

Robert Ellis Thompson

The Sending of the Apostles, Two by Two

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The Sending of the Apostles, Two by Two.

A SERMON

BY

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“ Now the names of the twelve apostles are these : The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother ; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother ; Philip, and Bartholomew ; Thomas, and Matthew the publican ; James the son of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus : Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. Matthew—x, 2-4.

“ What is the greatest wonder that God hath wrought in a small thing ? ” asks an old riddle of the middle ages ; and the answer is—“ The human face, and that God has made so many and no two are alike. ” Now just as different as these outer faces of the person, are the inner faces that we call character—no two of them are alike. You differ somewhere from every other child of Adam that has been born into this world of ours. God designed that difference in making you. It is part of your relation to Him, and if you come to know God as truly your friend and your father, you will find that He will make this difference

a channel of some communication to you which has come to no one else. For such is the infinitude of His greatness and His love, as He is thus able to adapt Himself to each one's character according to the specialty and peculiarity of that man, thus using those peculiar things, as well as the common things which belong to us all as members of the race.

Now while there are these infinite differences in character, so there are also marked resemblances. Men are not altogether different. One man reminds us of another, not perhaps by the outer face of the person at all, but by the inner face of character; and we gather these resemblances together in a common thought, and bind them up with a common adjective. We thus come to recognize a certain order and unity underlying this wonderful variety, and equally with it giving character to the world of humanity.

Now there came into this world One who claimed to be the Son of Man—man not in any narrow or partial sense, but in that broad and universal sense which God thought of when He said: "Let us make man in our own image." He came into this world to gather into one body all sorts and conditions of men—not a certain class of men, but all classes—to establish a Kingdom, which should be a gathering under one head of all that is in the heavens and in the earth. How did He deal with this wonderful difference in human character? When He selected the officers and ministers of this new Kingdom, what choice did He make? Did He pick out some one class of men, all of them filled up with zeal and fervor and faith—men who would go to their death at His command—men who never stumbled at any word of His—men of faith, who had no difficulties and without any ordinary weaknesses? Did He call for His ministers, men who would be as flaming fire and winds of strength in His service? If He had done so, how different this story of the gospels would have been. We should have read it then without feeling that it had anything to do

with such people as we are. We should have felt that these apostles were exceptional men—that they were strong where we are weak, that they did not feel our difficulties, had not to overcome our weaknesses. We should have said: “It is a wonderful story this of Christ, but somehow it does not take hold of us—it is full of wonderful and lofty teaching, but it does not lay hold of us.”

Turn away from this supposition to the actual story of Christ—the story that the Evangelists have told us with such wonderful candor in these four gospels—two of them written by apostles and two by companions of the apostles,—what a difference we find! How wonderfully full of love, and tenderness and comfort the story is seen to be. Why, you find that these twelve apostles were just men like ourselves, men of our frailties, men of our weaknesses, our failures, our doubts. We can look upon the story and see how Christ chose just such men as we are to take part in His ministry and form His first church, and we can feel that there is a place for us in His church. We can feel that we were represented in that first little company, that our doubts were met and overcome—our questions were answered, and that such as we are still welcome to His company as He goes on to do and to teach what He “began to do and to teach” in the Church of the Apostles.

And when we look into our Lord’s dealings with the difference in mind and character among His Apostles, we find there yet another lesson, as showing how this is still to be dealt with in His church. First let us see how each of the three first Evangelists tell of His calling the Apostles. Mark says it was “to be with Him in His ministry.” Mark’s gospel is the gospel of Christ’s ministry, that is its watchword. It is a short gospel, with few discourses or parables; but it is full of the tenderness of His service to men. See, for instance, its reference to our Lord’s hands: He took her by the hand and lifted her up; He laid His hand upon the eyes of the blind. The other gospels tell us that He blessed little children—

Mark tells us He took them in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them. He makes much of the hands—of the touch of Jesus—and then he makes much of His urgency. He is constantly pressing on from one thing to another. Our Lord does one thing; immediately, says Mark, He did something else, as if the time was too short for all He had to do for us. The Greek word for immediately occurs eighty times in the New Testament, and of this eighty just forty are in this short gospel of Mark. Lastly Mark dwells on the fact of Christ ministering to the multitudes of men; and then after He calls the Disciples to be with Him in His ministry, He sends them out on their ministry two by two.

