, but encompasses that little with the inventions of men, is undeniably in a better condition than he who blots out from his mind both the human inventions and that portion of truth which was concealed in them."

The parish church is like a rock in the wilderness, out of which gushes the fountain of life. There it streams forth in sacramental rivers of grace, and where it flows over, there is the green oasis of vicarage, school, institute, penitentiary, houses of god-fearing men and women, whose lives

are soothed by the murmur of this refreshing stream, where the parish Priest follows the guidance of the Good Shepherd and leads them forth in the green pastures beside the waters of comfort.

## I.

Of the many functions which the Priest has to discharge in his parish church, I would take now only just a few, asking you to remember that I do not put these forward as an exhaustive enumeration, but certainly as leading and most important offices of spiritual duty, which he has to discharge in his spiritual house of business.

And first of all, of course, I must put his ministry at the Altar. This is his most characteristic function. The worship of the church is no mere independent arrangement which might have been otherwise;<sup>1</sup> it is ordained by Christ Himself, to make, as it were, the worship one which links Heaven and earth together. A Sunday without

<sup>1</sup> See "The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of our Lord," Milligan, p. 309.

an Eucharist is an anomaly which ought to be impossible. A Priest who neglects this most important part of his ministry must surely feel that his church is like a patch of darkness, where the long line of Altars flashes up the great memorial to God. As one looks down from a height over the far-stretching plain, or over the city from the dome above us, and see the towers and spires of the churches reaching away into the haze, one realizes what a mighty intercession it might be, when, at every Altar, at least on Sunday, the Priest proclaims the Lord's death till He come. The guides at the top of this cathedral are accustomed to say (I know not with what truth) that wherever the cupola or spire is painted black, that is a sign that the pre-existing church on that spot was destroyed in the Great Fire. What does the recording angel think of those dead churches which neglect to plead the Lord's death and break this linked intercession? On the other hand, now, it is not unusual to find, and for this we must thank God, even many churches in which the Holy Eucharist is offered daily. Only, ought we

not to look to it as a subject of self-examination in Lent, that we never enterprise such a tremendous thing in mere obedience to a fashion, or because it is "the right thing to do"? One does so dread anything like playing with the Blessed Sacrament, or thinking that one can put on, as the saying is, a Daily Celebration as lightly and easily as one can put on a coloured stole. There are difficulties, yes, and there are profanations connected with it, which people do not always think of. It must be—it is—a tremendous strain for a Priest to be obliged, from want of assistance, to celebrate every day. I know there are some who think it only the right and the duty of every Priest, even when they are in retreat, so to celebrate. It is a tremendous claim, and implies a life of sustained sanctity, which I know we are all bound to aim at, but which we feel it is unspeakably difficult to attain to.

It is idle to affect to ignore that a mechanical devotion has before now crept in over the Priesthood. It survives in the popular idea of "Sacerdotalism." There is nothing in that term itself

which should or would frighten people, but it represents a scar, the memory of a past burn on the public conscience, which keeps men away even from warmth and light. It has been admirably put before us in a recent book on the "Ministerial Priesthood," that "a Christian priesthood misapprehends itself which can be content to find the beginning and end of its definition or meaning in terms only of what is outward and ceremonial, or in any sacramental service, however intelligent it may be, or reverent in itself, which does not sweep in the whole heart, and action, and life. Leadership in Eucharist worship, truly understood, involves many corollaries of spirit and life: the bearing of the people on the heart before God; the earnest effort of intercessory entreaty; the practical translation of intercession into pastoral life, and anxiety, and pain."<sup>1</sup> The Daily Celebration and ministerial easiness, or levity, go ill together. He who celebrates daily has mastered the difficulty which puzzles us, of wearing aright the Eucharistic Vestments. He has the Helmet of salvation on

<sup>1</sup> "Ministerial Priesthood," by Dr. Moberly, p. 261.

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his head, the Amice which shields him from the dazzling and distracting blows of the world, from intellectual perplexity and spiritual temptations. He is covered from head to foot with the Alb of perfect purity; he has learned to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. He is girt with the Girdle of absolute temperance; he is not the slave of any habit, however innocent in itself, but is girded in tight from the enjoyment of any creature, which is used for its own sake apart from the necessities of life. He bears on his neck the Stole of humility; he is the servant of God and the servant of his people; his whole life is dedicated to the service of humanity. He is covered before and behind with the Chasuble marked with the cross. He is wrapped up in Christ. His intercessions are joined with His. His active hands are pierced with His. His busy feet are pierced with His. His side is pierced in compassion with His. While on his arm hangs the Maniple of sympathy, to weep with them that weep, to know something of the Beatitude of the mourners, and to minister to the distressed. Wher-



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ever we go in the ministry we are surrounded with the symbolism of utter surrender; but directly we brush past these mute reminders directly we become official, cold, or perfunctory, we run tremendous risks. Fashion, "the correct thing," orthodoxy, a stiff rule, ecclesiasticism, have a great deal to answer for; our rough, illogical, haphazard methods, which seem to be so irregular as compared with the firm correctness of other standards, at least witness to an intense abhorrence of unreality, of a national shrinking from going one inch further outwardly than we are prepared to go inwardly, and an intense desire to know what the man is inside the Vestments. And if he be a golden Priest, let him offer in a vessel of wood; if he be a wooden Priest, let him forbear to offer even in vessels of gold. Surely it would be a region in which we should meet with no opposition, except from the devil, if we tried to provide ourselves, this Lent, with the Eucharistic Vestments of a Spiritual Life.

## II.

Another function connected with the church is the recitation of the Divine Office, known as Matins and Evensong, to which recitation we are bound by a special obligation. Of course the revival of this recitation was one of the main features of the Tractarian Movement, and it is probable that more people attended these Offices thirty years ago than do now. Possibly this has been due to that feminine form of admiration which imagines that love for a particular thing can best be shown by depreciating something else. People have thought it a good way of elevating the Holy Eucharist to depreciate Matins and Evensong. Partly, again, other popular Devotions have taken their place. Partly the Shortened Service Act has so robbed them of their structure and their beauty, that where everything has been sacrificed to brevity, people have ceased to feel their attraction. Partly, no doubt, also people have grown indifferent in a general wave of carelessness about church-going. But, as Priests, do

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let us recall a few simple considerations which merit our attention. First, that a very special blessing attaches to our recitation of an Office which is laid upon us under the obligation of a duty. Secondly, that it would be desirable that we should get out of the way of a perfunctory parochial recitation of these Offices, which is symbolized by the fact that none of the clergy ever attend unless they are obliged to do so, in the person of the one who is responsible for the Office. Surely, just as in well-worked cathedrals every effort is made to minimize the idea of "the Canon in Residence," so it would be a good thing to minimize the idea of the Priest who is responsible for the Office, and to use these times as far as possible as the expression of the united voice of those who minister to God in that parish. Thirdly, let us realize that this is part of our work, as real and as true as the performing of some definite parochial activity. We, in our Cathedrals, have an immense obligation laid upon us, to show people that we are not wasting time when we take part in our daily elaborate services,

and to let those whose duty brings them there feel that the clergy go to church not only when they are obliged, and that their main duty after all is not merely to preach, write letters, and attend committees. Fourthly, let us realize that by the custom of the Church of England the laity are invited and expected to assist the clergy in the recitation of the Divine Office—nothing unprimitive or unusual, as a study of Duchesne will show.<sup>1</sup> And this being so, it is loyal, it is well to emphasize and elaborate it. What is more miserable in life than a man who is unnatural; who, being born, for instance, to the honest and dignified position of tradesman, affects to despise trade, and to imitate the fashions and indolence of a social stage above him? Or, what is more provoking than for a man who is born an Englishman to pose as a Frenchman? Or, in the region of art, what greater mistake has been made by an architect than treating Classical Architecture as if it were Gothic, and Gothic as if it were Classical? Depend upon it, it is an immense thing, as

<sup>1</sup> Duchesne, "Origines du Culte Chrétien," chap. xvi.

Churchmen also, to be natural; to be fond of the peculiarities of Anglicanism, and to make the best of them, and not for ever to be trying to make them something else, or despise them because they are not foreign.

It would be difficult to find anywhere a form of Divine Office more dignified and more serviceable than Evensong. Its intense dignity and beauty must strike any one, as well as its great popularity in the best sense. And, indeed, largely intellectual in their appeal as the Divine Offices are, and full of Holy Scripture, they have brought up, and do bring up, a sturdier generation of Churchmen than those who are nourished on hymns and popular devotions, sometimes almost puerile, generally very light.

And this being so, is it not our wisdom to recognize it and adorn it? If Holy Scripture enters so largely into our Offices, they were meant to be instructive. If they are in the vernacular, they were meant to be heard. What is the mystical value of mumbling? What is the precise value of reading so fast, so unintelligibly, so badly, that laymen shrink away ashamed and pained? This surely is

an affectation of what we are not, and about as dignified as the assuming of a limping gait, or a lisping tongue, when God has made us healthy and whole. No! the recitation of the Divine Office should be performed with as much care as the celebration of the Holy Mysteries themselves. We cannot run in and out before God, and say, "It is only Matins, it does not matter. We must get through it somehow, we must do it quickly." No! God is there, and when we have done our best we shall have done it very badly. While to have done our best in the Divine Office is a reason for being able to do our best in the service of the Holy Altar. Might we not this Lent take the Divine Office in hand, and try to offer it more worthily to God?

What a grand thing is the recitation of the Psalter alone! Think of that great choir before whom we say it; the saints who have enriched every cadence, and fulfilled every turn of those Psalms with the melody of their lives! What a companion we have in the Daily Office; how it has wound itself round our life, and has spoken to us at every turn; childhood, school, college-life, our daily vicissitudes, are all in it! It is like the sea,

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it is like the mountains, always changing, yet always the same. We do not need proper lessons, they are always appropriate. King Charles is comforted before his martyrdom by the lesson chosen as if for his especial comfort. The Bishops on their release from the Tower are cheered by the Lesson which told of St. Peter's deliverance from prison. It is a sturdy, vigorous life, after all, which has grown up, fed with the Daily Office full of Scripture—and of Scripture shaded and painted and framed in the exquisite devotional setting which gives it its true value. Here at least we shall make use of our church, and ask our people to use it with us, and thank God for a national use which has taught our people to love their Bible, and has given them withal a masculine spiritual sense.

