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Williams, Isaac, 1802-1865.  
Sermons on the Epistles  
and Gospels for the ...











DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY

ON

THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS

FOR

*The Sundays and Holy Days throughout the Year.*

VOL. II.

*TRINITY SUNDAY TO ALL SAINTS' DAY.*



SERMONS  
ON  
THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS

FOR

*The Sundays and Holy Days throughout the Year*

BY THE REV.

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

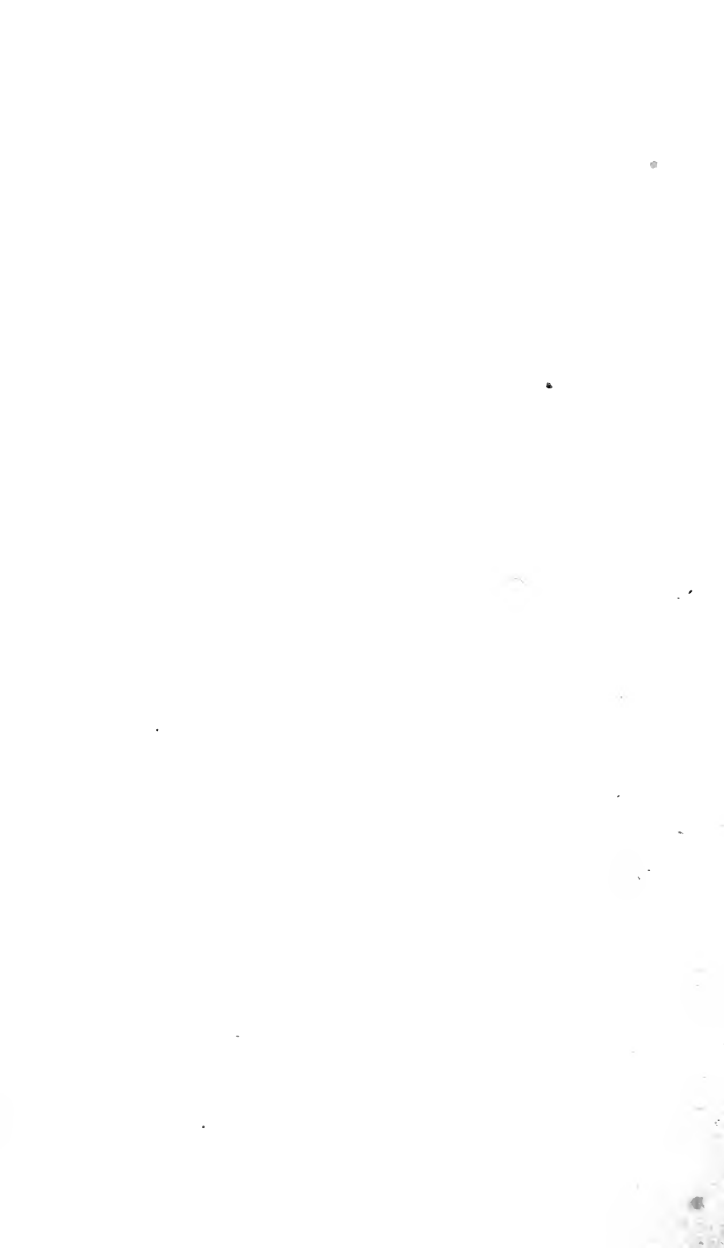
*TRINITY SUNDAY TO ALL SAINTS' DAY*

RIVINGTONS  
WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON

1882

[*New Edition.*]





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## SERMON XLVII.

### Trinity Sunday.

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#### THE DOOR OPENED IN HEAVEN.

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.—ST. MATT. xxviii. 19.*

THE seasons of our sacred year have carried us through the great events of our Redemption, our Lord's Birth and Temptation, His Passion, His Resurrection and Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost; and now we may say, "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in Heaven;" the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is revealed; and for one half of the year from this time we commemorate by lessons of obedience this doctrine of the Three Persons in One God. This the Scripture appointed for the Epistle sets before us, by a variety of very glowing images, in the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse, referring for the most part to the Old Testament.

*After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither,*

*and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.* It was a *voice* speaking, and yet it was *as of a trumpet*. This combines together the two great events of Pentecost—the awful trumpet of Mount Sinai on the giving out of the Law, and the living tongues on the descent of the Spirit; the one expressive of fear, the other of love; the fear and love with which we are henceforth to live in the great mystery of Godliness, as revealed to us in the Old and New Testament. For as Whitsuntide is the giving out of the law written on the heart, so the Sundays after Whitsuntide are the keeping of that law.

*And immediately I was in the Spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.* These words, “immediately I was in the Spirit,” may well express the dispensation of the Spirit as coming down at Whitsuntide. As in another place, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,” says St. John. And the “throne set in Heaven,” and “One sitting on the throne,” speak of the Kingdom of the Incarnate Word which we commemorate at this season as now established; “the King of Glory,” the only Son of the Father, exalted with great triumph unto His Kingdom in Heaven.

And the description then given of Him is by figures like those of the Prophet Ezekiel. *And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone*, that is, of exceeding beauty and brightness, like the fire in the bush, yet of enduring substance. “I saw,” says Ezekiel, “as it were the appearance of fire.” And it seems to have a reference to the precious stones, by which God revealed Himself on the breast of the High Priest; for the jasper and the sardine are the first and last of the twelve stones.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxviii. 17. 20.

It was the "appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord,"<sup>2</sup> or of the Word made visible.

*And there was a rainbow round about the throne ; i. e. the symbol of God's covenant of mercy ; " as the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain," says the Prophet in the same place ; yet not altogether such as the passing rainbow ; for it was in sight like unto an emerald—of an imperishable green, as setting forth that covenant of God which endureth unto everlasting life.*

*And round about the throne, where sat the Incarnate Son of God, were four and twenty seats. As our Lord Himself says to the Apostles, " I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My father hath appointed unto Me, that ye may sit on thrones."<sup>3</sup> And " to him that overcometh," He says, " I will grant him to sit with Me on My throne."<sup>4</sup> *And upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment ; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. By the twenty-four elders, signifying the twelve Prophets and the twelve Apostles ; or rather, perhaps, the priesthood of the New Covenant. " He hath made us," says St. John, " Kings and Priests unto God and His Father."**

*And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, as intimating the terrors of the law, and voices, as blending with them the gracious calls of the Gospel. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne ; as the seven lamps in the temple of old, but now meeting with their true fulfilment in the sevenfold powers of the Spirit, sent down from above by " the Father of Lights," which are, it is added, the seven spirits of God. As in*

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. i. 28.

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke xxii. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. iii. 21.

another place the Spirit sent by the Incarnate Son is called the "Lamb, having seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."<sup>5</sup> Whereas the Lamb Himself is likewise spoken of as the Light of the City of God.<sup>6</sup>

*And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal ; that is to say, that as there was a molten sea in the Jewish temple, so was there now to be in the Christian Church that which is signified by it, the laver of regeneration,—that Baptism by which we are made sons of God. In the same Book it is spoken of as "a sea of glass mingled with fire,"<sup>7</sup> indicating the Baptism of Him Who shall "baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire."*

*And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts ; or rather, four "living creatures," as they are called in Ezekiel, things that were all life, full of eyes before and behind. As cherubic figures about the Mercy-seat, but full of spiritual eyes, like the soul of man which looks before and after. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. This may perhaps signify the whole multitude of the redeemed, which are parts of Christ's mystical Body ; yet of various characters and dispositions, of zeal, of meekness, of love, or of heavenly contemplation, as members of Him Who is revealed to us in His four Gospels ; of Him Who is "the lion of Judah," is as the calf of atoning sacrifice ;<sup>8</sup> hath "the likeness of a man,"<sup>9</sup> and beareth us with eagle wings, as Scripture says, unto Himself.*

<sup>5</sup> Rev. v. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. xv. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. xxi. 23.

<sup>8</sup> St. Luke xv. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Ezek. i. 26.

*And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him ; and they were full of eyes within ; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come. That is to say, that when Isaiah saw the "glory" of Christ on His throne, and the seraphims in adoration, it was but the symbol of what is now fulfilled in the Christian Church, while the souls of His saints in Heaven and on earth worship the Three Persons in One God, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy," as to each Person in the Godhead ; and add the threefold expression, "Lord," and "God," and "Almighty ;" and "Which was," i. e. our Creator, Which "is" our Redeemer, Which "is to come," our Sanctifier.*

*And when those beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever ; when all created things are brought by the blessed Gospels, full of wings and full of eyes, full of love and full of knowledge, to worship Christ sitting at the right hand of God ; then the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created ; that is, when the multitude of those that are saved, represented by those living creatures, give thanks for their salvation, then the Christian priesthood fall down and cast their crowns before the throne ; that is, they attribute all to Christ, nothing to themselves. The more they are exalted, the more do they humble themselves in the sight of God ; for the better any one becomes, the more is he capable of the knowledge of God, and the more he knows God, the more is he himself lost in His Presence. Thus*

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is it with all the saints. As St. Paul so often speaks of himself: "I laboured more abundantly, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." He speaks of his crown: he says to his converts, "Ye are my crown," and "henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Yet whenever he sees the fruit of his labours, ever in heart and soul does St. Paul seem, as it were, to fall down before Him that sits on the throne, and to cast his crown before the throne, ascribing all to the undeserved goodness of God. Indeed, this memorable passage in the Apocalypse describes the very nature of all Christian righteousness which consists of faith, and the more it labours, the more it comes to know that all is of Christ in God. Thus this reverential adoration is but the acknowledgment in heart and life of that awful Name into which we are baptized, of the Three Persons in one God.

So peculiarly well suited and instructive is this passage in the Apocalypse to this season and this great day, having in it a peculiar living power of expression, as consisting of very striking imagery, whereby the Christian Church is portrayed after the descent of the Holy Spirit.

And now let us consider what connexion this may bear with the Gospel for this day. The Gospel is of the mystery of Baptism, and Baptism is by the saving Word of the Three Persons in one God. But to come to it more particularly, we may observe that St. John says that "a door was opened in Heaven," that he "was in the Spirit," when he beheld the throne in Heaven, and Christ sitting on His throne. And in the Gospel our Lord declares to Nicodemus that no man can see and understand heavenly things unless he is born of the Spirit. "Hardly do we guess aright," says the Wise Man, "at things that are upon earth; but the things that are in Heaven, who hath searched out, except



Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above ?”<sup>1</sup> We may consider the Gospel therefore as bringing down to us that great mystery of which the Apocalypse speaks in figure. For Baptism in the Name of the Three Persons in one God is as the “door opened in Heaven ;” in like manner as at our Lord’s Baptism the heavens were opened, the Father’s Voice was heard, and the Spirit was seen. To us, as born of water and of the Spirit, are the mysteries of Heaven made known, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. In other words, to us “a door is opened in Heaven,” and the mystery of the Godhead is reflected in the sea of glass which is before the throne. At the first Creation the Spirit moved on the face of the waters ; so even now is it in the Christian kingdom. “There were seven lamps of fire before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God ; and before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.” This is the description of Christ’s kingdom after the Day of Pentecost ; and it is this which our Lord would explain to us in the Gospel for to-day by earthly similitudes. For who is equal to these things ? and who should understand them, if God did not come down to us in our weakness, and meet us in our infirmities, overcoming by His humility our pride ?

*There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, one of station and of learning in the Holy City, and therefore ashamed in the light of day to give any heed to the lowly Teacher of Galilee and Nazareth. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him. Nathanael had said on far less evidence, “Thou*

<sup>1</sup> Wisd. ix. 16, 17.

art the Son of God;" but this is all that the wisdom of the Pharisees could reach unto, "except God be with him!" Yet how patiently did Christ bear with him and teach him, not quenching the smoking flax! for his coming at all, even though it were under covering of the night, and acknowledging Him as a Teacher from God, was as a spark ascending in the smoke,—like the beginning of a faith, however weak; and even this our Lord did not despise.

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* He cannot "see" it, however near it be to him, for he has no eyes to discern God; and where God is, there is His kingdom. Alas! how vain are all outward signs, unless God Himself teach us by His Spirit within, and reveal Himself unto our hearts as God! And here let us observe the difference between this man and all those creatures of God, in the Revelation:—they fall down; they worship with all prostration of soul and body; they rest not day or night from giving Him glory; the Saints in Heaven cry aloud, "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord?" But the learned ruler of the Jews questions, and inquires, and doubts. He seems to stand erect in His presence; to look with half-suspicion; and to think such a change as a new birth absurd, if not impossible. *Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?* Surely we may say, to be born again of his earthly mother would be no better than his former birth in sin; for to be a child of the Resurrection, he must be born of a new mother, which is the Church of God, and of His Spirit. He understood and spake of it carnally, as they of Capernaum did of the other Sacrament, when they said, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

and His disciples, "This is an hard saying ; who can hear it?"<sup>2</sup> "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."<sup>3</sup>

*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* The great truth which our Lord here expresses, is as needful for us to consider as it was to Nicodemus. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, into which we were baptized, is not to be understood, except by a spiritual mind ; carnal knowledge is of no avail ; it must be revealed by the Father from above, because the knowledge of these things is made up of faith and love. How can it be otherwise. For to know this truth in the Scriptural sense of knowledge is everlasting life ; and to know God, even here below, is rest and peace for the soul ; then to know Him must be the first and best gift of the Spirit.

O Spirit of love ! how shall we keep this great day, unless Thou givest us to do so by prayer and communion with Thee ; to know the Father our Creator, and commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well-doing ; to know Jesus Christ, Whom He hath sent, and to find peace in His cleansing Blood ; to know Thee the Sanctifier, and to feel in our hearts Thy holy flame ever ascending upward, in prayer and devout aspirations to Heaven, from whence it came. And, surely, if we are baptized into this faith— if by the Spirit of God alone we can understand it—what more suitable lesson could there be for this Sunday, than to consider this mystery of the new birth by water and

<sup>2</sup> St. John vi. 52. 60.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14.

the Spirit! what more edifying, than that we should be brought to behold ourselves in that "sea of glass, like unto crystal," to look on ourselves in that mirror of Baptism, that we may know of what Spirit we ought to be!

*Marvel not*, adds our Lord to the astonished Pharisee, *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* On Sunday last we read of the Spirit coming "as a mighty wind," and here we read of His effects on the hearts of men throughout the world. The sincere Christian is a marvel upon the earth; he is not of it, but is from above. Of him in some sense, as of our Lord Himself, it may be said, "He cometh from God and goeth to God." This sanctifying Spirit is the free gift of God, coming and going when He wills; His effect is known by its fruits, but He comes and goes unseen; He comes, but not unsought for or unasked; He comes to those who wait for Him in brotherly love, "with one accord." He makes present on earth the things of eternity; He reveals to the heart the mysteries of Heaven.

*Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things? Does not the law itself teach you that a washing is necessary before you can appear in God's presence? Does not David speak of a spiritual washing that must be of God, Who requireth truth in the inward parts, and teacheth wisdom secretly? Do not Moses and the Prophets point to this when they speak of the need of sacrifices and cleansings? of passing through the Red Sea before seeing the promised land of rest? of the winds*

of God coming on the dead bones before Israel can live?

*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.* You look on Me as on a Man come from God, because of the miracles you have seen; but yet, notwithstanding this, you receive not My witness. Or rather, “*Our witness;*” that of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit.

*If I have told you earthly things, such things as are explained by earthly similitudes, such as take place here on earth in the heart of man, in the operation of the Spirit and the mysteries of the new birth; and ye believe not; are still incredulous, and say, How can it be? then how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? of those eternal things which are in the bosom of God; of the kingdom in Heaven prepared for those that love Him; of the eternal generation from the Father, and the deep mysteries of Godhead.* Of such things our Lord spake to the disciples at the last; of the Three Persons, each and all eternal, infinite, incomprehensible; One God; One in Substance, One in Majesty, One in Power.

*And no man hath ascended up to Heaven, there is no one who can bear witness, from his own knowledge of those heavenly things, from having been in Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven,—He alone can bear the key to these mysteries,—even the Son of Man, Who is in Heaven; Who, being ever One with the Father, and in His bosom from all eternity, is still in Heaven.* For God and man He is but one Christ; He is with God in Heaven while seen with men below. And He maketh the members of His Body, even while they are on earth, to sit with Him in heavenly places. None can see the kingdom of

Heaven, none can ascend thither but they who are parts of His Body, and who are clothed with His Spirit, which He sends down from thence to bring them thither.

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* "Should have life;" not bodily and temporal, as that in the wilderness, but spiritual and eternal. The Son of Man is ever in Heaven, yet the Son of Man is also on earth, and as here on earth must be lifted up as the only sacrifice well-pleasing to God.

Wonderful indeed was that symbol of faith in Christ crucified, when, bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness, they gazed on that sign, and in gazing on it were healed; the likeness indeed of a serpent was it, but the semblance only, for it never had within it the life and poison of the serpent; and Christ was, on the Cross, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," being "made sin for us" as bearing sin and its curse, but differing from all men in this, that the natural infection of sin was not in Him. And "in His death," as says St. Augustin, "sin died."

That Cross was to Him as His Throne, on which the title was inscribed, "This is the King;" the throne before which all created things must bow. His saints gaze on Him there on His Cross, and in looking to Him obtain life, and in living to Him and for Him they rest not day and night; but, all "wings" without, in ever ready obedience, and "full of eyes within," as filled with the light of His Holy Spirit, with Divine intuition and enlightened conscience, watching within over themselves; they give glory to Him, and in Him to the Three Persons in One God, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come."

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And if crowned by Him with any spiritual blessings or gifts, then all the more in humiliation of themselves they fall down before Him, and cast their crowns before His throne, ascribing all glory, and honour, and worship to Him alone ; adoring the depth of those mysteries which they cannot comprehend ; believing in Him Whom as yet they see not ; and in faith loving to be the most where He is most revealed.

## SERMON XLVIII.

### The First Sunday after Trinity.

I St. John iv. 7—21. St. Luke xvi. 19—31.

*LOVE THE MARK OF GOD'S CHILDREN.*

*He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love GOD  
Whom he hath not seen?—I ST. JOHN iv. 20.*

WE have had occasion to notice that for many Sundays the appointed Gospels have been taken from St. John, almost entirely so from Easter Day, and these consist in some measure of our Lord's last discourses on the coming of the Comforter. And now when we celebrate the manifestations of the Comforter in practical obedience, St. John furnishes the Epistle for the two first Sundays after Trinity; still continuing the one great lesson on which his Lord had been dwelling in those discourses, that of Love.

*Beloved, let us love one another. And why? for love is of God; for love is of all things the most Divine—the peculiar gift of God. And more than this, it is the very mark of God's children; and every one that loveth, who has this Divine love, is born of God. Nor is this all; for he adds, and knoweth God. He has that intimate vital*



union with God, which, for want of a higher term to express it, is called knowledge, though it passeth all understanding. This knowledge and love are indeed so united, that they are like light and heat from one and the same flame. And, again, the more strongly to ensure this subject of love he puts the negative also : *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.* This last expression is far more than all ; he does not say that God is loving, or that He delights in love, or that He is the Author of love, but that He is Love. “ If nothing else,” says St. Augustin, “ were said of love in this Epistle, and nothing else in all the Scriptures, yet, if the Spirit told us this only, that *Love is God*, we ought to require nothing more.”<sup>1</sup> And how much does it contain ; for if God is Love, then whenever we sin against love in thought, word, or deed, in any matter, great or small—with regard to any person, whatever he may be or may have done—we sin against God. Whatever is against love is against God.

And then St. John adds the living proof and evidence we have of this love, upon all the recorded particulars of which we may dwell, in order the better to apprehend it in heart and life. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him; that in His life we might have life, that in His love we might have love.* This His love was *manifested* ; it was not like an unseen emotion of the mind, dead and inoperative, but showed itself in deed ; nor was it like the mere return of love such as we find among mankind, but it was love in an infinitely higher, truer, better sense,—Love itself, essential love. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but*

<sup>1</sup> In 1 Joan. ad loc.

that He loved us, seeking our love in return while we loved Him not; and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, to reconcile us unto Himself, to make us meet and fit to love Him, to dispose us to value and to seek for His love,—having this pledge, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?”<sup>2</sup> Hating sin so much, yet so much did He love the sinner: how much more then will He love us, if sin be away, buried in the grave of Christ, and we are in Christ, the Beloved of the Father?

*Beloved*, says St. John, returning again to the same point, *if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*. For we are all alike loved of God; and if we have any love for Him in return, we must needs love what He loves; we have no other way of showing our love for Him. *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us*. We cannot behold God; but what we have beheld is inconceivable Love, in the countenance, in the words, in the actions, in the sufferings of the Son of Man; and He by His Spirit dwelleth in us, and perfects His love in us, while we love all others as He loved them. *Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us; because He hath given us of His Spirit*. And if we have this love in our conduct to others, this fruit of the Spirit—for the Holy Spirit is Love—then we have a pledge and assurance of this His indwelling, this our living union with Him; according to the promise which Christ hath made, that He will send the Holy Spirit, that He Himself will come and make His abode with us. For a bad man may be

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 32.

named after Christ, may have been baptized in His name, and may receive the living symbols of His Body and Blood, and attend the ordinances of religion, and do many religious actions, but he cannot have love. By "love shed abroad in our hearts," by love bearing witness on our words and actions, written as on the "fringes"<sup>3</sup> and phylacteries of our garments, we know that He hath given us of His Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

And it is the gift of the Spirit which gives us to see and acknowledge Him in Whom is the forgiveness of sins, the healing of our maladies, the restoration of all our infirmities. Thus he adds, *And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* Here we may observe how all this, the chain of love, the breath of our life, and the light of Heaven, depends on our sustaining in our souls by obedience the doctrine of the Three Persons in One God, into Which life-giving Name we are baptized. This mystery of Godhead is ever recurring throughout this Epistle, all things connected with it, flowing from it, returning to it; it is the foundation and the crown; it is the way and the end; the progress and perfection; the fulness of the greatest, the life of the least of duties; the centre and circumference of all. By brotherly love we know we have the Spirit, and by the gift of the Spirit we know that we have the indwelling of God; and by acknowledging the Father we confess the Son, and by confessing the Son we have God dwelling in us and we in Him, and He is Love—Love in us and we in Love. And *we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*

<sup>3</sup> Numb. xv. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. v. 5.

*God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* "He dwelleth in God," safe from every enemy, the wars of the world, and the strife of tongues ; and "God dwelleth in him," filling him with all truth and love, and guiding him along the way of peace.

All Christians perhaps have the beginnings or germs of this love, but in many it dies away and never comes to ripeness ; "as the grass growing upon the housetops," "whereof the mower filleth not his hand." St. John therefore speaks of this love being in us brought to perfection, advancing as it were to the fulness of the stature of Christ, which is Love. *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement ; because as He is, so are we in this world.* Such love as St. Paul had, when he desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ ; and St. John, when he said, "even so, come, Lord Jesus," and St. Peter, when "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God." *There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment : He that feareth is not made perfect in love.* It is fear indeed which urges to repentance, and repentance kindles love ; but such partakes of servile bondage rather than the filial spirit of adoption ; it is as the scourge, or remedy, or the pruning-knife, which becomes less and less needed as love is perfected. Fear is the forecasting of evil ; but he whose heart is by love established feareth no evil, for God is with him. It hath no fear, except the godly, loving fear of displeasing Him, which fear hath in it nothing of torment, but ever grows with growing love.

*We love Him, because He first loved us.* He loved us when evil, that we might be made good ; He loved us when sick, that we might be made whole ; He loved us

when foul and unlovely, that we might become clean; and by loving Him in return, we that were evil become good; by loving Him, we that were sick are made whole; by loving Him, we, even foul and unlovely, are made in Him lovely and clean. But here is the proof whether we love Him or no. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, Whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.* He that would love God; he that thinks he loves God; he who has the faint beginnings of the love of God in him, must let this love be shown, exercised, perfected, by loving him whom Christ hath made to be in His own stead to him upon earth—his Christian brother.

From this most soothing, gracious, and beautiful lesson, the picture of Divine love afforded us in the Epistle, we now pass to another lesson, the most awful and terrible in the whole of the Scriptures, and the more awful and terrible, because delivered to us by Him Who is Love itself. It is the account which our Lord Himself gives us in the Gospel for to-day, lifting up the curtain from the unseen world, and disclosing to us a fearful glimpse into one of those dread realities which encompass this shadowy and transient scene of things. And if the account of His unspeakable love, set so earnestly before us by the disciple of Divine love himself, cannot win us, oh, that fear itself, and the insight into these terrors, may drive us for refuge to Him? It is the account of one who, in his short passage through this world, loved not "his brother whom he had seen."

*There was a certain rich man, says our Lord in St. Luke's Gospel, which was clothed in purple and fine*

*linen*,—"purple" without, as rich men usually were, of fair and costly appearance; and "fine linen," all softness and delicacy, within,—and *fared sumptuously every day*. That is, he was taken up with the love of self, according to the desires of the natural man, in self-gratifications which harden the heart. Nor does our Lord give us to hope anything better of that other rich man who said to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."<sup>5</sup> Both alike were devoid of the love of their neighbour and of God, because they were thinking of themselves, and filled with the love of this present life: no self-denial, no mortification, no watchfulness and earnest prayer, such as religion requires of us all. It was enough that both of them were living a life in which it was impossible to love God; that first and great law of the Old Testament and of the New. The desires they were cherishing were incompatible with it. "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

But nothing is stated of the inward and spiritual condition of the two persons in this parable; their outward condition only, in the sight of men, is described; the state of their hearts is left to the all-seeing eye of God, and no judgment is expressed of it here below—it is shown only in the sequel that ensues. No crime is alleged of the rich man, no prayers and patience are stated of the poor.

*And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed*

<sup>5</sup> St. Luke xii. 19.

*with the crumbs, which fell from the rich man's table.* He represented outwardly what we all are in our natural state: beggars dependent on God's undeserved mercies, and laid helpless without the gate, and with our souls full of wounds. Blessed is he who most knows himself to be so! And like the prodigal also in the parable, he was half-dying with hunger. Such is the season of grace: that aching void of a famished body longs after God, and in its want becomes filled with His fulness.

*Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.* Laid among unclean animals, and even they having more compassion on him than the household of the rich, he was even as one of the dogs under the table; but less favoured than they, unable to support himself, for he was helpless and sick; pining for want in the sight of abundance, for he was at the rich man's gate; longing for crumbs, but having them not; yet not complaining nor importuning, but patient and trusting in God. Such was he on this side of the door of death, at which he lay.

*And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.* Instead of the dogs he had angels to minister to him; instead of lying abject without the gate of a man, he was at the highest place at the table of God in His kingdom; instead of being despised, he was cherished and loved by the highest of saints in the bosom of blessedness. O wonderful morning of first awaking after closing the eyes on a scene of want, and wretchedness, and pain here below! He had no one on earth to care for him; none to relieve, none to pity him, to save him from death, or alleviate him in dying, or in death to close his eyes; but he laid himself asleep on the breast of God, and on that he awoke, and found where he was: safe in the bosom of Abraham,

the harbour of repose, and beneath him the Everlasting Arms. He awoke and found where he was, and where he was to be for ever. O blessed dawn of everlasting light, when songs of Angels are first heard with their glad welcome, and the soul awakes from the sad dream of life to know what it is to be with God!

*The rich man also died, and was buried.* It is added, he "was buried," for his costliness below was not over till then; but of the pompous funeral of his dead body on earth he was himself now utterly regardless and unconscious; or if he was sensible of it at all, it was as an aggravation and mockery of his real and true condition. He was buried: and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. In the outer darkness there was a gleam of sad light which but added to the gloom, for it disclosed to him the greatness of those joys which he had lost, and by the contrast increased his sorrows; but it was "afar off," as intimating the vast distance and separation which now lay between them. He sees and knows, though it be afar off, one whom he had often before, it may be, seen and known as he lay at his gate. But oh, how great is now the difference! what tongue can speak, what heart can adequately conceive it! It is the house of eternal blessedness, in the inner chamber of which he sees one whom he had known; but he is now himself without the gate, laid full of torments.

*And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.* "He cried," it was more than the "exceeding bitter cry" of Esau when he had found his birth-right gone—sold for a mess of pottage, and no place for



repentance. It is not for change of place or condition, not for release, not for a cup of cold water only does he ask, but far less; that Lazarus "may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue." That tongue which had not prayed to God while time was given, now prays to Abraham, but in vain; that tongue which had ministered to luxury, now longs in vain for one drop of water. His sin hath found him out. That whereby he sinned now suffers. Perhaps, also, it had been the tongue of evil-speaking, "set on fire of hell," the effects of which he now feels.

*But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.* What a weight of power and of woe in every word! *Son*, he had been, therefore, a son of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God; from this high calling he had fallen. *Remember*, oh! what a memory, what a serpent, what anguish must there be in such remembrance of the past! *Thou in thy lifetime*, that life of the flesh and the natural man; that life of the world, and esteemed in the eyes of the world, which thou hadst chosen to be *thy life*, instead of the life which is in God; *thou receivedst*—thou hast already had, thou didst receive and take for thine own *thy good things*, those which thou didst esteem "good," "thy good things;" those were thy choice and thy portion when thou hadst the power to choose; thou hast received them, and with them thy good, thy life, thy choice, hath ended. But it may be said, had not Abraham himself these riches of which he thus speaks? the good things of this world in abundance, gold and silver, exceeding many flocks and herds, household servants, and attendants? It is evident, therefore, that it was not the mere possession of these that Abraham would

lay to the rich man's charge, but that in them he forgot God; he possessed them, and they possessed him; they took up his heart, he made them his good things, his life, his god; whereas Abraham, in the midst of riches, was ever as one who in possessing possessed not; being exceedingly poor in spirit; he felt no place on earth to be his own, confessing himself as a stranger and a pilgrim; he made God only his portion, saying, when childless and old, "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me?"<sup>6</sup> "Dwelling in tabernacles with the heirs with him of the same promise," "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."<sup>7</sup>

Abraham poor in riches, and Lazarus rich in poverty; they are now together at the table of God. "Thou in thy lifetime," said Abraham, "receivedst thy good things," *and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* The Comforter Himself hath healed his sores, hath wiped away his tears, hath filled him with good things. With one the good hath gone, the evil remains; with the other the evil hath gone, the good remains. Such is the difference at death with the worldly man and the Christian. Nay, evil itself, even while it remained, was good to the Christian, for it was his Saviour's portion, and brought him nearer to God. And no prosperity in this life can be really good to a bad man.

*And besides all this, says Abraham, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.* Their lot can now never be changed any more; while time lasted it might have been changed every day; more love to man might be practised

<sup>6</sup> Gen. xv. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. xi. 9, 10.

every day ; more love to God laid up and learnt ; more humility of heart exercised. But that opportunity has now gone by for ever ; the time seems now as if it had been but for a moment, while looked back upon from the countless ages of eternity. There is *a great gulf fixed* between : *great*, so vast the difference ; *a gulf*, so deep and impassable ; and *fixed*, as for ever unchangeable, for the barriers are in the deep foundations of eternity.

O blessed Saviour, these are Thine own words ! we cannot explain or speak of them, for everything falls short, and all that we say seems but idle words compared with the dread reality. Do Thou, by Thy Holy Spirit, write them on our hearts. Teach us to know them in this our day, as Thou wouldst have us to understand and profit by the sad warning.

*Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house : for I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.* His torment is increased by thinking of others ; natural affection seems still to remain ; nay, it might almost seem brotherly affection, a desire for their spiritual everlasting welfare ; he would become, as it were, a preacher of the Gospel, and send an Apostolic message unto them ; but these desires are fruitless and unavailing, and now only tend to increase the bitterness of regret and sorrow. Dear Christians, how much reason have we all to fear that good desires, if not acted upon and carried out when opportunity is given, may come back to us when it is too late, knocking at the door of the heart with everlasting sorrow ! Have we not all of us some relative whose spiritual good we may promote now, by our prayers at all events, if in no other way ? O opportunities of great price ; seeds that are scattered about, as

it were, on the winds, which may on all sides be found by us, wherever we look ; seeds of imperishable good or evil, which may be taken home by us, and cherished, and made to bear fruit, and be an endless comfort to us when we have left the body.

*Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.* Moses and the Prophets ! they both teach the love of God and the love of our neighbour ; they both look forward to the everlasting life which is in God, sufficiently for an obedient heart to understand. Here we have our Lord's own declaration for this, expressed by the mouth of Abraham himself.

*And he said, Nay, father Abraham ; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.* *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Here we cannot but remember that there was once a man named Lazarus raised to life from the grave ; and the Jews, the children of Abraham, went in great numbers from Jerusalem to Bethany, in order to see him ; but the chief priests, in consequence, held a council to slay Lazarus, the witness from the dead, and with him to slay his Deliverer, the Prince of Life. They were not rendered the better, but the worse for that miracle. They repented not, they were "not persuaded" by one that rose from the dead ; but more confirmed in unbelief and wickedness.

Thus was it with these Pharisees, to whom this awful parable was delivered. They brought to its height and fulness this unlovely temper of the rich man ; they saw and hated their Brother of the seed of Abraham Whom they had seen, and knew not that in seeing and hating Him they saw and hated their God.

And now again, in conclusion, let us consider the loving

precepts of the Epistle, and the sad narrative of this day's Gospel together : how do light and darkness combine in one picture, each to heighten the other ! Both speak the same doctrine. What a wonderful mystery of probation surrounds us all ! How searching, how inscrutable ! We shall never know with what exquisite wisdom our trial has been adapted and constituted until it is past. We go on with very little sense or knowledge of the ultimate consequence of things, till all of a sudden in its fulness and reality it stands before us ; so it is with us, one by one, one after another. So was it with the rich man in the parable ; so was it with poor Lazarus whom he despised ; so was it with all those Jews who saw Christ and loved Him not. How little did they know or think of what they were about, until death stripped the veil from their eyes,—that the “outcast of the people,” “the despised and rejected of men,” He that had “not where to lay His head,” was their God, and that He their God was Love ! Moses and the Prophets testified of Him ; but as Abraham said, they heard not Moses and the prophets ; and He Himself rose from the dead, but as Abraham said, “neither” were they “persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

Many expressions of Holy Scripture imply, that we, in this our short time of trial below, are enveloped in the same kind of cloud—a cloud which conceals from our view the very near Presence of God. For the Jews, after their trial was over, could scarcely have been more amazed and surprised to find that the poor Galilean, the carpenter's son of Nazareth, was the Everlasting Son of the Father ; that He, their Brother Whom they had seen, was their God also Whom they had not seen ; they could scarcely have been more astonished than those accepted persons

will be in the Great Day of Terror to whom He shall say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

O awful season of short-lived time ! "Clouds and darkness are round about" us ; for "clouds and darkness are round about" our God, and our God is with us ; though, alas ! we know it not, or but feebly at best understand ; but all we know in this our darkness is, that he that now walketh in love walketh in light, and by so doing shall come to that everlasting light in which God is, Whose Name is Love.

## SERMON XLIX.

### The Second Sunday after Trinity.

1 St. John iii. 13—24. St. Luke xiv. 16—24.

THE GOSPEL A FEAST OF LOVE.

*And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the Name of His Son JESUS CHRIST, and love one another.—1 ST. JOHN iii. 23.*

VERY beautifully does the Church at this season continue and carry on her note of Divine love; taking up her lesson again from St. John, the disciple of love, and from that part of his Epistle where he seems to be dwelling in memory on our Lord's own words at the last Supper before He left them. "Much," says St. Augustin, "as the Scripture commends the power of love, I know not that it ever does so more fully than here."<sup>1</sup>

*Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.* Our Lord Himself had said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."<sup>2</sup> By "the world" is meant those who love anything in this temporal state of

<sup>1</sup> In Joan. Ep. Hom. v.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xv. 18, 19.

things more than they love God, as revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Whenever we do so in any respect, we hate those who love God more, because they are witnesses against us; their hearts being more set on God reproves and condemns us, we envy and dislike them. For they who love God must necessarily be displeasing to "the prince of this world;" and he will in every way stir up hate against them with all those whom he sways.

But if the world hate us, what is our comfort? it is this, *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* "We know," we have the witness in ourselves, that we are on the right hand of the Judge, by our conscience within telling us that we have love; it is a hidden life, a life hid in Christ. It is not seen now, as the life of a tree is not seen in winter, but it lies hidden in the root; but when its own appointed spring-time shall have come, it will burst forth in leaves and fruit, and be seen in glory at the appearance of its Lord, the Lord of life. But in the dead of winter you can tell whether the tree has life in the root, and so even now the life of the soul is known by love. Love is like the light within the house at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, while it is all darkness without, the hatred of the world, men "hateful and hating one another."

*He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.* He still continueth in that state in which he was born, a state of death, and lying under the wrath of God. He is hid from the face of God,<sup>3</sup> as was Cain, the first-born of Adam. *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.* The expression seems to allude to our Lord's own declaration in

<sup>3</sup> Gen. iv. 14.



the Sermon on the Mount, that His law, by which we shall be judged at the last day, is spiritual, extending to the thoughts ; that therefore he who is angry with his brother without cause, or uses towards him words of contempt or provocation, will be condemned of breaking the Sixth Commandment,<sup>4</sup> of which the penalty is death.

For the Christian's conduct must be regulated by the new law of love—the new law of loving others even as Christ hath loved us ; for this, the example of perfect love, is set before us as the stirring and sanctifying motive of our love. He states in contrast the lowest condition to which we can fall, which is of one who hating his brother takes part with him who was “a murderer from the beginning ;”<sup>5</sup> and from this the beloved disciple delights to pass unto the best of all, the fountain and the sea of all love. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us ; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* This is the love of God, the perfection of all love ; nothing can ever be higher than this, for it is the crown of all ; nothing deeper than this, for it is the foundation of all ; nothing longer than this, for it is the end of all ; nothing broader than this, for it is the sum and substance of all. It is as the Cross of Christ itself, of which one part sinks down into the earth below, while another part rises up towards Heaven above ; on the right hand it stretches forth unto boundless space, and on the left also. Such is the length and breadth, and depth and height of the love of Christ crucified. This is the pattern according to which we are to measure ourselves, and apply this Divine test to the little brotherly charities of life, as that of giving alms to the poor. *But whoso*

<sup>4</sup> St. Matt. v. 21.

<sup>5</sup> St. John viii. 44.

*hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him ; how dwelleth the love of God in him ?* There can be but little share of this love in him who spends his money on himself and forgets the poor. Goodness to the poor is the chief proof of the love of God in Christians, inasmuch as it receives not earthly requital or return ; whereas domestic, or filial, or parental, or social love, are more of earth, as less close in resemblance to the love of Christ ; which is described by this analogy, that " though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that " we " through His poverty might be rich."

And then with all possible tenderness the Apostle appeals to such proofs of sincerity as are alone availing for the satisfaction and peace of our own conscience with God. For there may be the appearance of such love without the reality ; men may be gentle and kind in their manners and conversation, give alms to the poor, and be well known for public charities ; nay more, may seem to be meek and forgiving of injuries, and all this from a great mixture of self-interest and self-love ; and if so, they lose the blessedness of that life-giving Eye that seeth in secret. It is the Eye of God in the soul that fills it with life, love, and light. *My little children*, says St. John, with more than parental care and affection, *let us not love in word, neither in tongue ; but in deed and in truth.* The more valuable anything is, the more important that it should be sincere and without counterfeit. *And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.* The confidence towards God which love gives, of which St. John so often speaks, and the peace and joy in the soul arising from it, depend entirely on such love being genuine and true, that self-pleasing

and the secret love of the world be not the motives which influence us. Our conscience will tell us if this be the case. *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.* If there be a secret misgiving, it will destroy our faith in God. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* And what are the blessed effects, the infinite value and benefit of such friendship with God? It is far beyond every other good, every satisfaction or comfort, which this world can afford; and it consists in this, that His eyes are upon us with love, and that His ears are open to our prayers. *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.* "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him;" this is a truth of God, that is, a life-giving truth; for truth may sound in Satan's words, a heart-deceiving truth which is unto death; as when he said, "Ye shall not die,"—conveying in words of seeming truth the worst of falsehoods. St. Paul asked and received not, when he prayed for "the thorn in the flesh" to be taken from him; but his prayer was heard and answered in a way beyond what he thought or desired, and he rejoiced the more in not having that release for which he asked, in a far better and more blessed fulfilment of his prayer. Whereas the Israelites often asked, but with hearts not right towards God, and they received what they prayed for; but their spiritual salvation was not promoted thereby, for such they desired not. Rejecting God for their King, they asked for a king like the nations, and obtained what they asked for; and afterwards, with a like spirit, they said, "we have no king but Cæsar," and rejected Christ. So necessary is it that our desires should be right towards God, lest He should

answer us according to our desires ; for He has promised to answer our prayers, if we keep His words.

To this St. John then adds, as his custom is, a summary of all Christian faith and doctrine, every sentence being full of Divine life ; for after having said that our prayers being answered aright depends on our keeping the commandments of God, he returns again, as our Lord so frequently does in His last discourse, to the subject of these His commandments. *And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment.*

To believe in Jesus Christ contains in it every doctrine with respect to God ; and to love one another, every duty with respect to man. Moreover, this last, as being the fulfilling of Christ's commandment, may be considered to imply the former also ; for it is in our lives the fruit of faith in His Incarnation, and in the mystery of Godliness. Therefore he adds, *And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him and He in him.* Whosoever keepeth His commandments hath the indwelling of God, and he becomes assured that he has this indwelling from the Spirit which gives him the power to keep these commandments. Thus all things are held together as by a chain which reaches to the throne of God, and connects with it every action of our daily life ; for he adds, *And hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit Which He hath given us.*

St. Paul's testimony corresponds with this : The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." <sup>6</sup> But St. John seems here to be thinking of his Lord's promise, that He Himself would

<sup>6</sup> Rom. viii. 16.

come and abide with him ; and he felt assured that this His promise was fulfilled by the Spirit which had given unto him such love and power.

Now if we have so earnestly considered this striking Epistle from St. John, as to have made it our own by meditation and prayer, it follows that we must carry on the same train of thought, and this heart-thrilling lesson of love and goodness to the Gospel also. It will necessarily be the case that we read the Gospel for the day with reference to it. The light we derive from the one will naturally be cast on the other, whether we intend it or no. Chiefly on this account in these Sermons we so often consider the Epistle and Gospel for the Sunday together, as enforcing one line of instruction, or illustrating but one and the same great truth. Now the subject of the foregoing Epistle we have seen to be that of brotherly love, of the peace of Christ established in the heart by faith, and the Presence of the Comforter. And one might well have supposed that all men would earnestly press after so inestimable a gift of God ; and that as there is nothing in this world to be compared with love,—for “if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned,”<sup>7</sup>—and nothing so conducive to lasting joy of heart, surely, we might have thought, this loving appeal of St. John will not be in vain ; and yet we see and know that it is so. There is nothing more delightful to hear or read than all these accounts of Divine love which fill the Epistles of St. John,—of the love of God to us, and of our love which He seeks in return ; and there is nothing more sad

<sup>7</sup> Song of Sol. viii. 7.

and melancholy than to lift up our eyes from these descriptions, and see what is going on in the world, where all this is acknowledged and known, and yet not realized nor accepted. The Gospel then comes in to notice and explain this remarkable circumstance, as conveying by a parable a sort of prophetic account of this the reception of Christ's kingdom by mankind. The Christian religion is therein compared to a Great Supper. What could be more expressive of fraternal love, and of that "gladness of heart" which is "better than corn and wine," the rich abundance of God's goodness which we are invited to partake of? and yet those that are invited, strange as it may seem, refuse to come. But more than this, the parable in this day's Gospel discloses to us, in the various secrets of men's hearts, those causes which indispose them to the acceptance of God's love.

The occasion on which the parable was delivered was the following:—Our Lord was conversing at the table of a Pharisee, and had been speaking of that recompense which shall be at the resurrection of the just to those who hospitably entertain the poor, when one of the company, impressed with the wisdom of His words, said to Him, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." On which our Lord gave the following reply:

*A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.* It is as if He had said, the blessedness of which you speak is indeed great, but nevertheless it will not be received for all that. It is truly like a rich feast made by the undeserved bounty of God graciously inviting all freely to partake of His goodness. *And he sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.* "At supper-time," when the day of this world was now declining, taking upon

Him "the form of a servant," He came unto His own, and by the loving calls of His Gospel invites them into what He has called "the Kingdom of Heaven"—the acceptance of His grace ; that washed from the business and employments of the world, and dressed each in his best robe, the garment of salvation, and brightened with the oil of gladness, they may sit down with cheerful and thankful hearts and brotherly love at His table in His kingdom.

*And they all with one consent began to make excuse.* Though all differing from each other in their characters, their pursuits, and desires, yet they agreed at once in this, that they "all with one consent" declined the invitation ; not openly and avowedly refused, but "began to make excuse"—to find reasons for satisfying themselves in such unaccountable rejection. It is the history of mankind at all times, in the days of Noah or of Lot, or of the Son of Man,—the goodness of God, and man insensible of that goodness.

*The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it ; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them ; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.* Now these three excuses seem intended to express all the various influences which prevail in the world, and which prevent men from being conformed to that love of God and of our neighbour which St. John describes in his Epistle, or, in other words, from realizing the Kingdom of Heaven which is within us. There is no mention of any crime, there is no notorious sin on which the judgment of God is pronounced. The occasions of hindrance are matters innocent and perhaps necessary.

Nay, more ; the invitation does not require that they should be relinquished. The bountiful Friend Who so graciously invites them does not ask of one to forfeit the piece of ground he has bought, nor the other his yoke of oxen, nor the third to forsake his wife. They might have kept all these and attended to them, without unthankfully refusing to come to this great supper. But the rejection consists in this, that their hearts were occupied and filled with these pursuits.

Surely, my brethren, He who delivered this parable knew what was in man ; He knew us better than we know ourselves. If any one of us were now suddenly to be taken ill, and had but an hour to live, and were truly sensible of our condition, it is probable that we should see and understand the force of this parable much more fully than we now are able to do. If as dying men about to appear in the presence of God, and to be loosed from all earthly temptations for evermore, we consider in what respects our heart is not and has not been right towards God, we should find the account in this parable. Here wouldst thou find that "secret thing," as Job says, on account of which "the consolations of God are small with thee," and "thine heart doth carry thee away."<sup>8</sup> Then wouldst thou hear God saying to thee, "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity ; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth."<sup>9</sup> O, how easy does the love of God and of our brethren seem to us, when anything has for a time thoroughly shaken and shattered in pieces our trust in the world ! How welcome, how easy of acceptance, of what infinite price then appears the loving Gospel of God ! but all these thoughts, before they ripen into practice,

<sup>8</sup> Job xv. 11, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Jer. xxii. 21.



are again soon blotted out. A little business, a little pleasure, a little worldly society, household cares or engagements, the prospect of gain, or some national or political excitement, cross the path and divert the thoughts. But what is especially to be observed is, that all these excuses mentioned in the parable consist of considerations which are selfish ; they are of self-interest, self-indulgence. It is self taking the first place. Nor indeed is there any harm in worldly or domestic business, except where it takes the first place in the heart. Let God be first, and all things will be sanctified. For indeed, occupations which are pursued for the good of our neighbour, or in the service of God, or for the humiliation of self, always dispose the heart to that love in which consists eternal life. St. John, after his manner in this his Epistle, explains it all, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof."<sup>1</sup>

*So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.* As the Gospel is not made the object of choice when men are taken up with their own concerns, therefore in His great mercy God again opens wide the door, and sends another call into His Kingdom. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."<sup>2</sup> Under the pressure of affliction, sickness, or poverty, He would bring them unto Himself, and take them under the shelter of His

<sup>1</sup> 1 St. John ii. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. iii. 10.

wings. While Scribes and Pharisees stand aloof, the Publicans and sinners press into His kingdom ; and while the learned and the rich are unmoved, every form of distress and disease is eager to take hold of the hem of His garment. When all is desolation around them they will listen to Him, and hear His voice. And therefore the soul of the Christian, which depends on Christ, and finds its rest in Him, is thus described, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved ?"<sup>3</sup> Never hath any one yet known the love of Christ, but he that felt the world to be a wilderness. His Gospel is described as fountains in the desert, as a table in the wilderness. And therefore not only are we assured by the Spirit that "the Lord loveth whom He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," but we may observe that in the Gospels our Lord pronounces His blessing on the evils of this world, and His woe on its prosperities. "Woe unto you that are rich ; for ye have received your consolation." "Blessed be ye poor ; for yours is the Kingdom of God." Surely these words contain that very invitation which in this place this parable speaks of—an invitation which is made to the infirm, despised, helpless beggars ; to those who know themselves to be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."<sup>4</sup> Again, it says, "the master of the house being angry." He is angry with men because they love death. And when He would rescue them, His chastening visitations of mercy are as if He were displeased. O blessed anger, which seems to speak to us so harshly that it may save us ! and because we have rejected His kind invitations, from being so taken up with things present, He sends another call ; and as it

<sup>3</sup> Song of Sol. viii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. iii. 17.

is through adversity and bereavement He speaks to us, there sounds something stern and severe in the tone. But "His wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and in His pleasure is life:" and we are able to say with thanksgiving, "Thou, O Lord, of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled."

"Blessed are they who are thus called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb"<sup>5</sup> that was slain. And oh, may this call be not only by His Providence, but also by His grace constraining, that we may not neglect the call!

*And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.* The Heavenly Feast differs from every earthly good in this, that it can afford no occasion for envy or ill-will, for there is enough for all. His house is of "many mansions;" ample the room, and overflowing the table of His goodness; no one can interfere with another, nor by having more can make his brother's share less. On the contrary, the more we promote the goodness and everlasting happiness of others, the more we add to our own.

*And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those that were bidden shall taste of my supper.* They have rejected His call and His day of visitation, and "He hath sworn in His wrath that they shall not enter into His rest." For "they have heard" His word, His gracious invitation of mercy, but "they go forth and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life"—the yoke of oxen, the farm, the wife in this parable—"and bring no fruit to perfection." If we look abroad upon the world we see that it is so, and

<sup>5</sup> Rev. xix. 9.

that in these "the days of the Son of Man" they are taken up with buying and selling, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage; pursuits indeed and callings in themselves harmless and allowable, but engrossing and transient; soon at an end, and of too absorbing interest while they last. This is the aspect of things around us. And yet we doubt not that under all this God's Word returns not to Him void, the Kingdom of Heaven is being filled—in a manner for the most part unseen and unknown to us; the seven thousands hidden from mankind are known to God. His grace invites, draws, constrains, compels, in nooks as it were and corners of this broad world, "the highways and the hedges." In the busy, many-peopled town and thronging streets, or beneath the secret hedge in the fields, there are they who hear the step and the voice of Him Who is seeking for His sheep; the voice of Him Who Himself brings His own invitation to the Great Supper, or stands and waits at the way-side house of Emmaus. "I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."<sup>6</sup>

In conclusion we may observe, that when the Gospel is in Holy Scripture likened to a supper or a feast, it seems to contain a secret allusion to that great Feast of Love, the Body and Blood of Christ; and this tends very much to explain and add force to the figure, inasmuch as this Holy Sacrament is not only in itself our life, but as a lively exhibition and type may serve to teach us the whole character of our religion. What inexpressible love to us beyond all our words and thoughts does it speak! what a constraining motive to brotherly love! for we are all thereby made to

<sup>6</sup> Rev. iii. 20.

be One Bread and One Body. Bread from that "grain of wheat" which died that it might "bring forth much fruit;"<sup>7</sup> and formed of that One Body Which was freely given in death for us, and now lives, and in living is our life. How does this Sacrament of itself teach, promote, set forth, and carry out all that the Epistle and all that the Gospel for to-day expresses: viz. that "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"<sup>8</sup> "and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Oh that, partaking of this bread which came down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world, we might meditate more on Christ's death and Passion! that it might fill our hearts far more than it does or ever has done! Nothing will purge us like this Divine fire from sensual lusts; nothing will withdraw us from the desire of the eyes so much as setting before us this Divine image of Love itself; nothing will so humble us from the pride of life as dwelling more and more on that shame and sorrow of the Cross, the shame and sorrow which we have laid upon Him, and which He willingly took for our sakes. It will tend beyond anything else to kill within us the love of this world, ambition, and covetousness; and if these selfish desires die within us we shall love others, because God loves both them and us. This is the best return we can make to Christ for all His goodness; and so shall we be acceptable guests at the "Great Supper" which He hath provided.

<sup>7</sup> St. John xii. 24.

<sup>8</sup> St. John xv. 13.

## SERMON L.

### The Third Sunday after Trinity.

1 St. Pet. v. 5—11. St. Luke xv. 1—10.

#### THE LOST SHEEP.

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.—ISA. liii. 6.*

ON Sunday last the Kingdom of Heaven was likened to a great supper, to which they that were invited refused to come, being engaged in their worldly pursuits, when the poor, the maimed, and the blind were brought in. On this Sunday the Lord Himself goes forth to seek for His sheep that was lost, and is rejoicing over it when found. It is like the same lesson differently expressed, with even, if it were possible, more touching tenderness. Instead of the Master sending forth servants to invite his guests, there is the good Shepherd Himself going forth, and seeking, and bringing home on His shoulders; and instead of the many invited, there is the one lost sheep. The Epistle for to-day is, in like manner, of the same character, exhorting to that humility which alone finds acceptance

with God; and which the parable in this day's Gospel was especially intended to illustrate and enforce.

*All of you be subject one to another.* Do not let each of you be insisting on his own rights and liberty as the evil world does around you; but on the contrary, as St. Paul says, "submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God;" "in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." And St. Peter here sums it all up in a memorable and beautiful expression: *and be clothed with humility.* Be covered all over with lowliness of heart, leaving no part unguarded, with bonds and knots, as the word implies, wrapping closely around you this mantle of protection; and why? *for God resisteth, setteth Himself in array against, the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

St. Peter himself knew by sad experience the truth of what he said; for before his fall he said, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." But after the Resurrection, when his Lord said unto him, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" he was grieved at the question being thrice put to him, and said, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Thus did he learn to look to God only, not venturing to compare himself again with others, or to prefer himself before them.

This humility is an exercise, a practice, a habit to be obtained by lowly actions and thoughts; whereas, whatever tends to exalt us in our own eyes, does so far lessen within us the grace of God. And thus St. Peter adds, *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.* So was it with the Great Pattern Himself of all goodness, Who humbled Himself beyond all, and "therefore God also hath highly exalted

Him ;” for all that is good in man consists in resemblance to Him. Exalt not yourselves, but let God exalt you in His own time. *Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.* He careth for you like a parent for a child, but with a peculiar and intimate regard beyond the thought of man ; for the hairs of your head by Him are numbered. Humble yourselves therefore, casting on Him every care. As St. Paul says, “Be careful for nothing ; but in everything let your requests be made known unto God.”<sup>1</sup> Lay your heads and all your troubles on the bosom of His infinite tenderness and compassion ; there is your only safety. If you forget this and trust to yourselves, you will immediately fall, and that assuredly. Thence follows, as in close connexion with this subject, that of unceasing watchfulness.

*Be sober, be vigilant ;* be ever earnest and on the watch, as knowing the consequence of things eternal and the short space of this our mortal trial. St. Peter speaks as one who always heard sounding in his ears those words of his Lord at that memorable Supper, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee.” And a little while after in the garden, still more earnestly, “Simon, sleepest thou ? couldst thou not watch with Me one hour ? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” And now St. Peter himself, giving the same warning to us which his Lord once gave to himself, as if passing on the same watchword in the night, *Be sober, be vigilant,* he says, *because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* “As a lion :” “having great wrath,” St. John says, “because he

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iv. 6.



knoweth that he hath but a short time.”<sup>2</sup> And “walking about;” as expressed in the book of Job, of his “going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it,” from his unceasing temptations on every side. *Whom resist stedfast in the faith.* St. Paul, of “the faith” here spoken of, says under another figure, “taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one;”<sup>3</sup> and St. James, of this resistance to his assaults, as if in allusion to the present simile of the wild beast, “Resist the devil, and he will fly from you.”

*Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.* Do not expect as Christians any immunity from temporal evils; for as “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together,” so do we also “that have the first-fruits of the Spirit;” nay, we are thereunto appointed as members of a suffering Lord, and are perfected thereby; being forewarned constantly throughout the Scriptures, by history, and precept, and example, and doctrine, that it is “through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God.”

With a beautiful sentence containing the fulness of blessing and the highest exhortation to all patience, St. Peter terminates this appeal. *But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

“The call to eternal glory,” and the “suffering for a while,” seem here set against each other, as in St. Paul’s expression, “our light affliction which is but for

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. vi. 16.

a moment," is weighed in the balance together with "an eternal weight of glory." The four words, "perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you," are very forcible in describing the good effect of tribulations and afflictions; but the last expression, "settle," in the English is inadequate,—it has a reference more distinctly in the original to "grounding on a firm foundation."<sup>4</sup> The effect of such trials in persons duly exercised thereby, is to render more secure the foundations on which their faith is built; to induce them as it were to go deeper until they come to the rock, which rock is Christ. The spiritual house to be blessed with Christ's Presence, must, as the material temple of old, "be built in troublous times;"<sup>5</sup> otherwise there will be but the fair structure whose foundation is on the sands. But God be praised, that He is ever wont to give us not only what the world calls blessings, and which appear so in their coming on, but such also as are known to be blessings in their going away, those sharp and severe trials which, in some shape or other, are calculated to find out our weak points. And if we be but faithful in making the most of them, they will, by God's blessing, and in His own good time, "perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle" us.

The sacred writers in the New Testament, at every distinct mention or thought of God, usually break forth into some full and definite act of thanksgiving, as from a heart ever abounding in devotion and love. And we may well indeed pause and respond to the same, taking up St. Peter's words, and saying, *To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

It is remarkable that the parable of the lost sheep is

<sup>4</sup> θεμελιώσαι.

<sup>5</sup> Dan. ix. 25.

twice given by our Blessed Saviour; once it occurs in St. Matthew's Gospel, where the object appears to be that of impressing the duties of lowliness and forgiveness of injuries on the disciples in their conduct with each other; <sup>6</sup> and on another occasion in the Gospel for to-day, from St. Luke, the same parable occurs as addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees, as representing to them the compassionate loving-kindness of God towards returning sinners. So intimately connected together is this our consolation from the goodness of Christ with the duties of humility towards each other; the mystery of God with the perfection of fallen man.

*Then drew near unto Him all the Publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* Proud, unregenerate man, he knows not God, and knows not himself to be a sinner? yet, surely if he knew his own sinfulness, he would know that God was merciful; for how else could he live, unless God had mercy on him? and if God were merciful to him, why should not the same God be merciful to others also? Nay, Christ's bearing with these Pharisees and Scribes was a greater proof of His mercy and long-suffering than was His receiving of humble publicans. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not."<sup>7</sup> "But Thou sparest all, for they are Thine, O Lord, Thou lover of souls."<sup>8</sup>

*And He spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it. As the*

<sup>6</sup> St. Matt. xviii. 4. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Lam. iii. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Wisd. xi. 26.

cry of her own helpless infant is distinguished by a mother amidst a hundred other sounds, as the plaintive call of a lost sheep is heard by the shepherd above the bleatings of the flock, so in the ears of God is the prayer of the distressed penitent. It is as the music most pleasing in the ears of Him Who came to save sinners, the sound nearest to His love; the voice of the cherished one which lies nearest to the heart of the Merciful. Partaking of this character has, doubtless, often been the prayer of the greatest among the saints, the more exalted of God, and enriched by His grace, as they humbled themselves and bewailed their ignorances of Him. Such was the lament of St. Peter when, as it is said, at the sound of the cock crowing he ever wept; such that of St. Paul when he ceased not to bewail himself as one that had been "a persecutor and injurious;" such the voice of Mary Magdalene when earliest and latest she watched at the grave of Him she had lost; such the feeling of the beloved disciple when "he fell at" his Lord's "feet as dead;" such the prayer of David when, in self-abasement at his fall, he searched his inward parts for the hidden wickedness which had been therein while he knew it not. This penitent cry, of all things upon earth, reaches the nearest to God's throne, has the readier access to the ear of the King of kings.

*And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.* He hath become as a servant from constraining love. He Himself bears the burden, and carries it with joy. *And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.* Greatness of joy contains not itself, but seeks for utterance and sympathy, and overflows.

*I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over*

*one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.* If the angels in Heaven join their prayers with those of the Great Intercessor, if they watch over such little ones, if they read love itself in the countenance of their Lord in Heaven, how must they needs rejoice at that which is peculiarly His joy, at the restoration of the lost one. For if, "as His majesty is, so is His mercy," they likewise that are nearest to Him upon the throne of His majesty must be nearest to Him in mercy also. And they among mankind must be highest in His favour, and nearest and dearest unto Him who have most love for penitent returning sinners; nay, they wash clean also their own robes in such charity. For it is in Him as their Saviour, their Advocate, their Comforter, that the joy of the Saints is upon earth, their life, their love; but they "which need no repentance" need no Saviour, no Advocate, no Comforter: and, therefore, of that which is peculiarly His, they partake not; they know not His joy in the recovery of the lost, nor His love for such.

But that the power of His love be not lost or circumscribed by being confined to one parable only, our Blessed Lord adds likewise another; another in further confirmation of the same, though it be but as it were one parable set forth in two similitudes, one language of love, the same mercy expressed: though, if anything, the latter adds to the description of helplessness in that which is lost, where there is no power of seeking nor of return: no feeling even of loss, nor cry of distress. For if a lost sheep may cry for help, yet the lost piece of money has not even that power, but is altogether the figure of one inanimate and dead, with no chance of restoration from that state, any more than Lazarus when he was in the

grave, unless it be by its own owner himself sought and found.

*Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?* Such a parable furnishes the pattern also for those who would be like their Divine Master, and in Him and for His sake would seek for His lost ones in the world; the lighting the candle, the seeking diligently, the sweeping the house, must be theirs also, if they would seek as they themselves have been sought for, and would partake of that love by which they have themselves been saved. They will become themselves eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, in bringing back those who have lost the will, or the power, or the opportunity, of self-recovery. Nor is it for a light object that they are in quest; the soul which in sin is lost, hath stamped upon it the image of their Lord, and that will render it inestimably valuable in their eyes. And if this be true, then surely they that "are at ease in Zion," they who, like Scribes and Pharisees of old, stand aloof, who, engaged in the business or amusements of the world, are in no way seeking for the lost ones of Christ's flock; they can know nothing of that love which is here described, that which peculiarly belongs to the Creator, the Saviour, the Comforter of all; nor can He Whose Name is Love have within them His abode. In this case, they that seek not cannot find, nor know the joy of that love which is the joy and love of Christ and His angels.

Both parables have not only one scope, but dwell on the ear the more impressively by a similar termination at the close. *And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. Like-*

*wise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* Now we read in the Gospels of many miracles of mercy which our Blessed Lord wrought when He “went about doing good, and healing all those that were oppressed of the devil;” and great must have been the comfort, the relief, and joy occasioned by them; as oftentimes when He healed the sick who were at the point of death, or given over to some almost incurable malady, such as leprosy; or restored again limbs that were lost, gave sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, and the like; or when He forgave sins, or raised the dead again to life; how much gladness of heart, I say, must those His works of mercy in every instance have occasioned! And yet, how very much more this single sentence! What a store of refreshment and comfort does it contain and convey year after year, and day after day, to the heart of some distressed penitent! To some one it may be oftentimes who has lived a charitable and holy life, yet at the prospect of death and eternity, or under an increasing sense of the holiness of God, is subject to seasons of oppression, and the sad distresses of a wounded spirit. “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” How does this sentence occur to him like “the oil of joy for mourning,” like the “wine that maketh glad the heart,” to revive his drooping hope? The holiest and best of men have, I say, often the greatest need of such consolation as this affords; nay, whatever of holiness or goodness the Spirit of God may have wrought in them, the more have they the need of it; for “the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity” dwelleth most largely in him who is “poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at” His “Word.”<sup>9</sup> In this

<sup>9</sup> Isa. lvii. 15; lxvi. 2.

sense of pardon arising in repentance, there is joy, humility, and love ; for it partakes most closely of union with Christ crucified. And if it be the case of those who have been by God's mercy kept comparatively pure from sin, how much more in those who, from the strength of passion, or overwhelming temptation, or the power of circumstances, or force of evil examples, have most deeply fallen, and known the lower depths and agonies, and would return to God. Are there not young men on whom the work of Satan, from boyish years, has left wounds covered over but not healed, and ever bleeding afresh at the recollection of school or boyish years? Are there not fallen women, miserable outcasts of society, against whom the door of the heart is closed ; falling and falling ever deeper into sin and woe ; yet among whom the living spark still is seen in the smoking flax, by good angels and the Lord of angels, and watched over,—oh ! how earnestly and anxiously by them,—though it be a matter of indifference to men !

