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*from Rev. H. Glynne
Hawarden Aug. '23*

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN

HAWARDEN CHURCH,

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1850,

Being the Sunday after the Funeral

OF

LAVINIA, WIFE OF THE REV. HENRY GLYNNE,
RECTOR OF HAWARDEN.

BY THE

REV. WALDEGRAVE BREWSTER, M.A.
CURATE OF HAWARDEN.

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A S E R M O N .

2 TIMOTHY II. 11, 12.

“ It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him : if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.”

WHEN we draw near at any time to look upon some signal dispensation of God towards us, and enquire why He has thus dealt with us ; there will be many things to be taken into account before we can come to a just conclusion about it. And a very principal and important one, is the great change that has passed over our whole nature, since its first constitution ; altering almost entirely its relation to God, and the character of those measures which are necessary for its ultimate happiness and perfection.

But for this indeed, there would be no sorrow here as there is none in heaven. God made not grief any more than He made death : but the generations of the earth were happy as well as healthful. God, I say, made neither sorrow nor

death;* but men called both to them by their evil deeds. And now that they have once gotten themselves a possession† amongst us, and we are so closely bound together by the ties of family and affection as we are; the distribution of them will often seem very mysterious and they will come upon us in instances where we are least prepared to expect them. In every case, no doubt, they are guided as well by infinite goodness as by infinite wisdom; and under the direction of Him in whose sight "right dear is the death of His saints." Still, though assured of His very tenderness toward us, His judgments are so far above out of our sight; and we are so little able to attain the knowledge necessary to the full understanding of them; that we are oftentimes struck almost as much with astonishment as with grief when they fall suddenly in the midst of us.

There is, however, in spite of all, enough even in what we know of the natural connection between suffering and our perfection to make us pause before we venture to declare any visitation of God, however painful and overwhelming, one of unmitigated evil. And blessed are they who can endure to wait upon Him in His judgments; for to such, let them not doubt it, soon or late shall come salvation from Him.

Let us consider this a little further.

* Wisd. i. 13, 14.

† Eeclus. xxiv. 6.

The condition in which God placed man at the first, was one of blessedness and freedom. That into which he fell by sin may properly be described as a state of discipline. Not that the first was in such sense one of blessing as to preclude all restraint; for that would appear to be incompatible with the safety of any created being. But certainly, its larger and distinguishing features were the abundance of its blessings, and the small amount of its prohibitions; together with its utter ignorance of all sorrow and bereavement.

Nor again is this later dispensation, in which we find ourselves, destitute of all blessings. On the contrary, it has some which may be said to transcend any that were received under the first. For that union with the Divine nature, which we enjoy in Christ Jesus, surpasses surely all the glories of our earlier state. Then, indeed, man walked outwardly with God, and was made in His image and likeness; but now He dwells actually in us, and makes us, by an ineffable mystery, not simply like, but one with Himself.

The difference then consists not so much in the amount of blessings attached to each; for in that respect, ours is not without considerable advantages of its own. But the difference I would notice between the two dispensations is this, that now the chiefest blessings we can attain to or hope for, are won by a process of discipline; that, in fact, instead

of coming to us as it were naturally, they too often reach us—and we are made capable of, and fitted for them—only through the intervention of suffering, sorrow, and pain. You will apprehend that this would make a great difference in any case, and in the one under consideration, it constitutes, I think, the distinguishing feature. Nay, more, not only may we judge that it is most frequently through suffering we are to look for our perfection; but if, at any time there come upon us any unusual trial, then may we gather most assuredly that God is calling us to some great thing, and desiring to bestow on us some peculiar grace.

Let us take it then for granted, as Scripture and experience abundantly prove, that the way to richest blessings often lies through severest trials. We acknowledge this principle, when we set the highest value, as generally speaking we certainly do, upon those things which have cost us most pains. But because our nature shrinks from such a course, and does not readily accept a doctrine so contrary to its ease and comfort, Holy Scripture is ever engaged in forcing the truth of it upon us in the strongest terms.

“Blessed are they that mourn,” says our Lord, “for they shall be comforted.”* “If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his Cross and follow me,”† are again His gracious words. In these He shows us that if we would

* St. Matt. v. 4.

† St. Matt. xvi. 24.

really follow Him, we must be content to undergo an amount of sorrow and distress which, as it is represented by the Cross, cannot be inconsiderable or trifling. But if we aspire to higher degrees of blessing; if we would fain reach to larger endowments of gráce and perfect ourselves in superior heights of holiness; if we desire to sit upon His right hand or upon His left in His kingdom, then are we no longer bidden to take up our Cross but His, to drink of the Cup which He drank of and be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized withal.* Observe too the very nature of the blessings promised to believers upon earth: what is it but houses, and lands, and friends, with persecutions?† Take the spirit of this declaration, and do we not see that there is no warrant for any expectation of unmingled peace below; but, that even those who have deserved most and have had richest promises made them, have also a large amount of tribulation annexed, as if necessarily, to their lot?