### III.

In the few moments I have left, I would speak of the church as a place of instruction, and that only in one department, the instruction as given in sermons. It is a question whether we are giving sermons anything like their proper position in our

work and thoughts. In the great reaction from the time when preaching obscured Sacraments, there seemed to be a deliberate attempt to belittle sermons. It was another example of what I spoke of just now: people showed their appreciation of Sacraments by offering indignity to sermons. We remember the absolute fear of preaching without a book, pulpits cut down, or even abolished, the restrained, unimpassioned reading of a doctrinal treatise, generally on the subject of Baptismal Regeneration. But English people certainly believed in sermons, and surely it was the height of folly to drive away a class which was ready to be taught, and to break down what was in reality a great opportunity. Now, of course, there are signs that this belief, imperfect and out of proportion as it was, is dying out. The rising generation as a rule dislikes sermons. And it is not a matter which we can view with unmixed satisfaction, if our class-room is empty, and an uninstructed youth is growing up, more especially as they come to us from schools where dogmatic truth is wholly ignored, and even a proper use of the Bible is neglected.



Is there not a growing carelessness and even flippancy about sermons? Their numbers, alas! do not decrease, but our people are being fed on terribly thin stuff, and they resent it. And then comes the terrible temptation to do something to make them stop and listen, which is unworthy,—the comic sermon, the attractive sermon, the sermon on subjects of the day. I myself have seen churches placarded as if a variety entertainment were to take place inside. “Courtship,” “Wives,” “Musings by the side of a glacier,” “The biggest banquet on record,” and titles of this kind, are advertised as subjects of sermons. Is it not degrading? Is it not pandering to the lowest tastes? Is it not an offence against beauty? Is it not dangerous to the preacher himself? The new calendar, again, landing us in Sanitation Sunday, with the general subject of drainage—is it not lowering the Christian pulpit? Does it not say, “The Gospel is worn out, and I must do something to attract and keep a congregation together somehow”? Or, take once more the prevailing fashion of inviting to church, men by themselves, women by themselves, children

by themselves, to a special service. Of course there are occasions when this may be desirable, but very often it is only a kind of flattery designed to make people believe that we have got a message of peculiar importance to deliver to them, which turns out after all to be something which might have been said with equal propriety to the occupants of the old family pew. It was said in a recent sermon<sup>1</sup> that there are four qualifications for a good preacher: (1) Reverence; (2) Study; (3) Dogma; (4) Comprehensiveness. And these are heads of examination under which we might well bring our sermons. If we think of reverence, it would be something if we always knelt down before we prepared, and always before we delivered our sermons, and said, "*Veni Creator.*" We should hardly then invite the Holy Spirit to help us to make jokes, or talk about glaciers, or say smart and profane things about the Saints, just to show we are not afraid. We should speak then as in a Presence, and feel that a sermon is a speech with

<sup>1</sup> "Four Qualifications for a Good Preacher," a Sermon by Dr. Luckock, Dean of Lichfield, 1897.

a *nimbus* round it, just as the Bible is a book with a *nimbus* round it, and the church is a building with a *nimbus* round it, and the Priest, if you like, a man with a *nimbus* round him. These flippancy attractive sermons not only, in some instances, do harm to the preacher, but they do harm to the congregation also. Accustomed to strong stimulants like this, they will have nothing without them, and the old Gospel sounds flat to those who want more jokes, more pictures described, more politics, more questions of the day. Smartness, profanity, irreverence—so it gets piled on and on, as the old stimulants fail, and something stronger is demanded, under threat of an empty church. We see the great Preacher of righteousness reduced to a congregation of twelve on one occasion, and they wavering; but there was no attempt to minimize truth in consequence.

And then I suppose, in just the opposite direction, a preacher who has driven people away by his dullness and emptiness, ought to be severely grieved with himself. It is not a mark of perfection to have an empty church. Study of books,

of men, of history, of self, should always give him something to say. And if a man has something to say, people will stop to listen to it. We want to get out of that hopeless way of droning out a few platitudes which have been said hundreds of times before, something to take up time, or suggesting the obvious impression that a duty has been forced upon us which we dislike, despise, and refuse. Every Priest who is in earnest can preach; if we have something to say we shall be able to say it. We ought surely to take more pains, not to write an essay, but to give our people, whom we know as individuals, a message. Indolence, neglected prayer, vanity, self-indulgence, contented ignorance, neglected visiting, neglected schools, all leave their marks upon our sermons. It is the greatest compliment which a preacher can receive, not that he has preached an eloquent sermon, but that he has preached a helpful one. My old Vicar, the late Dean Butler, used to say we ought to ask ourselves, "Has my sermon led anybody to do anything?"—to think worse of himself than when he came to church? Has it taught anybody

anything? These are the sort of things to aim at in a sermon: not, "How am I to write a good essay to satisfy myself?" but "What will that tradesman whom I know get out of this? What will this teach that difficult Churchman? Will this solve that young man's perplexities? Is this the sort of thing which will help my people to face the infamy of the streets, and the temptations of life?" It is better to speak from the heart, and what we feel, even if artistically or to a scholarly mind we are out of proportion, than to say, "There is this to be said on this side, and this on that; the truth lies somewhere between, and is of very little value when you find it." We want study. Study in the two books, the book of experience and the book of revelation. And we want dogma. I cannot sum up this better than in these words, which I once read in a review, "The Gospel is good news, not good advice." We have news, unspeakably good news, to deliver; we have to preach to men the way of salvation; and the way of salvation, however unpopular it may be to say so, is very clearly marked, and sharply separated

off from many tracts of very pleasing error. And we shall want comprehensiveness, "the proportion of faith." Surely this does need insisting on. At one time Baptismal Regeneration, as we have seen, used to be preached *ad nauseam*. At another time, the Atonement. Now we so often hear the Holy Sacrament of the Altar dragged in, in season and out of season, that we find ourselves looking out for it as a milestone on the way. It is terribly easy to make truth stale, to press it out of proportion, and to build superstructures without foundations, and to spend strength on ornamentation which was needed for the foundations. The whole history of schism is the history of ill-proportioned truth, which has broken off at the point of deformity.

If our churches are of such value, viewed in only three departments of their manifold uses, let us labour more and more to make them centres of life; houses of God in very truth; sanctuaries to which the sinner can flee and escape; schools of sound doctrine, the grave Gospel preached by grave clergy to meet the grave mysteries of life.

## LECTURE III.

### THE PRIEST IN HIS DEALINGS WITH PENITENTS.

“Despondency is but another form of self-conceit. Despondency is self-confidence which has failed.”

No one can have been long in the ministry, if at all events he has made full proof of it, without finding out how largely he is occupied in dealing with sin. So much so, that if a man finds, or begins to think, that his time and work are devoted only or chiefly to presiding at committees, organizing entertainments, improving sanitary conditions, and in political agitation, one is almost inclined to think there must be something wrong.

The sheep are safely curled up in the fold, he regards their number with pride, their general fleecy whiteness with satisfaction ; and he knows nothing of the thief which comes not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. If a doctor in the parish were

to spend all his time in organizing missionary meetings, or getting up concerts, his patients would soon seek some one else, or, failing that, die. And so if we Priests are out of touch with individual work, if we know nothing of the soul's needs among our people; perhaps unconsciously to us they are seeking other remedies, other doctors, strange unhealthy sentimental quackeries, while we keep the Church medicine-chest shut up, and do not know how to use the Church's instruments. And our sheep are getting their remedies elsewhere while we are sending up our parochial statistics to "The Church's Year-book," or they are dying of some hidden disease, while we complacently say, "What a beautiful flock we have under our hand!"

We are bound to assume the existence of sin and the need of definite penitence in our flock; not, alas! in those open and notorious cases which we fence round with a wall of propriety, and leave as altogether beyond us and impossible; but also among our own most cherished sheep, our choir, our communicants, our respectable Churchpeople, our schools.



Always remember—never let us forget it—that congregation of respectable people whose religious sympathies were so outraged, and their sense of the intense obligation of the moral law so accentuated; who wished to make it a test of our blessed Lord's conduct, whether or not He sympathized with them in suppressing so great an outrage. There they stand round the poor woman taken in adultery, indignant, triumphant, with a case with a definite issue, from which He could not escape. "Moses in the Law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?"<sup>1</sup> And in a few moments the whole congregation has melted away, stung by a shaft from the quiver of truth: "He that is without sin among you" (he that is free in this matter), "let him first cast a stone at her."<sup>2</sup>

## I.

And this brings me to the first thing I wished to say. We must *make* penitents. Every man is

<sup>1</sup> St. John viii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> St. John viii. 7.

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a sinner, but not every man is a penitent. Some are leading two lives, quite distinct the one from the other; it is "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" over again. And when the first man is in church, or talking to his Rector, he does not think anything about his second self, which is lustful, intemperate, angry, dishonest, on other days and in other company. And he has persuaded himself that everybody has something amiss with him; that virtue is like a highly refined spirit, which needs a little adulteration with sin if it is to stand the climate of the world. He poses in society as a man who is not too strict, as a man who knows something of the world, as one, in short, who makes no professions. There they sit before you on Sunday as morally dense as any King David when Nathan is speaking his parable in the pulpit. We must make penitents; that is, we must speak plainly from time to time about sin and the need of repentance. We must tell people what sin really is, and what penitence really is, and that a great deal more is required from the followers of the Crucified than was required from the better heathen and from the Jews.

Do we have plain speaking enough from the pulpit? The only plain speaking that many of our parishioners get is on the side of Satan, in novels and publications which they read without a blush; while they are shocked at anything which is outside the limits of commonplace in our utterances. It is the shallowest criticism which complains of what some people are pleased to call the indelicacy of the Bible. There, certain sins and the permanent attitude of God towards those sins, together with certain mysteries of life, are treated of in a solemn and serious way, and the knowledge of what is wrong and the knowledge of those mysteries of life which so many are now saying ought to be imparted to the young, are there set forth in a natural, solemn, and yet veiled manner.