Here, then, beloved Christians, is there in these parables the very life and living principle which characterizes the Gospel. It is not that they are spoken only with reference to the repentance of what the world esteems grievous sinners, but for us all. "All we like sheep have gone astray." "We have erred and strayed" from God's ways, as our Church teaches us to confess, "like lost sheep." Nay, at the very fountain-head of all our life and strength, at the Holy Communion itself, our Church would clothe us with a like spirit, as coming heavily laden, and "bewailing," and suffering under the "grievous remembrance" and "intolerable burden" of our sins.

These parables, then, teach us of what spirit we as Christians are bound to be. So far as we are of the



number of those righteous men that need no repentance, we are not among those whom Christ comes to save ; those whom He most loves ; those over whom, together with Him, the Angels rejoice. But so far as we have in us this temper of mind, fearful of offending, and clinging to Him Who hath brought us home to Himself, there is that within us which pleads for mercy, and is in the sight of God of great price.

And now let us again consider and take up with the fresh virtue and energy of this application, the instructive advice which the inspired Apostle has given us in the Epistle for this Sunday, that we be practising all humility among ourselves and before God, "casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us;" ever on our guard against the surprises of the great enemy of souls, "stedfast in the faith" amidst the "afflictions" that are to be "accomplished in us;" thus looking forward through the vale of tears to the glory which is beyond, as supported by the rod and staff of the good Shepherd. But now all these duties of self-humiliation, watchfulness, trust in God, and submission to His will in the trials He is pleased to lay upon us, these would be impossible, were not God such as He is revealed to us in the Gospels in relation to ourselves. For a sense of sin raises such a barrier between us and the most Holy God, that such loving confidence in Him would seem to be more and more far from us as we become more sensible of our own sinfulness, and of His holiness. And the exercises of repentance would render this distance only the more known and felt ; and the best of men would become the more miserable on account of his becoming more sensible how far he has fallen from the holiness of God. Nor would the doctrine of the Atonement, by itself only, and standing alone, be sufficient to

remove this effect, much as it might do towards it by the assurance it brings of God's infinite mercy.

It is the loving and pitying character of our Blessed Saviour Himself, by which He condescends to the most abject of sinners, and represents Himself in most wonderful compassion, as loving, beyond all the rest, him who has most need of His love. It is this that knits us to Him more and more, and will continue to do so, the more we humble and debase ourselves, and become more deeply conscious of our true condition. Pity and love will bring down the highest and greatest of all, and put him on an equality with the meanest and lowest. And thus the great doctrines of Revelation, and the history of our Lord's humiliations, from the throne of His glory to the Cross, do not stand alone; but even now, in the soul of man, wherever there is a poor and distressed penitent, He is acting over again the same part; and this is to each one of us perhaps the most endearing, the most affecting of all, when we know and feel, each one of us, that He is to us as we read of Him of old; nay, the doctrines of the faith which we receive, and the narrative of our Lord's life and death of which we read, become in this way full of living efficacy, because our own experience falls in with the same, and gives us a heart to understand. When among the many thousands that are hurrying and hurried on together to the Great Day of Decision, each in his own bitterness of heart and sad remorse comes to know, it is I, it is I, whom He hath come to seek, it is I who am the lost sheep; it is not I that have sought Him, but it is He all the while that hath been seeking for me; I am the lost one that He hath found.

And oh! if this be so, what humiliation of ourselves before Him, what humiliation of ourselves to each other

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for His sake, can be too great, as St. Peter on this day calls on us to practise. Loving humiliation, this is the highest crown to which such as we can attain. And what *sobriety* and *watchfulness* also for the future does it call for, while, in the words of the same Epistle, the *roaring lion walketh about seeking* for that stray sheep again which hath been once rescued from his devouring jaws ?

## SERMON LI.

### The Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Rom. viii. 18—23. St. Luke vi. 36—42.

*MERCY THE BEST PREPARATION FOR JUDGMENT.*

*What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*

*Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.—2 ST. PET. iii. 11, 12.*

THE Epistle for this Sunday, [in character with the Collect, consists of a passage exceedingly sublime and eloquent, wherein St. Paul, after his manner, compares the present state of suffering with the glory which is to be hereafter; the purport of which, in short, is this: what if as Christians we are called upon to suffer with Christ, we do but partake of the common lot of mankind, for “man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward;” all nature itself has likewise to labour under this heavy burden of sorrow. I deem it a matter of very little consequence; it is but for a moment; it will soon be all explained; all will have gone by; all will be utterly lost and swallowed up in the greatness of those eternal realities which are about to appear.

*I reckon, he says, that the sufferings of this present time*

are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. "Light and but for a moment," they are not to be set in the balance with the "eternal weight of glory,"—a glory which is even now hidden with God and existing, and only waits to be "revealed."

*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.* The inspired Apostle sees the whole of the creation, like one living being, in intense desire and earnest expectation, stretching forth the head and straining the eyes in awful waiting for something that is to appear. He beholds all things that are around us in one vast image or personification, and in one bold figure or expression he sums up all the appearances of this visible universe; day and night, seasons and years, trees and animals, skies and seas, clouds and rivers, and all the generations of men, the whole of created beings around us, and the human soul,—on all these alike there hangs one awful suspense, looking for the manifestation of God's children. *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope.* For this mysterious subjection to vanity under which the creation labours is evidently one of constraint, from not having its own object in which it can rest; not fulfilling its appropriate end; not finding its true and final good. But God has been pleased to subject it to the same for wise reasons in hope of release, and stamped upon it the expectation of that deliverance which it shall share. *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* For vanity and death, which hath passed upon all the visible creation, "the covering" and "the vail that is spread over all nations"<sup>1</sup> on account of

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxv. 7.

the fall, shall be done away, this temporal scene "as a vesture shall be changed;" and "a new Heaven and a new earth" shall share in that freedom from sin and death.

St. Augustin, indeed, says, "The creature, subject to vanity, spiritual, animal, and corporal, is in man; nay, is man himself. Willingly he sinned, and became an enemy to truth; and deservedly, for his punishment hath been made 'not willingly subject to vanity.'"<sup>2</sup> But in sympathy with man, the Apostle seems here to behold all nature around him in one view.

*For we know*: our own daily experience and knowledge of the world will tell us; for look abroad, and where is there not pain and death, with all their accompaniments, in earth, air, and water? *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together*; is as in travail or birth-pangs, as a woman doomed to bring forth in sorrow; but in the original there is a peculiar force in this word *together*—one lot of sorrow and of pain; this one common bond of sympathy holds all creation and all mankind; the expression is, they "groan together, and together are in pain." And great as are the things that are spoken of the state of the regenerate, yet while they bear about with them this body, they are not free from this common lot of humanity; nor can the peace passing all understanding which Christ bestows, nor the liberty of the Spirit and glad privileges of the adoption, afford them immunity from these pains of body and mind, which are but the yearnings of our fallen nature and longings for release. *And not only they*; nor is this all; *but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the re-*

<sup>2</sup> Enar. in Ps. cxviii. Serm. xii.

*demption of our body.* In other words, waiting for the sonship ; but you will say, Are we not sons already, having “received the adoption ?” Yes, doubtless, in some sense we are, but not altogether, for from this state of sonship we may fall away ; and where there is no security or full assurance of safety, there can be no full immunity from fear and pain ; but that perfect sonship, that last regeneration for which we wait, is when the body also shall be rescued “in full redemption” from this its state of corruption and death. “We look for the Saviour, Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body.”<sup>3</sup> For “now are we,” says St. John, “the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.” This is that manifestation of the sons of God, for which all creation waits. “But our lot at present is,” as St. Chrysostom says, “that of uncertainty to our last breath.”<sup>4</sup>

Now this subject of the Epistle and Collect is a very impressive one ; there is none that comes home more strongly to the hearts of us all ; it is so bound up and interwoven with all our natural feelings and affections ; and however men may labour to forget it for a while in the absorbing pursuits and engagements of life, yet they know that there is a great body of truth lying under all this busy scene ; the shortness of this our mortal condition, the vanity which is over its glories and its pleasures, and the ceaseless anxiety and sorrow which is mixed up with this state of being. But more than all is the deep abiding sense which we cannot but have of its transitory nature. Men are wont to speak of it, to acknowledge it with a sigh,

<sup>3</sup> Phil. iii. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Hom. xiv. In Rom. ad loc.

and make wise reflections concerning it; and they that speak of it are, as it were, already gone by as soon as such reflections are out of their mouths; while they are yet speaking their book of life is closed, and they too themselves are gone by together with those of whom they spoke. There is perhaps no one who does not more or less feel this. Moreover, on some occasions, as on the death of friends or neighbours, or in sickness, or solitude, weak spirits, or disappointment, or some earnest and moving account of it, as this of St. Paul to-day, the consideration of these things will in a very powerful manner impress them. And this is not only very good and right, but indeed in every respect so desirable, that we ought to do the most to improve such occasions, to deepen and strengthen such feelings; and so far from any attempt to escape from them, it were well that we should labour habitually and constantly to recall and stir them up,—I mean the touching, moving sense of our frail and short life; for it is always well to face the truth, never to put it aside or shrink from it. But there is always on these occasions a danger lest we should be too soon satisfied with such feelings, of their not producing any permanent effect on our life and conduct, that they should come and go like beautiful and bright gleams from Heaven on a barren rock, producing in us no real change; for, in fact, these reflections are expressed by none in a manner more affecting and sublime than they have been by men leading bad lives, without any endeavours at improvement. We should therefore be very careful not to let such emotions pass away without profit; we should, indeed, cherish, recall, and keep them, but only in order to render the heart and conduct better.

It is on such occasions that practical exhortations and rules of life become to us more than ever seasonable and



valuable, to settle and fix such thoughts ; when with more earnestness than usual the soul seems to ask, "What shall I do to be saved?" and there is one at hand ready to answer, "This do and thou shalt live."

With a mind therefore thus softened, and prepared, and laid open to receive the good seed, let us come to the Gospel for this Sunday, and with solemn thoughts of eternity and the Day of Judgment on our hearts, attend to our Blessed Lord's own precepts of duty.

*Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* Since the whole creation "groaneth and travaileth in pain together," what can be more suitable for us than mercy to each other? Moreover, on this account, from the state of suffering which surrounds us, God Himself is mostly known to us for His mercy. He "showeth His Almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity." And not only this ; but in this respect He has called upon us to imitate Himself. Were we in a state of innocence, as we were originally created, we might have been called upon to imitate Him in His holiness and purity, His justice, or some other attribute ; but as fallen creatures needing mercy, it is mercy to others that He most requires of us. The very term *compassion* implies this, that of "suffering together" with others. And how often is it spoken of our Lord Himself, that "He had compassion," His being "full of compassion," "He had compassion on His people," "His compassions fail not." And "bowels of compassion" are the words that express this merciful temper which He requires of us. It is this which He puts forth especially with reference to the Great Day. It is then that "the merciful shall obtain mercy." In this then we may see one great need and benefit of the manifold sufferings of this present time with which we are surrounded, that they

are calculated especially to call forth and exercise our sympathies and fellow-feeling with the distresses of each other, and so serve as the best preparation we can have to fit us to meet the terrors of the awful Day. If it be asked, "what manner of persons ought we to be, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God?" there could be no more appropriate answer given than this, "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

In furtherance of the same, it is added: *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.* Now if we are impressed with the speedy coming on of the Day of Judgment, not knowing what then will be our portion, and the shortness of the intervening time, how exceedingly gracious is this declaration, whereby God is pleased to put into our own hands as it were the sentence which is to be passed upon us. And indeed there is a peculiar fitness it should be so, for the more earnestly we seek, by repentance and prayer, to avert God's judgment from ourselves on account of our past sins, the more we tremble and pray lest we be condemned, the more we seek of God forgiveness for the past, by so much the more do we become disposed not to condemn, not to judge, but to forgive others. And this of which I speak is but the Spirit of God within us, answering our sighs and prayers, and our desires to avert judgment with this very same declaration which our Lord Himself makes: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." It is the good Spirit putting it into our better thoughts on such occasions, and whispering to us with His own still small voice, after the tempest of some worldly calamity, or the earthquake which hath shaken our earthly sense of stability, or the fire of God which hath entered the bones: it is His gracious voice

at length being heard, and saying, "Art thou afraid?" Well, "judge not, and thou shalt not be judged: condemn not, and thou shalt not be condemned: forgive, and thou shalt be forgiven." He inclines the heart, I mean, on such occasions, to these duties, and then all-important is it that we act up to these His suggestions.

Then follows a duty akin to the former, and like a fuller drawing out of the same into definite acts of the like mercy, under the apprehension of approaching judgment: as Daniel the prophet says to Nebuchadnezzar, when he saw the time of retribution just approaching, "wherefore break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity"<sup>5</sup>—*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.* Here are two things; first giving away or bestowing of alms; and secondly in our dealings with men in all matters of business being liberal and bountiful throughout in all the circumstances of it; "good measure;" and again, "pressed down and shaken together;" and yet further, "running over." Now God does not expect us to give, without expecting anything again in return, for this is peculiar to His own goodness; He alone thus gives, expecting nothing again, for He can receive no recompense from us; but what God requires from us is next to this, it is to look for no return or reward from man, but from Himself only. For He promises to treasure up, and remember, and to repay us for all that we thus do, looking to Him only for recompense, when He shall

<sup>5</sup> Dan. iv. 27.

measure out to us His own free gift of eternal life. "They cannot recompense thee," He says, of mercy to the poor, but "thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." And of the slightest act of this kind, "Verily, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Nay, He will measure out to us even the same already, by bestowing upon us, in spiritual gifts and holy thoughts, all that we do for His poor. Thus in a high, indeed, and spiritual manner, "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."<sup>6</sup>

But now there is advice quite the contrary to all this, suggested to us by what is called worldly wisdom; and it has indeed a thousand tongues, and speaks much louder than the Spirit of God and the meek Saviour of the world; and, alas, our own evil hearts are on all occasions much more ready to listen to it. Such are those numerous appeals to look to our own self-interest, to provide for our families and our own future wants, and it may be to other and greater opportunities of doing good, the excuses that often minister to selfishness and a hard heart. Here is assuredly another guide, another master that presents himself to us, and invites our adhesion, with advice altogether different and contrary. Nay, sometimes even in the Church itself, and from worldly-minded pastors themselves, we shall receive no better guidance than this; such as savours rather of earthly than of heavenly wisdom. To all such, therefore, we may apply our Lord's next words:—

*And He spake a parable unto them,* He left with them a dark saying or similitude, suggesting to them rather than openly declaring this deceivableness and danger of such

<sup>6</sup> Prov. xi. 25.

misguidance which surrounded them. *Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?* Shall the darkness of this world become the guide to the children of light? look before you to that "ditch," which lies so near, that gulf, that corruption, to which it hastens, and in which with all its followers it will soon be involved. It will indeed pretend to teach you of an easier, a more convenient path, whereby you may combine the good of this world with that of the next. But what! if this were the case, would not your Blessed Saviour have told you? would He have chosen the harder and more difficult path, and bidden us follow Him in that, if another were equally safe to us, or in any way more desirable? If this were the case, would He have confined us to that, the path of lowliness and self-denial, as the one and only path to salvation.

*The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.* Far above all particular commands or precepts is contained in this, "Shall be as his Master." What encouragement, what faith, hope, and love above all things centre in this! O that we might indeed consider it, and we should all of us be far other than what we are! "Shall be as his Master;" to be like, to be drawn near to, by very likeness and love; to approach Him, to have burned out of us by affliction this love of self; to have laid aside resemblances and adhesions to the world; as we get nearer unto death to become more united unto life. This is to be as He is. "Every one that is *perfect*," says our Blessed Lord, "shall be as his Master." In like manner, St. John, "Herein is our love made *perfect*, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because, *as He is*, so are we in this world." Here again is the answer, if it be

asked, "what manner of persons ought we to be, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God?" to be in this world as He Himself was.

In the meanwhile, what do we? each reforming his neighbour, and no one himself; seeing the exceeding beauty and wisdom of these precepts, and therefore applying them to the characters and conduct of others, rather than conforming our own to the same. There is a twofold blessing, or a double promise of blessing; one is that of our Lord, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged;" the other spoken by His Apostle, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." Whereas our tendency is to lose both of these, by judging others, and not ourselves.

*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou art too quick in beholding the slightest blemish and infirmity in another; the light falls, and thou seest the motes as in the sunbeam in a dark room; but there lies all the while in thine own heart such sin as brings over thy soul a cloud of darkness, which thou art able to endure without notice or concern. Nay more, not only in harsh judging of others is this seen, but in thy desire to reform them without beginning first with thine own heart, which hath such need of reformation.*

*Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. How shall any one of us improve or convert to God his friends, or his children, or his household, or his parish, or his school, or the world at large?*

He can do them no good unless he first begins with his own heart. Alas, it is but self-deceiving hypocrisy to attempt to do otherwise! And yet one half of the world are taken up with schemes for reforming the other, as if the judgment would be passed on others, not on oneself.

But to return:—self-condemnation and a severe judgment of ourselves do in a wonderful manner dispose us to be merciful and lenient to others. We are perhaps thus led in our affliction and self-reproach to drink of Christ's cup of mercy, every drop of which, being that of Divine love, fills us with something of the same. Hence it is that men find it so much easier to be merciful, to forgive injuries and the like on their death-beds, and with a near prospect of eternity, than they had done before; because at that time they judge themselves more earnestly, and feel so much more sensible of their own need of forgiveness.

And now, to draw all these reflections to one point, if works of mercy are the best preparation we can make for the Day of Judgment, as of all evils sin is the worst, what work of mercy can be greater than to amend and sanctify ourselves, in order that we may amend and sanctify others?<sup>7</sup> Thus may we strengthen the hope that they, together with ourselves, may be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

<sup>7</sup> St. John xvii. 19.

## SERMON LII.

### The Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

I St. Pet. iii. 8—15. St. Luke v. 1—11.

#### THE PEACEABLE ORDERING OF THE WORLD.

*That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.—I TIM. ii. 2.*

THE Epistle for this Sunday has not always been found with this same Collect and Gospel, and therefore perhaps we are not to look to it as carrying out the same lesson which they may be intended to convey; and yet it will be found to describe very fully in our daily conduct that “joyful serving” of Christ “in all godly quietness” of which the Collect speaks, and which the Gospel may be considered to represent. St. Peter is therein inculcating on Christians how they are to commit the keeping of their souls to Christ in well-doing amidst the fiery trial of troubles and persecutions from without. There is no passage which enforces more strongly what ought to be the feeling of Christians amidst the fever and disturbance of this world’s politics, as being throughout strangers upon earth and citizens of a better country.

*Be ye all of one mind; not like men of this world,*



with many clashing interests that divide them, but all of one mind, "the mind which was in Christ Jesus" being in you all alike; *having compassion one of another*, or rather, full of sympathies or fellow-feeling one with another, having like affections, so that if one member suffer, all the members suffer together with it. As St. Paul says, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." *Love as brethren*; be as those united in the one great bond of Christian brotherhood; *be pitiful*, having tender feelings of mercy, soon moved to pity; *be courteous*, of a disposition friendly and kind, in honour preferring one another with meekness. *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called*; that your very calling as Christians is thus to suffer evil in order that ye may requite it with good, after the example of Christ; and so *that ye should inherit a blessing*. So shall ye come even to that blessing of all blessings when Christ shall say at last, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you;" and in anticipation of which He Himself has said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you . . . rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven;" *i. e.* "blessed are ye," and "great shall be your reward," when ye can thus requite such ill-treatment with blessing. This is "joyfully serving in all godly quietness" under persecutions from without. It is to this ye are called,—this great inheritance of blessing. "For even hereunto were ye called," said St. Peter before, "because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps . . . Who when He was reviled, reviled not again."

To this St. Peter adds a passage from the thirty-fourth

Psalm, in the three following verses ; and in this we may observe how the very words of the Psalm seem to kindle and brighten with a sort of Divine fire, when the Apostle makes use of them, from the example and the Spirit of Christ with which they are full, far beyond what the Psalmist knew of when he spake them. *For he that will love life and see good days ; he that longeth after that life which is to be found with Christ in God ; whose heart is set on the many days of eternity ; to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living ; to behold in the beatific vision Him Who alone is good. Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile ! even after the example of Him " Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." Let him eschew evil, he says from the Psalmist, and do good ; let him seek peace and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

It is the earnest and daily fulfilment of these things which keeps with us the good Spirit of God, so that His ears are open unto our prayers, nay, more, that He gives us a heart to pray ; that the eyes of Jesus Christ are upon us, filling our souls with the light of His countenance, and that peace which passeth all understanding. And what more awful and terrible can be declared of those who neglect these things than this, that " the face of the Lord is against " them ?

*And who is he that will harm you, adds St. Peter, if ye be followers of that which is good ? And why this fear of evil men ? why all this struggling against them with so much unloving suspicion of men and distrust of God ? for who has any power to harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good ? or, as it might be explained, if ye*

imitate and try to walk in the steps of Him Who was Good.

But then an answer to this will immediately arise in the heart, Are we not told that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution? is it not following the example of Christ, which will bring upon us, we are assured from His own words and from all experience, the hatred and enmity of the world, as it did on Christ Himself? What security, therefore, is this of which the Apostle speaks in following what is good? To which St. Peter seems to say, Of course I allow that, I take all that for granted; but what then? I said, "Who is he that will harm you?" can such enemies harm you? can they touch a hair of your head while you are in God's favour and keeping? far from it. As for suffering persecution for righteousness, I look not on that as harm, but, on the contrary, as the very crown of joy and well-doing; if this is the worst ye can expect, then great indeed is your happiness. *But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.* Let all your care be to keep your heart in the love and the fear of God, and then you need not be apprehensive of those things which are without.

And now to proceed to the Gospel for this Sunday. It appears to have some connexion with the Collect; for we pray in the Collect that "the course of the world may be peaceably ordered by God's governance," and that "His Church may joyfully serve" Him "in godly quietness." And by the miraculous draught of fishes in the Gospel, Christ sets before us in a lively manner how all the governing of the world is in God's hand, to give or to

withhold, as He thinks best; and then, when He has shown this, our Lord calls on the Apostles to give up all and to cleave to Him. And what is this but to exhort His Church joyfully to serve Him in all godly quietness, under the full assurance that the course of this world is in His hand, and that He will Himself so order it as may most conduce to the good of those who seek first His kingdom and righteousness?

And indeed the Gospel itself presents us with a beautiful emblem or picture of this state for which we pray in the Collect; it is like a peaceful representation of serving God in joyful quietness. There is our Blessed Lord Himself in the boat, teaching the people who are gathered together in great multitudes on the shore; the boat is on the waters, which are now very calm and still; there is not a breeze to disturb the sound of His gracious words as they fall on the attentive and listening ears. The boat in which our Lord sits is, like His Church, in a state of peace and quietness: in like manner as the same boat, in the midst of the storm, and almost overwhelmed with the waves and the winds, represents His Church amidst the troubles of the world, when He Himself seems as it were asleep within her, or walking without in the midst of the storm.

*It came to pass, that as the people pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God, He stood by the lake of Genesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. These fishermen had indeed already been with Him as His disciples, but they had not yet learned that they were to give up all things to follow Him; they were still pursuing these their means of livelihood. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him*

that he would thrust out a little from the land: and He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. We well know what the nature of His teaching was, leading them by gracious words to trust in Him Who was the mighty power of God to save, and to think of nothing but of God and Heaven. But even His own disciples, at this time, found it a hard matter thus to serve God joyfully in quietness, for they were full of care, we may well suppose, about their own livelihood; they were mending their worn nets in sorrow of heart, with divided attention listening to His words, for they had toiled all night in vain. But their Divine Master saw and knew their trials, and was intending thereby to draw them more near unto Himself. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, *Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.* As if he had said, it is hopeless, humanly speaking, and all in vain; but Thee I will obey. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. Then, at so wonderful a sight, burst suddenly on St. Peter the knowledge that it was all miraculous. No thought of his own profit at such a supply, no sense of relief after having so long toiled in vain occurred to him, but all was lost in the feeling of God's presence and of his own sinfulness. So should it be with us when God opens His hand; it should humble us with the thoughts of what God is, and what we ourselves are. It should lead us to trust in Him to give us

all things needful for the body, while we yield up ourselves more entirely to His service; but, alas! it has usually with us the very opposite effect—we accept His gifts, and in His gifts forget the more the Giver of all good.

*When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.* And now our Blessed Lord had produced by this miracle the very effect which He had desired; He had thus led the disciples to trust Him entirely for their bodily support, and so to give themselves up to His service; Simon Peter had learned to abhor himself in repentance in the presence of the most Holy God. This was the beginning of Christ's Kingdom; in this his sense of weakness was the strength of God to be perfected.

*And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.* Thou shalt be as chief among those fishermen which, from this time until the end of the world, shall let down, and draw to the shore, that great net which is the Kingdom of Heaven, containing fish both good and bad, which the angels shall separate and part asunder.

*And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.*

Now what is the great lesson which this Gospel is to teach us, especially as taken with the Collect, which is the key to that lesson? We are not all called upon to be Apostles; we are not required to give up our means of worldly maintenance, as these disciples were, nor to expect

that we are to be miraculously sustained in attendance upon Christ. And yet the Gospel for the day speaks to us all ; and if we come to the very words which the termination leaves upon our ears, we shall find that it is a matter of universal obligation : “ They forsook all, and followed Him ;” for our Lord, we know, says to all alike, “ Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.”

What more beautiful and interesting lesson could there be to allure them on to serve God joyfully in all godly quietness? first of all, by want and by labouring all night in disappointment and despair ; and now, by great abundance, beyond all that they could ask or think, He induced them to trust in Him in Whom there is all fulness for every want, to look to Him, to cleave to Him in such a sense of His Divine Presence as to forget all things else. For what were all the fish they had taken, what were their nets and their boats to them when they had now found the Christ ; nay, more, when in Christ they had found God ? St. Peter does not give thanks for his wants being thus supplied, for he has forgotten them altogether ; he is conscious of nothing but of that gracious Presence which, by its very mercy and goodness, had brought his sins to remembrance. It is on account of that very goodness itself that he begs Christ to depart, as if saying, “ Such knowledge ” of Thee and of Thy mercy “ is too wonderful and excellent for me ; I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit : or whither shall I go then from Thy Presence ?” Nor again does it occur to these disciples to think, we have now enough for to-day, and to-morrow, and the next day, and will therefore be able without distraction to wait on Thee for the present, and hear Thy words ; but it is the entire surrender of themselves,

without any thought or care, to the one thing which alone is needful.

This is the important warning of this Sunday: the necessity of withdrawing all our affections, interest, and anxieties from the things of time, and fixing them without reserve upon Christ in God, that we may serve Him with joy. Let us apply this to the outward course of this world, in public matters. Many are anxious that these should "be so peaceably ordered," that the Church may serve God in quietness; but then they seem to think that this is to be effected by their own governance, and not by the governance of God; for otherwise how could they be so full of manifold anxieties, so absorbed in the success of their own wishes and management? and from hence what a world of bitter thoughts and jealousies, low and mean joys, and still meaner fears? From the state of their hearts on this subject, one might think that God had given up unto them the government of His own world. St. Paul commands that we pray "for kings, and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." Observe what are the means for this end. It is prayer only; it is to God only that we are to look in this, as in all other matters. For it is by looking to God in such matters, that not only will the objects we desire be brought about, but also our own souls healed with respect to them. It is the only cure for our own anxious desires and private ends.

Such is the lesson which the Collect appears so seasonably to bring before us at this time with regard to the course of public affairs. But it applies no less forcibly to our own personal interests; for as we pray to God that He will so govern this world that His Church may joyfully serve Him in quietness, so also must we leave it entirely to Him alone,



that the course of outward events may be so ordered that the soul may serve Him without distraction. To serve Him with joy is quite impossible, unless it be with an undivided heart; to serve Him in godly quietness can never be, if we are disquieted and "troubled about many things;" and disquieted we certainly must be, so far as we are not deeply in our hearts convinced that the course of this world, with regard to ourselves, must be ordered by His governance, and not by our own. O blessed and peaceful knowledge, which His Spirit alone can give! hidden anchor of the soul which, amidst the storms of this world, binds it to the eternal shore!

And now to return once more to the Epistle. What can be more seasonable and valuable than that concluding exhortation of St. Peter, Who can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? and if, for righteousness' sake, ye suffer persecution, happy are ye. And be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. Sanctify God in your hearts, and all will be well. Fear Him, and ye need fear nothing else. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," and all will work together for your good, your great and final happiness.

We must, then, take care not to make that false estimate of suffering which the world is wont to do. For we may observe, with regard to trials and persecutions, that it is by means of them that God works the greatest good in the world. If Jacob had not been driven from home by his brother's enmity, he would not as an exile have wrestled with God and prevailed, and seen visions of angels. Take away the afflictions of Joseph, and lost would be all that deliverance which God wrought by his means. Had not Pharaoh dealt so cruelly with the people of God, they would have been content to stay in Egypt; we should have known

nothing of Moses, of Mount Sinai, of the bread from Heaven. Had not David been persecuted by Saul, the sweet Psalmist of Israel would not have shown that blessed temper of unwearied forgiveness, nor known of those consolations, and of that Tower of strength, on which he ever delights to dwell. It was the bonds and imprisonment of St. Paul, and the hate of the Jews against him, which sent him to Rome to make known Christ crucified in the capital of the world, and the palace of the Roman emperor. In a word, it was the persecution and enmity of the Jews which occasioned the death of Christ, and the redemption of the world. And thus it is ever the case that, by the malice and cruelty of the wicked, God in wonderful ways works the greatest good ; and therefore well may St. Peter say, " Who is he that will harm you ? " " Be not afraid of their terror." Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and all will be well, infinitely well. If God be for us, who can be against us ? " When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble ? " <sup>1</sup>

Why then, it may be asked, do we pray that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered, that His Church may joyfully serve God in quietness ; if this joyfulness in God may be in the midst of persecution, and He may be served in quietness amidst the storms of the world ? The fact is, that this distraction of heart, which hinders us from the true service of God, does not so much arise from troubles and enemies that are without, as from the fear of them ; and it is by prayer to God that we get rid of such fears.

We pray for peace, and we seek for peace ; we would " live peaceably with all men," and would at all times be

<sup>1</sup> Job xxxiv. 29.

“peacemakers,” as followers of Him Who was the Prince of Peace ; and it is thus that He sheds in our hearts His own peace.

The saints of God in the Book of the Revelation, who in the last days are to overcome all the armies of evil men and evil spirits with which they will have to contend, are described as being without arms, without sword, or spear, or shield, following the Captain of their Salvation, “in linen white and clean,”<sup>2</sup> which is said to be “the righteousness of saints ;” and that righteousness is described to consist in meek forbearance and patience. “They have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb ;” it is Him they follow, the Lamb of God, the patient Victim of all endurance ; it is by His arms that they conquer ; all their strength consists in this, that as He was, so are they in this world.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xix. 14.

## SERMON LIII.

### The Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

Rom. vi. 3—11. St. Matt. v. 20—26.