Luke, on the other hand,—he gives us the gospel of the Son of Man—Christ in His humanity—Christ in the wonder of His sinless manhood, and so it is that he presents Him to us in the closest, the most intimate, the nearest relation to us. Much that the other Apostles tell us that Christ spoke to the multitudes and in public discourse—Luke tells us that He spoke “as He sat at meat with them,” in intimate social intercourse. And so of His parables; they commonly begin: “A certain man did thus and so,” and set forth the broadest and most universal teaching. As to the calling of the Apostles, he says that our Lord went out into a mountain and spent the night in the mountains in prayer, and when it was day He called unto Him His disciples, and chose the twelve whom He named Apostles. Luke dwells much on our Lord’s prayers. Here where Christ comes into the closest relation to us, we have His example pressed on us. Even He will do nothing without seeking to know and to do the will of the Father.

Matthew, on the other hand, gives you the gospel of the promised Messiah, the King of the Jews. Hence it is that although Mark’s is the oldest of the gospels, Matthew’s is rightly put first as furnishing the transition from the Old to the New Testament. It is the most Jewish gospel, a gospel that sets forth Christ’s life as a new chap-

ter in the history of the Jewish nation, showing how the unseen King who had reigned over them through all the past ages of their history, had now in the fullness of time come forth to claim the kingdom as His own—to be rejected of His own, “to be delivered to the Gentiles,” as Matthew expressly reminds you, and yet to establish that kingdom in the hearts and fellowship of men, and to be King in spite of His rejectors. So when he presents the work of Christ in calling the Apostles, it is the act of the King arranging the government and filling the offices of His kingdom. He calls unto Him the twelve and gives them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. And when He sends them out on this ministry, He sends them also, as Mark reminds you, two by two. From what Matthew tells us and the way in which he here groups the Apostles by twos, we are able to see how the Master and King arranged and disposed of the forces of His Kingdom—sending out His Apostles two by two on their errands of mercy and salvation; and as we examine these six pairs into which the Apostolic college was grouped, we learn how our Lord dealt with the differences of mind and character in the Twelve.

Let us look at these Apostles as they went out two by two:

“First, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother.” Simon Peter is a familiar, almost a proverbial character—the most outspoken and impetuous of all the Apostles, the man who carried in his head a tongue more dangerous than the sword he used to smite off the ear of the High Priest’s servant. Yet he was chosen by the Lord, called by Him for His ministry. We should have thought it extremely dangerous to entrust him with such a responsibility in a Church encompassed by enemies who were on the watch for every false step in its leaders. Throughout the whole Gospel story he is everywhere the same impetuous man. “Bid me come to Thee on the water,” is his greeting to our Lord on the Sea of Gallilee

while their boat and their hearts are still shaken by the storm. Even amid the glories of the Mount of Transfiguration, when one might have expected that the three who went up with Him would be awed into silence, Peter bursts out, "Lord, it is good for us to be here! If Thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee and one for Moses, and one for Elias." And when the Master warns the disciples that they will all forsake Him, Peter lays hold of Christ to rebuke Him, and says—"though they should all fly from Thee, I will not. I am ready to go with Thee, Lord, to prison and to death." But the Master sorrowfully warns him that before the cock crows twice, he will deny Him thrice. And then when the Master, before the Passover, stoops to render His Apostles that humble ministry of love, washing their feet as their host, when He came to Peter he said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Then when Jesus tells him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," he swings as far to the other side: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." And then, a few hours later, when he was charged by one of Pilate's servants with being one of Christ's disciples, he not only denied it indignantly in his impetuous way, but when they pressed him with being a disciple of Christ's, he denied Him with oaths and with curses—as vehement in the wrong as ever in the right. And our Lord turned and looked at Peter—Omnipotence only looked at the cursing Apostle. It was the supreme test of our Lord's forbearance. It is comparatively easy to bear the reproaches of an enemy, but when "my friend, who hath eaten of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me," it is hard to bear—yet the Lord only looked at Peter, and the look broke the man's heart—and he went out into the night and the darkness, weeping bitterly. And then you will remember after the resurrection Jesus says: "Go and tell my disciples and Peter," as much as to say, "Peter says he is not my disciple, but at any rate let him know that I am here, and see if he will come." Then you remember that last scene by the lake,

side, and the question put thrice: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me,—lovest thou me,—lovest thou me?" and then Peter, forgetting all the shameful past, bursts into those words of remonstrance—"Lord, thou knowest all things—thou knowest that I love thee."