Still, I return to what I said at first, Do we speak seriously enough to our people about sin and sinfulness? It is difficult and it is dangerous; and surely great care must be exercised; but still it should be done. Why should there not be more consultations among the Priests of a parish as to sermons? And if something has to be said, let it

not be said by the youngest and most inexperienced and the least responsible member of the staff, but by him who is best qualified by experience and capabilities to speak, and who will do so as the representative of all. How often it happens that things are rushed, and harm is done because a young man, straight from his Ordination, without consultation, and without knowing the people, insists on blurting out some difficult piece of advice on some delicate doctrinal point, and thinks that he is thereby declaring "the whole counsel of God."<sup>1</sup>

Most certainly refined ladies and children have to be respected; and therefore I would venture to suggest that when we preach about impurity, *e.g.* as we ought to do from time to time, it should be in Lent or at other times when special notice can be given, so that those who do not want to come may be able to withdraw themselves. Lust, drunkenness, untruthfulness, dishonesty, and other common sins, should be preached about earnestly and strongly, at least once a year, by that member of the staff who is best able to do it. It was the old

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 27.

Tractarian rule to preach penitence in the confident belief that repentance and confession of sins would naturally follow. In our æstheticism, our sermons on subjects of the day, our love of change, there is a terrible danger of forgetting *sin*; and it is one of the first duties of the parish Priest to put this before his people.

## II.

If it is his duty to make penitents, to rouse this feeling in the hearts of a too self-satisfied generation, it is his duty also to find out penitents. I mean, he will not content himself with firing into the air; he will follow it up; he must get at close quarters with his people. And how very much depends on this! Is there not a danger in that diocesan official spirit that people will begin to think you have no heart and no human sympathies? The man who looks from the height of an ineffable superiority on a poor struggling schoolboy will not encourage him to ask how he can get rid of that evil which has not yet

become chronic, which has fastened on him from evil surroundings. There are some people we could not confide in; they seem to repel us. That man who magnificently reaches the poor tempted artisan through a network of organization, and touches him with the finger-tips of a district visitor, perhaps not over wise, perhaps gossiping and fussy, must not expect to get at the depth of a man's heart. The man who only speaks to his people in herds in a parish-room or schoolroom must not expect Nicodemus to come and talk to him about his soul, or Onesimus to tell him that he is a runaway slave, who wants to get back to his Master and atone for his fault as a Christian to a Christian. Penitents hide away in the garrets in the shape of men who have long shunned the very sight of a Priest. There is a reason for it. Penitents lurk away in that class of difficult people whom we have lumped together in a broad generalization of uniform hopelessness as "publicans and sinners." Penitents are to be found in the Confirmation candidates, who are not a class to be drilled to pass an

examination, but individual souls to be saved. The young man who tells you he does not believe in a God does not really need a series of "Bampton Lectures," but probably only wants to make his Confession. The man whom you press and worry to fall in with the ordinary routine of penitence shrinks back; you have frightened him. His soul is tender; sin to him is a delicate and awful subject; he does not know you are the sort of doctor he cares to trust. It is one thing to preach penitence; it is another thing to have that subtle diagnosis of character, that wisdom and practical prudence, which knows where to look for the sin-laden sufferer, and how best to cure the acuteness of his sufferings.

And this, I truly believe, is a long process. You can get it mechanically. You can tell your young people you expect a certain routine of penitence, and that they must conform to it. But I doubt whether the good doctor, quite apart from anything else, ever treats people mechanically. Sympathy, experience, tenderness, seeking people in season and out of season, great refinement and

delicacy of touch, practical knowledge born of constant work among them, and supernatural grace, which is the outcome of prayer,—this will be the welcome to the penitent, which will attract him and draw him on to Christ.

### III.

But, having preached penitence, and having found those who feel deeply their need of forgiveness, having gained the confidence of your people, how are you going to help them? Most certainly God has provided in His Church the very anodyne of their pain, and has given it to you to administer. I mean Absolution. Now, you know this is a subject on which a good deal is said which is foolish, and a great deal that is wrong. Let us try and clear it up, as far as we may.

Most certainly, if we believe Holy Scripture at all, everybody is bound to confess his sins—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;" and, mark you, not merely our sinfulness, but our sins. Do our people realize this?



It is so picturesque and easy just to kneel down and say, "We have erred like a lost sheep. We all know that we are sinners. I know I am not so good as I ought to be." It adds sometimes a gentle softening, as of humility, to a character whose respectability is almost too obtrusive in its brilliant colours. Aristides deprecates ostracism by saying that, after all, his justice is defective, and he makes no professions. But it is quite another thing to kneel down and say, "O God, I did a vile action. I said this or that cruel thing to-day. I did not tell the truth. To-day I have given way to bitter anger." This is the sort of confession our Prayer-book orders for her communicants, accompanied with a searching self-examination by the rule of God's Commandments. But she does more than this; she is bound to do more than this. There is an ordinance of the Church known as Absolution, which (of course, it could not have been otherwise; we cannot cut away God's ordinances as indifferent matters) was retained at the Reformation as a well-known, definite thing. Everybody knew what Absolution

meant then ; everybody knows what it means now To retain the term, if something else was meant by that term, would be about as reasonable as if an inhabitant of Leicester were to leave behind in his will, as his advice, that, in face of the opposition to that medical process called vaccination, all his children should be periodically vaccinated at stated times, as a preventive against small-pox, when he only meant by this that they were to take cooling medicine when they required it. Surely it is playing with the meaning of terms if we suppose Absolution to mean reading "the Comfortable Words," or reading out texts of Holy Scripture, or declaring that God forgives sins on repentance, which a child could say with as much truth and power as a Priest. No ; the Church has put into our hands the power which has been lodged in the Church from the very beginning and was committed to us at our ordination— "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."<sup>1</sup> And it is this great, this

<sup>1</sup> St. John xx. 23.

unspeakable gift that we can bestow upon the penitent in his dealings with his sins ; which we, and only we, can give him. And to obtain this he must make Confession as the contribution on his part, which we always find in the case of any recipient of Divine grace.

But here we are confronted with several objections. In the first place, people say all this blessing which you hint at can be obtained in the Public Confessions and Absolutions of the Divine Office, and more especially of the Holy Communion. Surely it is quite sufficient if I examine myself, and remember my sins, and read them with true contrition into the Public Confession, and obtain the Public Absolution. Well, in the first place, "sufficient" is hardly the term we like to use in dealing with repentance for our sins. Our blessed Lord did not ask what was "sufficient" when for us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, but He emptied Himself of His glory. He did not ask what was "sufficient" when, to make Atonement, He shed His Blood in the bitterness of His Cross and Passion. In view of our sins, do we

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not need rather to ask, "Is there anything more that I could do? Is there anything to make me feel my sins more, to deepen my contrition?" *Amplius lava me*: "Wash me more and more from my wickedness." Surely thus to run in, as it were, under the public Absolutions would be to endeavour to snatch a Sacramental blessing with the smallest possible expenditure of personal shame and trouble. God forbid that we should say it is impossible! It is possible to wash in a tiny basin, but it is easier and better to use the cleansing bath. For although almost certainly the Absolutions in the public services are real sprinklings of Absolution pronounced by the Priest alone, yet surely they are final Absolutions pronounced over people already believed to be pardoned, for the purposes of the immediate service in hand. They are a kind of ceremonial cleansing of the wedding guest before he enters the Presence; a spiritual laver standing before the door of the sanctuary—"that those things may please Him, which we do at this present." That moment when we assemble and meet

together<sup>1</sup> to worship God is a time for very special confession of sins over and above our usual private penitence. And note these public Absolutions are no new thing introduced when private Absolution fell into abeyance, or, rather, ceased to be compulsory at the Reformation. They are to be found in the old Choir Offices of Prime and Compline. In the Roman Mass, every one who receives the Blessed Sacrament, and as a preliminary has received private Absolution, has said over him before his Communion a second Absolution in public: "Misereatur vestri Omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis vestris perducatur vos ad vitam

<sup>1</sup> That this is possible we see in the Rubric in "The Form of Prayer to be used at Sea":—

"When there shall be imminent danger, as many as can be spared from necessary service in the Ship shall be called together, and make an humble Confession of their sin to God: in which every one ought seriously to reflect upon those particular sins of which his conscience shall accuse him, saying as followeth:—

"Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc.

Just as in a similar manner a sick man can be assured that in great extremity a spiritual communion will secure to him all the benefits of an actual communion.

But surely we do not need to act in our daily life as if we were in imminent danger in a storm at sea.

æternam. Amen. Indulgentiam, absolutionem et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum tribuat nobis Omnipotens et misericors Dominus. Amen.”

Neither does the often-quoted exhortation in the First Prayer-book of Edward VI. countenance this idea. It runs as follows: “Requiring such as shall be satisfied with a general Confession not to be offended with them that do use to their further satisfying the auricular and secret Confession to the Priest; nor those also which think needful or convenient for the quietness of their own conscience particularly to open their sins to the Priest to be offended with them that are satisfied with their humble Confession to God and the general Confession to the Church, but in all things to follow and keep the rule of charity, and every man to be satisfied with his own conscience, not judging other men’s minds or consciences; whereas he hath no warrant of God’s word to the same.”<sup>1</sup>

Note here, as in our present Prayer-book, it is assumed that the penitent’s preparation shall be conducted at some length and with great earnest-

<sup>1</sup> Exhortation, First Prayer-book of Edward VI., A.D. 1549.

ness in private before coming to the service of Holy Communion. And in doing this the penitent can do one of two things : he can either confess his sins to God with earnest contrition, which is here described as "his humble Confession to God," and obtain from God the pardon which He always vouchsafes to true penitents ; or else he can confess his sins to God before His Priest, and obtain Sacramental Absolution, a definite assurance of pardon, accompanied with a special grace. Then, whichever course he chooses to take, he goes to church, and makes what is here called a "general Confession to the Church" of sinfulness, and obtains, although in any case a forgiven man, Absolution again, for the purpose of the service ; just as a man, however clean, washes his hands afresh before going to the banquet of the King.

No, if we reject Absolution and private Confession, we must insist all the more on the greater earnestness of private Confession to God, and find some mode, if we can, of deepening our contrition. The contrast is not between private and public Absolution, but between private forgiveness of

sins, which God gives to an earnest penitent, and private Absolution, which God gives as a Sacramental gift to all who have done their part by private Confession; both of these being the Church's method by which we may prepare ourselves for public worship.