#### *BROTHERLY LOVE AND THE LIFE IN CHRIST.*

*Now if we be dead with CHRIST, we believe that we shall also live with Him.—ROM. vi. 8.*

THE beautiful Collect for this week consists of a devout aspiration for those joys which are with God, and a prayer for that love which alone can prepare the heart for that rest. As a flame rises upwards, so the love of God in the soul naturally aspires to those joys and that rest which is with Him. But as a tree cannot live and grow, cannot bear flowers and fruit, and expand itself towards Heaven, unless it be first rooted and buried in the ground, so neither can the love of God in the soul, unless that which is earthly be dead and buried with Christ in His death. It is therefore at Baptism that this love is by the Holy Spirit planted within us; it is then that we are buried with Christ, in order that we may live with Him that life which is in God, in holy affections now, and in fulness of joy hereafter. Such, therefore, is the subject of the Epistle. But as this love of God within the heart

can only be known by its fruits, and as these its fruits upon earth consist in the love of our brother, therefore this becomes very properly the lesson of this day's Gospel. For the joys of Heaven and the love of God are things high and spiritual; and when our Lord speaks of them, He turns our attention to those practical duties of love, without which we may deceive ourselves.

But Baptism first is at the root of all, on which St. Paul thus speaks. *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?* The Christian dwells in continual contemplation on the cross and death of Christ; it is there his heart and affections are fixed; it is there he finds a remedy against sin and strength against temptation. And as we naturally become like that on which we contemplate, it is to him an expressible satisfaction to reflect, that by his very Baptism and new birth he is himself there dead with Christ and buried, in order that he might find in Him a better life; that the very strength and life of his Baptism consists in his being thus made conformable unto Christ's death. "Out of the strong comes forth sweetness,"<sup>1</sup> out of death life; and to resign earthly hopes, pleasures, and advantages, does require that the heart hath found something better, the treasure of new affections, which it values more. And so it is set forth in what follows.

*Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection; that is, shall hereafter put on a new*

<sup>1</sup> Judg. xiv. 14.

body ; in the mean while having, says St. Paul, a life of a hidden nature with Christ in God, which life shall appear when He appears.<sup>2</sup> Even as the life of a tree lies for a while concealed in the seed which seems to die away in the earth ; but wait a little while, and in all its fulness it shall appear, spreading in the summer skies. And all these expressions, on which St. Paul delights to dwell, intimate the very strictest union and incorporation of ourselves with Christ in His death, by which we derive continually and draw life.

*Knowing this, he proceeds, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.* The natural man, the old Adam, is to be dead in the Christian with its sinful desires ; dead in that it is continually being mortified, because it is incompatible with that life which is in the new man. For so far only as we are dead to sin are we free from its dominion now or its penalty hereafter. It sounds, indeed, in itself a hard saying ; so much so, that it must fall on the heart utterly cold and profitless, and all in vain, to say that we are to be thus dead to ourselves and alive to God, were the doctrine to stand alone ; it is from its connexion with Christ that it derives all its power and living efficacy. And we may observe that St. Paul never states anything of the kind except with reference to Christ ; every expression of it begins and ends with Christ ; it is in Him, from Him, with Him, by Him ; this the Apostle always keeps in mind. Christ's example, His sacrifice, His mediation, His grace, His life and death, the memory of Him, the being part of His Body, the living and dying with Him,

<sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 3, 4.

is so united with this doctrine, that both must be remembered or forgotten together. And so he proceeds :

*Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over Him. Dead we are with Him in Baptism, by His power and grace, and dead we must also be in the habits of our new life, in order that such Divine life may be continued in Him ; and all this from the most intimate reference to Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once ; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin ; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ "died unto sin once," as St. Paul says to the Hebrews ; "now once at the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."<sup>3</sup> There is, therefore, but one Baptism, one death unto sin for us ; for the life which Christ now lives is unchangeable and eternal, which is implied in the expression, "He liveth unto God." There is no living in sin in order that we may again die to sin ; but it is once for all ; no second state of probation, no new sacrifice or other oblation : once for all He died, that once for all we may die to sin.*

You see how very intimate and close is this union, which, as baptized Christians, we have with Christ ; it is like the living body of Elijah, stretched three times upon the dead child of the heathen woman. For thus in the threefold immersion of Baptism Christ imparts to us of His own life, that our life henceforth in the flesh may be His life, one with Christ, as Christ is one with God.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. ix. 26.

The point, I say, particularly to be observed throughout this and similar passages, is the constant mention of Christ ; it seems to imply that this new life required of us can in no way be sustained, except in union with Him, any more than a branch could live if cut off from the tree, or a limb from the body. This frequent mention of Him in the inculcating of Christian precept and doctrine implies in our lives also, and in the fulfilling of all Christian precept and doctrine, the frequent recurrence to Him as the source of life. The means of this spiritual union with Christ is indeed love ; as in the Collect we pray, " Pour into our hearts such love towards Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises." Love is ever thinking of the object beloved ; delights in acting with a view to it, to be likened to it ; to cling to it ; to become more and more one with it. But this love, as being contrary to our corrupted nature, must be forcibly sustained by doing violence to ourselves, and by all outward means ; by frequent communion with Him in prayer and meditation, by giving of alms and active charities, and, more especially, by a frequent participation of His Body and Blood.

The consideration of the Epistle and Gospel together is often of great advantage, and furnishes a subject of much interest, from the connexion of doctrine with practical precepts, which are thus brought to illustrate and bear upon each other. Thus it is to-day. Our Lord Himself in the Gospel assures us that no other righteousness but that which is thus founded and based in Him, thus spiritual and filled with Divine love, will be of any avail to us. *Jesus said unto His disciples*, in the Sermon on the Mount, when He was teaching them the laws and



the nature of His Kingdom, *Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* As for that "righteousness" which consists in the mere literal fulfilment of the law, it is not this which I require of you My disciples. The mere acknowledgment of only one God; keeping aloof from idol-worship; strictly observing the Sabbath-day; not committing murder or adultery, and the like,—such a fulfilment of the Ten Commandments as this implies falls far short of that spiritual law of love, by which the sinner is united with his Saviour, the soul holds intercourse with its Creator, the spirit of man with the Comforter. The external keeping of the Law which the Scribes and Pharisees teach is necessary; but your righteousness must be deeper and higher than this, if you would be "dead unto sin" in the grave of Christ, and be through Him "alive unto God;" a righteousness not fair without, while full of rottenness and dead men's bones within, like the whited sepulchre, but having therein the living Christ, Who requireth truth in the inward parts. For the old law, with "the blood of bulls and of goats," may confer an outward "sanctification to the purifying of the flesh;" but the Blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, must enter within and "purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God."<sup>4</sup> The new law of love hath in itself swallowed up the old; the fire coming down from Heaven hath eaten up the wood and the stone, the altar and the sacrifice, and shown thereby its Divine nature.<sup>5</sup>

*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou*

<sup>4</sup> Heb. ix. 13, 14.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 36.

*shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.* As there are differences of happiness in Heaven according to the degrees of love which hath reigned in the heart below, so in condemnation also there will be gradations of punishment according to the want of that love which hath broken the brotherhood of God which Christ hath wrought; the causeless anger, the name of unkindness, the opprobrious charge, which mark the issues of the heart, shall then pass, each after its kind or degree, into indelible judgment.

*Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Leave it not undone, but first take care that the heart be right, for to the heart of the worshipper God looks. An altar implies a sacrifice, and a sacrifice implies sin and the need of expiation. And how can he express his need of forgiveness, or his sense of pardon, who hath aught done against himself which he hath not forgiven? And therefore Christ, the true Sacrifice on the altar of the cross, "which sanctifieth the gift" of the heart, estimates the value of the gift by the brotherly and Divine love which is lodged therein. He Himself, in becoming the Sacrifice for us, hath given us the example and the true character of that love, which, as a holy fire from above, is to kindle the gift and to hallow the sacrifice we ourselves would offer. Thus in the oblation of Himself for us He washed

the feet of the traitor Judas, and ate with him, and admitted him to the kiss of love, and called him, not Raca, but friend ; Who at the same time healed the ear of one who was about to seize and bind Him ; Who with His disciples that slept was not angry, nor lost patience, but said, as they might have urged for themselves, with tender charity excusing, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak ;" Who, when stretched upon the Cross, prayed for His murderers ; and when withdrawn from sight forgot them not, but sent down on that guilty city the unspeakable Gift, the Comforter, that He might speak peace unto them, and offer forgiveness. To His altar, therefore, nothing can be so desecrating, nothing so unwelcome, as want of love in the heart of him that approaches. But to be as He was, is to be "planted together in the likeness of His death ;" that the "old man" of self-interest and ill-will may be destroyed, and the new man may serve Him in the new life of love, that new love which is as Christ hath loved us.

Our Blessed Lord, knowing what is in man, and his temptation to evil, well knew the dangerous delusiveness of this self-deceit, which would come before God with unkindness to man at heart, yet with professions of loving God, which is indeed like betraying the Son of Man with a kiss. He knew also that there was another most fruitful source of final falling away : that of acknowledging this law of love and intending to fulfil it, but putting it off to a more convenient season, when enmity should have died away, or time smoothed down the difficulties of reconciliation. For nothing destroys men's souls more than relying on such intentions of good, while not putting them into practice. He therefore adds : *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way*

*with him : lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.* These last expressions allude apparently to the parable of the unforgiving servant, who had cast his fellow-servant into prison, after he had himself been forgiven of his lord.<sup>6</sup> The words derive light and strength from that parable. But the peculiar injunction, like so many of our Lord's warnings, has reference to the shortness of the time of our probation. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," says the Apostle, "neither give place to the devil."<sup>7</sup> And here the adversary gains his strength and power from the forgiveness being delayed. It is like sleeping with a deadly serpent coiled up within the bosom, not knowing at any time when he may inflict the mortal sting. Indeed, anger and malice are of the nature of deadly sins ; nor do we know how near they may be to murder in the heart, as they appear in the sight of God. St. John assures us, that "he that hateth his brother is a murderer."

And here may be added one word in illustration, from the Old Testament Lessons, which our Church has appointed for this Sunday. Where is there a more touching account of forgiveness and love than in David, the man after God's own heart? How often did he forgive Saul? how did he spare his life, do all that he could to alleviate, to pacify, to win him over to love? how did he lament over him when dead, and remember his family afterwards? how patient and forgiving unto Shimei that cursed him? And his love for Absalom, when in

<sup>6</sup> St. Matt. xviii. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Eph. iv. 26.

arms against him and seeking his life, seems recorded as an image of our Blessed Saviour's love for His murderers. Why else is there twice mentioned his exceedingly affecting cry, "O Absalom, my son, my son!" In that we hear our Saviour's own voice; it is like that of God's own love: "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him."<sup>8</sup> Yet even David, such as he was, so loving, so forgiving, harboured an evil thought till he was guilty of murder. Who then has not reason to fear, lest he should tempt God?

But we have a better strength, and far more light than David had. Anger and hate are always in the heart closely connected with some other evil passion; lust and hate are inseparable companions; and so are malice and covetousness; they were woven into one and the same cord in the heart of Judas, by which Satan held him; so are pride and anger, they are never found apart. And therefore, blessed be God for His great deliverance! all these passions are in us to be mortified and buried with Christ; and if lust, and covetousness, and pride, be away, anger will have nothing to feed on, and will of itself be extinguished.

"Take My yoke upon you," is our Blessed Lord's own invitation, "and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Shall find "rest;" shall find the true Sabbath, the Sabbath of rest in Christ, rest in His grave, from our evil passions being buried there. "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?"

<sup>8</sup> Jer. xxxi. 20.

Therefore we are buried with Him in Baptism unto death." And then if we be dead with Christ, to live with Him will be easy, for He will raise us up by the same Spirit, and we shall live with Him ; live with Him even now, and not know the death of the grave to be death at all.

What we have to do then is, to be conformable to Him, to learn of Him His love, to learn to love Him, in order that by so doing we may learn to love others with something of that love with which He does. The love of Christ—let this then be your one great business in life, nay, your one and only business ; let every day be considered by you as a lost day which has not done something to further this one end. As a man, who has great and important business to attend to at a distance, must travel whether it be rain or sunshine ; whether he meets with convenient modes of being conveyed forward, or those of labour and difficulty on foot ; whether he has to pursue his journey in company or alone ; so with this one end in view, let your days be, in the sunshine of life, or under its clouds, under all varieties of circumstance let this one end be advanced, be always thought of and considered. If you meet with success, let it further in you the love of Christ by some sacrifice ; if you have trouble, by strong definite acts of resignation ; let all things have a reference to His Cross and Passion ; if you are with a friend who sympathizes with you, be as the two going to Emmaus, let Him make one with you and constrain Him ; if you have an enemy, this is an opportunity not to be delayed or foregone ; if in public prayer, then take care that it be an act of union with Christ, spiritual worship to the Eye of Him that seeth in secret ; if you have leisure and solitude, be sure not to lose the time,—He is then especially waiting to draw near to you. But above all, on every

opportunity of approaching His altar, make the most of it by thorough forgiveness of injuries "from the heart," by entire repentance, and love unfeigned; so may we, "loving Him above all things, obtain" His gracious "promises."

But remember, it is a work to be done, a gift to be gained by importunity.

## SERMON LIV.

### The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

Rom. vi. 19—23. St. Mark viii. 1—9.

#### THE BREAD WHICH GOD GIVETH.

*But seek ye first the Kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—ST. MATT. vi. 33.*

THE Collect and the Gospel being on this as on other Sundays during this season found together in ancient books, may be considered as both illustrating and enforcing each other; but it is not so with the Epistle, which is but a continuation of that for last Sunday, and seems to be carrying on the same subject. St. Paul had therein been speaking, in expressions very sublime and heavenly, of the new state into which we are brought by Baptism, being dead with Christ, and having from henceforth in Him a Divine life. To-day he proceeds in a lower strain to urge the same upon these Roman converts, appealing to their human reason on the great advantages of a religious life over that which is worldly and sinful.

*I speak, he says, after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh.* If ye are as yet unable to appreciate arguments drawn from the love of God, and from



faith in the highest mysteries of Christ, whereby the soul is hallowed by the great Spirit of truth, I will descend to set forth the same before you in a manner suited to your own natural experience. *For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.* Now there are two services which must be altogether distinct and separate; the one is the service of sin, which ye know was that of your heathen state formerly, which was under the dominion of all natural desires,—lust, covetousness, pride, and the like,—and continued to increase that servitude by adding sin to sin; the law of righteousness having then no power over you. But now ye are called unto quite another service, wherein God demands of you all that undivided subjection which ye formerly paid to sin and Satan. And now only consider the vast difference which exists between the two.

*What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.* There is no argument which comes home to a worldly man more strongly than this,—your pleasures are soon over, and when gone, how are you the better for them? You have, to say the least, sown the wind, and have nothing; your hands are empty. They are for ever gone, and you are ashamed of them; the abiding effects which they have left with you are not honour or advantage of any kind, but shame. But I will not say they have no fruit; for the very feeling itself of shame which remains, continues to be a witness against you, indicating that your higher and better nature has been broken in upon. And what is the end which is naturally to follow?—the death of the

body and the death of the soul. Such pleasures are intimately allied with death, having their seat in corruption. Such was your unregenerate heathen condition.

*But now being made free from sin,*—delivered from the bondage of those things, the very recollection of which is accompanied with shame,—*and become servants to God ;* having entered upon another service, *ye have your fruit unto holiness ;* ye already perceive the fruits of it in spiritual sanctification and works that tend to holiness of life, which is its own most abundant reward ; *and the end everlasting life.* These fruits are joyous now to behold, even as a summer field, as they increase and advance towards perfection ; and they wait for a harvest and ingathering into the barn, which is everlasting life with God.

Weigh, then, as in a balance together, the difference between these two states, the result of these two services. *For the wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Death is the payment which Satan hath in store for those that serve him, such are “the wages” which sin earns for that service. But I cannot speak of “the wages” of holiness ; I will not say that by serving God eternal life is earned as its due recompense or reward ; for there is no sort of comparison between such service and the greatness of those promises which God hath made for those that serve Him ; that free “gift of God” which is everlasting life. Such is that crown of glory which hath been purchased for you by Christ, and is freely bestowed of God to those that love Him.

So great, therefore, being the contrast between these two services, all I ask is, that ye serve God now as ye once served sin. For if any one will take that pains in the service of God which men do in the service of the world, rising up early and late taking rest, feeding the thoughts

with its desires ; hoping, contriving, longing for the objects which it holds out to him, he may attain unto great holiness now and happiness hereafter. Only seek for the bread which God giveth as worldly men labour for the meat which perisheth, and you will find your hopes and aspirations so increased upon you, that God only will fill them.

Now the Gospel for this Sunday is remarkable in this respect, that on two other Sundays, the fourth Sunday in Lent and the last of the Sundays after Trinity, the same subject occurs for the Gospel of the day,—that of our Lord's multiplying the loaves and the fishes. And indeed, when we consider that our Lord on two occasions wrought this same miracle, and has had each of them recorded for the edification of His people, it seems but agreeable to this, that His Church also should more than once thus solemnly call our attention to the instruction they are intended to convey. Moreover, our Lord, by twice performing this miracle, has thereby stamped it to us as one of peculiar interest and importance. Add to which, it appears in itself intended to set forth the marvellous operations of His providence and of His grace in two instances which He likewise often repeats ; the one is what we witness in nature, especially at this approaching season of the year, in the waving corn-field, when a few grains of wheat are, by the blessing of God and the secret working of His power, multiplied into very many. And the second is that frequently recurring miracle in His spiritual Kingdom, whereby His Church is sustained, the carrying on of that memorable occasion which the circumstances of this day's Gospel seem more especially intended to exhibit, when the same night in which He was betrayed He took the bread into His hands, and blessed and brake, and gave to His disciples.

So is it even unto this day in His Church. And both of these miracles, the one by which the body, the other that by which the soul is supported, have the promise of continuance. Of one it is said, "seed-time and harvest shall not cease;"<sup>1</sup> of the other, "as often as ye eat this bread, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."<sup>2</sup> It is the Lord's memorial, the pledge of His Presence, the food of His people until the end.

But on this occasion, without dwelling merely on that high mystery which our Lord has connected with it as its spiritual signification, whereby He supernaturally supports His people in the wilderness, for He has explained the true Bread to be His own Body, we may consider it in a more general way as a pledge and assurance to us, still continued and confirmed unto this time by the like going on in the kingdom of nature and of grace; that He will never fail to support us, if we look to Him, both in body and soul; and if with bodily support, oh, how much more with spiritual, of importance so infinitely greater! Yet both may be considered together; for the Lord is Maker of them both, both naturally come together on this subject; as in St. Paul's words, "He that ministereth seed to the sower minister bread for your food, multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness."<sup>3</sup>

*In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples unto Him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away fasting to their*

<sup>1</sup> Gen. viii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 26.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. ix. 10.

*own houses, they will faint by the way, for divers of them came from far.* How often do we read of our Lord's having *compassion*, or outwardly showing indications of it! It would seem as if He could not behold any form of distress without being moved with pity; whether it were the cry of a blind man, or the sight of a bereaved widow, or mourners like Mary and Martha at a grave, or people suffering from hunger,—He could not witness such things without being sensibly affected. This is much to be observed. Thus, in the present instance, He might in His wisdom have had great and Divine reasons for working this miracle, both for the confirmation of His mission and for the edification of future generations; there was no occasion, humanly speaking, that He should thus be brought down and be made one with suffering mankind by a sort of human pity; that the miracle should thus be as it were forced from Him as a relief to His affections thus worked upon and moved. The world almost accounts it a sort of weakness when a man does good out of sensible pity. Or again, many human teachers, when they had been instructing the multitudes on the infinite value of the soul in comparison with the body, of the importance of eternity, inculcating on them the truths of spiritual wisdom, of the things of God and Heaven, would have considered almost beneath their notice the mere wants of the body. Such earthly matters they would have left as the concern of others; if not beneath their notice, yet not such as to interfere with their high and spiritual calling. But far otherwise was it with Him Who "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows;" and had in Himself that intimate feeling for all our wants, with a tenderness like that which a mother has for a child. For when we do good to others we stand above them; when we do so out of com-

passion, we are brought down to them. However, so it was, He was as one under constraint, drawn "by the cords of a man." He had *compassion*. And so is it even now; in His exaltation He has not laid aside this tender sympathy with all our needs. "We have not an High Priest," says St. Paul, "who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."<sup>4</sup> Wonderful indeed is this His mercy; it is like His almighty power, which manifests itself alike in the greatest and the smallest things; for while His pity was so great that it had brought Him down from Heaven to give His own Body for the food and eternal life of our souls, at the same time the like pity descended likewise to the daily wants of the perishing body. What an encouragement is this to go to Him in all our wants, both small and great, knowing that He careth for us!

*And His disciples answered Him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?* It seems strange that they should have forgotten the former miracle, were it not that mankind are so wont to forget such tokens of God's presence. Or it may be that something of faith and hope was intended in the inquiry, as if with the secret thought, man indeed cannot do it, but Thou canst.

*And He asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes; and He blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.* In this action of our Lord's is particularly to be observed His giving of

<sup>4</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

thanks, which was probably, as on other occasions, accompanied by that significant action of looking up to Heaven, as if acknowledging all good to be from thence; and then, in like manner, with the lifting up of His hands did He confer His blessing. Thus we read throughout the Scriptures of all good being associated with the blessing of God. It was the blessing of the Creator, Who in the beginning blessed the creatures He had made, and said, "Be fruitful and multiply." Again, the father of the faithful had a peculiar blessing vouchsafed to him on the offering up of his son, when God said to him by the angel from Heaven, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy people." And Jacob, taught of God, struggled for the like when he said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." And the increase of His Church is owing to the same; for our Lord's last act, when He ascended to Heaven, was, that "He lifted up His hands" on His disciples, "and blessed them." But the crown of all blessings, which most resembles this occasion, was that at the Last Supper, when offering up Himself as a willing oblation for us, He gave thanks and blessed the bread and the wine. So that the bread has been ever named by the Church with this peculiar name, "the Bread of Thanksgiving;" and St. Paul calls the cup, "the Cup of Blessing which we bless."

*So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away.* How many reflections crowd upon us at this manifestation of Him Who is the Giver of all good! Thus He openeth His hand and filleth all things living with plentifulness. And thus would He have us to be, like Himself, "full of compassion;" not to close the hand as man does,

but to open it as God is wont. For "it is more blessed," said the Lord Jesus, "to give than to receive."<sup>5</sup> And He has in this set forth that precept which He has given, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy rich neighbours," but the poor. For here His guests are the needy and the hungry. And St. Basil observes,<sup>6</sup> that in the last Judgment, when the Lord calls the righteous, he that hath been bountiful hath the first place; and he that hath nourished the poor is sent into life before the rest.

Those who meditate on these things will also find high spiritual truths opening on them more and more, as contained in these outward symbols. Those whom He thus fed were such as flocked to Him for religious instruction, and to hear His gracious words; and these four thousand may well represent those multitudes who will come to Him from the four quarters of the world. These He will feed by means of His Church, which is built on "twelve foundations," in which are "the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb;" shall feed them with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost,—that Bread which is the food of the soul. And herein we have His deeper and fuller answer to that question of the disciples, "Whence can one satisfy these with bread in the wilderness?" The world is a wilderness, what therein can satisfy the human soul? Nothing, surely, but the Bread from Heaven which Christ gives. And He has promised that they who hunger after righteousness shall be filled.

What, then, is the chief consideration we may derive from the Gospel of this day? The subject is one of no little importance; for the people that partook of that first

<sup>5</sup> Acts xx. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Par. Brev.



miracle were offended because they considered it not aright. And the Twelve themselves, who distributed the bread, after both these miracles grieved their Divine Master, because they remembered them not, neither understood. It was but a short while after this miracle, that in the boat with Him, mistaking an expression He had made use of, their anxious thoughts were reasoning among themselves because they had no bread, when He said, "O ye of little faith! why reason ye because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your hearts yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember?" And then, reminding them of those two miracles of the five loaves among five thousand, and the seven loaves among four thousand, He again added, "How is it that ye do not understand?"<sup>7</sup> The subject that grieved their Lord was this, that notwithstanding all that those two miracles were intended to teach them, they were still thinking of the bread that perisheth, whether or not it would fail them; whereas, what He had intended to teach them was, to leave this entirely to His merciful care; for "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He had wished, that being assured He Himself would provide as was best for the body, they should be concerned and thoughtful only for the things of the soul—of God and eternity. He had designed by those miracles to draw off their minds from the concerns of this world, and to lift them up from earth to heaven.

And the same thing was shown in a manner no less forcible and impressive in that discourse at Capernaum,

<sup>7</sup> St. Mark viii. 14—21.

with those who had partaken of that first miracle of the loaves. In grief and disappointment He saw them flocking after Him, and said, "Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

And now to apply the same to ourselves. It was observed that the counterpart of this miracle is still carried on by the providence of God every year in harvests more or less abundant, whereby the blessing of God upon the corn, as it passes through the hands of man, multiplies the seed sown, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred-fold. Now what our Lord desired on those two occasions of multiplying the loaves was, to draw attention to the miracle, to the marvellous working of His power and goodness; this He had particularly wished them to notice, and understand, and remember; it was from hardness of heart that they were slow to do so. But what He wished at the same time to withdraw their minds from, was the mere means of bodily support. He wished them to have seen His hand—to have been impressed, overpowered by it—to have been thankful; to have understood it, reading that lesson with spiritual eyes; and in consequence to have trusted in Him altogether for the means of present subsistence, and to have sought from Him the true food of the soul.

Now the effects of the harvest—of reaping, and enjoying, and witnessing the fruits of the earth of all kinds—is to make men think of the food that perisheth; to look to such things, and rest in them in all their varieties and abundance. What is the consequence when the mind dwells on these for their own sake? It is again to seek for more with the men at Capernaum, or else, with the

good and lowly disciples, to be "taking thought" in poverty, from a fear that such wants may not be supplied. But the very contrary to this is the design and desire of our merciful God towards us. He wishes us to rest in none of His gifts, but to be led by them to seek for rest in Himself only. For be assured, my brethren, let Him give us the whole world, yet unless He gives unto us Himself we are poor indeed.

But, alas! such is the frailty of our nature, that the more He bestows upon us of outward gifts, the more danger we are in of resting in them, and thereby of forgetting Him. For He gives, and in giving withdraws Himself; yet it is Himself that He would have us to seek, to love, to rest in, and then we shall care for nothing else, for in having Him we have everything. He would have us to seek Him, because He loves us and pities us, and knows that He is Himself our only true happiness.

But it is not in harvests and fruits of the earth only that He indicates His superintending compassionate Providence, wishing us at the same time not to care for such things, but only for Himself the Giver. But in all the circumstances of our earthly life, in which He has shown His watchful regard to our wishes, our comforts, and desires of all kinds, from our birth all along unto this day; His affording us many means of temporal good,—friends it may be, some share of reputation, wealth, learning. Most men are at times sensibly affected by a review of these blessings in their own lives, as indications of God's tender goodness towards them. But in all these things it is to be feared that we afford to our merciful God matter of complaint and sorrow, because we value and love His gifts more than Himself.

Compassionate Saviour, do Thou Thyself teach us the

lesson Thou wouldst have us to learn, and write it by Thy Spirit on our hearts and lives. Let us not grieve Thee by letting it pass from us, or by taking it amiss, as they did of old who partook of those Thy miraculous mercies.

Alas, O my God, I know no greater occasion than this for sorrow, and pain, and tears, that we should forget and dishonour Thee, because Thou art good !

It is such reflections as these, dear Christians, which I think the Church would call to our minds on this Sunday, by the key which the Collect seems to furnish to the intentions of the Gospel ; for in that we pray that He Who is “the Author and Giver of all good things,” would “graft in our hearts the love of” His “name, increase in us true religion,” and “nourish us with all goodness.” And I hope that during this week this Collect may be very frequently repeated by us, both night and day, with such thoughts of humiliation as become us, on account of our want of love to our merciful God for all His benefits.

## SERMON LV.

### The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

Rom. viii. 12—17. St. Matt. vii. 15—21.

*BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM.*

*For as many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the sons of GOD.—ROM. viii. 14.*

**I**N the Epistle for Sunday last St. Paul had been contrasting the service of God with the service of sin; he touches on the same subject again to-day, but immediately passes from it to dwell in glowing language, as he ever delights to do, on the blessed privileges of being in Christ.

*Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* How great, therefore, he was about to say, is the *debt* we owe to Christ; but in speaking of *debt*, as if carried away by that expression, he passes on to say we are under no debt to the flesh. It sometimes seems implied that we are under a sort of debt or obligation to society, to nature, to the world; but we have seen what all this comes to—we are delivered from that bondage

which only leads to death. Nature, and the world, and all things human, have no other end but death; whereas to overcome them through the Spirit is life.

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* For this being "led by the Spirit" to mortify the flesh is the very proof of our sonship. I say "sonship;" for though I have been speaking of the "service" of God as contrasted with that of sin, yet our state as Christians is not in fact a service, as was that of the Jews, but a sonship. The spirit which we have received does not teach us to approach God with servile fear, but with the spirit of adoption and the name of Father. For the Jews are described as being under a state of bondage to the law, the full meaning of which they understood not; but to His disciples our Blessed Saviour says, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but I call you friends, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." And no sooner had He paid the ransom for us than He says to Mary Magdalene, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father;" fulfilling His saying in the Psalm, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren." Hence St. Paul says in like manner to the Galatians, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son." And that this spirit of adoption is to influence and characterize all our daily lives, our Lord Himself has taught us, by commanding us to be continually coming to God with the words, "Our Father Which art in heaven." For as we ought always to be using this prayer, so ought we always to be looking to

God as our Father. And confirming all that encouragement which the name suggests, our Lord says, "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?"

This temper, then, this spirit of adoption influencing our lives, is to us the proof that we are of the number of God's children, as the Apostle adds: *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.* "Joint-heirs with Christ," "if we suffer with Him." Thus He Himself says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, as I overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."<sup>1</sup> Thus as this loving spirit of filial obedience is the evidence of our sonship, with that sonship is connected an inheritance not earthly but heavenly. As in our Prayer, to the Name "our Father" is added "Which art in Heaven." The home, the inheritance, the Father's house, is in Heaven. For the earthly promise connected with that sonship is that of suffering, from its being united with the Sonship of Christ, the Captain of our salvation, made perfect through sufferings.

From hence it is evident, that so far as we value an earthly inheritance more than an heavenly; esteem riches, honour, or learning, more than holiness; despise the poor; shrink from suffering and obscurity; think more of the great in this world than of the sons of God; we have "our portion in this life," we are under bondage to

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 21.

the world, and have lost the spirit of adoption. For the condemnation of the Jews was, that they valued not the promise; "they thought scorn of that pleasant land, and gave no credence unto His Word." And it has been said with awful truth, that "no man can expect to go to Heaven when he dies, who has not sent his heart thither while he lives."

The Gospel for to-day is taken from our Lord's Sermon on the Mount; and it so far falls in with the subject of the Epistle, that the Sermon on the Mount consists entirely of the duties and privileges which arise from this new relation, into which, as Christians, we are brought unto God as sons; it all refers throughout to this spirit of adoption, and this new law, the law of love, which supersedes while it fulfils the old law. Hence through this Sermon on the Mount our Lord speaks of God as our Father. The prayer which He therein gives us is to "our Father Which" is "in Heaven." Ye are to do all things "to glorify your Father in Heaven;" "your Father in Heaven seeth in secret;" "your reward is with your Father in Heaven;" "your Father in Heaven" feedeth the birds, and careth for you; ye must "be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." And hence all Christians throughout the same are spoken of as brethren.

But the particular advice taken from the Sermon on the Mount, given in to-day's Gospel, is the warning against false prophets. Our Lord has often cautioned us on this subject; of "blind guides" that lead to destruction; of "false prophets and false Christs" full of deceivableness, which will form the chief danger of the latter days. And the Apostles have carried on the same note of warning, speaking of Antichrists and seducers that



had already appeared in their own day; of heresies, which must needs be for the probation of the elect; and of these greatly increasing as time advances to the end, many "deceiving and being deceived." And the Book of the Revelation not only describes the seven Churches in those days as severely tried by the counterpart of Balaam, and of Jezebel, and the synagogue of Satan; but intimates, that from thence to the end of the world, false religions, and delusive forms of corruption, will extend and be multiplied till they are developed in one great apostasy or falling away from Christ.