Had there never been an alien element admitted into our nature, had sin never triumphed over us, this would not have been the case. But now, as in an unsound body, it sometimes happens that health can only be restored by the painful process of cautery or excision; so also there may be circumstances in our moral condition which demand a not less grievous mode of cure. Either we must suffer,

* St. Matt. xx. 22.

† St. Mark x. 30.

and suffer greatly—almost all of us more or less so—or we may be undone. I say *almost* all; for there are some, and your minds may suggest to you *one*, at least, who seems not to have needed this course of remedial sorrow, but to have “kept her garments”* without it. But generally the power of that corrupt nature which we have derived, cannot be overcome without painful and continued struggles. And if at any time we forget or neglect this essential duty, then it is an act of mercy on the part of God to put that yoke upon us, which we do not willingly take ourselves; and by affliction, of one kind or other, force on us the remedy suited to our needs.

No doubt this rule of sorrow as the way of perfection has obtained from the beginning; from the time, that is, that man fell from the first law under which he was made. It was the burden of the old world; and *they* had none to go unto, who should refresh and give them rest when their souls were weary and heavy laden with it.† But this is not the case with *us*. True we are under the same law of suffering as they. But Christ has “carried our sorrows,”‡ and He lays them upon us, in a manner, only as sanctified by and as the complement of His own.§ From the time He trod “the Dolorous Way,” sorrow and death have both been blessed: yea, they are now twice blessed: gifted with a

* Rev. xvi. 15. † St. Matt. xi. 28. ‡ Is. liii. 4. § Col. i. 24.

power to sanctify, which they could not have before, and endowed with arguments of peace.

See too what the blessing is: how very much is contained in it. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."* It is not merely that if we will suffer them, and not thwart the gracious purposes of our heavenly Father, who doth not willingly afflict or grieve us: it is not merely that they would result in our advantage here, our moral or spiritual improvement in this life; but they advance us to a fitness for degrees of glory hereafter, that we can but faintly conceive of until they are bestowed. For "it is a faithful saying," "if we suffer we shall also reign with Him." And not we only, but all those who yet look for His appearing, or are gone before us to be with Him; while it is possible, nay likely, that the separations we grieve over may be the mode adopted in the far seeing mercy of our Father, to render our eternal union more blessed and secure.

Let us then accept this almost universal law of suffering, sanctified and solaced as it is by the example and blessing of our Lord: let us acquiesce in the wisdom of our Father whensoever He shall see fit to bow any of us under it: that so it may bring forth its fruit in due season. And then, at length, when the warfare of life and the discipline

* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

of our present state are ended ; as we contemplate the past from our place of rest or glory, and remember the trial that met us by the way and seemed ready to devour us, from which we shrunk as so fearful and overwhelming, we may be enabled to see that there were ministrations of mercy behind it, and exclaim as one did of old, " Out of the eater came forth meat and out of the strong came forth sweetness."* Meat which strengthened our souls then, and that sweetness, which we taste in Jesus now !

" If we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him." Here again is the same law and the self-same hope : for to live with Christ, what can it be but to reign ? " If we have been dead with Him we shall also live with Him ;" and therefore live for ever as He is " alive for evermore."† Yes, " if we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall be also of His resurrection."‡ And this likeness to Him, though it be, for the most part, won by sorrow and discipline ; yet has it a reward even here. For have not those souls who attain it, a peace which nothing else could give ? and do they not walk amongst us with something of an angel's beauty in their mien ? Do not men do them homage, and visitants from heaven watch around them, yea and even take charge of their bodies, when they have fallen asleep in Christ, as they duly watched beside their Lord's in His sealed tomb ?

* Judges xiv. 14. † Rev. i. 18. ‡ Rom. vi. 5.

And is all this nothing? Is it nothing to be loved of God as they are, to be kept always by Him as the apple of an eye and hidden under the shadow of His wings? Is it nothing that even here He should “hide them in His tabernacle,” and keep them safe from “the stormy wind and tempest” which rage around us?

No! my brethren, it is much in itself; though it be but little compared with that “better thing,”* which He has provided for us, when after showing us great troubles and adversities—as He does to all, though He shelter some from their effects—He shall at the last turn again to comfort us and compass us about with songs of deliverance, and bring us to great honour on every side: “when He shall take His poor out of the mire of this sinful world and set them with His princes, even with those that stand before His throne.”† For observe how many of our blessings here consist in defence, and shelter, and protection, and circumstances generally, which betoken a state of imperfection. Yea, and with them all, it is oftentimes sore travail for the soul; so mightily does temptation beset us, “the enemy cometh on so fast!”