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to allude to the objections which are advanced from time to time against this salutary ordinance. They are, for the most part, the objections of people who have no practical experience of the matter at all. Take, for instance, the assertion that Confession weakens the will. It weakens the will just so far, and no further, as the Priest allows a person to repose in his direction and advice, instead of following the dictates and orders of his own conscience and Divinely illuminated sense. This weakening of the will has nothing to do with Confession. The Priest who is always allowing his parishioners to consult him on all matters, so that they never stir a step without asking his advice, which they seek in the private interview and the godly converse, is in this way impairing the wills of his people just



as much as by the supposed weakening which goes on in Confession. Are we not in danger of looking too much at the humiliation of the Confession, or the help given by direction, and not enough at the pure and surpassing grace given in Absolution? This is the grace which is quite unlike any other grace in the world for overcoming sin. It is useless to describe it *ab extra*. "Come and see" is the only advice which is of real and salutary avail. No—that which weakens the will is sin—the deadly warp of sin. But Confession of sin, that never weakens the will, and never can. The perpetual seeking for advice and for some pleasant remedy which is powerless against the deep-seated evil—these may be dangerous. Only, may I venture to say here a word of caution? I do think we make a great mistake if, for lack of time or pressure of penitents or by reason of our own dryness and lack of spiritual power, we send penitents away without a word of advice. It is good for their humility; it is good for their soul's health. They need it; it impresses on them the sinfulness of their sin; it gives them the advantage

of the opinion of an outside person. Do not let us fall into mechanical officialism. If other Priests do not do it, that is no reason why we should not. If Absolution and direction are two distinct things, this may be granted. But there are other ways of marking the distinction. We are getting rabbled out of our prayers, our meditations, our Offices, by the exigencies of work. Do not let us be rabbled out of the best and most potent opportunity for advice which touches a man's inmost soul. Do not let us be like the perfunctory doctor who hurries over a crowd of official patients; but let us imitate the physician who carefully and earnestly examines every case and prescribes with minute attention, as if his ante-room were empty, and his paper of engagements a blank.

This is what the *Times* obituary notice says of the late Sir Richard Quain:—

“Always cheerful, always hopeful, he had the gift of adapting his discourse to the mental and bodily condition of the hearer; and he had the still greater gift of never being in a hurry and of never seeming to be impatient. How his leisure

was obtained, and how he crowded into the available hours the work of his ordinary day, were mysteries which few could fathom; but when he was in a sick-room, it is certain that he did not appear to have a thought beyond its boundaries, or that was not devoted to the welfare of the sufferer whom he was called upon to aid."

It is hardly necessary to condescend to answer the people who talk about "the filthy Confessional." I do not know what it means. From a long experience of more than thirty years I can only say that if there are people who make Confession filthy, they are the same people who make the Bible filthy, and Church-going filthy, and the ordinary social dealings of life filthy. We cannot legislate for the filthy: "*De minimis non curat lex.*" But, at the same time, I know that it does require absolute delicacy, refinement of touch, prayer, and great carefulness. The surgeon may be poisoned while cutting out a sore. The surgeon may bungle, and start a sore which was not there before. But all these dangers exist in far greater acuteness in the spiritual diagnosis or

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consultation which is suggested in its place when the clergyman plunges about with his knife, testing an unwilling patient, instead of painfully and carefully listening to what he believes to be a faithful enumeration of the exact diseases which are laying siege to life.

There is no doubt that Absolution is an immense help to our people. I do not say that we are to go about preaching it in season and out of season; that would only defeat our object. But we ought to let it be known that there is such a power, more especially in preparing candidates for Confirmation and for Holy Communion, by reading the Exhortation in the Prayer-book, by giving them individual advice, by preaching penitence. I can only say, from my own experience, that there are certain sins which Confession alone will touch: sins of long standing, sins of great malignity; sins when a man falls below his own standard and wants outside help, when he wants a voice to answer, and say to him that he is forgiven, and grace to make him stronger. I think we ought to make a firm resolution that,

if we have no experience of Confession, we will never say anything against it. I hold that so to do is wicked; and, in view of the ordinary experience which any Priest could give, is—unintentionally, of course—to play into the hands of the devil. You know how Mr. Keble longed for its revival; how he described our methods without it to be like a man stumbling along his way in the dark, who treads into puddles and makes false steps because he does not know his path. Certainly a physician who treats his patient generally as being ill, without knowing what is the matter with him, must either give him coloured water, or else run a risk sometimes of giving him poison instead of the medicine suitable for his disease.

One thing we must remember when we talk of Absolution as an occasional remedy. How do we know the occasion, or who wants it? The startling thing is to find how it is the good people who so often need it—the best boy at school, the regular communicant; yes, the Priest who is eating his heart out because he cannot shake off the yoke of some galling sin. And here we sit

with the remedy in our hands, and say it is a bad thing always to be taking medicine. Perhaps so; but not when you live in a morass, and drink in the malaria of the world, and are actually being wounded by a malignant serpent, or when you are afflicted with a dangerous illness. Many people, on the other hand, are killed by doctoring themselves.

#### IV.

Just one word in conclusion. My old Vicar and dear friend, Dean Butler, to whom I owe so much, a man the memory of whom makes one smile when people talk of Confession as weakening the will; a strong, vigorous, trenchant, resolute man, as hard as flint and as downright as a lion—he has said: “Of one thing I seem certain, that it cannot properly be urged but by a *confessing* clergy.”<sup>1</sup> And what he preached we knew he systematically practised. Is it not so? I cannot quite see the spiritual force of the argument: “I

<sup>1</sup> “Life and Letters of Dean Butler,” p. 66.

cannot hear the Confessions of others if I do not make Confession myself." I do not recognize the force of the word "cannot;" I would rather say "I will not." I suppose it would be almost incredible that we should go on dispensing this wonderful grace, while all the time we left our own sores untended and unhealed by a help whose power and whose efficacy were so abundantly displayed. I would say, further, that we clergy need it more than other people, our work is so delicate; we come very near to God. Just as a person who has very fine work to do needs constant washing, so we seem to need it more than others; we who approach the Altar so frequently; we who are so beset with the dangers of formalism; we who are always preaching, and so seldom get an opinion on our own lives; we who have to venture into dangerous positions, and labour amidst the dust and filth and contamination of the world; yes, we need it more than others. Sometimes it will come across us as Israel comes back routed from the battle, and parish things go wrong, and the Church makes no progress: "Am I, after all,

that Achan? Are these the wedges of forbidden gold, the secret sins of my youth, still buried beneath the tent, the Babylonish garment of past carelessness?" "Brother, reform thyself." It is the first call to Church reform.

When things go wrong, when we say we ought to go somewhere else, when everything seems to fail,—is it all right within?

Most certainly sin, and how to deal with it, is the most pressing question which besets a Priest; if he does not beat it down with the power of the Cross, it will beat him. Penitence is wanted more than culture; personal dealing more than platform oratory; the Priest more than the district visitor. Take nothing for granted; sin is everywhere. If we raise up the sacerdotal garment, the leprosy is beneath; and we kneel at the head of our congregation, a sinner among sinners, and say, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."



## LECTURE IV.

### THE PRIEST IN HIS PARISH.

“O guide us when our faithless hearts  
From Thee would start aloof,  
Where Patience her sweet skill imparts  
Beneath some cottage roof ;  
Revive our dying fires, to burn  
High as her anthems soar,  
And of our scholars let us learn  
Our own forgotten lore.”

It is a solemn moment when we first enter the parish where we have to minister. You remember your first curacy; the buildings—how interesting the church was!—whether it were beautiful or ugly, this was where you had to minister—full of traditions to the people, of which you yourself as yet knew nothing. The names on tombs, on the walls; the hideous windows—beautiful to them; the altar—not correct, you thought it—it was the daily delight of some of them; the walls,

the floor, the roof, the seats, the pulpit, were all written over with inscriptions, in a cypher which long intercourse with your people and knowledge of their secret would alone enable you to read. Then the church officials, how they stared at you! —the old sexton, the bell-ringer, the organist, all wondering how you would affect them; whether their privileges were safe; whether you had any strange notions; whether they were to treat you as a sort of new boy come to school. And then the schools! Ah, the misery, when you find all the children locked up from you under the jealous eye of a Board! But if not, as you go in, all those little faces, so quick, eager, inquisitive, the future men and women of the parish, which you will either form or deform. The people in the streets, the shops, they are all so strangely interesting —my parish!

## I.

And surely this is a legitimate sentiment. We are casting into the great crucible of the present

ferment all manner of time-honoured institutions. Parochialism, more especially here in London, is, from the nature of things, only loosely and lightly maintained; but still there is immense good in it. If our people like to destroy and break down the limits of the parochial organization, we Priests shall, nevertheless, find the parochial delimitation practically a great help to us in our work.

*Divide et impera.* Here is a definite, to a certain extent manageable, division of the great seething mass of humanity. Within certain limits marked off on the map, I am responsible for the well-being of every man, woman, and child who passes his time in it, and calls it his parish and his home.

Where this is literally possible, it is a great blessing and a great power; and therefore a man is foolish who despises a small parish. It is an opportunity of doing a small piece of work in an exquisite and finished way, which reacts on the whole neighbourhood, and far out into the Church. Where this is not possible—and do not let us assume it too hurriedly—where one man is

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confronted by thousands, or by birds of passage, or is planted down among infidels or aliens, or those of another Obedience who reject him and his ministrations, still they are all his people, all his charge; he is not the parish Priest of a part, but of all. He cannot accept the Dissenting Minister as anything else but one of his parishioners who has no real charge and no real right to deal with his people, but whom he will regard in the ordinary parochial friendly relationship. And in cases like this (I suppose the most ordinary case in a London parish), at least, he will make a study of his district. He will not merely open his church, like a van in the market-place, and just welcome all who come; he will make a study of the streets, the occupations, the religious professions of his people. Is it too much to ask that at least the names of all the people should be known to the Clergy, that they may bring them before God, and scientifically deal with them? And then he will have his organizations, his reservoirs of good, in guilds and classes; his outposts; his missionaries; his district visitors;—only I do feel that the parish

Priest should be in touch with all this. "Visit? Oh no; I have no time for visiting. My district visitors do that, however, instead of me." "Schools? Oh no; I have no time for schools. One of the curates looks in sometimes to say Prayers; besides, I have got a first-rate master." "That alley? Oh, it is of no use for me to go there; I have a first-rate colonel, who comes down from the West End, who manages all that for me. He has got a class of ragged boys who will do anything for him."