If, again, from these prophetic intimations of Scripture we turn to see what fulfilment of them is now taking place in the world around us, the first point that arrests our attention is the great and numerous divisions among those who are called Christians, and have the Bible in their hands. The Christian world is full of parties and sects, one may say of different religions; yet it is clear that one religion only can be true,—God is the Author of union, not of division. Truth is one, error is manifold. One faith only hath Christ once for all delivered unto the saints. But there are many in the world. And now, though every one supposes himself to be right, and his own form of religion the best, yet it is evident from this very diversity that there must be many erroneous opinions,—ways by which men are deluded, and delude themselves, respecting the way of salvation. The warnings, therefore, which the Gospel for this day conveys, cannot but be most seasonable for us, and the more so the less we are aware of the necessity of them.

*Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* The word "beware" implies a subtle danger which requires

watchfulness, as does also the false semblance of "sheep's clothing." The false prophets of old wore "the rough garment to deceive,"<sup>2</sup> but these put on the very likeness of Christ Himself, Who, "as a *sheep* before his shearers was dumb;" or they have "two horns, like a lamb with the dragon's speech,"<sup>3</sup> "seducing spirits," it is said; it is the "strong delusion that believes a lie," and with "all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."

*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* Now here there are some difficulties occur to one in the application of this rule. Is it intended that persons are to leave their own pastor, who is set over them by the Church, because he leads not a good life? This cannot be the intention; for in our Lord's own time these "blind leaders of the blind," full of hypocrisy, were the Scribes and Pharisees; yet He says of them, "the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." In like manner, your appointed minister may be a bad man, even as Balaam or as Judas Iscariot; yet that does not make it the less true that he may have received his appointment and commission from Christ, which would be a matter of fact. The most godly life cannot of course ever give a man a commission from Christ who has it not; nor can a wicked life take away that authority, or destroy the power of it, unless it be taken away by those who gave it and had the

<sup>2</sup> Zech. xiii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. xiii. 11.

power to do so. Our Lord's warning, therefore, does not apply to this, but to doctrine and teaching. Thus of these very persons who were to be obeyed as being in Moses' seat He says, "Beware of the leaven," *i. e.* of the hypocrisy, and false doctrine, "of the Scribes and Pharisees."

Again; in some sense we ought not, and indeed cannot judge men, nor pretend to say what they are in God's sight; *i. e.* we must not judge them censoriously or enviously; and, moreover, there is great difficulty in judging correctly of men. Good men are hated by the world, and evil spoken of, as was the case with our Lord Himself; whereas bad men may be like whited sepulchres, beautiful without, but within full of uncleanness; or in sheep's clothing pretending to all Christian holiness, but wolves within. Besides which, good men labour to hide their good works from the world,—how, therefore, are we to know men from their fruits?

The fact is, that notwithstanding all such objections, there will ever shine forth from a sincere, good man, a clear and consistent light which cannot be hid. If any one takes diligent care of his own heart, this cannot but be seen in his words and actions, for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. His life is of itself an unmistakeable living language: deeds are the very tongue of the heart. All this is what our Lord here adds in this passage, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" which we may thus further venture to apply,—shall we look for the sweet fruits of charity from the mere briars and thistles of party spirit and controversy?

If, on the contrary, we know that any man denies himself daily,—that he is meek and gentle under trying provocation,—that he is indifferent to the things of the

world, and sacrifices his worldly interest without scruple to preserve his Christian principle,—then with him we may expect to find the truth ; but more particularly if he denies himself in that which would naturally be his ruling passion or desire, for this we know cannot be done without the especial grace of God.

They who live a life of active self-denial, charity, and purity, will be ever brought to the knowledge of God,—to them He will reveal His mysteries ; for they cannot live such a life without the good Spirit of God ; and the Spirit of God, being truth and light, will enlighten their minds and lead them unto all truth. And thus it is, as our Lord says, that they who do the will of God shall know of the doctrine,—shall know whether He that speaks be of God. Since, therefore, God imparts the knowledge of truth to those that obey Him, our Lord teaches us to look to the lives of men, to know whether it be the good Spirit of God that leads them, or their own private spirit, actuated by prejudice, pride, or self-interest, and swayed by the passing gales of the world.

*Every tree*, our Lord here adds on this subject, *every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* The evil tree with its evil fruit shall soon come to naught,—or rather, with its lack of good fruit, as with an allusion to the parable of the unprofitable fig-tree. The end of the tares is that they shall be burned ; and of “the idol shepherd” in Zechariah, who hath made the flock his prey, the judgment is that he shall lose all power of good, and all spiritual wisdom : “his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Zech. xi. 17.

Wait awhile, and whatever is not of God will come to naught. "Let them alone," said our Lord, with reference to false doctrine; "every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up;" and of the blind Pharisees leading the blind, that "both shall fall into the ditch." And we may observe of heretical doctrines, that they prevail for a time and then come to an end. "I went by, and lo, he was gone:" "I sought him, but his place could nowhere be found."

And then, as if in allusion to the hypocrisy of these false guides, putting on the appearance of religion, and the danger of such false pretensions to holiness, building on the sand, and not on the hidden rock of obedience, our Lord makes that memorable, all-comprehensive declaration, *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father Which is in Heaven.* The same may be otherwise stated in the words of the Epistle, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." For these false prophets which will lead astray are connected with disobedience, lawlessness, and self-deceiving flatteries; in some way "strengthening the hands of the wicked by promising him life;" "with their mouth showing much love," while "their heart goeth after their covetousness."

In other words, St. John says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." The confession of Christ is therefore the test of truth, but that confession must reach the heart and life. To this, then, we must further add this our Lord's last caution:

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord . . . but he that doeth the will of My Father.”

It is then, in short, this, that the Spirit of God, the free spirit of adoption, and confession of “Christ come in the flesh,” is to us the way of salvation; but further, that we may not be deceived, we are warned that it must be the Spirit of God influencing our lives, and filling them with filial love, that is to bear witness with our spirit; and that this confession of Christ is to be accompanied with obedience, in order that it may be genuine. It is this faith held in filial obedience which is to keep us in the path of safety. It is by loving filial obedience that we hold as it were the hand of God in the dark night of this world, being assured, that as long as we do so He will guide us in the truth. It is from losing His protection that men fall into the wiles of seducers; God will “send on them a strong delusion,” because they have “pleasure in unrighteousness:” it was a “lying spirit” from God filled the mouths of the false prophets which flattered Ahab to his destruction.<sup>5</sup> It is to Him, therefore, that we look; to Him “Whose never-failing providence ordereth all things in Heaven and earth,” we pray in the Collect for this week, that He will “put away from us all hurtful things, and give us those things which be profitable for us.”

To apply the whole subject more closely to ourselves, in these days when various religions abound, each claiming to itself the only true worship of God;—the first thing needed is more entire obedience to the plain duties of the Gospel. It is very much as it was in the falling away of Judah, when God says to them by His Prophet, “Amend your ways and your doings” . . . “trust ye not

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 22.

in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord are these.”<sup>6</sup> And in our Lord’s own time the Jews would compass sea and land to make one proselyte, although it were only to make him a child of hell. We cannot, therefore, be too much on our guard against mere profession in religion, and party spirit, that great enemy to love and truth; and instead of these, to cultivate in ourselves active charities, humility, and obedience, and to seek for them in others. This is laying the foundation, and will lead us to know what is of God from counterfeits and delusive forms of false doctrine.

It was in speaking of the broad way which many travel, and of the narrow way that leadeth unto life, which few find, that our Lord added this emphatic advice, “Beware of false prophets,”—“by their fruits ye shall know them;” as if it were implied, You will have many to prophesy smooth things, and to flatter you, when large companies are going the way that leadeth to destruction, but take ye heed and be on your guard; there is a way of safety by which ye may escape from flattering prophecies which say, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace;” it is by looking for such consistent fruits of holiness as show the heart to be right with God. The Christian law is a law written on the heart by the Spirit of Truth. “An highway shall be there . . . it shall be called the way of holiness . . . the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”<sup>7</sup> Cleverness is not what we need, nor scholarship, but the simplicity of a wayfaring man,—of one that travels right onward in the way of Christ.

<sup>6</sup> Jer. vii. 3, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Isa. xxxv. 8.

It is "to the meek" and obedient that "mysteries are revealed."<sup>8</sup> A good man, under God's teaching, naturally looks to good men; and where he sees great obedience and reverence, he values the words and sayings of such a man; his foot "wears the steps of his door."<sup>9</sup> It was thus that good men came to Christ Himself; they looked to His works, and so came to know Him. And Christ frequently invited them to look to them, saying, "The works that I do in My Father's Name they testify of Me." "If I do not the works of My Father believe Me not." They were constrained to confess that such holiness and goodness could only come from God. And when they were thus brought to Him by witnessing His works, they believed His words also; they said, "Thou hast the words of eternal life;" and then they came to see in Him the Son of God, God over all blessed for evermore.

And now this is the strength of a good man, by which he is made wiser and better,—that he is able to discern and distinguish false prophets from true, which the world cannot. "The spiritual man judgeth all things, but he himself is judged of none." And when he comes to read of good men of old who spent their lives in voluntary poverty and devotion, in frequent watchings and fastings, then he feels that the words of such men cannot but be of great weight and authority; and when he finds that they all from the beginning speak with one and the same voice respecting the great doctrines of our faith, and that sacred discipline with our Church would require, then he feels among them as in a tower of strength. The spirit of their holy lives still lives in their works, and the more any good man knows of them, the more will he find his

<sup>8</sup> Ecclus. iii. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ecclus. vi. 36.



heart knit to them. Such fruits could not be borne by a corrupt tree, and such cannot in the main be false prophets.

This, by the great mercy of God, is one of the chief protections of good Christians in dark and evil days,—that there are holy men in the Church from the beginning down to the present times. He knows from their lives that they could not all have materially failed of the truth; and he knows that in many points they all, as by the same spirit, condemn those free opinions which now prevail in religion and politics, and agree with one consent in maintaining those essential doctrines of the faith which have been handed down to us. There is a ray about the path of the just; and where they all speak the same thing, then they form together one consistent light to guide those that sit in darkness, and with the dark fore-castings of the coming night overtaking them.

To expect, indeed, truth to reside in the Church at large when it hath become corrupt in practice, were to do dishonour to the holiness of God. But in the early morning of the Church, before it had lost its first love, when it was said, “Behold how these Christians love one another,” we may expect God of a truth to be among them; and while we hold the things which they then held in humility and holiness of life, we cannot be far from the way of life. As the shadows of evening fall on our path, we cannot be altogether in darkness, while we still see the beams of the sun are bright on the eastern hills where first He arose.

## SERMON LVI.

### The Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

I Cor. x. 1—13. St. Luke xvi. 1—9.

*LOOKING FORWARD, OR DIVINE COVETOUSNESS.*

*O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.—DEUT. xxxii. 29.*

WE have sometimes had occasion to allude to the Epistles at this season being transferred in the order of their course; and thereby having lost whatever connexion, real or imaginary, they might originally have been supposed to hold with the Collect and the Gospel for the day. Thus the Epistle for last Sunday, which used to stand between this Collect and Gospel, might seem appropriate to this day's parable, as implying that "we are debtors, not to the flesh, for if we live after the flesh we shall die." But let us consider whether the Epistle we now have may not be brought to bear upon the Gospel and the Collect for the day, and be applied in furtherance of them. Our Blessed Lord in the Gospel bids us consider the men of this world, how wise they are in their generation with the wisdom of the serpent,—

how successful in their plans,—how full of industry and management in providing for a few short uncertain years. And St. Paul, in the Epistle, speaking by the same Spirit, bids us look on another picture, such as may represent the children of light in their pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world; and oh, how sad and disappointing is this sight! how unwise in their generation! how careless and slothful! how unsuccessful at the last! because they looked not forward to everlasting habitations.

*Brethren*, says St. Paul, *I would not that ye should be ignorant*. I would have you carefully consider this remarkable type and warning. *How that all our fathers were under the cloud*, even as we are now under the especial shadow of the Almighty,—the presence and care of the great Comforter,—giving us “the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful.” *And all passed through the sea*,—the Red Sea as of blood, which betokened that redemption which is in Christ, whereby our spiritual enemies are slain. *And were all baptized unto Moses*, that visible token of our spiritual incorporation into our great Lawgiver and Leader; *in the cloud*, which set forth the Holy Spirit, *and in the sea*, which represented Baptism as in Christ’s Blood. *And did all eat the same spiritual meat*,—that manna, or bread from Heaven, which prefigured the Body of Christ, the true Bread from Heaven, and, as representing this mystery, was called angels’ food. *And did all drink the same spiritual drink*; all drank of that miraculous stream which set forth the living waters of the city of God (*for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ*). For although they drank but on one occasion of that water, and that Rock was but once smitten, as Christ was but once pierced, and on one

occasion only the water flowed from His side, yet in that once for all is He always, unto the end of the world, as it were smitten for us ; always present as our Rock, following us even unto the end, and covering us with His almighty shadow, and ever pouring down for us the Holy Spirit from above, although but once for all sent down as the price of His redemption. So was that smitten rock, and the water flowing from it, a sign to them in the wilderness, that His gracious Presence was ever with them, following them throughout and sustaining them.

*But*, notwithstanding all these things, *with many of them God was not well pleased ; for they were overthrown in the wilderness.* Their not entering into that rest which had been promised them, and for which they had been supernaturally supported and guided, is a proof that God's displeasure was upon them. "God was not well pleased" with them, the reverse of this expression is afterwards used of our Blessed Saviour Himself, of Him in Whom alone we are accepted, "My Son, in Whom I am well pleased." What St. Paul then here calls our attention to is this, that as the promises and the threatenings of God to the children of light are of things unseen and eternal, He has thus, by a visible sign, and in the history of a peculiar people, shadowed forth the awful consequences of neglecting His spiritual call and guidance.

*Now these things*, adds the Apostle, *were our examples ;* or literally, and as St. Chrysostom understands the words, they are the types or figures of us—they represent us ; as Baptism and the table of the Lord were shadowed forth to them in prophecy for us, so also "the certainty of punishment coming on those unworthy of the gift." But as in them it was but the shadow, and not the true Baptism, nor the true Bread from Heaven, so also, says

the same great writer, will our punishment, if we be found unfaithful exceed theirs in substance and reality.

So awful is this warning surrounding us,—*To the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.* St. Paul here enumerates the different occasions of their fall; because so manifold are the shapes of evil, the besetting sins of men, and the forms the tempter assumes, and yet the end of all alike is, that they enter not into that rest. And, indeed, take any one single sin enumerated, as that of “lusting after evil things,” how does this, in a thousand different ways, tempt the thoughts and desires! How innumerable are the meshes of that net by which the great enemy catches men! how manifold are his arts! like different flies, different colours of a fly, with which he baits his hook to ensnare the soul,—according to the disposition of each, whether it be sunny or cloudy weather, or the morning, noon, or evening of life. All this finds a place in that living picture of our spiritual warfare, which Israel in the wilderness holds up to our view.

*Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted; saying as they did in distrust, “Is the Lord among us, or not?”*<sup>1</sup> or of the manna, “Our soul loatheth this light bread.”<sup>2</sup> *And were destroyed of serpents*—those fearful emblems of our unseen foes in this wilderness of the world.

*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured,*

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xvii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Numb. xxi. 5.

“thinking scorn of that pleasant land,” and despising the appointed ministers of God, *and were destroyed of the destroyer.*

*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples,* that is, “by way of type;” *and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* They are full of spiritual signification, made to speak the language of God to us who are placed in this last dispensation of all, to represent that invisible world, which, though most intimately near, yet lies beyond the reach of the eye and ear of man,—great things of infinite and everlasting consequence, such as no tongue can utter, no heart can understand!

*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* These admonitions are given us in order that we may fear for ourselves; for even St. Paul himself, ever mindful of these things, although no man could have had greater reason to think himself secure against falling away, yet was urged on by an active, energetic fear lest he should become a cast-away. And, as an early Greek Bishop adds to these words of warning, “if St. Paul thus exhorts those who think they stand, what must be said to those who cannot think that they stand, but must know full well that they are fallen?” and the holy man puts himself also among that number. What must we ourselves do but make haste to arise,—by instantly seizing the hand of Him Who lifteth up those that are down,—by seizing hold of His hand and not letting Him go?

We are surrounded by occasions of falling; there is no one but has his peculiar temptations, more or less, waiting on him,—some owing to his peculiar disposition,—some to his circumstances in life,—some to his past sins: some one day assail him, others the next; some on one side;

and when he is on his guard against them, some on another side coming upon him ; some in thought, some in act or word, some in the flesh, others in the spirit, some in all these together. And by these temptations, for the most part, men are more or less overcome ; they give way sometimes with a struggle, often without an effort ; they yield often as a matter of course, as if from time to time it were a little matter,—or as if the temptation were too great, and by its very greatness smoothed the way of their besetting sin. They are overwhelmed, and borne along like a leaf in the torrent, as if it were a matter of necessity ; not as if God was in all things weighing and trying their spirits, and never allowing them to be carried away without power to resist and to overcome. It is all these cases that St. Paul now meets, for in speaking of one particular instance his words are applicable to all. *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.* No temptation is an excuse for sin ; for whatever it may be, it is only such as man's present state of probation admits of. To suppose that any one is placed in a condition in which he cannot but fall, is to forget that God is the Disposer of all things. He knows, He measures, He deals out all events. There must be temptation, in order that His strength may be perfected in our weakness ; but such temptation is never too great for us, otherwise our weakness would be overwhelmed by it, to suppose which were to doubt the faithful care of God. *But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

Thus the Epistle holds up to our attention the sacred

history of the people of God journeying to the promised land. The Gospel would lead us to the like consideration from altogether another point of view, from what we witness as it were among the nations of the world around. And here first let us notice the source and occasions which furnish us with this mode of instruction.

We are surrounded on all sides by persons taken up more or less with the love of this world; everything is full of it,—newspapers, conversation, all our daily life wherever we go. And this circumstance is full of temptation to a Christian; he is led to follow the examples of those around him, to have the like affections and desires, or to uncharitable judging of them, to envy and ill-will. But to what account would our Blessed Saviour have us turn this scene of evil? He would have us use it altogether in a different manner, as a means to quicken us and strengthen us in heavenly wisdom. Nor is there any consideration more impressive and affecting than that with which our Lord terminates this parable, that “the children of this world are in their generation” so much “wiser than the children of light” are in theirs; to notice in the examples which occur around us how wise men are in the things of time,—how slow and blind, even the best, in the things of eternity. It has been this reflection beyond any other which filled the Son of Man, and His prophets that went before, and His saints that followed, with sorrow and tears. “O that there were such an heart in them, that it might be well with them for ever!” “O that My people would have hearkened unto Me; for if Israel had walked in My ways, I should soon have put down their enemies!”

It is an instance of this worldly forethought that our Lord has pointed out in that interesting parable which is



brought before us to-day. *Jesus said unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.* Now, my brethren, when you hear of an incident of this kind, do you thus immediately turn it to heavenly wisdom? Do you at once reflect, Ah, how like is this to my case! am not I put into this life as a stewardship? am not I called upon soon to give it up, and to render my account of it? For I have sinned against God, and my life is forfeited.

*Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.* Seeing that he could not stay where he was, he looks forward, he seizes the short opportunity that remained; he makes haste, and prolongs not the time; he forgets his present position in every respect except as a means of securing the future. *So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and write fourscore.* Thus by cheating his master did he make friends of his tenants. Observe his urgency and despatch, lest he be turned out before his position has been made secure by his overreaching and treachery. "Sit down quickly," he says. How impatient lest he be overtaken before his

retreat is safe. *And the Lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely.* What the Lord pointed out and dwelt upon in this conduct, was the wise craft and forethought of this wicked man. *For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.* O that we might learn wisdom of the evil world around us; that we had but the management and care of worldly men,—that eye to our main interest which they have for temporal shadows! “You see,” says an ancient Bishop, “how the Almighty maketh light out of darkness, and out of iniquity teacheth righteousness.”<sup>3</sup> *And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* Those riches which are connected with so much evil in the world around you, may become to you your very best friends in your great need; they may purchase for you an inheritance with God which faileth not. You may find Christ in His poor, you may make them your friends, and in them you may have, when you leave the body, an Almighty Protector. Your covetous and dishonest neighbour cannot carry his gold with him to the grave, nor sleep more sweetly there for a golden coffin; but you may, if you make haste, if you use all diligence and wisdom, the like to what you see in him, you may send before you all your worldly opportunities to wait for you against you leave the body, and then to receive you with blessed welcome into that life which is hid with Christ in God.

Although this parable is usually and rightly applied to giving of alms, yet it may be well explained also of all the means and opportunities of this temporal life; we may

<sup>3</sup> Paulin., apud Par. Brev.

make friends of them ; and thus it may be taken, in a larger sense, in conjunction with the Collect ; that we may be quickened by the example of the children of this world, to live with all that earnestness and care that becomes the children of light ; to keep with us in all our actions the gracious guidance of God ; that He would “grant to us the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful, that we may be enabled to live according to His will.”

What, therefore, is the one great lesson which this Sunday would impress upon us, taking together as in one the Collect, the Epistle, and the Gospel,—the oracle of God, enshrined as it were in His holy place, and speaking as from this His sanctuary ? It is this, that the children of light should consider their salvation as much a real matter, to be contended and struggled for, as the children of this world do their temporal objects, of interest, honour, or pleasure. We are in a state of danger and temptation which requires this. We are so placed that nothing less will succeed ; there is not one of us that can succeed without it ; and yet there is not one of us who will fail to succeed at last with it. I mean, with such pains, wisdom, and care, as men take for worldly objects ; so nicely are all things respecting us arranged, “in measure, and number, and weight.”

For instance, there is one man whose chief thought, labour, and anxiety, is to become richer than he now is before he dies. To this his heart turns ; he is cheerful and happy when anything promotes and assists this object ; he is depressed and disheartened when a cloud comes over it ; his thoughts are continually engaged in something respecting it ; he loses no opportunity, however slight, in advancing it. To this his reflections recur in the

watchful night ; on this they dwell as he rises in the morning. Now this is an exact description of what God requires of the children of light, in order to obtain a far more important, an infinitely greater, and more noble object, and that is, to root out of the heart the love of money, and of this world altogether. It requires constant thought and pains ; it is an object never to be omitted, never to be forgotten or lost sight of ; it is, like the other, an art to be learned ; but nothing can exceed the blessedness of it, God Himself being our Helper. For of whom have we to learn this divine art ? It is of the Blessed Comforter Himself. It is first of all by continual and earnest prayer that He will open our eyes more and more to see the vanity of all earthly things, and by labouring together by our prayers to co-operate with Him. There are many things to sacrifice, many things to suffer in this work, hard to flesh and blood, still harder to a heart that hath drunk deep the love of this world ; but can He not make even this labour refreshing and light ? for is He not called the Comforter ? But still, it is a labour and a work, and may well be one of a whole life ; for is it not so with the children of this world, to obtain the contrary ? and can we expect to buy at less cost a pearl of so great price ? Ask the worldly man what it is that makes him labour so, so eager and watchful ? It is hope of success, ever increasing, ever renewed after every disappointment, and a love of the end he has in view, ever growing more and more within him, that is, the love of riches. This is the case with thousands around us. And shall we not have hope to quicken our exertions in labouring after poverty of spirit, when God Himself is with us ? Shall we not have love sufficient to sustain us when we are daily drawing near to the time when we shall behold Him

Whose Name is Love? Oh! my Christian brethren, why is it we have so little active hope? why is it that our love is so weak? It is because we do not labour after it as the worldly man does after his objects. We allow so much to interfere with it without sorrow, or so much to interfere with that sorrow when it comes; we let our vision of things heavenly become daily more dim and languid, and yet we are not depressed, or we let that depression pass away.

Our Lord would seem to say to us, Why need I say so much from Heaven? What if Prophets, and Apostles, and Saints, and God Himself, were silent; does not even this miserable and wicked world around, in every place, call upon you to look forward, and provide for that time when you will have to give up your stewardship? Only be as wise in your heavenly calling as the men of this world are in their generation, and the angels shall assuredly receive you into everlasting habitations, and you shall for ever dwell with God.

## SERMON LVII.

### The Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

1 Cor. xii. 1—11. St. Luke xix. 41—47.

#### THE DAY OF VISITATION.

*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!—ST. LUKE xix. 42.*

WHEN the Epistles and Gospels were ranged differently to what they now are, the Epistle for last Sunday attached to the Gospel for to-day added a peculiar force to it; for the Epistle gave warning of Israel in the wilderness not entering into God's rest, while this Gospel speaks of the Israel of a later time being in like manner wept over by their own Messiah, and by Him cast out of His temple; and both for the same reason, on account of God being forgotten in the love of this world. But our Epistle for to-day has for us in store another lesson of edification. Let us endeavour to read and ponder it with the light of God's Spirit, and may His holy guidance make it profitable to us.

*Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.* St. Paul is here speaking of a state of things different to anything which we now experience;

for when the Gospel was first being planted in the world, the Holy Spirit made His Presence known by many visible tokens; and when by Baptism He was received, being Himself invisible, He thus by sensible signs gave evidence of His power, such as the weakness of men in the infancy of the Church required. And first of all, St. Paul tells these Christians at Corinth how they shall distinguish these manifestations of the good Spirit from those possessions of devils, to which, as Gentiles, they were accustomed; and he points out this distinction to consist at that time in this, whether or no they confessed Christ. *Ye know, he says, that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols even as ye were led.* When ye were possessed by those evil spirits, ye were forcibly dragged away to the idols without having any will of your own: but not so with Christians; they are influenced by the sweet compulsion of a gracious Spirit leading them gently on with the love of Christ; and the acknowledgment of Christ is the test, for this the evil spirit will not allow his votaries to make. *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; that is, can deny Christ in the manner that the heathens require men to do. And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, no one is able to make this good confession, under such circumstances of persecution and martyrdom, but by the Holy Ghost.* St. John says the same: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."

And again, there is another point; these miraculous gifts are of many kinds, but you must take care not on that account to confound them with the many false gods of the heathen; for in the Church all is union and harmony, arising from the Divine unity, the Three Persons

in One God. *Now there are diversities of gifts, which He bestows in this manifestation of His Presence, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, by which we serve Christ in His Church, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations; the ways by which God worketh in this His kingdom of the Spirit are many and manifold; but it is the same God Who worketh all in all.* Whether they be gifts, or administrations, or operations; though differing in name, yet all may be one in substance; they are by the same Spirit, for the same Lord, of the same God; and These being Three are yet One.

There is, further, another consideration; what is the end and object of these miraculous tokens of the Spirit? It is one and the same in all,—the diversity of them all, their measure and degree, is for what is profitable. *But the manifestation of the Spirit, by these outward and sensible signs of His Presence, is given to every man to profit withal; they are dispensed according to what is good for each to receive, both for his own spiritual well-being, and for promoting that of others.* And here St. Paul affords a very interesting mention of what those miraculous powers were, which God was then using in His Church for the conversion of the world; they were not like graces of the Spirit, and the gifts of righteousness which adorn the saints; but they were like natural powers, and endowments of mind and body, such as did not necessarily make men better, but were lent them by God as stewards of His gifts, which they might use for good, or abuse. *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, such as St. Paul and St. John were so wonderfully gifted with. We “speak wisdom,” says St. Paul, “among them that are perfect.” To another the word of knowledge by the*



*same Spirit.* He speaks not here of that knowledge of God which is inseparable from love, and in which is eternal life, but of that knowledge of the things of God which may be without charity, and as such puffeth up. *To another faith by the same Spirit*; that is, the Spirit at that time gave to some a miraculous insight into the unseen, with so strong an assurance in Christ's Name that it could remove mountains, as an evidence to others of the Spirit's power; but this was not necessarily that saving faith which is unto life, for this also might be without charity. *To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit*; *to another the working of miracles*; *to another prophecy*; *to another discerning of spirits*: "the knowing who is spiritual," says St. Chrysostom, "and who is not; who is a prophet, and who a deceiver;" for many were the false prophets which then had gone forth; *to another divers kinds of tongues*; *to another the interpretation of tongues.*

So rich and manifold were the gifts with which the Church of God then went forth to draw the Gentile world unto her as it were by her beauty, miraculously adorned "in a vesture of gold wrought about with divers colours," and saying, "Hearken and consider, incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house." *But*, although so many and various were these manifestations, yet, adds St. Paul, *all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.*

What, then, does this Epistle teach us of the present day? for it speaks of a state of things which does not now at all exist; there are now no supernatural signs which mark believers from unbelievers. It used to be connected with the Gospel of the parable of the Pharisee and

Publican praying together in the same temple, and one despising the other. But as it now occurs with us in our Epistle for to-day, it seems to contain this general lesson, that we are all of us at all times in a state of probation and trial; that even in the early Church, warm with her first love, when miraculous gifts were poured upon its members, these very gifts themselves became a source of temptation, and served as a means of trying their love to God. Some were puffed up by the possession of them and despised others; some misused them; to others they became subjects of envy because they had them not; others confused them with the powers of possession showed by evil spirits. All these things the Apostle here writes to correct, and shows that they were only given for the purpose of edification, and ought in no way to be the causes of strife and selfishness; for they were but different manifestations of one and the same Spirit, dividing to every one as appears good to Him, precisely as different members of the body have different powers and offices.

It is true we have not now these miraculous powers to profit by or abuse,—nothing of this kind to separate one in pride and envy from another. Yet never has been a time when Christians have thought so much of themselves, as if separate and set apart from others; of their own gifts of spirit, of mind or body, of nature or fortune, and so little of that one great Body to Which they belong; and the reason of this has been because love waxes cold. How often may the Apostle's words occur to us with respect to all those differences of gifts and diversities of office in which we are placed to serve God; all these, what are they? "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." Take, for instance, outward station,—we call it

station in the world, but it is not really so with Christians,—it is outward position in the Church of God. Why is one rich and another poor, with all the numerous inequalities in condition? the answer and explanation is here given; it is merely such as is given to each to “profit withal,”—that is, such as may serve by God’s blessing for the spiritual benefit of himself and others. It is, indeed, too often the case, that riches are the destruction of the rich man, and poverty of the poor man; but the very contrary to this is intended by the all-wise Disposer of our lives, “dividing to every man severally as He will.” There are differences and diversities innumerable, but it is by the same Spirit and for the same Lord. And the destruction of soul arising in these cases is in great measure from this,—that each is wont to look on these things, not as ways of God and talents of His, to be used by us for His honour, but as if they were things of our own; if lent to us we are proud of them, and so misuse and abuse them; if lent to another, we are envious and discontented at the sight, and covet the same for ourselves. So is it with learning and reputation, and other such diversities between man and man. So is it with means and powers of usefulness in the Church. Whereas to be high-minded from having them, to desire them for their own sakes, is to forget God and our own awful stewardship. They are given to each “to profit withal,” and for no other purpose. Heathen idols were many; and the evil spirits were many that led to their worship; and many their vices, all leading to selfishness and hatred. But in the Church of God, that is, among Christians, all distinctions are nothing else but the different callings of the one Spirit, by which they are in love to serve one another and to serve God; or different powers given to

different members for the benefit of each other, as all parts of that one Body, Which is Christ. Now the effect of these two ways of looking on things, whether as in ourselves and by ourselves, or only as members one of another, is as opposite as light and darkness. So far as we consider the gifts of God as something of our own, we are exalted in our own eyes; so far as we consider them as parts of a stewardship for which we are accountable, we must be more and more humbled under a sense of them.

This, then, is to us the day in which we have been called by the Householder to work in His vineyard,—the day of our visitation, our accepted time, and the season of grace.

The occasion of the narrative in the Gospel was this: our Lord was now approaching Jerusalem for the last time of His sojourn there, just before His death. It was on Palm Sunday, as He meekly rode from Bethany with rejoicing multitudes, and at the turn of the hill on the Mount of Olives came suddenly in sight of Jerusalem, when St. Luke's account thus proceeds:—

*And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Yet to judge from sight all in that city was peaceful—nay, more, full of holy festivity and rejoicing. But as with the soul that hath departed from God, it was a false peace, and not to last. In the words of Baruch, "Thou hast forsaken the fountain of wisdom. For if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou shouldest have dwelled in peace for ever."*<sup>1</sup> Whereas, now to them the day of peace was for

<sup>1</sup> Bar. iii. 12.

ever over and gone: and the sign of this was already approaching, for a war and destruction, the most terrible which the world has ever witnessed, was in forty years entirely to overwhelm them.