And therefore doth our Father oft, in very tenderness and mercy, gather in His chosen at a time which men think premature; taking them from the “evil to come,”‡ lest wickedness should pervert their

* Heb. xi. 40.

† Psalm cxiii. 8.

‡ Is. lvii 1.

understanding, or deceit beguile their souls ;* lest, in a word some jewel in the crown He designs for them should lose a portion of its brightness from their longer conversation in a world so full of snares, so alien, yet so trying to their hearts. And it is well for them that he does so. Here their very blessings were imperfect, their trials oftentimes very sore : now “they are in peace.” Shall we not congratulate with them that they at least are gainers, however great our loss ? May they not say to us, “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to my Father ?”† May they not justly recall to our thoughts, as we commune in spirit with them, the saying of the apostle, that to “depart and be with Christ is far better ?”‡ May they not convey to our souls, not the truth only, but some portion even of that blessedness, which is now inalienably theirs ? May they not whisper to our hearts how calm and peaceful is their repose, how exalted their contemplations, how exquisite their delights, and how sweet the refreshments of God’s mercy which reach them there ? May they not in some way show us how white are their robes, how pure and spotless their redeemed spirits ?§ What on earth can equal, or be compared with one, even the least of all their joys, if it were only the certainty, that they are saved ? For we know full well that whatever doubt humility

* Wisd. iv. 11. + St. John xiv. 28.—St Bernard’s Epist. 374. † Philip. i. 23. ‡ Rev. vi. 11.—Rev. v. 5.—Heb. xii. 23.

may suggest, as long as the strife continues here; or however it may become us in general to avoid too confident assertions about those who are removed out of our sight; *they*, at all events, know their present condition, that it is full of peace, and their future prospects as still more blessed. In them, beyond all doubt, and far beyond all previous intention or accomplishment, is fulfilled that saying, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh from you."* Tribulation, affliction, peril, nor sword, can come nigh them there: neither time nor eternity, neither life nor death, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature can separate them from the love of God which they there experience in Christ†—that lovingkindness which is better than the life itself.‡ They are sealed indeed unto the day of their redemption.§

And, my brethren, could we wish it otherwise than it is, to any with whom it is thus? Would we call them again from that secure haven,|| to be tossed once more upon the troubled sea of life? Or shall we not rather fear, lest by uncontrolled grief, we should disturb their peaceful joy? For, indeed, we may well suppose that the soul, "when delivered from the burden of the flesh," has her powers enlarged; ¶ and her capacities are likely to be greater, and not less, now that the obstacles to their deve-

* St. John xvi. 22. † Rom. viii. 30. ‡ Ps. lxxiii. 3. § Rom. viii. 23.—
Ephes. iv. 30. || Ps. cvii. 30. ¶ Wisdom ix. 15.

lopment are withdrawn. And though we believe that, when it shall again be clothed upon with its glorified body, it shall receive still larger accessions of might, and strength, and beauty, and glory, and knowledge, and joy: yet, even in its intermediate state, its faculties are higher, its powers greater, its graces more excellent, its vision more extended than now. Let us cherish this thought. It may be a comfort to many among us to cling to it, yet. And as there may be more means of our holding closest communion with the Blessed who are at "rest from their labours," than an unthinking or misbelieving world will acknowledge, let us not voluntarily deprive ourselves of one drop of comfort which may rise from a source so holy and so pure.

Much, at all events, we know of them: and can we imagine they know less of us? they, whose eyes are no more blinded by the veil of sense, who look upon God? They are yet in the Church as when we knew them here. They are still I say in the Church, only now of another order in it: but not less members than before of Him, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."* And we cannot suppose that a condition, which brings them nearer to God, should involve any diminution, but rather an extension, of all faculties which respect vitality and bliss. Evil, indeed, we may well believe they are spared the knowledge of for many

* Ephes. iii. 15.

reasons ; but all else is doubtless within their intelligence. So though we hear no more with outward ears, that voice upon whose lightest tones we once fondly hung, we may know that it rings amid the choir of seraphim ; and but for our dull carnal hearts might reach us even now. And oft as we think of them, their thoughts may also be with us ; oft as we speak of them they may know it, and the thought that we remember them give tranquil pulses to their joy ; oft too as we assemble here, they are doubtless gathered with us in the presence of our common Lord ; and, most of all, when we kneel before the altar, our hearts may tell us their delighted spirits hover near. And oh how earnestly and tenderly, now they can better sound the great deep of God's judgments :* with what tenderness and anxiety may they watch to see if their removal is working in us, that effect which they know our Father meant it should. What joy and gladness must be theirs, if, instead of grieving unduly, they see us thankful that, at least, their peace and salvation are secured beyond the reach of all accident or reverse, and endeavouring so to conduct ourselves as to assure our ultimate re-union with them.