This may be all very well; but there is a difference in the man who, while "*facit per alium*," yet "*facit per se*" (it is still always *facit*, "he does it"), and the man who practically deparochializes himself—sublets his parish rights to various tenants, and just retains the vicarage and the church, and occasionally receives in rent the chorus of praise which belongs to a man who is a splendid organizer. No, depend upon it, for practical purposes a parish is an invaluable institution; and I would say now, make the most of it, hope for it (that is all-important; we shall

never get on without hope), and, almost above all, be proud of it. There are bright examples all up and down the country of men who, like the monks of old, have settled down on the fever-stricken morass, with its stubborn growth of weeds and its unyielding soil, and have prayed and laboured until the desert has blossomed like a rose, and their parish has become a glory and a pride. I can think of three cases which will illustrate what I mean. One is a village on a bleak stretch of down, where jockeys and trainers form almost the entire population. Among these laboured devotedly an earnest Priest. Jockeys sung in his choir, trainers supported him in his work; and when he died, at his funeral there was a sight not often seen in England, men kneeling on the ground in the churchyard outside, who were unable to get into the church, packed with a devout and sorrowing congregation. Another instance is in a large town where Church principles, even now, have to contend fitfully and with difficulty against the results of years of neglect, and the outcome of triumphant Secularism.

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Here are two Priests, hunted, pelted, mobbed, yet sticking to it in their little iron church, and, before they died, living to see two large churches built, if not three, filled with devout worshippers from among their own people—large Church schools, and a devout and intense parochial patriotism. And the third is an example of a place where men, with their own hands, in their off-work time, actually built their own church, and so exhibited the power of this parochial sentiment.

Do not let us despise our parish, or work always with one foot out of it, one eye looking elsewhere, and our heart wholly somewhere else. Do not let us say, "I shall be better among educated people." It is a pity to be a failure anywhere; and most often to have failed among the poor is a sure indication that a ministry among the more educated will be a failure also. The more unpromising the materials, the greater the glory and the joy of having rescued a bit of waste land and made it blossom for the Lord.

## II.

Having accepted, then, your post as part of your vocation; having recognized that "vocation as a call to God, and not a call to work," and that God has placed you *there*; having studied, and organized, and made your survey;—you will probably find, at least in most parishes, that your work is of two main kinds: one, the edification of the faithful; and the other, the more ordinary mission work to those who are practically outside Christian influence.

(a) As regards the first, there is no doubt that it is the most serious and important work. We cannot advance without it. The body of the faithful is a sort of hollow square, inside which are included all the weak and timid, with which in close formation the Church marches across the desert, flanked, harassed in the rear, by the incessant assaults of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. In the formation of this hollow square four constituent elements are employed. First of all, there are the clergy; and how difficult it is to keep up to



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the mark! "No time, no time; so tired, so tired; my uniform is rent and soiled, my face blackened with gunpowder, my shoes worn out with marching!" And yet we must keep up, we must keep dressed; a button missing on the coat is a serious breach of military discipline. We must keep up, prayers must be said, meditation must be made; we must observe and compare, and never sink down to the level of our surroundings—that is vital—nor get careless and flippant, and lose *σεμνότης*, or get lax and slipshod, and lose refinement and brightness of spirit. "What we are comes before what we teach." And there is a perpetual struggle going on, did we but know it, as to which is to teach which, refinement, degradation; or degradation, refinement. Always come dressed on to parade, always keep bright and smart; you will not be obeyed as you ought to be, you will not get your army across the desert, if you become out at elbows, and just one of the people. Remember you are an officer!

And then there comes the band of Church-workers, teachers, visitors, helpers of all sorts. We

must tell them again and again that they must be teachers "come from God;" that they never must lose sight of the fact that they have got to get Israel out of Egypt; that Pharaoh is as crafty now as ever he was. Either he wants Israel only to go just a little way into the wilderness—that is, not to be too extreme; not to push religion too far, to keep it for Sundays—and then come back to him; or, when he finds this will not do, he says, "Leave the children behind; go ye that are men. Do not worry me about religious education, let me have one who will go ahead, and not bother the children about theological distinctions. Go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire." And when that will not serve, Pharaoh then expresses a desire to have the cattle, the endowments and money of the churches, and tells us that all we want is to stand out in a bare and simple spirituality. But no; he has to be told plainly and directly that we are going right out of Egypt; that we are going with our young and with our old, and with our flocks and with our herds; that the Church of God is a great

organization moving across the plain; and that we come to the people, not as sanitary improvers, or political agents, but in the Name of God.

Then there is the choir. I wonder if we think enough of the extreme importance of insisting that a great many things are of more value in a chorister than a good voice; that it is a very serious thing to stand up and conduct the service of God's people? I think it was the old Emperor William of Germany who said that he always used to judge of the discipline of a regiment, as it marched past, by the band. Difficult, disappointing, distracting folk are choirs; and they need a great deal of watching. And how they live comes before how they sing. Do let us avoid all mawkish sentiment and petting, and "angel voices," and "dying young," and all that sentimental nonsense; and remember that it is a matter for very stern discipline, and that he who has charge of the choir has the charge of the most difficult thing in the parish, which requires a great deal of prayer, watchfulness, and inflexible severity.

And then there comes the general body of communicants. I suppose in most parishes now there is an arranged system of classes or guilds for the communicants. This system was carried to great perfection by Dean Butler at Wantage. It is thus described in his "Life and Letters," pp. 107, 108 :—

"I have found it necessary in a country town to form no less than twelve classes, which are [held] *invariably* in the week which precedes the first Sunday of every month, and before the greater festivals. These classes vary greatly in size. The smallest has eight names only, the largest forty-five. On the *whole* the numbers, which at first were under thirty, have now passed three hundred. A careful list is kept of absentees, who are always specially visited and invited not to pass over the next time. A few, as might be expected, slip through as years flow on, sometimes from old age, or other reasonable causes, sometimes from idleness, but the leakage is more than made up for by those whom each Confirmation and close and continuous parish sifting adds."

He continues with "a few words of caution,"

which describe, in fact, his own practice for thirty years.

“(1) On no account should these classes be held in schoolrooms, parish-rooms, or aisles of the church, but in the parsonage itself. It is of all importance to give them a friendly aspect. . . .

(2) The members of the classes should be *re-visited* and *re-invited*. General notices given in church are of less than no value. . . . (3) The classes must on no account be omitted. . . .

“In my opinion, all the success of communicant classes depends simply on real hard work. . . . Much prayer, much patience, much tact, and much perseverance are here absolutely necessary. . . . If, however, the parish Priest is not afraid of ‘spending and being spent,’ he will . . . find after a time that he has established, without show or fuss, in this bit of parochial machinery, a most potent auxiliary in his campaign against evil.”

An organization of this kind is of the very greatest importance. Something into which to draft the newly pledged Confirmation candidates ; something in which to place those who need the support of

numbers and the sense of companionship ;—an organization, in fine, through which Christ and systematic teaching may be regularly given. And in this division I would include those who, without being in a guild or class, yet belong to the inner line of our parish life, the very earnest and the very devout. What are we doing for these—the sixth form, as it were, in our schools? Are we guiding their reading? Are we giving them any spiritual instruction? Or are we shrinking back in a cowardly way from helping them? St. John Baptist says to Christ, “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?”<sup>1</sup> Still, he baptized Him. Do we shrink from spiritual sermons, spiritual advice, the spiritual training of our best people? “I have no time to read.” Ah, there it is again! Dry, withered, unfreshened sermons! but the safety of our hollow square largely depends on these good people, whom we are bound to help and keep up to the mark.

(*b*) Then if we turn to the mission side of our work, surely our first aim is to bring into this square

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. iii. 14.

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as many outsiders as we can ; first to put them inside, and then to get them to fall into line as they get strong. To this end, therefore, there is hanging up in our study a list of the unbaptized ; every baby that is born in the parish is put down on it. There is in our note-book a list of all the unconfirmed, whether they wish to be confirmed or not. That is what we have to work at for *them*. Then there is a list of all who, being confirmed, are not yet communicants. That is the next stage which we have to work for in *them*. Then there are those, too many to classify, who we know never come to church. That is the next thing we have to work at for *them* ; the first overt act which we shall look for in their return to religion.

And here, perhaps, we go on to classify. We have to eliminate the Romans, the Dissenters, the Jews, the Infidels. All these need special treatment of their own. We have to eliminate houses where we are not received, and make them a subject of earnest prayer. But with the others there is this special aim always going on : to make the careless come to church ; to make all who come to church

become confirmed ; to make all who are confirmed, communicants, and pass them into the hollow square.

Then there comes the definite mission work, rough and exacting, to deal with men and women who seem to be outside all religious influences. I suppose we run several dangers here : first, that terrible danger of hopelessness. It does seem so absolutely hopeless to attempt to touch the sordid mass of sin and indifference. And yet, I suppose, nothing ever seemed so hopeless as the conversion of the Roman Empire. To be hopeless is to fail ; it means that we have lost faith in God, in ourselves, in human nature. All the strongest powers are on the side of success, after all. "They that be with us are more than they that be with them."<sup>1</sup> Think of the work that is going on about those souls ! The Good Shepherd Himself is there. He has come to seek that lamb which He once carried in His arms, now flaunting her shame in the streets, lost, degraded, and unhappy ; but He has not given her up. There is a grave angel bent on the same

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings vi. 16.



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errand, the angel who has watched over her ever since her Baptism. He has not given her up. Think of the great pleading in heaven, the mighty power of intercession, the innate good which lies at the bottom of every heart. Do not despair, do not listen to the inverted gospel of failure. Saul is always ready to stop David going out to meet the giant. "I have tried it often and often," he says: "it is of no good; at least, you will want my sword and helmet. You must first secure the people their rights, and set them to return a good member to Parliament, or a proper representative on the County Council; you must first civilize them." And David, who has not got much beyond a Bible, a few earnest prayers, and a sense that God must help, is half inclined to turn back. No; do not let us be hopeless, and do not let us be in a hurry. That is where we fail; we want to see it all in a day. We may have to reform the parish through the children, which takes a long time; or by our martyrdom, when we shall not see its reformation at all ourselves; or by methods which take a very long time. It is one of the saddest things to see

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all the hasty remedies that are employed one after another, with little patience or sustained effort. And, what is worse, the confident proclamation of the old much-abused precept, which seems to be engrained in human nature: "Let us do evil that good may come." How often we have scorned with indignation the sophism that "It does not matter what a man believes as long as he is in earnest." And yet, what is more common now than to hear, "Yes, it is difficult to justify; it sails perilously near Nestorianism; it is just the thing the best people on the Continent are trying to get rid of, but it does attract the people *somehow*, and that Priest is so good, and does so much hard work, and is so devoted"? Of course, on these principles every form of religious empiricism may be justified. Even Arius himself was very popular. "My people love to have it so." "The house of Baal was full from one end to another." The gospel of attraction is largely answerable for popular cults; and popular cults are allowed to prey as parasites on dogmatic religion. And because the people love to have it so, the gardens of the

Church are planted with forced flowers—large congregations of ill-taught people, who look like success. There are no roots, growing slowly and steadily; roots are ugly things, and will not flower in our time. The attraction dies away, and the flowers wither, and the next generation is further than ever from the Faith. They have never been planted in the house of the Lord, and they cannot flourish in the courts of the house of our God.