“He wept,” not for His own approaching sufferings, which He so distinctly foresaw, but for them who should inflict on Him those sufferings. “He wept” not merely on account of their eternal loss, which was ever present to the “Man of sorrows,” but as the sight of any distress, of hunger, or loss, moved His compassions, so the prospect of these temporal sufferings affected His pitying spirit, as He beheld that beautiful city, so soon to be the seat of such calamities.

*For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.* What an awful figure of that inevitable ruin which may overtake the soul, when its short peace and rejoicing in worldly things is over, as a gulf trenching it around, deep and large, spiritual enemies hedging it in on every side, as a net from which there is no escape. “Thy children within thee,—no stone remaining!” All thine earthly hopes gone, no vestige left!

*Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.* These are remarkable words, “the time of thy visitation,” and “because thou knewest it not.” There is a day in which God visits every Church and people, and every individual soul; it was this for which the warning voice had been sent, saying, “Now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees,” and “repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” This was the day of their visitation.

And moreover, there is an imminent danger lest it be not known ; that it should come and go, and not be felt or understood, because our eyes are closed by sin while it is with us ; and that it should have gone by, like the harvest and the summer ended, but never again to return. " But now they are hid from thine eyes." It is this want of knowledge which is twice spoken of in this our Lord's pathetic appeal, " if thou hadst *known* in thy day the things of thy peace ;" and again, " because thou *knewest* not the time of thy visitation."

And a circumstance which the Evangelist mentions immediately after, affords us a strong and lively evidence how it was that they knew not the things of their peace, and the day of their visitation ; it was because the love of the world and the business of the world occupied and profaned that temple where God would dwell alone. So it is with the soul which knows not the things of its peace. On beholding the city He wept ; *And*, on entering Jerusalem, *He went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer ; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

Now we are taught by this what great reverence is due to that holy place wherein God has placed His Name ; that the evil world is not to enter there ; there is to be there no buying and selling ; nothing that partakes of the spirit of this world ; no thoughts of covetousness, or business ; but all is to be holy, full of veneration, and awe, and peace ; that God may be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Secondly, that not only the material building, but what Scripture calls " the Church of the living God," that spiritual temple spread abroad, the pillar and ground of the truth, the Kingdom of Heaven, as

it is described in the Gospels, into which we are received at Baptism; that in this there should be no traffic or merchandise, no consideration of worldly politics should have any place therein; but that it should be "called an house of prayer for all people,"<sup>2</sup> that there should be "in every place incense and a pure offering,"<sup>3</sup> "an offering in righteousness;" the continual sacrifice of prayer and praise. And thirdly, that as the Christian is so often in Scripture said to be the temple of God, being such he should keep himself holy, as the house of prayer; that nothing should be admitted within him which should impair or take the place of his constant communion with God; that as he is called upon to love God with all his heart and all and strength, so nothing of this world should find an entrance into his heart, that sanctuary wherein God would dwell. That in carrying on the necessary business of this world, he should never allow anything of this kind to take the place of God in his soul; but should be as one who in possessing possessed not. That he should keep such things without his secret spirit, wherein God alone must be; that his joys and sorrows, his hopes and fears,—those things which dwell in his inner heart, the hidden man,—should be of another kind, and not like those of the men of this world. Now this is to know the things which belong unto our peace; this is to know the time of our visitation; that Christ may not be weeping over us while we are rejoicing, and we know it not. Further, one word more of this indwelling of God, "the vision of peace." When Christ had driven out the buyers and sellers it is added, *And He taught daily in the temple.* So it is with us; if we

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lvi. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Mal. i. 11.

cast out from the heart whatever is common or unclean, every worldly thought and desire, reverencing ourselves as the house of prayer, in constant intercourse with God, then He will "daily teach us." He will open our eyes within to the wonderful things of His law. He will give us to know the things which belong unto our peace. He Himself in our heart will sit as a teacher, instructing us daily, so that day unto day and night unto night shall utter knowledge.

Let us then be careful not to lose this our day, the day of spiritual gifts, and when Christ sits in His temple. Surely we have much to labour after in order that we may obtain "the mind which was in Christ," and "the mind of the Spirit." The shadows of evening are stretched out, and this our day of grace wanes away apace. There is a night that overtakes man darker than that of the grave.

Our Church on this Sunday lifts up as it were again what had been her Advent<sup>4</sup> note of warning, lest the things which belong unto our peace be for ever hidden from our eyes; yet in this warning is there also great encouragement; for are they not the things of our "peace"? is not the very expression full of the most sweet attraction? for, oh! what else in the world is worthy of one moment's thought and care compared with this peace, the peace of God? Is it in our power to obtain this peace? yes, it is still in our power, for it is our "day;" Christ is watching over us, but not, we may trust, weeping over us as lost; for these things are not yet hidden from us; we desire them still, we long and labour for them, we tremble lest we lose them; they are not then yet hidden from us.

<sup>4</sup> See the First Sunday in Advent, vol. i. p. 2



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And again, that other expression, "the day of visitation," this too is a word of fear and alarm, but also of love and power; for it is the day when God visits us, and therefore called "the day of salvation." For how does He visit us? it is with thoughts of repentance, with desires to pray, and to serve Him better than we have yet done. And when He gives us these thoughts and desires, He gives us likewise, if we neglect them not, the power to fulfil them.

## SERMON LVIII.

### The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

I Cor. xv. 1—11. St. Luke xviii. 9—14.

#### THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT.

*And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, GOD be merciful to me a sinner.*—ST. LUKE xviii. 13.

THE subject of this Sunday's teaching is of God's covenant of grace and mercy, Who "declares His Almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity." St. Paul, in the Epistle, comes to the very foundation of all our hopes, the Creed. *Brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you.* "I declare," that is, I solemnly announce unto you that Gospel, which indeed ye well know; *which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.* "Which ye have received as a kind of sacred deposit," so St. Chrysostom explains it; that "faith once delivered," into which ye were baptized; "and wherein ye stand," in holding firmly to which all your strength consists, and your future hope. As he adds, *by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you;* or, more literally, "if ye hold

fast to that evangelic statement," or that saying by which I announced the Gospel to you; *unless ye have believed in vain.*

*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received.* The last-mentioned ancient Bishop observes of these words, that the Apostle does not say, "I said unto you," or "I taught you," but "I delivered;" nor does he say that which "I was taught," but that which "I received;" as referring the whole of it to Christ, and signifying that nothing was of man in these doctrines. Men could not diminish from nor add unto this sacred deposit of the faith once delivered unto the Church's keeping until the end. Neither man nor an angel from Heaven could preach any other. And St. Paul, in writing to the Galatians, is careful in saying, that even in receiving the same, it was not from man nor from any human teaching, but from Christ Himself.<sup>1</sup> From hence he proceeds to state that great article of the Apostles' Creed. *How that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures,* as all the ancient Scriptures had set forth in promise, and type, and prophecy. *And that He was buried; and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.* His death, and His resurrection, the two great cardinal points of our salvation, the two golden hinges, as it were, on which the gate of Heaven turns; and, therefore, such as were not only seen of men, but both of them testified throughout by all the word of God which had gone before; "according," he says, "to the Scriptures."

*And that He was seen of Cephas.* Not indeed that St. Peter was the first to whom He appeared after His resurrection; but it was to him in so marked and pre-

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 12.

eminent a manner as brought conviction to the disciples.<sup>2</sup> *Then of the twelve*, as they were collected together with closed doors in that upper chamber, at Jerusalem. *After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once*; on that memorable occasion, on the mountain in Galilee, for which He had sent them thither from Jerusalem, as the place of His great manifestation;<sup>3</sup> *of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep*: a vast cloud of witnesses, of which the greater part are with us to bear testimony even still, although some of them be with Christ. *After that He was seen of James*; “for the Lord,” says St. Chrysostom, “is said to have ordained and made him bishop in Jerusalem;” *then of all the Apostles*; by all the Apostles, adds the same writer, meaning the Seventy which were sent forth. It appears to allude to some later appearance of our Lord to the whole apostolic body, for some express purpose, probably with respect to their management of the Church: for He was for forty days “speaking to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

*And last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.* Seen of Peter, seen of the twelve, seen of the five hundred, seen of James, seen of all the Apostles, seen of St. Paul himself; all speaks of the evidence of their own senses to His resurrection. And observe in this the mercy of the Gospel, first seen by St. Peter, not only because he had been the first to confess Christ the Son of God, but because he had denied Him; and last, as the crown of all, to St. Paul, who had been a persecutor. *For I am the least*, he adds, *of all the Apostles*, even as a child of untimely birth, *that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.*

<sup>2</sup> St. Luke xxiv. 34.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. xxviii. 7. 16.

*But by the grace of God I am what I am*; yet in this my weakness, even as an abortion, and one unworthy of the high name of an Apostle, has the strength and the goodness of God been manifested; and in my labours may be seen. *And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all.* This he mentions as a proof of God's mercy to him; and yet he seems to shrink at the very expression, and hastens, as it were, to withdraw it, and to attribute all to God. *Yet not I*, he immediately subjoins, *but the grace of God which was with me.* Ancient writers, as St. Augustine and others, delight to dwell on these words of St. Paul, as so expressive of his sweet, trembling humility, fearing to contemplate himself, except in his sins and infirmities, and losing all sense of his greatness in God; fearful lest he should presume, and so lose by presumption all that crown of hope and joy which by humility he had gained.

He had been speaking of the witnesses of the resurrection, and in so doing was obliged to speak of himself, which he does with all lowliness and self-condemnation; but yet, in order to show that his evidence as a witness was not inferior to the others, he mentions how by his more abundant labours God gave testimony to His grace. But passing from this, he adds, *Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.*

And here it is especially to be noticed, that in this Epistle for to-day, wherein the wonderful mercies of the Gospel are set forth, yet it is implied that faith in these things may be in vain; for St. Paul says, "unless ye have believed in vain," and also that the grace of God may be given in vain; for he says, "and His grace was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly." Thus we pray in

the Collect, under the sense of God's exceeding mercies, that we may not run in vain, but may so run as to obtain His promises, and be made partakers of His treasure.

And now let us consider this a little more particularly. It is in showing mercy that God most chiefly manifests His Almighty power; and, therefore, in order that His Almighty power may be seen in us, in our advances in holiness now and our salvation hereafter, we must show ourselves objects of His mercy and pity; and that must be by a very low estimation of ourselves, by a constant sense of our sins and unworthiness, by a deep humiliation, under an apprehension of the infinite holiness of God. Our very life must be like a continual supplication for mercy, appealing to God in deed and word.

This, the very character of all Christian holiness, is exhibited to us in the Gospel for to-day, in that memorable parable of the Pharisee and the Publican in the temple; and the same may be very well exemplified by what St. Paul says of himself in the Epistle. *Jesus spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican.* Our Blessed Lord here sets before us two characters, as they appear before God in prayer. This, my brethren, is everything to us, how we appear in the sight of God when we come before Him in prayer, with what degree of acceptableness we then are looked upon by Him. This is, in short, the only thing of any importance; it matters not what we seem to be to ourselves or to others, but only how God looks upon us when we pray to Him. Our everything depends upon this. This you may take as the test and proof of anything you say, or do, or think: and of the real importance of any event

that happens to you. What difference does it make when you come to appear before God in prayer? Will it render you more pleasing and acceptable or not? Will this or that circumstance add weight and avail to your prayers or not? If you do this, or leave it undone, if you say this or leave it unsaid, will it make a difference when you come before God in prayer? And if you would weigh the distinctions between one man and another, between different stations and conditions in life, you can have no surer test or proof of them than this, which renders you most availing when you come before God in prayer. "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" and "blessed are the merciful;" now this their blessedness may be known from this, that they have power and worth with God, when they come before Him in prayer. And if, moreover, "blessed are they that mourn," and "blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake," and "blessed are they that hunger now;" it is because these are conditions of life and circumstances which put the heart in that frame which will make prayer of avail with God. Let any one notice each day,—there can be no better rule or safeguard,—what will render him at his hours of prayer most acceptable with God. There can be no better standard or measure of the real value of all things than this. And, therefore, when our blessed Lord introduces two characters as going up to the temple to pray, and is about to instruct us in their acceptableness, and the availing of their prayers with God, there is nothing whatever can be conceived of a more lively interest to us. It is bringing two characters into the light of God's own presence, and telling us how they there appear; it is allowing us to see both put in the balance, and weighed by God Himself; nay, more, it is telling us, admitting us

to witness the power which they have respectively with Almighty God.

*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican: I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.* Now here was a religious man, righteous according to the law; fasting, and giving tithes, and going up to pray in God's house. Nay, more, he attributes all this his righteousness to God; and not only that, but gives God thanks for what He had made him; for preserving him from extortion, dishonesty, and adultery. In what respect, therefore, does he differ from St. Paul, in that passage we have been considering? For if this man compares himself with others, so does the holy Apostle; for he also says, "I have laboured more abundantly than all" the Apostles. And he also gives thanks to God for it; for he says, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." But it must be observed, that St. Paul is not here speaking to God in prayer, but is making his defence to men; and being constrained to show the weight of his testimony as a witness and Apostle of Christ's resurrection, he cannot but allude to the fact of his more abundant labours and sufferings; but in so doing, he hastens, as it were, away from the subject, as one he could not dare to think of, and loses himself altogether in the sense of God's goodness and grace. It is his own former ignorance, and the sad consequence of that ignorance, in being the occasion of his persecuting the Church of Christ; it is his own present infirmities and inability of himself to do anything, on which his whole heart was set.

When St. Paul turned to God in prayer, it was under a sense of his many miseries; of the thorn in the flesh,



that bodily infirmity which humbled him in the sight of men, and seemed to impair his usefulness ; it was under the constant recollection of his having been once a “blasphemer,” or one that denied Christ, a “persecutor and injurious ;” it was as one fearing to fall short of his high calling at last, and being “a castaway ;” as one beating down his body and keeping it under ; as one weak with the weaknesses of others, and sympathizing with them in their temptations ; as praying to God with many tears, both for himself and for others ; and finding no relief from all these things, but in forgetting himself altogether, in the deep overwhelming sense which he had of God’s love, and of Christ crucified. In short, there can be no doubt but that when St. Paul appeared before God in prayer, it was with the mind and spirit, not of the Pharisee, but of this Publican, who would not lift “up his eyes to Heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” If the Publican was abashed and humbled, because he had intercourse with the heathen ; no less was St. Paul, because he had been a Pharisee, one of those the great persecutors of Christ.

The words by which God pointed out St. Paul to his Church as worthy of all acceptance, were these, “Behold, he prayeth.”<sup>4</sup> Thus he commenced, thus he continued, thus he ended his course, in the character and spirit of availing prayer. Before angels and men is seen the great power which he had with God ; but the secret of that power was in these words, the testimony of God, “Behold, he prayeth.”

*And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven ; he thought, not of other*

<sup>4</sup> Acts ix. 11.

men, but of God : this was the reason why he could not lift up his eyes to Heaven ; he was filled with a deep sense of the holiness, and the power, and the mercy of God ; and, therefore, he would not lift up so much as his eyes. He had some knowledge of what God is, like the angels have, who cover their faces in His presence ;<sup>5</sup> and those in Heaven, who cry aloud in the Apocalypse, “ Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name ? for Thou art holy.” He felt that he was in God’s sight, even as Daniel, who lay with his “ face toward the ground,” and as St. John, “ when he fell down at His feet, as dead ;” or as Job, who says, “ Mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” He stood afar off, even as the lepers, constrained by the law to do so ; and as St. Peter, when falling at Christ’s feet, and holding down his head, he said, “ Depart from me, for I am unclean.” But because he stood afar off, God brought him near by hearing his prayer ; because he ventured not to lift up his eyes to Heaven, God looked down from Heaven upon him, and lifted up upon him the light of His countenance : for the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit.

These instances I have mentioned indicate that this Publican, by his outward gesture and demeanour, showed that he did in some degree realize God’s presence. And how then could he at such a time think of others, and compare himself with them ? No, it was of himself, of the wicked self within him, of what he had said, and done, and thought ; of his own unclean heart that he thought, as his actions spoke more powerfully than words, “ He lifted not up his eyes, *but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*” His misery pleaded to God most powerfully for mercy ; and he felt his misery, be-

<sup>5</sup> Isa. vi. 2.

cause he knew what God was, infinitely holy ; and that he in His presence was a sinner. He earnestly desired to be released from himself ; he felt the infinite distance between himself and God, and earnestly desired to be united to God. It was this made him so miserable, to stand afar off, to hang down his eyes, to beat on his breast, to say and know nothing, but that God was merciful, and he a sinner. Prayer is always answered according to the greatness of the desire, and the greatness of the need ; and his desire and his need were infinite. But the Pharisee had nothing to ask for, he needed nothing. How then could it be otherwise, but that the hungry was filled with God's mercy, and the rich was sent away empty ?

Christian brethren, I fear we do not pray as we should do, none of us ; because we do not earnestly desire or feel our need, we are more like the Pharisee in God's house than the Publican. And oh, how much do we lose every time we come here, because it is so ! We do not feel each in himself what it is to be a sinner, because we do not know God and ourselves. O that we could feel miserable, and sore distressed, and cast down, and unable to lift up the head ! O that we knew our need, and that according to our need were our desires, restless, insatiable, and as infinite and immeasurable as is God's mercy ! We sit down by a boundless sea of goodness, but have no desire to be filled. The Sun of Righteousness would kindle us into life by His beams, but we hide ourselves from Him, content to be as we are and as we have been, not as He would have us to be. We keep as it were with the Pharisee in the dark of the temple ; and not where the rays of God's presence pour down light, and show us unto ourselves.

And for this reason we return home from God's house of prayer much as we came. *I tell you*, adds our Blessed

Lord Himself of this Publican, *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Do we return from Church more justified, or with a sense of God's pardon shed abroad in our hearts, and His unspeakable peace, as those who are lifted up from our own deep humiliation by His own sustaining Hand? Or do we return as we went, like the Pharisee, barren and self-satisfied; with no feeling of want, no craving after God? This is certain, that according to our desires we are filled. Some indeed there are that ever walk in heaviness; and come and go, and walk in and out in humiliation and sorrow, because they love God; and, therefore, are ever grieved that they love Him not more, and that others around them love Him not. Yet in prayer and Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, they have a comfort which the world knows not of; and, even in sorrow, a peace that surpasseth knowledge. Thus, God is pleased to leave them in humiliation and self-abasement, in order that they may not be satisfied; but enlarge their desires after Him, nay, feel more and more their sense of sin, and their need of His righteousness. For the more they feel this their need of it, the more is it growing within them. The more they feel their own nakedness, the more are they clothed of God.

What we need is not comfort, but that sorrow which must go before all true comfort; it is not peace that we, my brethren, mostly need; but war with ourselves, like that poor Publican; war and earnest contention with our worldly hearts and desires, so that we may long beyond all things for the peace of God.

## SERMON LIX

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

2 Cor. iii. 4—11. St. Mark vii. 31—37.

WEAKNESS OF FAITH.

*Such trust have we through CHRIST to God-ward.*—2 COR. iii. 4.

ST. PAUL is here speaking of the wonderful experience which he and others now had of the efficacy of God's grace in Christ. *Such trust*—such confidence, or full assurance, the word implies an habitual frame of mind (*πεποιθησω*), such reliance of faith—*have we through Christ to God-ward*. But he has no sooner uttered the words than he stops to qualify and correct them still further, lest any one should think that even this faith in God was anything of our own, or owing to ourselves. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything*—not that even such good thoughts of reliance and trust, or any such consideration of God's power and goodness are our own,—*as of ourselves*,—as arising from anything in us; *but our sufficiency is of God*. Even this frame of mind consists in entire dependence upon God; the very heart which thus thinks and feels in consciousness of its own utter inability and helplessness, leans and hangs,

may, more, reposes altogether upon God. Even as a child that cannot walk, or a man out of his depth that cannot swim, supports himself upon another, and when he ceases to do so at once sinks or falls,—a Christian, in his most earnest exertions and endeavours, has this sense of rest in God; and when he has it not he ceases to think and feel as a Christian. This very trust in God is of God.

And this sufficiency which is of God is especially shown, St. Paul proceeds to say, in the efficacy of us His ministers. *Who also hath made us able, or sufficient, ministers of the New Testament.* But in using the word “Testament,” which commonly signifies a written will or covenant, he subjoins, *not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.* The letter commands, but gives no power to fulfil, and therefore only brings condemnation; but the Spirit gives power to fulfil, and in that fulfilment is life. The knowledge of the Scriptures themselves, of the Creeds, and of the Catechism, will only serve to condemn us, unless by faith and love they are received into our hearts and lives by the Spirit of God. And therefore this was the case especially with the Law, which St. Paul proceeds to speak of as “the ministration of death;” for when the sinner came to the Law it said unto him, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” And this it set forth in various ways; even the sacrifices which were offered by the Law were a confession that he that offered them was worthy of death; while surely the death of slain animals could never atone for sin; manifold punishments were declared by it; it was given out amongst signs of wrath and terror, the earthquake and the fire, and the awful trumpet; and the Law in its progress and going forth was accompanied with the deaths of many for disobedience. But when the sinner

came to the Gospel, it spoke not to him of death but of life; it said not to him, "I will punish," but "I will forgive." It spoke with a still small voice, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."<sup>1</sup> Its going forth was not accompanied with signs of terrors or of death, but of healing diseases, and of raising the dead. The Law took hold of a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath, and slew him; the Gospel on the Sabbath day took hold of impotent and dying men, and gave them life.

It is then in contemplation of this, the vast difference between the two, the Law and the Gospel, that St. Paul calls one the ministration of death, and the other that of life; and thus proceeds to shadow forth the unspeakable grace and glory which the Gospel opens. *But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away?* The Law was from God, and therefore was full of a hidden glory; and Moses, from conversing with God, had his face covered with glory; but this was only for a time,—that glory soon passed from Moses' face, as that Law itself was to pass away; to pass away as being perishable as the stone on which it was written. But not so the souls of men, on which the new Law is written by the Finger of God, according to His promise: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrys. ad loc.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. viii. 8—10.

Let the Jew, therefore, look back to the face of Moses, and glory in that dispensation which he received from God; but how infinitely more precious and glorious is that to which the Christian has to look, who has his law written on the living stones of the heavenly Jerusalem! *How shall not the ministration of the Spirit, proceeds St. Paul, be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.* “The ministration of righteousness,” that by which sins are forgiven, by which the Holy Ghost is bestowed, and men are enabled to walk in the Spirit—that by which they are made righteous before God, as clothed in Christ’s righteousness and putting on Christ, are renewed by Him day by day, through faith that worketh by love. For Christ came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.<sup>3</sup> “And it is for this end,” as saith St. Augustine, “that the Holy Spirit is given, in order that the Law may be fulfilled. This power Christ gives, through the Holy Spirit, to all them that believe; for the more every one receives of the Holy Spirit, the more does he fulfil the Law.”<sup>4</sup> For this reason then it is called “the ministration of righteousness.”

St. Paul, through the remainder of this chapter, dwells on this, the unspeakable glory of the new covenant, and describes it to consist in beholding the face of Christ; in gazing as it were upon His countenance in faith and love, while the Almighty Spirit within us converts us, as we gaze and behold Him, into the same Image. This, Christian people, is the inexpressible glory of that marvellous dispensation under which we live; the looking to Christ,

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. v. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Serm. cclxx. 3.



and by looking being changed; and by becoming changed being divested of this body of death and sin, and having a hidden life with Christ in God. In dying to the world, obtaining life; in very weakness and in a sense of weakness, being lost and again found in Him Who is our strength. St. John speaks of this glory, in the beholding of Christ, when He was seen among men: "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." But St. Paul, in this passage, speaks of those who have not "known Christ after the flesh," but behold Him in the Spirit, His example as Man, His power as God; and both of them as manifested here below, and made known to us in the Gospels.

The Epistle, indeed, appointed for the day stops short of this account of the Apostle, and does not proceed to tell us in what this glory of the new covenant consists, as St. Paul afterwards describes through this chapter. But the Gospel which succeeds sets before us as usual that very Image Itself of Christ, and invites us to behold Him "full of grace and truth." For this is our glory to behold Him, and to be made like unto Him. And, indeed, in this Gospel for the day, He is brought to us, in some sense, singularly near. We behold therein our God, as it were, marvellous as the expression may seem, in great weakness. It is not so much on account of His almighty power, such as we read of in other instances, but of His condescension to our infirmities in great compassion; of His coming down to meet us in the slowness of our faith, becoming weak in our weakness, in order that He may impart to us of His strength. For we may observe that in the Gospel for to-day the incident recorded is not of that powerful Voice which awoke the dead, nor of that

Word which storms and winds obeyed; it is not any great stupendous miracle by which persons at a distance were suddenly healed by the command of Christ, or of that power which brought fish to the shore at His bidding; nor of evil spirits trembling and terrified before Him; nor of His forgiving sins as the Almighty Judge Who is to come. But it is an apparently small manifestation of His power under peculiar circumstances, His making a stammering man to speak plain, and even that not without some delay and apparent difficulty, and with something as it were of human means. We are almost tempted to ask, where are His great words of power?

“Is His hand shortened that it cannot redeem?” Is He “as a mighty man that cannot save”? Oh! no, my brethren, it is all of our unbelief that it speaks, and of the multitude of His compassions that fail not. It is of His coming down to us, “more ready to hear than we to pray, and wont to give more than we desire or deserve:” as one submitting to be bound by the cords of our unbelief; and even as one thus bound, though in sighing, indeed, and much sadness of spirit, yet, as far as may be, aiding and healing us. “He could not do many mighty works there,” it is said on one occasion, “because of their unbelief.” He was as one bound; yet, even then, although thus bound, “He laid His hands,” it is added, “on a few sick folk, and healed them.” So it was now in this incident recorded to-day. He came down from the throne of His almighty power to be as an Infant of days in swaddling bands, to meet us in our weakness. But let us come to the occasion itself.

*And again, says St. Mark, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where He had meekly retired from the violence of the Pharisees, who were lying in wait to kill*

Him, *He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.* He was still holding aloof from His Jewish persecutors, and proceeding by that further side of the lake which was inhabited by Gentiles. *And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech;* not exactly deaf and dumb, but one that had some difficulty or hindrance, both in his hearing and his utterance; like themselves, spiritually slow to believe, deaf to His wonderful Divine words, and slow in tongue to acknowledge Him. *And they beseech Him to put His hand upon him;* they did not know Him as God, probably did not receive Him altogether as Christ, but yet looking on Him as a very Saintly Man of God, and a Prophet working miracles, they thought He could lay on him His sacred hand and heal him. This was much, indeed, had He been but mere man, but it was but a weak and inadequate acknowledgment of Him as God. And He never manifested His glory where there was not faith to receive Him. Perhaps for this reason the account is as follows:—

*And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His finger into his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue.* He condescended to be almost like a human physician, who had need to use means to bring about his ends, so did He accommodate Himself to the weakness of their faith, that they might thus come to understand that His Body was full of Godhead, that the touch and communion of His sacred flesh healed and hallowed mankind: that it was He Who was in the beginning with God, and was God, when “He formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” But this was not all, for He still lingered and delayed in His work of healing, which was not yet done. *And looking*

*up to heaven, as if praying to God for mankind as the Son of Man, He sighed: the depth of His sorrows audibly burst forth from His overcharged heart as He pleaded to God for our unbelief, our unwillingness to hear, which is worse than being deaf; our tongue, which was made for His glory, but hath forgotten Him; but while He prayed as Man, yet at the same time as God He commanded. He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.*

*And He charged them that they should tell no man. For He wished to be hidden; God always hideth Himself; as was said by the Prophet, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, the God of Israel, the Saviour." He hideth Himself in His Providence, and His works of grace; and where He is received into the heart He disposes a man to hide his works from the evil world, to withdraw himself more and more into that hidden life where God is. And well is it that it should be so; worldly men would but trample under foot the good which they love not, and turn again and rend those that bring it; and so but add to their own condemnation.*

But when God allows the good, which of itself would wish to be hidden, to break forth, He disposes the hearts of simple and lowly men to receive it with thankfulness. Although such as the Pharisees are more hardened and despise it, it is not so with these. *But the more He charged them, the more a great deal they published it; and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.*

Now the consideration brought before us to-day is, as I have said, not the greatness but the smallness of the

miracle ; and taken with that confession which we make in the Collect, the most vast of all miracles wrought by the power of God is not so impressive, so calculated to come home to the heart of a sinner as this. When a thoughtful man looks back on his past life, he must be astonished at the evidences of God's mercy and care which have surrounded him on all sides ; every portion of his life which he contemplates is full of His goodness ; but it may appear an extraordinary thing to say, yet nevertheless it will be found to be the case, that it is not the greatness but the smallness of these mercies which is most affecting. God has averted many dangers from him, it may be, given him many comforts, means of support, raised up friends, preserved to him loving relatives, perhaps blessed him with outward prosperity, a good name, and success in his undertakings ; and these things God has bestowed upon him in consequence of his desires, or in answer to his prayers. But is this all ? Are these the best things which God has to give ? has He nothing in store which He wishes to bestow better than these, which He holds back in His hand because we desire it not ? These are indeed tokens of His goodness and love, but they are such as should make us ashamed, such as Christ may have granted us with a sigh ; with a sigh that we wished for nothing better. A very early writer, Origen, mentions it as a saying of our Lord's Himself, " Ask for great things, and small things shall be given you." Would He not have granted to us, if we had desired it, that unspeakable gift, to have been conformed to the likeness of Himself ; to have been changed, by beholding Him, from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord ? No ; there is nothing more affecting than these mercies of God, for would He not teach us by these how ready He is to give

us what is of infinitely greater worth, if we in faith asked for it, and desired it? Daniel is called "a man of desires," but we are not men of desires; our desires are very weak and poor and low; because our love is small. St. Peter fell down at Christ's feet, overcome at the draught of fishes; and why? it was the smallness of the miracle, combined with the greatness of the power and love; it was as if he said, Boats and nets full of fishes! Oh! what is this, if only Thou, our God, art with us? What are these things, for which we toil, to us? From that moment he turned his back for ever on his trade, and on all this abundance; and seemed, with St. John and St. James, ever after, to increase more and more in his desires, and as if saying with Abraham, the father of the faithful, "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me?" Wilt Thou not give me Thyself

## SERMON LX.

### The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Gal. iii. 16—22. St. Luke x. 23—37.

*LOVE THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.*

*Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see.*—ST. LUKE x. 23.

AS we proceed from week to week along the Sundays after Trinity, every one seems to open to us some new view of the loving-kindness of God, urging the same upon us as constraining motives to serve Him with something of the same love to Him and to each other. And so is it to-day. St. Paul, in the Epistle, is explaining to the Galatians that “the blessing of Abraham” comes not on the Jews as such, but on all of us, as we are in Christ. *To Abraham, he says, and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; the word of promise speaks not of the many families of the Jews, born on the stock of Abraham; but speaks as of one, And to thy seed, Which is Christ; to Christ the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, and in Whose Body, being one, are contained all the faithful.*

But again, the Jews supposed that through the fulfil

ment of the Law, which came in so long after, they should inherit this blessing of Abraham; this then the Apostle proceeds to answer. *And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, in giving that promise to Abraham, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.* For the inheritance of the kingdom is given to us at our baptism, as being in Christ; it is a free gift, according to the promise made to Abraham. *For if the inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

*Wherefore then serveth the Law?* the Jew will ask. *It was added,* says St. Paul, *because of transgressions;* it was as a bridle placed upon the Jews,<sup>1</sup> to restrain their wickedness, and that too only for a time; *till the seed should come, he says, to whom the promise was made: and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator.* The Law itself was dispensed by the ministering spirits of Christ, Who Himself was before the Law, and gave the Law as the great mediator between God and man. For He spake there by means of angels and prophets, not as in the Gospel, by Himself. *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.* A free gift, without conditions, requires no mediator; but the Law was through a Mediator between God and man. A mediator implies two persons, God Himself is but One; the other party must be man therefore, and his part was to be performed, which was obedience. For a mediation cannot be like a promise, dependent on one party only.