But enough perhaps has been said, generally, of those who now live thus with Christ and shall hereafter, when He takes His great power and reigns, †

* Ps. xxxvi. 6. † Rev. xi. 17.

reign with Him. And you may expect me, now, to speak more particularly of one, whose entrance among those blessed spirits and their peaceful realms we have so lately celebrated with many a prayer; not without thanks to Almighty God for His great mercy in thus delivering her out of the miseries of this sinful world. Gladly would I do so, if it might be for the comfort or edification of any among you. And truly, if ever there were materials for either in the life or death of any we have known, they were here. Yet when I consider what I should say, I find nothing to record which the world would call striking. But the fact is, the true and proper graces of a Christian woman are all of a simple and unobtrusive character. They cannot indeed fail to be seen; they cannot be hid; but even the most lovely of them do not dazzle or make much show. It is "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," which she eminently possessed, that is of greatest price in the sight of God and of all good men. The fruits of the Spirit of God are all of the same retiring character; they are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,"* patience, purity.† There is no worldly distinction in such things; they make no stir among worldly men; but they are dear and acceptable with God. With such she was richly gifted; and faithfully and well did she use them, to the

* Gal. v. 22.

† St. James iii. 17.

glory of the Giver, and the good of all who came within her reach. Few persons were more considerate and thoughtful for others; fewer still more guileless and pure themselves. Rarely have any walked amid the things of this world and retained the simplicity of their baptismal gifts so little impaired by its attractions or its snares. And if any we have known have come near to that test of spiritual perfection which St. James proposes to us—and which too our own hearts as well as our neighbours can witness to the difficulty of acquiring—viz. the not offending in word,* surely it was she whose voice is now to some of you as the remembrance of a melody still loved, though heard no more.

More than this it is needless to say; though thus much, if we follow the pattern of other times, it is well to have said. I may add, however, that though her removal from those duties which she so adorned,† was in some sense sudden and unexpected, it could scarcely be premature for one who had long seemed ripe for the time of gathering, and more fitted for a better world than for this. It could not well take by surprise one who lived in habitual contemplation of the eternal and unseen; and made daily preparation for that event, which, though it came earlier than others looked for, found her, I doubt not, both ready and prepared, with her loins girded and her lamp burning brightly.

* St. James iii 2. † Tit ii. 10.

Natural piety would forbid us to sorrow as men without hope for one so early perfected—for one who needed not the discipline of sorrow for her purifying. Rather might we almost joy that she was thought worthy* to enter so soon upon her inheritance; that she was taken before the dull vapours of this world had settled on her soul, and the fine gold become dim.†

Now she is “in perfect peace:”‡ and in due time shall receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord’s hand.”§

To those of you who are left to walk henceforth amid the shadows of life in some degree alone, let me offer a word of consolation. Though the way seem dark now that the light of your homes is withdrawn, “wait you still upon God,” for of Him shall come “salvation” to you even yet. “Unto the righteous ariseth up light in the darkness,” and so also shall there to you if you will but look to the Lord, and let your souls wait for Him. That blessing, for the bereavement of which you are now mourning; all our blessings in short are but so many rays from the presence of Him whose love is the life of all things that live. And if you be patient and submissive to His will, He will yet again “lift up the light of His countenance upon you,” and your wounded hearts shall be whole. Even now I seem to see that you are not bound in the

* Rev. iii. iv. † Lam. iv. 1. ‡ Is. xxvi. 3. § Wisd. v. 16.

furnace* of your affliction, and that one whose form is like the Son of God, walketh among you, ministering strength to your souls. Else how could you endure as you have done but that “God is your helper,” and in the deep places of your sorrow you feel that underneath are the “everlasting arms” to uphold and support you.

May the God of all comfort and consolation† comfort your hearts indeed; and after you have suffered awhile, strengthen, stablish, settle, and confirm you in every good word and work.‡

Finally, my brethren, while we bless God and give Him thanks for the graces manifested in others who have departed out of this world in His faith and fear, let us remember that what they attained may also be attained by us; and that if we would find peace in the hour of death, or hope in the day of judgment, as we believe of them, we must make it our chief care to live as they lived, and to love God with that integrity and constancy which they were by His grace enabled to maintain.

Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling and do for us exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:§ to Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus* throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

W. B.

* Dan. iii. 20. † 2 Cor. i. 3. ‡ 1 St. Peter viii. 10.—2 Thess. ii. 17.
§ St. Jude 24.—Ephes. iii. 20.