This is the man that Christ chose and sent out as His Apostle—not the kind of man you would have chosen for this great work; you would not have given such a man any such responsibility as this. But the Lord chose him, and sent him out upon this highest of commissions. And he sent with him Andrew, his brother; a man who seemed in every respect the contrary of Peter. He is far-seeing, prudent, cautious. He sees all the difficulties ahead of him. He is the Apostle the cautious Scotch nation have taken as their patron saint. When the hungry multitudes are gathered in the wilderness, it is Andrew that suggests, as a sort of Committee of Ways and Means, that "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes," and then he adds, in his Scotch way, "But what are they among so many?" When the Greeks would see Jesus and come and ask Philip about it, Philip goes and consults the cautious Andrew, as knowing that he will not make any mistake which might excite the Jews against the Master. When the three confidential disciples, along with Andrew, and no doubt at his suggestion, go to ask the Master what is the meaning of this strange prophecy about not one stone of the temple being left upon another, they go secretly, and no doubt at his suggestion also. Every thing we are told of the man presents his character in complete contrast to that of Peter, although they were brothers, and the Master sent them out together. He had need of them both—each needed the other to make up for his own weakness. He needs the boldness of the radical who acts regardless of consequences, and strikes while the iron is hot, seizing the golden moment of opportunity. But He also needs the caution of the conservative, his respect to use and wont, to tradition and habit, his sense of the obstacles in the way. He

needs them both in the service of His Church. He needs those who are bent upon, and who are urgent to have the methods, the usages, the worship, and even the confession of the Church adapted to the demands and necessities of our day. He has need also for those who insist that change shall come, if at all, slowly and gradually; by growth and not by leaps; who will hold fast to what is worthy in the past of the Church. At bottom, the two tempers are not hostile to each other. No man can be truly a radical who is not a conservative also, for if all the past was blundering and error, what reason have we to hope for better in the future? No man can be really a conservative without being a radical also; for if God was with His Church in the past, leading and guiding it—the living God—will He not be so in the present and the future? So let Peter and Andrew go together in this ministry, for the Master needs them both. He says that every wise scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven “is like unto a man which is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure”—what? New things? Old things? No, but “things new and old.”

The next two are James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother. We would have said John, the son of Zebedee, and James, his brother. John looks so much larger to our eye, is much more eminent, being the beloved disciple—the author of the fourth Gospel, of three gracious Epistles and of the wonderful book of Revelation. This apostle stands beside Peter and Paul among the great teachers of the Church, yet here we have “James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother.” This is because at the time when the first three Gospels and the Acts were written, James was much more eminent and was a father of the Church. This James is called elsewhere “James the Great,” to distinguish him from James the less, not because he was more eminent or a bigger man, but because he was older. Now as James, the less, or junior, was a man of full years—this older James must have been past the prime of life—perhaps past sixty when he was

called to be among Christ's disciples. John, on the other hand, although his brother, was the youngest of the Apostles, the nearest to the Master's heart, only a mere lad. It was a lad that lay in the Master's bosom on the night of the Last Supper, exciting no jealousy in the others. It was a lad that asked Him the question that even Peter feared to ask. It was a lad that passed unquestioned in Pilate's judgment hall when Peter was challenged. It was this lad of whom it was said that he should remain on the earth until Christ should come again. And he actually lived on for nearly seventy years after his Lord; and then died, the last of the Apostolic college, writing the last gospel and the last epistle. Such was the contrast in their age; and the Master sent them out together. Age and youth are thus together in the Master's service. So it is that the Lord loves to be served in his Church. As John Keble beautifully says :

For as of old, when two by two
 His herald saints the Saviour sent,
 To soften hearts like morning dew,
 When He to shine in mercy meant.

So ever more He deems His name
 Best honored and His way prepared,
 When watching by His altar-flame,
 He sees His servants duly paired.

He loves when youth and age are met,
 Fervent old age and youth serene;
 Their high and low in concord set
 For sacred song, joy's golden mean.

He loves to see all ages co-operate, age gaining fervency from youth, and youth learning serenity from age. The Church is made for all ages. It is distinguished from all other societies except the family, and this Bible is distinguished from all other books that claim to be a revelation of the Divine will, by their adaptation to all ages, that was not devised for grown men by grown men. This Bible has lessons at once for youth and age. It comes to the

young with the story of the world's childhood, and of the wonderful child clothed in glory and wisdom. It has lessons of wisdom which tax the ripest experience for their comprehension. And the Church is for the young from the moment that God lays His hand upon them in baptism and claims them as His own. It is equally for the aged, the home of their spirits, until the last flickering of the lamp of life ceases, and they find themselves in the arms of everlasting love. Let James and John go together. Let there be no division of ages, no sundrance of these parts of the Church of Christ, but let youth and age go together—old age for counsel and youth for energy and execution.