### III.

All this means hard work. When St. Paul is enunciating his doctrine of gifts, he says, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ."<sup>1</sup> Be in it!—that is it. Stick to it! It is only too easy to sail off on the doctrine of gifts and say, "Well, every one has his proper gift. Preaching is a

<sup>1</sup> Romans xii. 6, 7.

gift. I wish I could preach, but it is not my gift; I cannot." Or another will say, "I would gladly teach in the schools, but teaching is a gift which I have not got. I should only do harm; the school-master will do it much better." Or another will say, "Pastoral ministration is a gift. I do not know what to say. If people come to me, and ask for something, well and good, but I cannot go beating about the bush to find what they do want; it is not my gift." Of course, it is well, it is only right, that we should always and everywhere recognize that all good things are gifts of God, and that some have them more than others, and special gifts fall to special men. But it was never meant that we should say, "Because I am not a Saint Chrysostom, I will not try to preach at all; because I am not a first-class teacher, I am going to take no pains at all to develop an important part of my Office; because I am not naturally gifted with the power of making my way, I am therefore going to be stolid, stupid, and ungenial, while I yield to a selfish sloth." No; if we have a gift, and

if we have no gift, we have undertaken to be Θεοῦ δίακονοι, and our virtue must be to stick to this vocation, ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ.

Now, we often hear people say, "A change is good for every one after a time; three years, seven, ten (whatever be the time when the precise speaker wishes to make a move), is long enough for a man to be in any parish." I wonder if this is so? Certainly, if we are always to attract, and still to attract with novelties, people may get tired of us; but if it is the same gospel, which we dare not alter, the same truths, the same difficulties, the same grace, the same sin about which we are busied, then surely it does not hold good. Dissenters feel this strongly, and many of them move their ministers on, as a matter of course, after a term of years. But to us, who do not view our people chiefly from the pulpit, I doubt whether it is so. Certainly there is a great deal to be said on the other side. The Church methods are slow, and take long to develop. It ought to take many years before our plants begin to show fruit; and it is a great blessing where he who plants is

allowed to stay long enough to see some of the fruit of his labour.

And there is also an immense power in gaining a knowledge of our people and letting them know us. This would seem to me to be one great virtue in a system of *διακονία* which seems to be strangely unpopular, without any definite reason, or at least any valid reason. The fact that parochial visiting is not practised in other portions of the Church seems no reason at all, and certainly the comparative neglect of it by Dissenting Ministers is a never-ending source of weakness to them. It does seem so foolish, when we are trusted and welcomed as no other clergy are in the world, in the same way, that we should push our opportunity aside on any *doctrinaire* grounds. Of course, I am aware that parochial work in London and in the country are two very different things; that the poor man's house in the country and in town may be two very different things. But this neglect is not confined to London. I know there is no sacramental value in visiting; I know it may degenerate into gossip, or become a system

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of dole-distributing; that no good results may seem to come of it. But there are other and more serious charges brought against other branches of our Ministry, of which we take no notice because we know better; and so with this, when we have recognized these dangers, forewarned is forearmed; but they are not sufficient to stop us in a very obvious duty. The merit of parochial visitation is this, that it helps us to know our people, and all our people, in a way that we cannot know them otherwise, and it helps them to know us. I could give you examples, again and again, of what it effects, and how people miss it. I could give you examples of Priests and people becoming estranged and strained in their relations simply because they did not know each other. I am speaking in the interest of that large floating neutrality, who will not, as yet, come out into our hollow square, and yet have not joined the ranks of the avowed enemy. I am speaking in the interest of those who can be approached through their hearts, and can be drawn by sympathy. I am speaking in the

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interest of the parish Priest himself. Why does that man get up in the pulpit on Sunday and preach a sermon full of terms which his people do not understand any more than if they were Greek? It is because he does not know the language of the country, and how these terms need to be translated. Why does another get up and preach about some absorbing topic in the Church newspapers? His parishioners are wrapped up in the sad news of "Tom's" death in America, who was known in the neighbourhood, or are entirely absorbed in some local difficulties which appeal to them much more, and in which they crave for sympathy. We should not have such dry and pointless sermons if our Priests knew their people better. The knowledge of our people and the knowledge of God are the two factors which make up a good sermon, however halting be the delivery and feeble the words. I am speaking, once more, in the interest of the clergy. What interest can there be so keen, so absorbing, as the study of the lives of our people? Yes, I know the struggle with sin, our Church work in penance,—I know all



that. But this is absorbing too: their tragic sorrows, their strange joys, their awful needs, their family interests! Surely it is an immense privilege to be allowed to enter into—as you are allowed to enter into, where you are trusted—the family life of your people, with all its strong interests; to trace the little ship of life which put to sea from your school, and to see it cross the river-bar, and go out into the deep, and come back again buffeted and broken, and perhaps almost a wreck, but still with a warm place in the heart for you, next to the old father and mother. No; he would not come to church—there you sat with your biretta on—not he. But you went round to see him, you talked to him at the street corners; he half responded—perhaps he turned away. But it has come up at last, just that little seed between the stones of a very hard heart; and he comes to church now, he is confirmed, he is a communicant; he is an experience to you, so that you do not despair.

And I ask you again, as you feel cold and lifeless, and out of heart, have you ever looked to your

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people for comfort? On that dark day when you sat at home and wished your brother-curates would come in and talk, when you said you were worn out, and that you must seek other work. And then you went into the parish; you went to the sick-bed where a man was lying, the bread-winner of the family, with no wages, only a small club allowance, with no comforts, the children hungry and squalid around him, and you heard him say so quietly and so earnestly, "It is all what pleases God." And you felt what a simple faith there is here, when I, with so much to be thankful for, can only grumble and complain! There are lessons of refinement, lessons of charity, courtesy, self-denial, which the poor have to teach us, which we would not miss for the world; quite different from the ordinary lessons of penitence which we get in church. A reaction, thank God, is setting in, and when we have done imitating the faults of other people, we shall wake up to the solid virtues which make our ministry in the English Church such a treasure and such a force.

## LECTURE V.

### THE PRIEST IN HIS LIFE AND CONVERSATION.

“The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience like a sea at rest.”

#### I.

It has been well said, “What we are comes before what we teach.” “Conduct and character are the keys of Creed.” It is the man, after all, who comes out in everything—the ministrations, the sermons, the direction, the parish visiting. We may wish that it were otherwise. We may decry—and rightly decry—a personal ministry; it is dangerous and artificial. We may have to say again and again, “Don’t cling to me; act for yourselves.” But still people cling to the person. They grudge Moses the time, even, which he spends in the mount, and will make a golden calf if he is not there.

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They will grudge the Divine Teacher His time of retirement in the mountain, and will not give Him leisure so much as to eat. We know the truth of the XXVIth Article, that "the unworthiness of the Minister" does not hinder the grace of Christ in the Sacraments. But it is next to impossible to get our people practically to believe it. If there is a Hophni or a Phineas in the ranks of the Priesthood, men, for their sakes, abhor the offering of the Lord. If there is an Eli on the seat of government, things slide from bad to worse, and he cannot pull them up. There is an old belief that flowers flourish best under the hands of those that love them. However this may be about flowers, it is true as regards the souls of men—they flourish best where there is a loving personal touch, which is furthest removed from officialism.

It is this that is at the bottom of a great deal of the outcry about Sacerdotalism. People resent anything which is merely official, or domineering, or removed from personal sympathy. And, alas! on looking back over our career, it is this that perhaps we have more than anything else to deplore—the

obtrusive personality which has just ruined the roundness and finish of our work ; the hot temper which lost us the cause which we had at heart at the public meeting, or gained us our desire, and sent leanness withal into our soul, as, like spoiled children, we experienced the disappointment which resulted from merely getting our own way. The self which cropped up in sermons, in advice, in visiting ; the old breakage which suddenly began to twinge and wrench, dating back to a youthful fall. It is this self which, for good or for evil, clings to us like a shadow. We cannot shake it off. We shall never succeed in being pure officials ; at least, if we do, it is only to minister to the dead and dreary ghosts of men and women—formalists ministered to by officialism. The great teachers of the Tractarian Movement knew this, and they bent all the force which they could command to turn a worldly, self-pleasing clergy into spiritual, self-denying, careful Priests. No one can read the life of Dr. Pusey or Mr. Keble without being struck by the stern self-discipline which they practised, the resolute attempt to combat worldliness in themselves,

the firm endeavour to develop clericalism of the best kind, and to recognize that many things which are quite permissible to a layman are often undesirable—nay, more, unbecoming—in a Priest. And who can say how much the movement, which has transformed the Church of England, owed to the inner life and devotion of those who were its prime movers? “What do they say at Hursley?” It is no light tribute to the great personality of that humble, retiring man that, “when all else had been said and done, people would wait and see what came from there before they made up their minds as to the path of duty.”<sup>1</sup> And people who remember the giants of those days are somewhat like the Jews who wept when the foundations of the New Temple were laid, having remembered the Temple which preceded it. “Yes,” they said, “it is all very beautiful; but where is the Shechinah? where is the Sacred Fire, the Urim and Thummim, the Spirit of Prophecy, the Ark?” And so they say now, “Yes, it is all very beautiful—your services, your choir, your ritual—but there is something wanting.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Liddon, “Clerical Life and Work,” p. 350.