*Is the Law then against the promises of God? Does it*

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrys. ad loc.



by bringing in the curse on disobedience stop the promised blessing, and cut off the Jew who lived under the Law? *God forbid: for if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law.* For the Law never could under any circumstances have given life; and, therefore, its non-fulfilment cannot destroy the promise of life. *But the Scripture hath concluded, hath shut up together, all, not all men, but more, all things, the whole creation, under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* The Law was to convince them of sin, and bring them to Christ: thus John the Baptist preached repentance; for if they had believed Moses they would have believed in Christ. The Law was but the means, not the end; but the Jews were now making it the end; whereas the end of the Law is Christ, in Whom is the promise, and the blessing, and the covenant, and righteousness, and life; not for a time only, but for ever. It was to this the prophets of old looked, to this the saints of the elder covenant aspired, to behold Christ, the end of the Law, in Whom dwells the fulness of all good, the love of God flowing down from Heaven, and embracing all men; as the fragrant oil that came down on the head of Aaron, and went to the skirts of his clothing.

It is this which is in so interesting and beautiful a manner set before us in the Gospel for to-day. *Blessed are the eyes, said our Lord to His disciples, which see the things that ye see; eyes that in faith are able to discern God in Christ. For I tell you, That many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* Blessed the eyes that see,

and ears that hear of sins forgiven, of Heaven opened, of diseases and evil spirits flying away at the presence of God, made Man for us; that witness the day of Christ which Abraham saw afar off in hope, and rejoiced.

*And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the Law? How readest thou? As our Lord Himself in the temptation thrice overcame Satan, by saying, "It is written," so now He points out to the Scribe who tempted Him, that the word of life was in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.* Does our Lord then mean to say, that in thus fulfilling the righteousness of the Law, there would be found eternal life? And if so, how is this to be reconciled with what St. Paul says,—that the Law could not possibly, under any circumstances, give life? The reason is this, that thus fulfilling the Law, in loving God, would bring to the end of the Law, which is Christ. For God is only known, or loved, or believed, as He is seen in Christ; Christ is the manifestation of God; the Law is the schoolmaster, teaching the love of God, in order to bring to Christ. Therefore, every one so far as he loves God, loves Christ; there is no other love of God either in the Law or in the Gospel. Nay, more than this, Christ only is Love, and Christ only is Life; we can only then have within us love or life, so far as Christ is in us: for He is Himself both the way and the end. And, therefore, He Himself said, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me." And here

He lays down for us the great principle of love as fulfilling both the Law and the Gospel ; in which is the union of man through Christ with God. It is, therefore, of two laws, the love of God and the love of man, yet both comprehended in one, as God and Man are One Christ.

His life only is holy and righteous who loves all things according as they are worthy of love ; who loves not much what is worthy of little love ; nor loves little an object worthy of much love. “ No sinner,” says St. Augustine, “ as such is to be loved ; but every man as man is to be loved, for the sake of God. But God alone is to be loved for His own sake. And if God is more to be loved than any man, every one ought to love God more than himself. And another man is to be more loved than our own body ; because he is capable of enjoying God, which the body cannot.” “ And all men are alike to be loved : for our Lord, in explaining to us who our neighbour is, has excluded none.”<sup>2</sup>

And when our Lord discloses this one great law of love, it is immediately seen why He is rejected of the Jews. For the Scribes and Pharisees we find on all occasions full of their own righteousness, and so anxious at all times to establish this, that they knew not the love of God in Christ : and, therefore, they were so far from loving their neighbour, that they knew not even who he was. *And he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour ?*

Now our Blessed Saviour had often given commands of loving our enemies and the like ; but it was His habit to clothe His precepts in little interesting and instructive

<sup>2</sup> De Doc. Chris. Par. Brev.

histories, such as might take hold of the mind, and never be forgotten; and perhaps there is none of these more memorable than this parable of the Good Samaritan.<sup>3</sup> *And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.* Leaving him in a dying state by the road-side, unable to assist himself, and, therefore, sure to die a lingering death, unless some timely assistance should occur. *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way.* For Jericho was the city of the priests, and Jerusalem was the place where they ministered before God; and surely, if any one might be expected to know the love of God, it was one whose whole business it was to intercede with God for man, and to intercede with man in behalf of God; who “made his boast of God, and knew His will, confident that he himself was a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, a teacher of babes.”<sup>4</sup> But, alas, they of whom most might be expected are often the worst: he came to that place in the road where the wounded man was, *and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.* He would not even look upon him. This is usually the case with selfish people; they are anxious to get out of the sight of misery, that it may not disturb their feelings. It was so with the rich man in the parable; it is not said that he even knew of Lazarus dying at his gate, such things were carefully kept out of his view; he kept *on the other side* of the road, the side of self-indulgence, ease, and luxury, not to be

<sup>3</sup> For the mystical meaning of this Parable, see “Plain Sermons,” vol. iv. Serm. cxiii.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. ii. 17—20.

offended by distresses that might occur to other fellow-travellers on this our common journey of mortality.

*And likewise a Levite.* Now, the Levites being a sacred tribe, belonging to the temple, and having the care of all holy things, were those of whom, next to the priests, we should most expect to know what Divine love is ; but the proverb is too often true, that the nearer men are to Church, the further they are from God. The Levite, *when he was at the place, came and looked* on him ; he was so far indeed better than the priest, that he came and looked on him as if with a passing thought of concern and sympathy, for first thoughts are often the best ; *and* then he also *passed by on the other side.*

*But a certain Samaritan,*—one of those half-heathen, ignorant outcasts whom the Jews would not deign to look upon, by whose very presence they felt contaminated, calling Christ a Samaritan at the same time that they called him a devil,—a Samaritan, *as he journeyed*, not passing in his own leisure like the priest and the Levite, as it would appear, but on a journey of business,—as he journeyed *came where he was ; and when he saw him he had compassion* on him, *and* not only so, but as if forgetting his own concerns and his journey, he *went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.* He entered into the case as if it had been that of a near relative or dear friend, for even on such an occasion he could have done no more. He gave up his own business, he gave up his oil and wine, the support of his own journey, he gave up his beast, he went himself on foot, he waited himself and tended on the wounded stranger, he made the case entirely his own. This is loving one's neighbour as oneself. *And on the morrow,*

when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, *Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.* He did not say to the innkeeper, "Now I have done my part, it is for you and others to look to him," but he kept to the same course throughout, as a privilege to serve one in distress.

*Which now, said our Lord to the Scribe, of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him.* Thus the Scribe who asked the question himself gives the answer, according to that expression in prophecy of the last day, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee." *Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.* If you wish to know who your neighbour is whom you are bound to love, it is he who needs your assistance. The word neighbour is more expressive in the Greek and Latin languages than in our own; it is he who approaches nearest to you. We are to love all men; but in doing so are to love most those who need it most. Now how can this be? It is only, my brethren, by loving God. It is by loving men because God loves them, and as beloved of Him, and because we ourselves love Him. And therefore it is the second Commandment, it cannot stand alone, but another goes before it, the first and great Commandment, which is the love of God.

We may love some persons because we love ourselves, —because they are connected with us, are useful to us, or kind; but then we shall love ourselves best; but if we love our neighbour because we love God, then we shall love him in some measure as we love ourselves.

Again, we may dislike various persons for various reasons; one, because he is proud or happy and above us; another,

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because he is miserable and below us ; another, because he is unkind to us ; another, because he is in our way, or condemns us ; another, on account of infirmities of body or mind : but in all these cases we shall get rid of these evil tempers, if we consider how they are loved of God ; surely, as much as we ourselves are. Consider, I say, how God loves them, and you will learn to be merciful, even as your Father in Heaven is merciful.

## SERMON LXI.

### The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Gal. v. 16—24. St. Luke xvii. 11—19.

#### THANKFULNESS THE LIFE OF THE REGENERATE.

*And JESUS answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?—ST. LUKE xvii. 17.*

IT is an awful lesson which God would impress on us this week, speaking to us as it were from the two horns of His holy altar. For the Gospel is of ten lepers being healed, and one only being thankful; and the Epistle brings before us that test by which so many will be found wanting, viz. whether we walk in the Spirit or after the flesh.

*I say then, says St. Paul to the Galatians, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* This abiding in the Spirit, this dwelling in love, this conversation in Heaven, the only life of the regenerate, nourished by faith, will keep you from the desires of the fleshly mind. The best mode of avoiding sins of the flesh is by being actively engaged in the life of the Spirit. For thus it is that he who is “begotten of God keepeth himself, and that



wicked one toucheth him not.”<sup>1</sup> “This path,” says St. Chrysostom, “makes duty easy, produces love, and by love is fenced in.”

*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.* By the flesh St. Paul means, “not the natural body, but the depraved will;”<sup>2</sup> our corrupt nature is in its desires opposed to the good Spirit of God, so that there must ever be a conflict between them, till one obtains the mastery; or, as the Apostle says, *And these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* That is, while this contest is going on, which St. Paul describes more at length in another place, “For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not,”<sup>3</sup> speaking of him who has not yet found that perfect freedom which is in the service of God.

*But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.* If ye are following His Divine guidance, so as to obtain this mastery over the natural mind, ye have no more need of the law. “For,” says the last-mentioned writer, “he that hath the Spirit as he ought, quenches thereby every evil desire, and when released from such he is above the law. For he who is never angry is no more subject to that command of the law, Thou shalt not kill; and he who never harbours an unchaste thought has no need of the law, Thou shalt not commit adultery. The grace which is now given has no need of the law, inasmuch as it mortifies all those evil desires in the heart, and leads to a higher rule of life.”

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, i. e. ye must*

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 18

<sup>2</sup> St. Chrys. ad loc.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. vii. 18.

not be deceived by them, as in making this same solemn declaration to the Corinthians, he says, "be not deceived;" and to the Ephesians, "let no man deceive you."<sup>5</sup> The works of the flesh, *which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, I solemnly warn you beforehand, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* It is as if he had said, Christians who are sons of God, and inheritors of the kingdom, must so live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, as not to be tempted by these desires; you must not creep and crawl on the ground as heirs of death, and children of the serpent; but your walk, your hearts, your desires, must be above the world, governed by the grace of God, which is a new law unto itself. And thus, in the Collect, as not satisfied with faith only in the beginnings of repentance, we pray for the increase and abounding of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain the promises of God, we ask not only to keep but to love His commandments.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* He here calls them "fruit," not works, as produced by the labour of man and the dews of Heaven. This description of Christian graces contains within it all the eight beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount; its duties and its blessings shed abroad in the soul; and corresponds with the account which St. Paul gives of all those heavenly dispositions which are found in charity, or the love of God, which

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. v. 6.

never faileth. Here it is added, *against such there is no law*. That is, such persons and such graces are not subject to the law ; it reaches them not ; for the Spirit gives them a higher and better rule to walk by.

And then, that there be no mistake, nor room for self-deceit, he sums up all in that touching comprehensive sentence, *And they that are Christ's have crucified*—he does not say will crucify, or would, and desire to do so, but “have crucified”—*the flesh with the affections and lusts*. Thus, speaking for himself, in other places, on this subject, St. Paul breaks forth into a sound of triumph, as one in battle who had seen his enemies turn their back, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”<sup>6</sup> Now this passage of St. Paul, which forms the Epistle for to-day, is, I say, an alarming one, for it speaks of a conflict and struggle between the Spirit of God within us and our natural mind, which struggle many never think of making at all, but live according to the desires of the mind, as if there were no war to be waged with ourselves. But more than this, for he describes the only way of salvation to be that of being victorious in this struggle; for the works of the fleshly mind and of the Spirit are so utterly at variance that there can be no compromise, but the Christian, who is in the narrow way of life, is led by the Spirit so as not to fulfil the desires of the natural mind. He is not in the struggle or conflict, but having, through the Spirit, gained the mastery over his corruptions, he is in the way of peace. He is full of “love, joy, and peace,” and is there-

<sup>6</sup> Rom. vii. 25 ; viii. 37.

fore abounding in all the fruits of righteousness. But now this is a state to which few Christians attain. Of how few can it be said that they have crucified the flesh with its affections, and are now risen and ascended into that new life which is with Christ in God? Expressions such as that of being dead with Christ, and buried with Him, of the old man being mortified, and of our living the life of the New Man, are taken up and used by us, as if they applied to our own case, because we know that St. Paul does apply this description to all Christians. But, alas, we little consider what it all means, and how far it is fulfilled in us. In a parish of two or three hundred people how few are there who thus live? Happy is the pastor who has reason to think there are some that do so.

Now leprosy is, throughout the Scripture, so often put for an outward type or sign of sin, that we cannot fail to apply the Gospel for to-day, and to see how strongly and sadly it bears on this subject. *And it came to pass, as Jesus went to Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off. Set apart for legal uncleanness, without the congregation of the faithful, and outside the city of God, "standing afar off," they afford a lively representation of ourselves in our unconverted and gentile state. "Ye who sometimes were far off," says the Apostle, "are made nigh by the Blood of Christ."*<sup>7</sup> And when he had been describing those who followed the lusts of the flesh, which shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, he adds,

<sup>7</sup> Eph. ii. 13.

“and such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.”<sup>8</sup> Leprosy, therefore, is a sign of that unregenerate state from which, through Christ, we are delivered.

*And they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.* We are all of us, in distress, wont to call upon God; such, indeed, is an act of faith in Him, with which He is pleased, and answers our prayers according to our need. But this is no proof of the habitual state of our hearts towards God; indeed, the history of the Jews of old is in this respect the case with ourselves; when oppressed by their enemies, in affliction or fear, they remembered themselves and turned unto God; they remembered that the High God was their Redeemer; but no sooner were they relieved than such feelings passed away; “within a while they forgot His works, and would not abide His counsel.”<sup>9</sup> And, therefore, this prayer of the lepers, and their faith in Christ, might have been very earnest for the time, and as such was answered by Him, but did not indicate their ultimate acceptance with Him.

*And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go, shew yourselves unto the priests.* If you will believe My Word, and obey Me, you are healed already; and as such, in obedience to the Law of Moses, “show yourselves to the priests;” they will certify that you are healed, and will again admit you into intercourse with men. *And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.* In faith and obedience they found restoration; suddenly they found their foul diseased body, which was like a living corpse, changed; they were, as it were, born again, “alive

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Ps. cvi. 13. 43, 44.

from the dead ;” their flesh came again as a little child. They represent us in our mighty deliverance, washed from our sins in baptism, and made whole.

*And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks ; and he was a Samaritan.* This short description may well represent the state of mind required of a Christian ; ever sensible of that great mercy which has healed him, and, as it were, “with a loud voice,” he “glorifies God,” by confession of his sins, and of the undeserved goodness of Christ. Thus “love, joy, peace,” fill his mind. And “he fell down on his face;” such is that humility which is the chief mark of a Christian mind, with his face to the earth, like that accepted publican who would not lift up his eyes to Heaven ; and it is “at Jesus’ feet” he falls down, that is, in his humiliation ever worshipping Him Who is God and Man. This is the temper of mind which ever abounds with “long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,” such as St. Paul has described in the Epistle as the fruits of the Spirit.

To this description of the returning leper it is added, “giving Him thanks;” and this indeed contains it all ; his turning back, his glorifying God, his falling on his face, his worshipping at the feet of Jesus, all these were but outward signs, with which his whole demeanour and conduct expressed what his heart felt, namely, his giving Him thanks. And in like manner, all that is required of the most perfect Christian may be contained in this “giving Him thanks;” giving thanks, always in word and deed, to Christ, for His great deliverance and salvation. Is he compassionate and merciful, active in giving of alms, fervent in prayer, careful in practices of mortifica-

tion and self-denial; does he labour to offer up his whole body as a living sacrifice to God, acceptable through Jesus Christ? All this is nothing else but a giving of thanks for his salvation. And therefore it is that love, joy, and peace are inseparable from every duty of a Christian, because his heart is the seat of thanksgiving. What more natural? what more easy? How much more so is this conduct of the thankful leper, than the miserable pride and forgetfulness of those who went their way and gave no thanks!

It is added, "and he was a Samaritan." This also is not without much meaning, and the consideration of which ought to be very humbling to us, who have such means of grace, viz. that those who have least advantages are often the most lowly and thankful, and therefore the highest in God's everlasting favour. The Great Day will surely make a wonderful disclosure in this respect, setting on high those who are now the least accounted of and esteemed; and putting down many who now seem to stand high in God's favour, on account of the privileges of grace which they enjoy; being dry and barren within for want of thankfulness for great blessings, while some, whom they despise, are thankful even for the least crumbs that fall from the table of God; like this Samaritan, ever "prostrate, in mind and heart, at the feet of their Deliverer."<sup>1</sup> And therefore is it in manifold ways fulfilled that Christ "came unto His own, and His own received Him not." "That," as St. Bernard says, "the foes of Christ are of His own household;" that "the wounds" which He receives are "in the house of His friends."

To this our Lord adds very memorable words, such as

<sup>1</sup> Quesnel.

He would doubtless have us to consider unto the end of the world; and which may well ring in our ears and sound in our hearts at all times. *And Jesus answering, i. e. calling their attention to it, said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger, this Samaritan,—an alien from the promises, and without the covenant and household of God.* Our Lord speaks, if we may so say it, with a sort of mournful and painful wonder; and, indeed, it must appear to us a circumstance marvellous and almost incredible; such as we could not understand and scarcely believe, were it not that it is such an exact picture of our own hearts. Notwithstanding all the deceits we put upon ourselves we cannot but acknowledge it; although there is no truth in the world more sad and melancholy than this; in all our manifold deliverances from sickness and dangers and distresses, we may be full of faith, full of prayer, full of holy resolutions, when we feel God's chastening hand pressing hard upon us; but when it is removed, this is all gone away and forgotten; the very feeling of thankfulness is but as the morning cloud which passes away, as the morning cloud which catches a few gleams from the sun, and is radiant for a moment, or which lets fall, it may be, a few drops of tears; but, look again, and it is gone away and not found. And if this is the case, in all those little perils and escapes which happen to us in our daily life, alas! how much more is this the case in that to which I would this day apply the whole of this subject, viz. in our spiritual deliverance, once for all, out of the hands of our great enemy, and the little thankfulness it has produced in the whole of our Christian calling. For the whole perfection of the highest saint of God may be said to consist in



nothing more than what is contained in this single word "thankfulness." And all the condemnation of the unworthy Christians, at the last, who fall from their high calling, may be summed up in this: "They glorified Him not, neither were thankful."

It is this consideration which renders the Epistle for to-day, in conjunction with the Gospel, as I said, so exceedingly awful in the lesson it conveys, for in the former St. Paul describes what the Christian must be as living by the Spirit, such as our own experience must tell us that scarce one Christian out of ten will be found to be; and then, in the Gospel, our Lord Himself, Who knew what is in man, has lifted up and left to us this sad note of warning, a warning which I would to God we could carry about us at all times, wherever we are and whatever we do, "Ten cleansed, one only found thankful." Would that it might sound in our ears in all the gracious providences of God towards us, so that it might stir and alarm us into more diligence! "Out of ten one only found thankful!" Would that this warning might attend us in our daily business, reminding us of how much Christ has done for us, how little we do for Him! Would that it might occur to us again and again, in all our intercourse with the world, "Out of ten one only found thankful!" that it might fill us with a holy zeal and emulation not to be as other Christians are content to be! Would that the words might be with us here when we come to pray, "Out of ten one only found thankful," and he was with his face to the ground, at the feet of Jesus! Would that, not at our prayers in church only, but at all times, we might be thus found, in lowliness of mind, as it were with our face to the earth, and in an holy peace, as at the feet of Jesus! I was as one dead, "nevertheless I live; yet

not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And when we hear a sermon, let us not be as the nine around, with wandering eyes, or curious ears, or thoughts occupied by the world, or with forgetful memories, but rather as considering that God may therein be delivering a message to each of us, on which our life depends. Let us remember that so many, though healed by His Word, departed without His blessing. One only out of ten returned, and glorified God, and gave thanks.

*And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole.* "Arise:" according to the humiliation of himself in His sight is every one raised of God, exalting him who humbleth himself. "Go thy way," let My peace be with thee in all thy ways; and remember that it is thy faith only which hath made thee whole, and therefore faith alone can preserve and keep thee such; this, thy deliverance, is a token of the power of faith in Me. By faith shalt thou a stranger be grafted into that living Stock, from which the natural branches, through unbelief, are broken off. And now, "thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear."<sup>2</sup>

Alas, my brethren, may not this incident express something of that mournful surprise and terrible wonder which will break upon us on the Day of Judgment, on beholding how few will be saved? May we not suppose that this sad truth, which He saw in the Spirit, may have been in our Lord's mind when He said, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" *Where are they?*

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 20.

## SERMON LXII.

### The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Gal. vi. 11—18. St. Matt. vi. 24—34.

*MY BELOVED IS MINE AND I AM HIS.*

*From henceforth let no man trouble me ; for I bear in my body the marks of the LORD JESUS.—GAL. vi. 17.*

THE Apostle sums up his beautiful Epistle to the Galatians in a few short and touching words, *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.* St. Paul's Epistles were usually written by the hand of another, while he dictated the words ; but here, in his very great anxiety for these simple Galatians, he seems to say, "ye see how large a letter," or rather by what large-sized,<sup>1</sup> ill-shapen<sup>2</sup> characters, "I have written to you with mine own hand." Or as he speaks on another occasion<sup>3</sup> of his adding the salutation at the end in his own writing, it may be now by these large letters in the conclusion you will see my own handwriting, thus testifying to you the sum of the whole matter, which is this: The Jews, which desire you to be circumcised and to keep the Law of Moses, do so from ambitious and worldly motives,

<sup>1</sup> *πηλίκους.*

<sup>2</sup> *τὴν γραμμάτων ἀμορφίαν.—Chrys.*

<sup>3</sup> *2 Thess. iii. 7.*

to gratify their own pride, as the peculiar people of God, and that by so doing they may do away with the offence of the cross, and all the persecution which thence arises. *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.* Nor can this be from any desire of serving God, or from any love of the law itself, as a means of doing so. *For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.* They will compass sea and land to make a proselyte; not to make him more holy, but to gratify their own party spirit and vain-glory.

*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* As if he had said, But as for me, I shrink from the very thought of anything that partakes of human pride; for all my glory is in that sign of God's unspeakable love, by which He so loved me while I was His enemy, that He gave Himself for me. He was not ashamed of all His humiliation and pain, out of His infinite tenderness for me: the consideration of which has so through and through pierced my heart, that this world with all its charms is dead to me; and I am dead to it. It is a double death by which I cling to life.<sup>4</sup>

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* Neither Jew nor Gentile hath anything to bring; all this new condition consists in being born again in baptism, and putting on the new man, and being renewed day by day after the image of Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Chrys. ad loc.

*And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.* And now, in conclusion, when I come to pronounce upon you that peace which Christ gives, I exclude from this peace those who fall back into that old Jewish pride which nailed Christ on the cross, and I give that peace to those whose life is according to this law of the new creature, who walk by faith in Christ; for these are in fact the true "Israel of God." For as for them that call themselves so, our Lord Himself says of them, they "say they are Jews, and are not,<sup>5</sup> but are the synagogue of Satan."

*From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.* When a slave is about his master's business, and people see that he has on him the brand or mark of his master, they trouble him not; well, I have on me the brand and mark of my Master, which is the Cross. The many stripes and wounds I have suffered for His sake bear testimony how dear His cross is to me, and that I belong to Him. Leave me to His service. Let me hear no more of circumcision and the false synagogue.

And as for you, *brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.* Amen. May that grace which is not of the law, but of faith in Christ, be with you, not outwardly in the flesh, according to this Jewish mind, but inwardly, in that spirit in which is formed the new creature.

Thus strongly does St. Paul, as with a godly jealousy, cut off everything that may interfere with that undivided love of Christ crucified, in which alone is all peace and grace. For how contrary is that self-exaltation of the

<sup>5</sup> Rev. ii. 9; iii. 9.

Jew to the spirit of lowliness which the cross of Christ preaches? How does everything which tends to human glory so far impair and impede that fulness of peace which is to be found in God? So far speaks St. Paul in the Epistle. And now Christ Himself teaches us in the Gospel for the day that same lesson of whole and entire rest in God, disclosing to us in unspeakable tenderness something of that love towards us which was perfected on the cross; and which can admit of no divided affection.

*No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* It is quite impossible for a man at the same time to love two things opposite to each other; to love the ease and honour of the world, and also the self-denial and humility which is found in the cross of Christ. What then is to become of the worldly callings by which we live; of the farm, and the shop, and the wages of labour, and to the minister himself, the profits of his ministry? Ye cannot *serve* them, says our Lord, ye must be in heart above them, ye must make them merely secondary, and subservient to the love of God and His service; or else no doubt they are sinful; they prevent you from loving God and cleaving to Him. They make you secretly to despise the cross, and things of Heaven.

*Therefore, I say unto you; I say unto you, Who am Myself the Bread of Life, and the clothing of your shame and nakedness, I Who am Myself the Life of those that believe in Me, and their portion for ever,—I say unto you, Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.* Let there be no carefulness for food and raiment, much less for other things of this temporal life; for re-

member how the good Mary, who had chosen the one thing needful, was praised, because she had forgotten all that pertaineth to the meat that perisheth; remember how the disciples, when they had omitted to take bread in the boat, were reprov'd by their Divine Master, because on this account the subject was afterwards first in their thoughts; remember how they were sent forth in need of all things, in order that they might practise this heavenly mind, as having nothing, yet possessing all things in Christ.

*Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? If He gives the greater, will you not trust Him for the less? If He gives life, will He not sustain it? If a body, will He not give the clothing needful for it? And oh, how much more may not we add with St. Paul, and say, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"*<sup>6</sup>

*Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? If these creatures that know Him not thus trust Him, will not ye to whom it is given to know Him? Are ye not capable of knowing God, of loving Him, and enjoying Him for ever? To be able to know and love God, this raises you immeasurably above the beasts that perish. Are ye not to Him of value unspeakable, beyond all that ye can think or know? are ye not infinitely more dear to Him than ye are to each other or each to himself? Does He not care for you far more than ye do for yourselves? Our Blessed Lord does not, in this passage, say all this,*

<sup>6</sup> Rom. viii. 32.

which might be truly said, but what is more constraining, even to the most faithless, in His exceeding gentleness and condescension He suggests nothing more than this: Are ye not much better in the sight of your heavenly Father than the fowls of the air? yet even they are by nature itself taught to trust in His care; He asks nothing more of you, for all His gifts, than that you will rely on His goodness and trust Him.

And again, after all, how unprofitable such carefulness? For *which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?* Blessed be the goodness and mercy of God, Who, to keep us from such anxious thoughts, has made them to be of no avail: miserable cares, which end where they begun, and can never prosper, because they consist in a distrust of Him Who is the Giver and Disposer of all good.

*And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow.* Why do you think that your heavenly Father has raised around you such abundance of flowers? why are they so beautiful and wonderful in their structure, and colour, and varieties? why do they bear about your paths such tokens of His hand, and seem to make silent appeals to you, in order to call your attention? It is because God has designed them to teach you, His children, of His unceasing presence, and His care, although you see Him not, in order that you may trust Him. *They toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* He spreads the beauties of nature at your feet, He gives delight and joy, He sends fear and sorrow, but it is all for one end, in order that we may trust Him. A poor man, who sees in the meanest flower the marks of his heavenly Father's care, is richer



in that knowledge than he who is dressed in a kingly robe and forgets God. What is there that a king can prize in a work of art, or an ornament of honour, or a memorial of high birth, compared with a token of God's love to him that loves God? Because he knows full well that He will "show him greater things than these," he accepts it as a sign of those better things in store, which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard;" of the hidden glories of that robe of immortality by which Christ shall cover his shame, the white vesture of those who are "made kings and priests unto God." But what our Blessed Lord here asks of him is far less than this; it is only that, taught by these things, he should be without carefulness for that second great need of our earthly life, which is raiment.

*Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,—if even this is so contrived and adorned with the marks of God's hand, which is of a nature so frail and perishable, and for uses so poor,—shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* It may be observed, that these exhortations of our Lord are addressed to the very poorest, such as are tempted by careful anxieties for the very necessaries of life; and they are expressions of His great tenderness and compassion for them. It is to the poor His Gospel is preached; the poor were the especial objects of His care, and the subjects of His blessings; it was their condition which He Himself put on, in order to comfort them; it was to relieve their hunger that He twice wrought a miracle; and thus these precepts are especially addressed to them; it was their carefulness, their anxiety He wished to relieve, knowing that if they had faith in Him they were rich indeed; that poverty was the best school to bring them to Him. And therefore, never was greater

love expressed than with these words, which seemed to upbraid them, "O ye of little faith." Oh, why will ye not trust in Me? It is all I ask in return for My love: recline yourselves on Me, in My bosom ye shall find peace for all your cares. Oh, why will ye not? I have left the riches and glories of Heaven; I have emptied Myself of all My greatness, and become poorer than any of you, in order that ye may trust Me; and that trusting in Me all which I have may be yours. For why is God revealed in so much love, as your Father in Heaven, and accepting you as His children in His well-beloved Son, if ye are still to be as the heathen, without God in the world?

*Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:)* When you think so much of these things, it appears as if there are no higher blessings which you value, and on which your affections are placed; and as if there were no Providence in the world to support you.

*For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* It is an expression of more than fatherly affection and care: He knoweth every want; there is no need ye can have which escapes His most intimate regard. "Cast your care upon Him, for He careth for you." And now our Lord adds the sum of the whole matter in these memorable words, to be ever engraven on all we think or do: *but seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* Here is the reason given, why all thoughtfulness for things temporal is forbidden; it is in order that all our thought, all our care, all our desires, may be taken up in the one thing which alone abideth. Any one who looks back on life, will see not only that his worldly cares have

been profitless, but that they have kept his mind from growing in grace. They have stopped him on his heavenly journey; they have thrown him back; they have been the occasion of precious (ah, how precious!) time irrevocably lost. But when the cares after the Kingdom of God occupy the first place in the heart, they lead one to perceive the hand of God's providence much more distinctly; and to see that whether it be by hardship and poverty, or any other means, that all things work together for good to them that love God. So may we learn to live only for God, in Him, and for Him, and to desire nothing but for His sake, and that it may bring us nearer unto Him.

*Take therefore no thought for the morrow.* It is not the pressure of want that fills men with faithless cares, but the fear of it; it is not the need of to-day, but of the future; take therefore no thought for the morrow; *for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* Every day brings troubles of its own, which it will be enough to bear with meekness and patience; every day brings sins and temptations against which it will require our whole undivided care and attention to contend; every day brings us nearer to those vast overwhelming changes which await us, infinite in importance, and eternal in duration, great realities of joy or misery; and every day is of consequence with regard to them; so that well do we need to be unentangled and unimpeded by faithless fears and hopes about the shadows of this short passing existence.

"Henceforth let no man trouble me," says St. Paul, "for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Surely, my brethren, we may say this, not only to all the glory of the world, its party spirit, its controversies and

self-righteousness, but we may take up the words, and apply them also to all its petty anxieties, its faithless schemes, and disappointments,—henceforth trouble me not. I bid adieu to you, in order that I may run the more readily in the service of Him Whose mark I bear; I would cast off all such things, in order that I may learn more and more the depth and height, the breadth and length of His immeasurable love, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. His mark I bear, as sworn to be His soldier and servant. His brand has gone deep in my flesh; I am His; with His cross was I signed at my baptism, in token that I should be for ever none but His alone; that His cross should be my study, my pattern, my peace. From henceforth let no man trouble me; for it is the knowledge of Christ only that I wish to learn, and far from me be everything that hinders that study: blessed and welcome be everything that helps me to it. All things are hurtful to me that impede and hamper me in this race; all things are so far only profitable to me as they aid me in this course. And what these things are Thou only knowest, O my God; I am blind, and poor, and miserable, and know not what may be good for me, towards my everlasting interest, and what not: Thou knowest. Do Thou choose for me, O my God; and grant me to love what Thou chooseth, because it is from Thee; and to love it the more the more it partakes of Thy cross; for then am I more sure that it is altogether Thine, and from Thee.