The next two are Philip and Bartholomew. These two stand out in marked contrast as to their intellectual character. Philip is a man that is slow of intelligence, we may call him, with all respect for his goodness and his eminent usefulness, the stupid Apostle. He is able to see only what lies generally on the surface of things, but nothing beyond. When he told Nathaniel that he had found the promised Messiah in Jesus of Nazareth, and Nathaniel said unto him, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" all that Philip can say is "Come and see," although he might have told him of Jonah and others of God's servants who had come out of Nazareth. Again, when the multitudes are hungry in the wilderness, the Master asks Philip, as if to give the slowest scholar in the class a chance, "Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Philip can only answer: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little." And then when the Master has been speaking of Himself as the manifestation of the Father, Philip misses the whole point of the discourse, and says: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Mark how the Lord's sense of his slowness blends with the divine patience of the answer: "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip,—He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then—'Show us the Father?'" That was the kind of

man Philip was—a man that had to understand and preach the wonderful news of the Kingdom, while so slow to lay hold of such things. Yet the Master chooses him, but He sent with him his friend Bartholomew, better known as the Nathaniel of John's gospel. Nathaniel was a man of alert and active mind and quick perceptions, although it was the slow-witted Philip that brought the quick-witted Nathaniel to Christ. No sooner does he hear of a Messiah from Nazareth, than there flashes on him the objection: "Can any good thing come out of that place." But when he yielded to his friend's invitation to "come and see" for himself, and when he found in Christ first a supernatural insight and then a divine sympathy, he burst into the confession which he was the first to make, "Thou art the Son of God—Thou art the King of Israel!" He was satisfied in three questions, and satisfied forever.

Such were these two men, and the Lord sent them out together. So this ought to be the way of His church at all times. There is need of people of slow wit in His church. It is not an assembly of learned divines, each able to distinguish between every doctrine and its counterfeit heresy. There is room in the church for those that know little more than to know Christ. It is a grand thing to know that there is a fellowship here for us all. Sometimes in our Presbyterian Churches we are apt to draw the line too high in the demand for doctrinal intelligence and qualifications of that sort which are not demanded by the law of God. Once there applied for membership in our old church, when the late Dr. S. B. Wylie was its Pastor, a poor woman who had very little opportunity of learning these doctrinal niceties, and when the session examined her, she was not able to answer their questions and it was recommended that she wait until she should be better instructed. As she rose to leave the room she burst into tears, saying, "I don't know all these things, but I know that Christ is my Saviour, and He died for me." And good old Dr. Wylie rose and took her by the hand, and brought her back and set her down again among those

who were to be received into the membership of the church, saying, "My dear sister, after all, that is the substance of the whole matter, and if Christ has welcomed you, we will not send you away." Yes, there is room for such in the Kingdom without knowing much about doctrines, when they have faith in Jesus Christ that died for them. So Philips have their place in the church, if they also have their dangers. So the Lord chose him, but sent with him Bartholomew, a man of alert intelligence, ready of apprehension, and the very opposite of Philip although they were friends. But he also had his danger—he was in danger of being turned away from the Christ by his own superficial objections such as that: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" How that kind of objection keeps men away from Christ still—as it did not keep this man. It is because men will not listen to the advice of the slow-witted apostle and "come and see." It is because they do not give earnest and serious consideration to the evidence of fact and experience, that they stay outside. "Come and see" how men and nations have been regenerated into a new life by the gospel. "Come and see" how men have been lifted out of a life of sin and impurity into one of noble service to God and to man. Says James Russell Lowell—our chief poet:

"When the microscopic search of skepticism has turned its attention to human society, and found a place on this planet ten miles square, where a decent man can live in decency, comfort and security, supporting and educating his children, unspoiled and unpolluted, manhood respected, womanhood honored and human life held in due regard—when skeptics can find such a place ten miles square on this globe, where the Gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way, and laid the foundations, and made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for the skeptical *literati* to move thither and then ventilate their views."