What you express now with ceremonial and magnificent service, they were able to express by the sheer force of their lives—the sense of the great visit which our Blessed Lord makes to His Church in the Sacrament of Holy Communion!” Look at Dr. Pusey handling Holy Scripture! See him dealing, as has been described, with the twenty-second Psalm, as if he almost shrunk back from entering into the discussion of that great Psalm of the Passion; as if the awful mysteries of the Crucified Messiah which lurked in it came out like the devouring cloud of glory, and made it impossible to minister there before the Lord. A modern commentator would have no such difficulty. This contrast must strike us with wonder and fear, lest it be true that we have lost something. Certainly it is beautiful and edifying to contemplate even the pages of their biographies—their intense humility, their sublime reverence. How strangely it comes out in that anecdote told us of Mr. Keble, when he was waiting to see Froude off by the coach, and felt that he ought to say that his own sense of reverence had been pained in conversation; too

tender to rebuke, too brave to neglect his duty, you remember how, just as his friend was leaving him, he said, "Froude, you thought Law's 'Serious Call' was a clever book; it seemed to me as if you said the Day of Judgment will be a pretty sight." And Froude said this speech had a great effect on his after-life!<sup>1</sup>

And in addition to their reverence there was their great regard for authority. They had to rouse in the members of the Episcopate the sense that they were the successors of the Apostles, and they always treated them as such, and in their conflict with individual Bishops this was never lost sight of. The whole movement was based on authority, and they never dreamed that the idea of the Church which they recovered could ever live for one moment without it.

## II.

What, then, should be the characteristics of that inner life which is beating so strongly beneath our

<sup>1</sup> "The Oxford Movement," by Dean Church, p. 25.



outward ministration, as to make or mar in the eyes of our people the holy profession which God has called us to undertake? Remember that religion is hard to the natural man; the road is narrow which leads unto life, and the gate is strait, and there are few people who traverse that way.

(1) Surely we ought first of all to set our people the example of how to bear the Cross. We are in danger of forgetting, in days of great material progress, that this is set before us again and again by our Blessed Lord as the elementary condition of discipleship—bearing the Cross. And, remember, the Cross is no plaything, but a heavy burden of rough wood whose pain is constant, on which we are crucified, that thereby we may be elevated towards God as a victim; that we may expiate our sins, and be a comfort to others, who without us would suffer only like the impenitent thief, and be unworthy communicants in the Sacrament of pain.

I suppose it would lead us to bear with gentleness, with resignation, with joy, those things which

God has to put upon us all for our perfecting. It is rather a sad thing that we have had to talk and think so much lately about clerical incomes and clerical preferment. Do you think there are some of our people looking on and saying, "Ah, I thought so; now he has got to feel some of the things I have to put up with—working without a rise, full time and bad wages—he calls out loudly enough: why should not I"? Thank God, they have also been able to witness really splendid examples of clerical devotion. They have seen in many cases the parish Priest on the sharp cross of actual destitution and want, suffering without a murmur, cheerfully and patiently, and doing his work at a tremendous sacrifice. We must never forget what beautiful instances of this there have been in recent years, and how powerful for good these examples have been. And when God's Cross comes to us in sickness, or loss of money, or some acute disappointment; when we seem to be left behind, forgotten, unnoticed, do let our people see an example of bearing the Cross! Let them see that these things elevate and not sour, that they

are accepted—"We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds"<sup>1</sup>—and that they soften and make us sympathetic, so that we can bring to others the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. And then, further, ought not our people to see in us less shrinking than they sometimes see from the fasting and discipline of the Church? It may be we have systematized fasting more than we did. God grant that we may continue to do so. But ought we to be more courageous about this than we are? ought we to try and observe—at least in some way, so that others may see—the Fridays, the Ember Days, the Vigils, the Rogation Days, the Forty Days of Lent? It is disagreeable thus to make ourselves conspicuous; so it is to say our Grace when others do not. It is setting ourselves up as more particular than other people. But there are times when we must let our light shine before men. How else are we to get the proper position of fasting recognized? A simple rule, that we do not dine out on fast days, and that we will try to

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xxiii. 41.

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observe, as far as health will allow, the rule of the Church, is surely a very plain and obvious duty. And if we are obliged to curtail this, or seek dispensation, surely we should act in the spirit of this prayer: "Blessed Lord, Who for our sakes didst fast forty days and forty nights, give to us whose faith is imperfect and bodies less subdued, grace to follow Thee more distantly in a contrite and humbled spirit, and grant that the sense of this our weakness, which we meekly confess before Thee, may in the end add strength to our faith and seriousness to our repentance. Who liveth and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen."

But I suppose we ought to go further, and look out, each for himself, for opportunities of self-denial. The following passage in a well-known volume of sermons is worthy of our consideration:<sup>1</sup> "But, besides this, there are other modes of self-denial to try your faith and sincerity, which it may be right just to mention. It may so happen that the sin you are most liable to is not

<sup>1</sup> Newman, "Parochial and Plain Sermons," vol. i. p. 69.

called forth every day. For instance, anger and passion are irresistible, perhaps, when provoked, and when you are off your guard; so that the occasion is over, and you have failed before you were well aware of its coming. It is right, then, almost to find out for yourselves daily self-denials; and this because our Lord bids you take up your cross daily, and because it proves your earnestness, and because by doing so you strengthen your general power of self-mastery, and come to have such an habitual command of yourself as will be a defence ready prepared when the season of temptation comes. Rise up, then, in the morning with the purpose that, please God, the day shall not pass without its self-denial—a self-denial in innocent pleasures and tastes, if none occurs to mortify sin. Let your very rising from your bed be a self-denial; let your meals be self-denials. Determine to yield to others in things indifferent, to go out of your way in small matters, to inconvenience yourself (so that no direct duty suffers by it), rather than you should not meet with your daily discipline. This was the Psalmist's method, who

was, as it were, 'punished all day long, and chastened every morning.'<sup>1</sup> It was St. Paul's method, who 'kept under,' or bruised 'his body, and brought it into subjection.'<sup>2</sup> This is one great end of fasting. A man says to himself, 'How am I to know I am in earnest?' I would suggest to him—make some sacrifice; do some distasteful thing, which you are not actually obliged to do (so that it be lawful), to bring home to your mind that, in fact, you do love your Saviour, that you do hate sin, that you do hate your sinful nature, and that you have put aside the present world."

I suppose most of us have had to give up something, some a great deal in the way of worldly amusement and comfort, when we were ordained. Have we given up enough? Not because the things are wrong in themselves, but because they are unclerical. We frequently use the sign of the Cross. Is it really traced over our use of food, of sleep, of time, of recreation? Surely we Clergy ought to show our people the way, in reducing

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxiii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 27.

that large common ground which so many seem to think may be allowed to exist in their lives, which belongs neither to themselves, nor to God, nor to their people, but is a sort of unclaimed waste space, where we meet the World, and sometimes the Flesh and the Devil—a large strip of neutral ground. How many difficulties we meet here; when we just spend an hour in smoking with the young fellows, merely to show that we are one of them! When Peter stands by the fire and warms himself without any idea of breaking with his adorable Master; and yet not exactly wishing to declare himself then. That tiresome maid; that awkward turn in the conversation; “surely thou art one of them?” “Let us hear what the Clergyman has to say!” And yet how much we want that common land for building purposes. If we could only succeed in taking in some of it, we should hear less of the persistent cry, “No time to read—no time to build up by solid learning the foundations of the faith!” They put up an advertisement in the railway stations, stating how many thousand miles of one form of cigarette are

smoked daily. How many five minutes in the day do I spend on my own enjoyment, or allow to lie quite unused? All that neutral ground—that ground where we meet people, and do, as we profess, so much indirect good—it may be well filled; but we have gone very much in the opposite direction to old methods. We are so afraid of cant, that we seem to be as afraid of talking to a man about his soul as we should think it indelicate to ask him about his income; while there almost seems a danger of thinking that smoking over a subject is equivalent to praying over it.

I venture to think we make a terrible mistake in being so shy in these matters, that there are hundreds and hundreds of people who are not really so shy as the Clergyman is, and who sometimes wonder why he does not come to the business of his life just as readily as any other professional man. No; I wish we tried more to feel that we are consecrated men, and that we, if any, have no common land to waste; that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we wish to do all to the glory of God; and that we wish to



bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

(2) In the second place, we ought to be not only marked with the Cross very definitely, but we ought to be making a constant study of our profession; there is the study of books, the study of God, and the study of human nature, and the study of our own professional methods. Now, I have already touched on the importance of reading; I suppose we should nearly all agree on that point; what we should like to know is, rather, how to find time for it. What can one say, in the whirl and the utterly overwhelming tide of work which carries you along, dear brethren? Still, I am now speaking of the very busiest life. I hold it more or less a duty, if we are to deal with men and women, that we should read, each day, some of the Newspaper. It is terribly irritating to keen active minds to hear us peacefully discoursing about events which happened thousands of years ago, when we have not tried to connect them with passing incidents of absorbing interest, which affect the welfare of our people—

like the country squire, who is said to have gone out with his harriers between the positions of the contending armies on the morning of the battle of Edgehill. Without preaching sermons on subjects of the day—which I, for one, abhor—we ought to have these same subjects of the day clearly before our minds in our presentation of the gospel. Contemporary history, as it is there unrolled before us, is a sacred and a serious thing. And yet how easy it is to waste time over the Paper; to let it engross the precious morning hours! Here is something which can be read, for the most part, in recreation time.

Then there are the odd five minutes—ten minutes—between appointments, when we are kept waiting, which is not unusual. Are there not books which we can keep on our table, which we can take up at these odd moments, adapted to this fragmentary style of acquiring knowledge? And then, is it not possible to get one solid hour somewhere, at least, on most days? Archbishop Benson's day was, if any, a full one; yet one cannot read without personal shame how a man,

pressed as he was, contrived to secure on the busiest days that serious food which his soul needed by a vigorous exercise of self-discipline. The author of "An Appreciation of Archbishop Benson," in the *Times*, has told us: "His life of incessant labour did not stop him from reading—and reading stiff books—though the reading was generally done when he ought long to have gone to bed.<sup>1</sup> He kept up with modern literature of many sorts. Whenever he got an opportunity he worked diligently at St. Cyprian; but the Bible was his chief study, as became a Priest. No morning came without his making time for long and solid work upon it before joining his family. All that minute and exact scholarship, of which the foundation was laid at Birmingham, was brought to bear upon it. Nor was he minute only in his analysis; he loved to read large pieces together, so as to enter into the general tenor and catch the drift of what he was reading. Religion

<sup>1</sup> This is not to be imitated by every one. There is, with many people, as much self-denial to be exercised in going to bed at night as there is in getting up in the morning.

was a profound reality for him ; he was resolved to sound the deeps of it." This is, I fancy, very often a mere matter of arrangement. It is the fashion of the present day, not only to have time for nothing, but to be proud of having time for nothing. And, I suppose, in this, as in other things, we ought not to undertake more than our strength can stand, while, I suppose, that the ideal man, as he reserves time for meals and for bed, would also reserve time for reading.