How much of the skepticism among young men grows out of this unwillingness to come and see. It is said of

Alexander Hamilton, whom Niebuhr pronounced the greatest statesman of his age, that in his youth he fell into the habit, then prevalent, of ridiculing the Gospel and the Christian religion, and that on one occasion he had gone further in this direction than ever before; and as he stood at his own door, after knocking for admission and waiting for the door to be opened, the thought flashed on him: "If you had been given the meanest retaining fee you ever had, you would have given that case more thought than you ever gave to this that claims to be the only hope of mankind;" and before the door opened he resolved to "come and see," and Alexander Hamilton became an humble disciple of Christ. If men would only "come and see" as he came, how much less there would be of the folly that makes a mock of sin. "Come and see,"—they are the words of the stupid apostle, who made no professed claim to wisdom, and yet wrought to wise ends in a brighter man. And the Master did not part them; Philip and Bartholomew were sent out together.

The next two are Thomas and Matthew the publican. Thomas is known to us all—a disciple that has passed into a proverb as the "doubter." We would hardly admit him into the Church now, after all these centuries of growth and confirmation in the Gospel, and yet the Lord took him. His doubting comes out in more places than one. The Lord has been saying that Lazarus is dead, and He must go back to Judea. Thomas said: "Let us also go that we may die with him." Unbelief prompted those words; they mean: "He does not know what a risk He is running, or how those Jews hate Him. But, at most, they can but kill us, so let us go." Another time he flatly contradicts the Master, who has been saying of His departure from them: "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Thomas said to Him: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how *can* we know the way?" Then you remember that remarkable scene after the resurrection, when the disciples said to him:

“Thomas, we have seen the Lord!” and Thomas said to them: “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Even that evidence was granted to this doubting Apostle, and Thomas fell upon his knees and cried out: “My Lord and my God!” What a man for the Lord to choose as an apostle, the minister and founder of a Church based on faith! Yet the Lord chose him, and bore with him, as with many another like him since that day, partly for our sakes as well as for His own, that it might be on record that the Apostles were not a group of silly devotees, ready to believe anything that was told them, but had among them men who insisted on proof evidence as distinctly as any modern man of science could. Augustine says: “Thomas doubted that we may never doubt!”

So the Master chose him as an apostle; for He had use for him; but when He sent Thomas out, He sent with him Matthew, the publican, a man of tried and tested loyalty. This man was a collector of taxes—not for the Roman government, but for himself. He had bought them from the government and so he is sitting at the receipt of customs and the Master passed by, and said unto him: “Follow me,” and he arose and left all—left his worldly substance—and followed Him. He had doubtless heard the Master preaching, and his heart had been touched; so when Christ called him, this man, who sat down that day a publican, rose up with a new spirit, as a true Israelite, and lived to write the most Jewish of the Gospels. This man had fearless faith and followed without a question or a doubt, and the Lord sent him and the doubter out together. Fearless faith and honest doubt are not enemies; they are the best of friends. Coleridge well says: “Do not be afraid to doubt if you want to believe.” The doubter who wants to believe will end as Thomas did, on his knees before Christ, with his mouth full of praise and thanksgiving. But the man who wants not to believe should be afraid to doubt, for his doubting

then will carry him further and further away from Christ. Honest doubt is but another kind of faith—the horror of it implies unbelief, a dread that the truth will not bear examination, that its pillars are rotten. As Tennyson says, though with something of exaggeration :

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

Who fights his doubts and gathers strength,
And will not make his judgment blind,
But faces spectres of the mind,
And lays them, thus he comes at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
The Power is with him in the night
Which made the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone.

So let Thomas and Matthew, fearless faith and fearless search, go forth together.

The next two are James, the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus. This is James, the less, so-called, to distinguish him from James, the brother of John. He is also called James, the Lord's brother, and James, the Just—and that last is the word which tells us most about him. His mind and character are shown in his epistle—an epistle of rebukes for the loose tongue, the godless lives and empty professions which he found in the churches. Its keynote is: "Show me thy faith *without* thy works and I will show thee my faith *by* my works." Thaddeus, who is also called "Judas, not Iscariot," also "Jude, the Lord's brother," also has left us a lesson, the Epistle of St. Jude, and it also is an epistle of rebukes—for the false teachers that have broken in like wild boars are wasting the Lord's vineyard. Its watchword is: "Contend earnestly for the faith!" He was a man of definite, clear, sharply-cut convictions, as appears also in the Gospel of John. Christ says to them that He will manifest Himself to those who love Him. Judas, not Iscariot, said unto him: "Lord, how is it that Thou

wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the World?" He wanted a definition—he must get a definite answer about difficult things. He was as eager for that as a whole synod of divines. Such is the contrast in the two: the man of practice and the man of faith. And the Lord sent them out together. So Christ is best served in his Church—when faith and practice, Jude and James, go hand in hand, you must not separate them. This Gospel is not mere morality, as James even will show us; nor is it mere theology, as Jude will show. The Christ it shows us is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and what God has joined together—power unto life and wisdom unto doctrine—let no man put asunder. Attempt to do it and what is the result? Separate Christian morals from the great principles of Christian truth and you will have a mere bundle of rules without any power over the hearts and lives of men. Separate Christian doctrine from life and practice, and you will have left a valley of dry bones, an endless and wearisome hair-splitting and contention over trifles. But when James and Jude go together, then the Church grows both in faith and in godliness.

And now we come to the last pair of the twelve—Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot. Heretofore we have been dealing with two types of mind and character, for both of which there is room and welcome in the kingdom; but here we have two, one of which is welcome and the other is not. Simon, the Canaanite, belongs to the Church, but as to Judas Iscariot—as Peter said of him—"He went out from us, because he was not of us."

Simon the Canaanite is called also Simon the Zealot, the two epithets meaning the same thing. He belonged to the sect of Zealots, which was the extreme party of the Jews. These men were the very opposite of the time-serving Herodians. They banded together to keep the Holy Land clean of idolatry, by inflicting swift and secret vengeance on all who profaned it by heathen practices. And in this they were protected, as the Jews re-

garded zeal as a fruit and evidence of Divine inspiration, and thus they enjoyed impunity in doing things where others would have been punished. Thus it is that when our Master went to the Temple and drove out the money-changers and those that bought and sold therein, no one interfered with Him, because He was understood to claim the immunity of a Zealot. Simon had belonged to the Zealots, which tells us of what temper of mind he was, and doubtless when he is admitted into fellowship with Christ, carried his zeal with him into Christ's service. His motto, as that of his party has been: "Independence at any price." Now it would be: "Christ at any price!"—all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ!

But what shall we say of Judas?—the man whose very name has become a curse, the bitterest word anger can fling at its object. We put his sin too far away from us. We think of it as something monstrous, abnormal, impossible to us. In truth it is the sanest sin of all. Judas Iscariot was a minimum Christian; that was the secret of his fall. He was drawn to Christ by some kind of attraction and was willing to do what would entitle him to a place among Christ's disciples, and as his faith had no zeal in it, it gave way. He showed his spirit when Mary took the costly ointment and anointed her Master's feet, and he says: "Why was not this sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" Ah, Judas! some gifts are too precious for Christ, some offerings too great to make to Him, some worship too much to render to Him! He hesitated at a complete surrender and so he fell. He is the only one in the Gospel that ever counts anything; all the rest give without counting. He counted the three hundred pence, the value of the ointment, and the thirty pieces of silver—the price of his Master. In his life and death is a warning for all of us. As against Judas Iscariot we must all stand with Simon, the Zealot, and with Mary of Bethany, in the self-surrender of a love that gives Christ the best—gives Him everything. "The virtue is