I would only dwell now on one other region of reading—I mean reading in the book of experience. Here is a book which again and again God tells us that He has given us to use. "Hear My law, O My people: incline your ears unto the words of My mouth. I will open My mouth in a parable: I will declare hard sentences of old; which we have heard and known: and such as our fathers have told us; that we should not hide them from the children of the generations to come: but to show the honour of the Lord, His mighty and wonderful works that He hath done. He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a

law: which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children; that their posterity might know it: and the children which were yet unborn; to the intent that when they came up: they might show their children the same.”<sup>1</sup> Why are we so dull in reading our communicants the lessons of experience? Are there no lessons of your school life which you can impart to those young boys, who have very much the same trials and temptations as you had? Are there no lessons out of the hard experience of your life for these young men whom you are so shy in helping? Do you not say, “If only I had been helped; if only I had known; if only a word had been said to me”? Are we practically so shy and dull that we are acting in the same way towards those under our care? Do not let us fall into the snare of seeking to be popular, or saying pleasant things, or speaking what we know will easily go down. This is akin in our personal ministrations to that dismal mistake of “pleasant afternoons in church.” Not but that it is extremely important to keep

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 1-7.

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alive our sense of humour. It might save us from a Polychrome Bible and strange theories. It would save us certainly from some of those curious notices which we hear and read in churches; while it would help us not to take too seriously the follies of the fool, who says there is no God. Our Blessed Lord saw the rich young ruler whom He loved go away. He once was left almost alone with His disciples. There are times when we must be very stern and very uncompromising, just as there are times when we must be very tender, and this is only to be learnt by long and patient studies in character drawn from experience. Ah, yes! Here is a use to which we can put our own sad past. It is not all loss, after all; it stays me from being Pharisaical; it stays me from casting the hasty stone; it stays me from trifling; it makes me intensely in earnest; it makes me long with all my heart to rescue and relieve. As the poor penitent kneels before me, I see myself once more. There are my old troubles, my old difficulties. I know what helped me. Poor fellow! I must make him feel, I must

make him smart ; but I can help him. I know now why God has given such power unto men in the wondrous strength of sympathy. Practically, in our ministerial life, we have a wonderful opportunity of witnessing the best evidence for the confirmation of the Faith. We can see the Faith at work ; we can see the fearful struggle with evil, such as is described in the pages of Holy Scripture : the awful power of sin, and the incidence of temptation, while, at the same time, we can trace the effect of Atonement, of Sanctification, and of Sacramental grace.

Are we making full proof of what we have ? Do we know the strength of those stores which have been deposited with us, which we are keeping from our people, while we let them put up with the panaceas of the world ? Do we know the edge of the sharp instrument which God has given us to use ? Can we trace out the spiritual anatomy of a soul ? We should be seeking to be spiritual experts. There are many seeking to be experts in all branches of science, to be critics, improvers, reformers ; but how few are trying to

be spiritually excellent, and to be, before all things, profound and accomplished ecclesiastics !

(3) And then there comes, lastly, at the end of this course of lectures, the old sign, which we long that our people should see in us—the sign of holiness. We long that our people should see our faces shine, as a token that we have been talking with God. But the glory dies away ; we put a veil over our faces ; we shrink within ourselves at the thought of the startling and ironical discrepancy between our words and the person who utters them ; and we do feel that if only we could be holy, we should be the happiest people in the world, and our parishes would be like flowers bathed in the sunlight ; we should be a centre of brightness and heat and joy wherever we went. Holiness ! We have been reading this last year, in the newspapers, the account of a town, not so far from here, desolated with an epidemic, which has only just left it. There were the springs which fed the town reservoir gushing up bright and clear, but very near the surface, and very unprotected. And we have read how encampments of rough people,



squatting in the neighbourhood, caused defilements to percolate into the stream, and the water was poisoned and the town was stricken. Do we look back on our life and see its little springs bursting up in the fresh green surroundings of home? And then came school, with all its opening opportunities, and with its work and its treasures there oozed in the subtle defilements which poisoned our unprotected life. Larger and coarser were the occupants who settled on it as life went on. Its very activities seemed to take away its sweetness and its freshness. Perhaps, as we look back—God grant that it may not be so!—our conversation brought sickness, and our presence was not a presence of health to those whom we reached with the stream of our life. It is one of the saddest things that a man can brood over, if he has to think of some soul whom he has injured, whom his own penitence cannot affect, perhaps his heartfelt prayers hardly reach—perhaps some one, unknown to him even, who just tasted of that poisoned stream, or who languished under an unhealthy influence. And, in addition to this,

how difficult it is to work it out! What a terrible thing is a Priest's fall, a clerical scandal! So often the recrudescence of an old defilement, which trickled in many years ago, and has never been cleansed away. As we aim after holiness, as we long for its mark on our characters, certainly we must ask ourselves, "Is the stream of my life clean? Has it been purified in the precious blood of Jesus? Or am I trusting to the lapse of years or the general purifying effect of time, and then wonder that my people are so little refreshed by the brackish water of only a half-cleansed life?"

And if my life is clean, is it fresh? Consider what we have tried to think over together—the life of Sacrament, Prayer, and Meditation! All round our life there are springs—openings through which comes down the fresh inrush of heavenly grace. Nothing will make up for it if they are closed. A bad Sunday will make all the week stale and lifeless. A prayerless morning will make all our spiritual efforts vain and unprofitable. They will be like delicate work done by one only half awake or in a fit of irritation, so that he

cannot work with patience. A day without meditation will be like a day without our regular exercise. Our work will be done formally and mechanically, to the ultimate injury of our spiritual health.

And then, is our life full? If only we could realize the intense interest of all that is around us, and the correspondences whereby we can reach out to all the riches of the spiritual world, what a different life this would be! It may be, like Jacob, we lie down tired and disappointed upon the hard pillow of a monotonous life. We are tempted to think we are failures. At school we were told we were going to be the supplanters, we won our boyish prizes; at the university we gained our distinctions, we were known, and we were popular;—and now here we are, failures! “The supplanter” and its promise is a delusion. We have tried and failed. When, lo! at our very head, out of the dreary streets, with their depressing squalor and their exacting toil, rises the golden ladder which joins earth and heaven, and grave angels are ascending and descending on it. There

is something greater than being a supplanter; something greater than prizes and benefices and "*monstror digito prætereuntium.*" The supplanter Jacob may become Israel the prince. The Altar is open to him, with its wondrous stair opening out into the ever-vanishing distance of increasing glory. To be so very near to Christ, to bring Him to the people, to be linked on to the great sacrifice in heaven!—The Church becomes dearer than it was before, as I am able to say, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."<sup>1</sup>

And the golden ladder starts up from the schools which I thought so dull and uninteresting. How strangely those young lives wind themselves round me; I wonder that I ever despised those whose angels see God in heaven; their little sorrows, their easily produced joys, their losses, their sins, their sicknesses, their early deaths—how impossible it is to despise them; how anxious I am to help them up the golden stair!

And the ladder reaches up from the squalid,

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxviii. 17.

festering courts and the dirty houses around me. And I find Jesus Himself in His poor; I minister to Jesus in the sick and afflicted; I clothe Him; I visit Him. I bear my people on my heart, and their sorrows drive out mine, and their joys enter into my cold heart and make it warm with sympathy.

Happiness does not come from our surroundings; we bring it with us. Success is not the lucky chance of a man who has got on, but comes from doing the work which God has given us to do with all our might.

We are sons of a glorious Church; we have inherited a splendid birthright. Let us see to it that we adorn it. "The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground; yea, I have a goodly heritage."<sup>1</sup> A sure secret of failure is to disparage what we have got, and to try to be one thing while we really are another; to mourn over our meagre Liturgy in comparison with others, ancient and modern, when perhaps we have never tested or made full proof of the excellences of the one we

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xvi. 7.

have. Should we find devotion any easier, or the difficulties of concentration any less hard, with another Liturgy? It is not the Liturgy which is to blame. We mourn over the Babel voices of the Church of England, when perhaps we have not as yet submitted ourselves to the supreme virtue of obedience. It has been pointed out that there was a period in the incident of Babel when the builders all spoke indeed the same language, but were all fatally in the wrong.

There is no doubt that we are rapidly approaching a crisis, when much of what we have gained will be lost if we do not fall into line and stop the petty larceny of private judgment. It is ironical that those who have laboured to uphold the Catholic ideal instead of the Protestant substitute which seemed to have usurped its place, should be actively promulgating the essential doctrine of the barest Protestantism, viz. private judgment, as opposed to authority. It is wonderful, as we look back, to see what has been achieved. There is no limit to what we may achieve yet, if we go forward in order, in submission to the principles

which are absolutely bound up in the Catholic Faith. Here is a contribution which we may add to the great cause of Church progress, we who have entered into the labours and martyrdom of other and greater men, to consolidate what they have won for us; to have a firm hopefulness in the immense future which lies before the Church of England; to pray and to work for the reunion of Christendom, not by belittling our own Church, or minimizing the good we have, but by showing that we are proud of her, and that if we are ready to make any concessions which may be right, we are by no means prepared to say that they must all be made on our side; while before all things we shall make it clear that we can never play with truth, but that rather we shall be seeking to strengthen with dogmatic fulness the more ornate worship which an æsthetic age seems to tolerate and even desire, but not always with a zeal according to knowledge.

Above all, we will aim at the fuller development in our own souls of that holiness which ever must be the distinguishing badge and glory

of the Priesthood ; in a life marked with the Cross ; in a life which exhibits a knowledge of God's law, and a delight in all that He has revealed ; and in a personal life, clean, fresh, full, alive unto God, watchful, eager for His work, devoted to the Church of England, of which we are proud to be the sons.

“ Spernere mundum, spernere nullum, spernere sese,  
Sperneri se ; quatuor hæc bona sunt.”









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