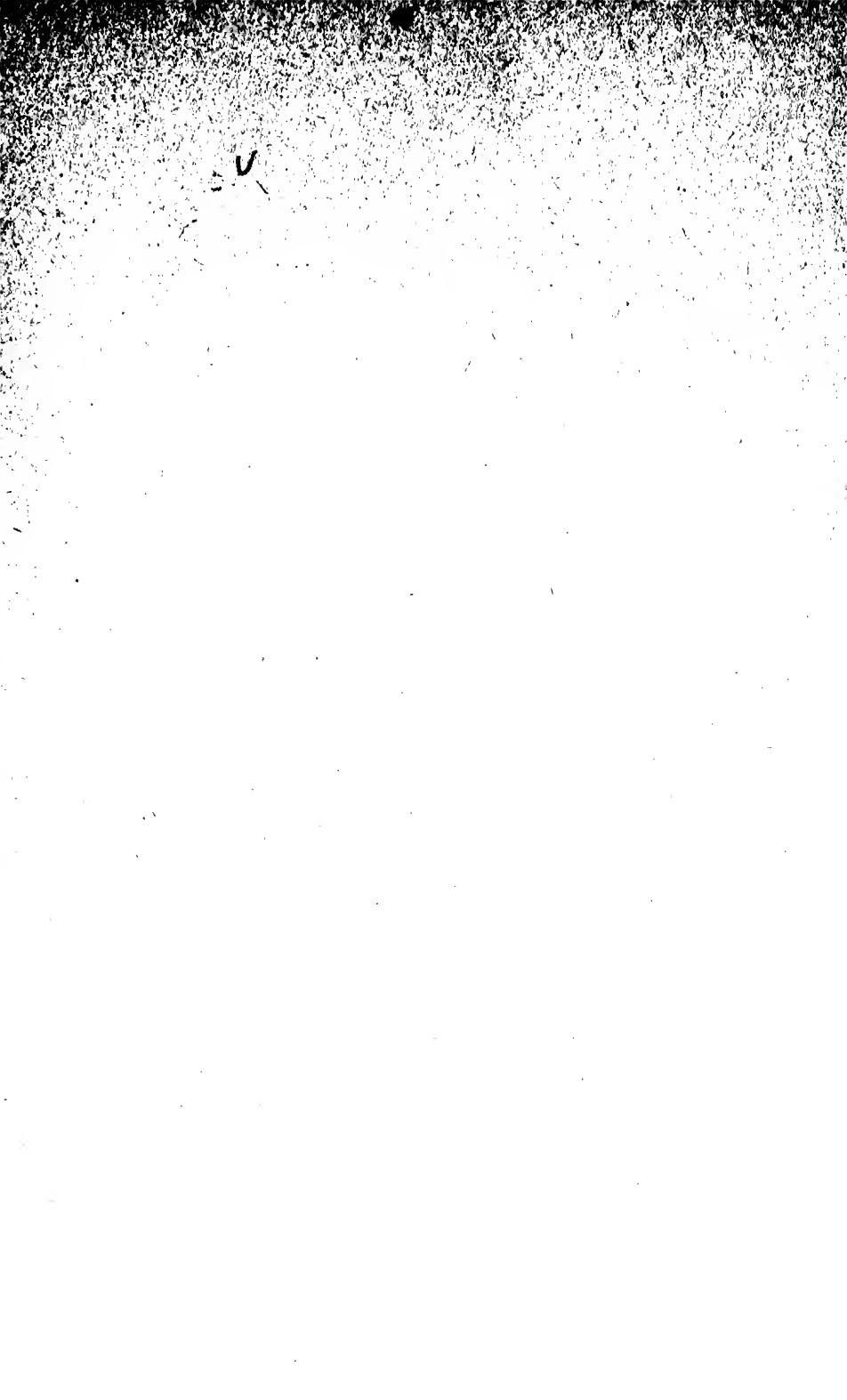
not safe that is not enthusiastic," says a modern writer. The faith is not safe that is not zealous. When we begin to count and reckon how much love is absolutely required to give us rank as Christians, how much (or how little) holiness will get us into heaven, then we are on perilous ground, near by the traitor Apostle—"Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him."

And now, dear friends, as we look upon the whole of this story, at the Apostles gathered thus into the fellowship of the first Church, and sent forth two by two, do we not see in it a lesson of Christ's wonderful wisdom and goodness in thus binding into one brotherhood these inexhaustible varieties of character and temperament, and finding for each its place and its work. As we look upon it, we can feel and say, each of us, there is a place and welcome for me. I am not called upon to measure my faith or my service by any other man's. I am called to faith, unfeigned and true service, according to my nature, and my ability, and can leave the rest to Him.

And when we see how our Lord sent out His apostles two by two, joining together those who differed the most from each other and thus were the best able to help each other, by making one whole man out of two halves, we learn another lesson of His dealings with His Church. We see that it is His purpose that these differences of mind and character and condition should be not a cause of division and dissension in His Church, but a means of binding His servants together more closely for effectual service. But the Church has not learnt this lesson of Divine love and wisdom. We have not gone forth together, but more often against each other, making these innocent differences of temper, and habit of mind, the plea for sectarian divisions, much more than any grounds of truth imperiled or righteousness outraged. This is why the world has not fallen before the testimony of the Church; has not believed that the Father has sent Him to gather humanity out of its isolations and sorrows into one body under its true Head; because it has had no

evidence that all His own people are one in Him as He is one with the Father. We have not been a united "household of faith," but have been biting and devouring one another because of the very things He gave to bind us closer together. We have been like troops that, in the heat and smoke of the battle, pour volley after volley into the ranks of companions in arms; or, like the two ships of war, which spent the night in bombarding each other, and then when the sun rose saw it was the same flag which floated over two shattered hulks, over two decks slippery with blood. Let us pray for the dawn of that blessed day in whose light we shall be able to recognize as brethren all who love the common Master, and come to mind not our own things only, but the things of others—the gifts and graces with which He has been pleased to enrich the lives and the fellowships of our fellow-Christians of other names.

You remember that wonderful prayer of the Apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints"—mark the expression, "with all saints," not you in your little corner and I in mine, both shut in by a sectarian fence from the rest of Christendom—"what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." And then he passes from prayer to praise: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to (right in the line of) the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."



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A SERMON

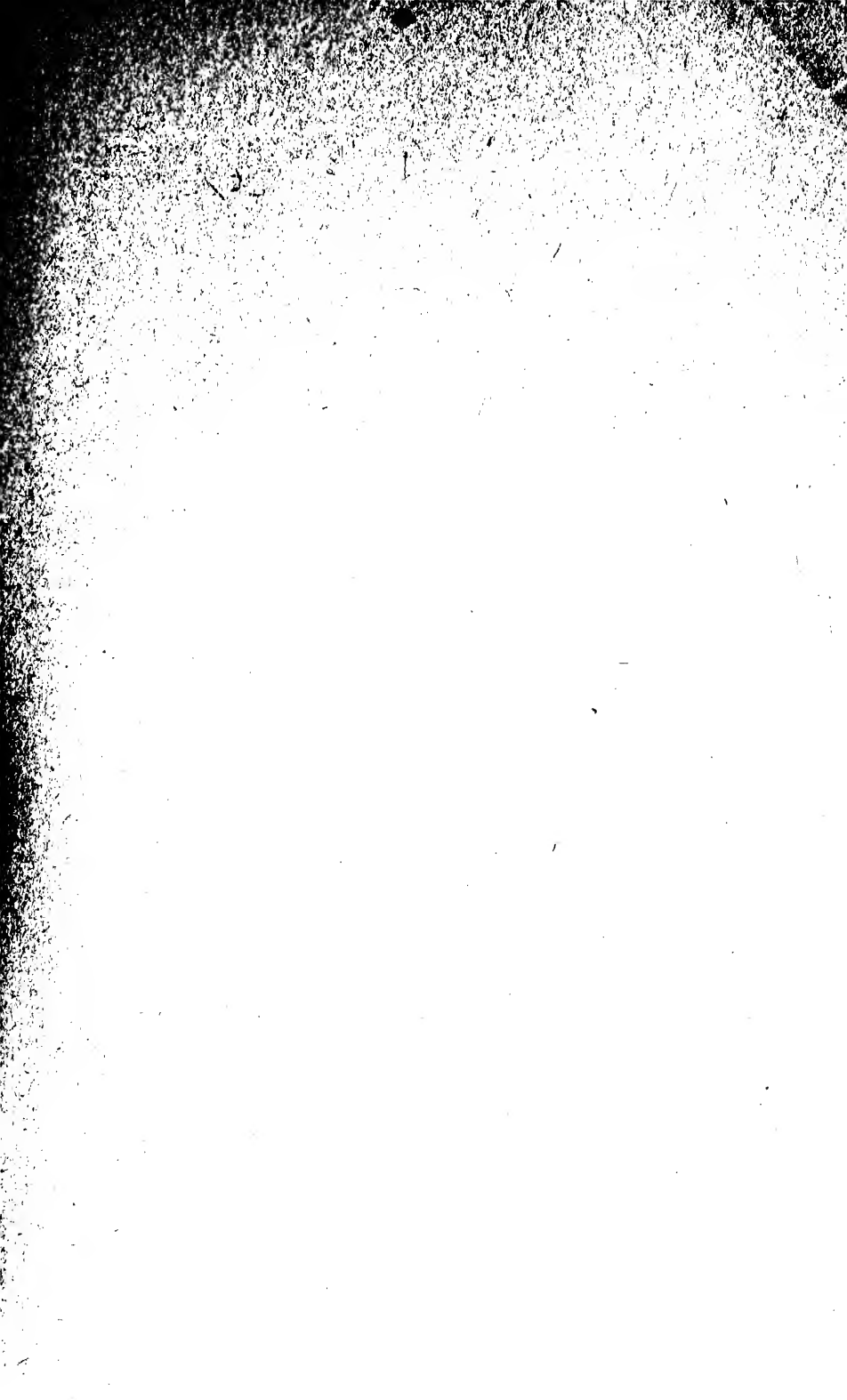
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