And now, my brethren, may we not to-day consider the Collect, the Epistle, and Gospel, as all bound together by that one golden chain which, extending from the throne of God, holds all things that shall endure; and which is no other than the mercy of God in Christ. Thus, there-

fore, may we read the Collect and pray ; Keep Thy Church, O Lord, we beseech Thee, with Thy perpetual mercy ; or rather, as it is in the original Latin, by Thy perpetual propitiation ; or, as St. Paul says, by the cross of Christ, by the mercies overflowing to us from thence, by His all-prevailing atonement, Who for our sakes became poor, that we by His poverty might be made rich ; and because the frailty of our mortal nature is such that without Thee it ever falls away,<sup>7</sup> by Thy help may we be withdrawn from things hurtful, and be directed to what is profitable for our salvation.

7 " *Labitur humana mortalitas.*"—Lat.

## SERMON LXIII.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Eph. iii. 13—21. St. Luke vii. 11—17.

*THE KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS LIFE ETERNAL.*

*And to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge.—*

EPH. iii. 19.

IN the Epistle for to-day St. Paul appears, as it were, lost in contemplation at the unspeakable vastness and majesty of the Church, and the incomprehensible love of Christ. *I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.* To himself his own tribulations were but light, but his only fear was that his sufferings might become to others a cause of offence, like the cross of Christ itself was. But as the cross of Christ was become the glory of the believer, so also might be the sufferings of His servants, who drank of their Master's cup. *For this cause*, he adds, breaking forth into very glowing eloquence at the thought of that great mystery by which all things are drawn unto Christ by His cross,—*for this cause I bow my knees, as in heartfelt solemn supplication, unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named;*

the family not of Abraham only, but of all angels and saints united in service of one common Lord. *That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory; not according to the thought of man, but according to that abundant goodness which is in Christ beyond all thought; to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.* This is his very earnest prayer for them, kindled and quickened by his own tribulations. And as explaining this strength in the inner man of which he speaks, he adds, *that Christ, the New Man, after the unspeakable Image of God, may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love; not as if faith were the root only, and love the fruit, but as rather love itself were the very root and ground of all, while it is also the immeasurable expansion and height. That, rooted in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, that love of God which is boundless every way as the heavens, by which, far as the east is from the west, He hath set our sins from us; or, as St. Paul more distinctly adds the same, and to know the love of Christ, and as if to correct himself, as speaking of that which no man can understand, as being in every way infinite,—which passeth knowledge.* To know that “which passeth knowledge,” to know that which cannot be known, this sounds like a contradiction; as if it were to understand that which heart of man cannot understand, and yet which may, in a manner, be understood by the Spirit of God within. As in another place, St. Paul speaks of those things which have not entered into the heart of man, but God hath revealed them unto us, he says, by His Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 10.

And this he here further states, by an expression singularly eloquent and comprehensive, *that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

And then, bringing down the same mystery of Godliness to bear upon themselves, by supplication and thanksgiving, he carries on this exceeding loftiness of expression, as if words were unequal to contain it, and adds: *Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,—to do more than we ask or think were much, but to do “exceeding abundantly” above, this is a very strong expression,—not only greater, but abundantly greater, and not that only, but exceeding abundantly.*<sup>2</sup> So vastly does the gift of God surpass the highest conception of our weak faith and love; and as if to mark such Divine power as shown, not in outward miracles in this perishable world, as that of removing mountains, but in that inward and marvellous work of indwelling grace, which, by experience, they knew, he says, *according to the power that worketh in us.* And in speaking of a gift so amazing, so transcendent, so unspeakable, he passes into worship and praise, *unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

Now, one great point in running through the whole of this passage of St. Paul is, that this love of Christ of which he speaks, and this indwelling power of His Spirit connected with it, is something far beyond what we can understand. We know what love is, we understand its nature, but this love exceeds all that we understand, not in kind, but in degree; it is something beyond what we can comprehend, from the greatness of it; it is like the vastness of the natural world, the material universe, or like

<sup>2</sup> St. Chrys. ad loc.



the vastness of eternity, ideas which we cannot grasp, because they are infinite and without end. So is the love of Christ : we know what love is, from a parent's love to his children, a bride to the bridegroom, friends to each other, and the compassionate love of a kind heart ; and from these we apprehend what the love of God is, as manifest in Christ's Incarnation ; and yet St. Paul seems to say, that while knowing we know it not, not on account of its nature but its greatness, except that even this, according to our degree, is by the Spirit shed abroad, and manifested to the heart.

It is evident, therefore, that this, the love of Christ, is not to be measured, or entered into, by any ardent imagination, no strong feeling or sublime conceptions of men ; nor even by exceeding greatness of understanding and " largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore ;" but it is spiritually discerned by faith. It is not different from, or unlike, what we ask or think ; but above, or beyond, what we ask or think. The more we ask of God, the more we think of Him, the nearer do we approach to it. It is prayer which gives the knowledge. Do you wish to know whether God is love ? pray to Him, and this will tell you, as no words of man, no teaching can do. Do you wish to know how great the love of God is ? pray to Him more, and you will know better. Pray to Him more humbly, and you will know more the height and depth of that love ; pray to Him more earnestly, and you will know more the intensity of that love ; pray more constantly and perseveringly, and you will know the unfailing steadfastness and strength of that love ; let your prayers be longer, and you will know more the length of that love ; pray more frequently, on all occasions, and you will know more how encompassed you are on all sides

by that love. Deny yourself when you pray, and you will find out the mystery, how that love is connected with the Cross.

It is, therefore, not with the understanding, but with faith and prayer, my brethren, that I would ask you to attend to that account of the love and power of Christ which is recorded to us in the Gospel for to-day. And may God of His great mercy grant that both you and I may have the seeing eye, and the hearing ear, while we look on and behold Christ, God of very God, though clothed with human flesh, manifested to us in this wonderful incident. May the Spirit give us to see His sacred countenance, and to hear His gracious words.

*And it came to pass the day after, that Jesus went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people.* Now we must consider our Blessed Lord in this His going about, what it was; it was not like any great man among ourselves, when, as he proceeds, persons stand aloof and gaze apart, from his being hedged about by something of worldly pomp: it was not so with our Lord, there was no such state or outward dignity; on the contrary, the people thronged Him and pressed upon Him; for His external deportment was exceedingly humble, He was not only as one of themselves among the crowd, but as the poorest of the poor; and not only this, but from His extreme condescension to the most mean and afflicted, to women and little children, He made Himself as it were still lower in mind even than His personal outward appearance. This was so much the case, that the disciples were surprised that He asked on one occasion who touched Him, because all the people in the crowd pressed upon Him and thronged Him; and at another time this was mentioned as so much the case,

that He was obliged to get into a boat to teach them. From this we may learn how it was when He went about, — there was no authority of worldly greatness. But what was remarkable in our Blessed Lord was the exceeding holiness and power of His words, and that Divine love which emanated from Him, and seemed to encompass Him all around with compassion and tenderness, beyond the sons of men. True indeed it is, that at the sight of a very holy person all good men are impressed with awe, more than in the presence of the greatest of kings ; but then this is only the case with good men ; the multitude, comprising many Scribes and Pharisees, many of the proud and profane, have no feeling of this kind. So was it now ; some no doubt were deeply awe-struck, not so much at His miracles, as by His holiness, and by His words that entered the soul, and seemed to be within a man's inmost heart, full of eyes. But even this was accompanied with such a singular lowliness and pity, that rendered His Divine presence something quite different from that of any other teacher ; for while His words were with Divine authority, His deeds were as One Who made Himself the servant of all. Such were the mingled feelings of amazement and wonder which filled St. Peter when he exclaimed, " Lord, dost Thou wash my feet ?" And that of the Baptist, when he said, " I have need to be washed of Thee, and comest Thou to me ?" And again, this familiar access was so great, that Judas the traitor, when he wished to point out his Divine Master, had no means of doing it, except this sign, " Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He !" As if he had said, He is so like other men that you will not know Him apart, except for that love which He bears to me ; the love that He bears to me, that is the sign.

By these remarks I wish to describe and set before you

what our Lord's going about was, so that you may see Him as it were in your minds as He proceeded with "much people" in this passage. *Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, this little town, called Nain, on a rising ground, at the foot of Mount Tabor, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her.* "Behold," says the Evangelist, as drawing attention to a sight which suddenly arrested their course; a funeral met them, unusually large, because it was attended with circumstances of more than ordinary distress; a young man prematurely cut off, an only son, and not that only, but the only son of a widow; and her sad case, from the account, seemed to have excited the compassion of all around; for "much people of the city" were gathered around her, not merely attendants of the funeral, but it is said, *with her*, as if supporting her, and desirous to console her, as far as might be, by their presence. *And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.* If the case was such as to have occasioned commiseration and pity among all her neighbours, much more must it have done so with our Lord Himself; for He is oftentimes described, as the Son of Man, so full of what may be called human sympathy and pity. Thus when it is said that He wept at the grave of Lazarus, the account seems to imply that the immediate occasion of this was His beholding the distress of others; for it is said just before, "When Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." And the same is implied on this occasion, for it is said, "When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her;" whereas it might have been supposed that He would have wrought the miracle indeed

with Divine love and goodness, but Himself all the while undisturbed at the sight of sorrows, the occasions of which He could so easily remove. But it was not so ; although Himself at all times full of that indescribable peace which He bestows on others, yet that peace was mixed with the very tenderest concern for all human sorrow, such as man feels for man, or rather far more, though it be the same kind of pity, and such as is always found in good men. Such is here signified by the description of the Evangelist, that He was moved with compassion ; such as is said of Him on another occasion, when He saw the multitudes weary and without food, or ignorant and needing instruction. And, in addition to this expression of the Evangelist's, the words our Lord uses are those of the most tender commiseration, "He said unto her, Weep not." It was not the funeral, nor the large concourse that attended it, which had arrested His regard ; but the mother's sorrow. This is as it were the centre of attention, the one great point which pervades the whole narrative ; His compassion for the mother when He saw her, and His restoring to her the lost son of her widowhood. While as our gracious Saviour's words are ever powerful to perform what they speak, His words, "Weep not," take away at the same time all cause for weeping.

*And He came and touched the bier, (and they that bare him stood still).* They stopped with their heavy burden of death, as no bearers or mourners ever have done before or since ; they stopped to gaze in awe on One Who showed by His compassions that it was not without purposes of good that He had arrested their course ; and perhaps from His very manner they perceived in faith some mysterious intimation that He Whom they had now met was no other than the conqueror of death.

*And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.* On each occasion when our Lord raised the dead, it is stated that He addressed Himself and spoke to the person who was dead. As, "Lazarus, come forth;" or, "Maid, arise." And in each case signified the same by His actions, as on one, "taking her by the hand," on the other, "opening the grave," and here, "putting His hand on the bier." So will it be at the last day; "the hour cometh, yea, now is, in which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice." Each in his grave shall hear His voice, as addressed to himself individually. So is it now; to the conscience of each one He speaks, as if there was no other, saying, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

*And he that was dead sat up.* They were carried on a bier without a coffin, or rather the bier itself, in some respects, resembled an open coffin; he sat up, *and began to speak: and He delivered him to his mother.* Taking him probably by the hand, and giving him to her, as implying that it was for her sake, in answer to her tears and secret prayers, and the anguish of her heart, breathed forth to Him alone; giving him to her no longer as a dead man, but full of the bloom and strength of life.

*And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, That a great Prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited His people. And this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.*

Now, if we let our minds dwell on this wonderful incident, there is one thought which has probably occurred to us, which is this: what must have been the feelings of the mother when she thus received her son? She was, we may suppose, a very holy and humble person, both

from the interest she had excited in others, and especially from our Lord's marked observation and care of her, Who alone knows the heart of man. It is said that "fear came upon all," much more must a sense of indescribable awe have come upon her, so much so as to have swallowed up every other feeling in adoring amazement, and love and wonder. She had received, indeed, back at His hands the most precious of all earthly gifts, but this could only be for a time, and till death came again for her son and for herself. She probably felt little or no joy at receiving him again, because such a feeling must have been lost in one far greater and more overwhelming, which was this : she had seen God face to face ; she had seen such love and such power combined, that proved something far greater than this was to be obtained of Him. For He Whom she had seen in the flesh had evidently power over death, and a will, nay, an earnest desire, to exert that power.

In conclusion I may just observe, to ourselves, at this day, who read or hear this account, it is more than our life is worth that we do not read it merely as an interesting history, or I may say even this, that we do not read it only as a manifestation of Godhead. When the clergyman meets the bier at the churchyard gate, and says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord," it is a comfort to think of the narrative of this day's Gospel, and of Him Who met and touched the bier. But surely this is not enough. The intention of this being revealed to us is because it is of the very utmost importance, of value inconceivable, towards the regulation of our daily life ; that, as our Prayer Book says, in the Burial Service, He may "raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness." It is the visible manifestation of Him

“Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us;” for we stand in the presence of Him in Whose hands are spiritual life and spiritual death. What would you have thought of any one who could have trifled and sported under the eye of Christ, when He had just done this deed of raising the dead? We should have thought it quite impossible.

But now, if we in faith receive this miracle, it is, I may say, all one as if we saw it, nay more, for we might have seen it with our bodily eyes, and yet not with faith.

Let us, therefore, go home this day as if we had seen this miracle, had seen Christ with His hand on the coffin, and the young man awakening at His word from the sleep of death. How deep and humble would have been our repentance at finding God so near to us!

Let it be so now, and it will be to us one step towards knowing the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.



## SERMON LXIV.

### The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

Eph. iv. 1—6. St. Luke xiv. 1—11.

#### THE SABBATH OF CHRIST FOUND IN MEEKNESS.

*I, therefore, the prisoner of the LORD, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness.—EPH. iv. 1, 2.*

THE strongest appeal which St. Paul makes to others in his own behalf is by his sufferings. “Remember my bonds,” he says, as by those few words implying very much; and in the Epistle for last Sunday, “Faint not at my tribulations, which is your glory.” He often expresses his joy in bonds and afflictions, not only because he counted it a privilege to suffer for Christ’s sake; but because also his own chains and sufferings partook of the power of the Cross, and most prevailed towards spreading his Master’s Kingdom. Thus when his heart had been set on going to Rome, and God intended that he should bear witness of Him with power in that great city, it was brought about by his being sent there as a prisoner. And in speaking of his success there he says, “My bonds are manifest in all the palace.” And of the confidence it

gave others, "Many of the brethren waxing confident by my bonds." And when he said to King Agrippa, "I would to God that thou, and all that hear me this day, were such as I am, except these bonds," never were words spoken more powerful, because it was as if he had said, "As to my sufferings, I am most desirous that none should suffer as I do; but as to the blessings of the Gospel, I would to God that all might share them with me." When in bonds at Jerusalem, he made the governor tremble, and amazed the king; when in bonds at sea, he bound the storm, and had all the ship given into his hands; when in bonds in the island, he shook off the serpent unharmed; when in bonds at Rome, he made the world captive to the obedience of Christ. And here he alludes to his bonds, not only to enforce his testimony, but as showing also the very nature of the Christian's calling and duties, as humbling himself to all things for love's sake.

*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. We may observe how much force these words derive from one who was at the time a prisoner for Christ's sake: for what greater evidence of love could there be in himself than this willingness to suffer? He wished them to be bound also, but by another chain, that of mutual love and forbearance; not the iron bands on the feet and hands, but the golden chain of God upon the heart itself, which bound them to one another and unto God. Of this he proceeds to speak: Endeavouring, with all earnestness, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. As our Blessed Lord Himself prays for this union, "that they may be one as We are One."*

As the whole body and all its members are held together by one soul, one spirit of life, so is it with the Church of God. There is *one body and one Spirit*: one Spirit which animates and quickens that body, or else it would be more bodies than one. *Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.* Here on earth, and in things temporal, nothing unites men so much together as having one object to desire, one end to hope for; how much more when that desire and hope is for everlasting union together through the indwelling of God? *One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* What greater bond is it possible to conceive than this? It contains within it everything which can hold men together in love in this bad world, whether friends or relations of any kind. It might be likened to a chain of adamant, or any substance which nothing can rend asunder; nay more, God Himself is this chain, this chain of love, for God Himself is love. How then can it ever be broken? It is indeed so; and in Heaven, where God is, it cannot be severed; for there God is All in All, and this bond is strong as the foundation of Heaven; but here on earth, although it may become ever more and more strong, yet it is all easily broken and rent asunder by pride. It is preserved only in humility, by each esteeming other better than himself; but wherever pride comes in, alas, my brethren, it is but as the withy bands, when Samson awakens: it is all gone. And what from poor fallen nature is more inseparable than pride? "It bindeth me about as the collar of my coat," as Job says.<sup>1</sup> We shall not be divested of it, till the old Adam be laid in the dust, and the new man be altogether within us.

<sup>1</sup> Job xxx. 18.

Let us now, therefore, turn to the Great Physician of body and soul, to that gracious and blessed example which the Gospel for the day presents to us, in Him on Whom to gaze is itself our health, if only we look on Him with faith in His Godhead, and go out of ourselves to read wisdom "in the face of Jesus Christ."

*And it came to pass*, says St. Luke, *as Jesus went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched Him.* Our Lord had taught the Jews that the only way of keeping the law was by love; the love of God and the love of man; and especially by the latter, as the outward evidence of the former, which He instances in the parable of the Good Samaritan. But our Lord's custom was to teach by actions as much as by words, and therefore the day which may be said to represent the Law, the Holy Day of the Jews, the Sabbath, He appeared to select more especially for His works of mercy. For as love is the fulfilling of the law, in love is to be found that rest which the Sabbath signified, when man ceases from his own works in that faith which worketh by love, through the indwelling of God, Who worketh in us. Thus we find that in the synagogue, on the Sabbath Day, our Lord wrought His miracles of healing; and now, when the synagogue was over, and He had gone to the house of one of the rulers of the synagogue, it was evident to all that the same love and compassion was in His mind. If distress was there, He would alleviate it. And they "watched Him;" eyes of hatred and suspicion were cast upon Him. These with us are apt to dry up what little love we have; but it is not so with God.

*And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy.* *And Jesus answering*, or reverting to

their thoughts, *spake unto the Lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? And they held their peace. And He took him and healed him, and let him go.* Our Lord was at a feast, but He laid not aside for one moment that which was always in His mind, love and compassion for man. One in distress, or infirmity, or want, was to Him what the sight of a great man may be to us, something that immediately attracted His attention beyond others. Now here we are taught this great law of love, that we are on all occasions to think of those who most need our aid. And again, what a consolation to ourselves in our great need! We are taught what God is, so full of wonderful compassion, that the fact of our needing His assistance is enough; He is watching, and waiting, and willing to aid us.

And now that our Lord had healed the man with the dropsy, He turns to a more subtle evil which was before Him, the swelling pride of these Pharisees. But as this is in the heart itself, which must first know its own disease, He gently leads them on to the knowledge of this their self-deceit or hypocrisy; for they, in their covetousness, would do the same for their beasts, which He as God had done in His love for His creatures. For if they had loved each other as they loved their own property, they could not have looked on with such evil eyes. O blessed law of love, what infinite pains has our Lord taken to engrave thee on our hearts!

The man, made sound by His word, had departed in peace. There is an expressive pause, for the angry countenances that looked on are but the more embittered at the sight. He addressed them, therefore, again, *And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull*

*him out on the sabbath day? And they could not answer Him again to these things.* They stood convicted by their own consciences.

Such was our Lord's conduct at a feast; we have accounts of what He did when by the way, when in the synagogue, when in the temple, when in a ship, when He was with the multitudes, when with His disciples, when alone, for He was then always in prayer, when in a friend's house, as with Martha and Mary; and here we have a description of what He was doing when He sat at meat in a Pharisee's house, with many guests. Having healed the sick, He is now endeavouring to heal that worse disease, from which flowed this great want of love. The evil spirit that possessed the body, and the diseases to which it is subject, are easily overcome; but that evil spirit of pride which possesses the souls of us all is lodged deeper. It is not against this outward covering of temporal life, but against the life which is in God it struggles. Wherever it dwells in any degree it stifles love. That old serpent in the heart strangles the dove. Wherever he is, the Spirit of God grieves and departs. It is to this then that we now behold the Great Physician directing His attention.

*And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms.* For not the Pharisees only, but all "love the uppermost seats." Nor is there any more melancholy sight, more sad proof of the selfishness of which even Christians are guilty, than when many are gathered together, whether at a dinner, or in travelling, or at a show, or in business, where each endeavours to make himself more at ease, more at large, higher or better off than his neighbour. Nay, alas, does not this same spirit enter even into our very churches also?

“He put forth a parable,” it is said. Now a parable means a dark saying, something containing in it a deeper signification than the mere circumstances of the story itself; and here no doubt it means that what our Lord spake respecting persons sitting down at dinner He meant to apply to all the circumstances of our life, to the place which we assume to ourselves under that Gospel which is likened to a marriage feast.

He put forth a parable, *saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, that is, to a great feast, for the wedding supper was with the Jews the chief occasion of such meetings, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.* Take care, whatever you do, that you are not estimating yourself too highly, and above others; for if you do, be assured you will be found out, and covered with shame. For all things will find their place, all will be known. Your neighbour may, in God’s sight, be above you, and assuredly will be if you set yourself above him in your own mind. For real greatness depends on the knowledge men have of God; and the more knowledge men have of God the more humble they are.

*But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that, when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.* Now if a person were literally to do this which our Blessed Lord commands, if he were to take the lowest place, with a view that he might be put up to the highest, and so gain more honour in the sight of all the guests, why surely this would not be humility and lowliness of mind, but it

would be the worst kind of pride, together with hypocrisy and dissimulation. For indeed we ought to choose and love the lowest place out of lowliness of mind, and from the love of God and our neighbour; we ought to be most happy at being there left in the lowest place as best suited for us, and not from any secret desire of exaltation. Far from it. Such were more like the secret creeping up of a serpent, than that meekness and lowliness of heart which was in the Son of God. How, therefore, are we to explain this saying of Christ's? The parable is indeed an instance of His exceeding gentleness and meekness of wisdom. If at this feast, and on witnessing this struggle for precedence, among proud and ambitious men, He had said aloud, "Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and He in due time will lift you up," this would have seemed to them quite out of season, and unsuitable to the occasion; these worldly men would but have scorned, and been angry with their Divine Teacher. They would have been the worse rather than the better for such a warning, and therefore our Lord Himself has said to us, "Cast not your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot, and turn again and rend you." They knew not that they were in the sight of the all-seeing God. They loved Him not, and honoured Him not. But He, in the meanwhile, was looking with tender pity and regard on their infirmities; He saw and knew full well the exceeding meanness and poverty of this their proud love of distinction. They knew not Him, but He knew them full well. He looked upon them as we might on little children, and only thought how He might best correct them in their childish follies. What He earnestly longed for in them was lowliness of mind, but how was He to produce this? "Answer a fool according to his folly,"



says the Divine wisdom, in the Book of Proverbs;<sup>2</sup> that is, you must meet him in his ignorance, and by that correct him. And thus our Lord endeavoured to catch them, as it were, in the nets of their own pride. He saw how blind they were, and in their blindness wandering far out of the way, and yet that they would not accept His guiding hand, because they thought themselves wise and clear-sighted. It is, therefore, as if He had said, Now, you are all anxious for honour and distinction, I will therefore advise you which is the best course for you to adopt in order to obtain it. This advice the worst of them could not despise; but the better among them would be rendered thoughtful, would consider over what our Lord could mean, would remember His strange expression, "If you are desirous of honour, sit down in the lowest place." We cannot but suppose that among that company there must have been some who thus returned home, pondering over and considering what the Divine Teacher, Who restored the dropsical man, could intend by this instruction. One thing was evident, that He wished them all to take the lowest place,—such was to be their conduct. But what was their motive to be? "That when the master of the feast cometh, he may say, 'Go up higher;' then shalt thou have worship in the sight of them that sit at meat with thee." But when is this to be? Who is this master of the feast, who will know the right place for each? Does it allude to that table of which our Lord speaks on another occasion, when He says that they shall come from all parts of the world, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven. It was probably so understood, for it was

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxvi. 5.

apparently at this feast that afterwards, when our Lord exhorts him that invited him when he made a feast to invite the poor, one present exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." As if it were to that our Lord had directed their thoughts.

And He ends by comprising it all in this short sentence : *For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Many are the forms of humility, or the ways in which it shows itself, which our Lord sets forth in different parables ; on this occasion it is taking the lowest place at a feast ; at another, it is one who in prayer stands afar off, not daring to lift up his eyes to Heaven ; in another, it is one who comes with the words, "Father, I am not worthy to be called Thy son, make me as one of Thine hired servants ;" in another parable, it is one who loved much because he felt he had been forgiven much ; in another, it is one who, even at the last Day, says with surprise, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and ministered unto Thee ?" as if quite unconscious of any good in himself that should claim so great reward. Many also are the examples which set forth the same in different aspects, but this one expression embraces all.

There seems some great mystery on this subject of humility, as connected with our justification, with the atonement of Christ and our faith. Perhaps the less we say to explain it the less likely we shall be to fall into error ; for it is one on which the most wise have fallen, but the meek will be guided aright in the way of peace. All that we know is, that there is nothing which our Blessed Lord has so laboured to inculcate upon us, as this one grace of humility ; or rather, not as one grace, but as that without which there can be no grace whatever in

the soul on which God looks with approbation. By His example, by His parables, by precepts and exhortations without number, He has declared to us the infinite importance of it. No words, therefore, can possibly express of what moment it is to each one of us that we labour after it.

Whatever other meaning this parable may have, of taking the lowest place at the wedding feast, we may be quite sure that it is rightly explained of the Lord's table, at which they that hunger are filled. There can be no doubt that he will be the highest in God's favour who comes to that Divine Table with the most lowly mind, most deeply sensible of his own unworthiness.

If such lowliness is most becoming for the guests at a man's table ; if it is the most availing disposition in prayer to God ; if feeling most the need of forgiveness it loves most ; if it is most rich in pardon to enemies and compassions to all, there can be no time and no place where it is more needed, than when we come to the altar of God, to partake in the Body and Blood of Him Who humbled Himself from Heaven to earth for our sakes.

## SERMON LXV.

### The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

I Cor. i. 4—8. St. Matt. xxii. 34—46.

#### CHRIST ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

*He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him LORD, saying,*

*The LORD said unto my LORD, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?—ST. MATT. xxii. 43, 44.*

ALTHOUGH the Epistle for the day is always placed before the Gospel, and is therefore to be first considered by us, yet we know that, in point of fact, it usually alludes to circumstances which occurred long after those of which the Gospel speaks, and after important changes had taken place, by our Lord's ascent to Heaven, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. It would therefore often tend to edification, if we could take the Epistle after the Gospel, in which case it would afford a striking confirmation of its truth, or introduce precepts flowing from it. Such is much the case to-day. For how wonderful is the language of our short Epistle, when we consider it as a fulfilment of that which our Lord alluded to in the Gospel, as the text mentions. He spoke of that mysterious expression

of David, when it was all unintelligible to the Jews ; but how different was the case when St. Paul wrote ! Sitting at the right hand of God, and there seen by the eye of faith, He had poured down such gifts on His Church, and exerted such power in the hearts of believers, that about five-and-twenty years after our Lord had thus spoken St. Paul was able to write to the Corinthians, appealing to his and their own experience in such words as these :—

*I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ ; that in everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge ; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you ; so that ye come behind in no gift ; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ; Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Church of Corinth was peculiarly rich in these spiritual gifts, the outward manifestations of power, but all intended to promote their spiritual profit, and to prepare them for Christ's return in judgment. And thus, in the opening of this Epistle, St. Paul bears testimony to these gifts, showing how much he rejoiced in these their privileges, and giving solemn thanks for them, before he proceeds, as he afterwards does in this Epistle, to correct the abuses of them, and to turn their attention to the great end of all, that charity which comprehends the love of God and the love of our neighbour.

The passage, moreover, is remarkable, as St. Chrysostom observes of it, and indeed of the whole of this Epistle, for the very frequent mention of the Name of Christ. He speaks of the grace bestowed by Christ, of their being enriched by Christ, of the testimony of Christ confirmed in them, of their waiting for Christ's coming, of Christ so

establishing them that they may be blameless in the day of His Coming. So forcible is this testimony, as an answer to our Lord's question, and as explaining the expression of David when he spake in prophecy.

And now let us consider in detail the Gospel itself; to understand its exceeding interest and importance we must look to the occasion of which it speaks. It was on our Lord's last public teaching of the Jews,—His last teaching in the temple,—only two or three days before He was put to death. *When the Pharisees had heard that Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.* Our Lord had just shown the Sadducees that the doctrine of the Resurrection, which they denied, was implied in the very Law of Moses itself; upon this their great adversaries, the Pharisees, were for a moment softened in their enmity against Christ, Who had with such wisdom and power defended what they considered their own cause. They were in consequence collecting together in little crowds in the open spaces of the temple, conversing on this victory they had obtained; and upon this one of the most reflecting among their learned men thought he would try our Lord's answer on a point discussed among themselves. *Then one of them, who was a Lawyer, or Scribe, a teacher of the law, asked Him a question, tempting Him, that is in order to try Him, for all the people it is said were now "astonished at His doctrine;" the Scribe therefore wished to put His knowledge to the proof; tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

But this is not all, for it is not as if these two commandments were to be selected and set apart from the Scriptures as something higher and better than the rest, as some of the Jewish interpreters would suppose. But the fact is, that these two commandments contain within them all the rest, so that if these are fulfilled all the Scriptures are kept; if these are not fulfilled nothing is. *On these two commandments*, our Lord adds, *hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

St. Mark tells us in his account, that the Scribe greatly admired the wisdom of this reply; and that in consequence our Blessed Lord said unto him, that he was not far from the Kingdom of God, that is, that he was very near being a Christian. How was it, we may ask, that he was so near being a Christian? It was because he perceived that the love of God and man was everything; that it was all which the Law and the Prophets contained; he had then so far a spiritual discernment into the meaning of the Scriptures. This brought him near; but what was it prevented him, as a Scribe learned in Divine matters, from being altogether a Christian? And the same may be said of all the Scribes and Pharisees; the nearest approach they made was this. Now our Lord, in teaching them, always appealed to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, because these were the study of their lives; it was through these that God would teach and guide them into all truth. They advanced so far then as to see that the love of God was All in All; but still they raised not their thoughts beyond this; they did not perceive that Christ was God; they did not see it in the Scriptures. Knowing that He was to be the Son of David, they thought that He would surely come with signs of worldly greatness, a King, a Conqueror, and a

Prophet, like David was. They did not discern that the Old Testament itself spoke of Him as God, and that therefore His greatness, and His power, and His kingdom must be something worthy of God, something spiritual, heavenly, and eternal. And this altogether arose, not from want of learning or intellectual skill, but from the state of the heart; for if they had longed for the eternal life which is with God, if they had indeed loved God, and therefore felt that in His love there could never be any death or sorrow, then they would have considered "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," as no gifts worthy of God. They would have thought forgiveness of sins, and restoration to God's favour as the only objects worthy of any concern. They would have looked and longed for this in the old Scriptures. But they looked not up to Heaven, but down to earth. Therefore it was that they did not perceive, in reading the Scriptures, that Christ was the Son of God; that His kingdom was to be entirely spiritual, and His enemies the enemies of the soul of man. For this reason, therefore, it was that our Blessed Lord now finished all His teaching by putting to them one question. These were the last words He spoke to the Jews; and, at last, when before His crucifixion He was questioned in a very solemn manner by the High Priest before the Council, He called their attention to the same passage of Scripture, and confirmed it by His expression. It may, therefore, be considered as His one last question to the Jews, and from that day to this the Jews are to be met with in all parts of the world; and if you ask the reason why this is so, it is this, because they have not yet been able to answer this our Lord's question to them. He has left the question with them, and all this scene going on ever since will end, my brethren,



in nothing else but in this, in our Lord Himself giving the answer to His own question. And this will be on that Great Day when He will appear in His own glory, and in the glory of His Father, and with the holy angels, that will be His own answer to this question which He has left, "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?" Or, as He said in those His last words to the High Priest, when he said unto Him, "Art Thou the Christ?" He answered, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven;" by which words our Lord evidently alludes to this same passage of the Psalms, to which He here appeals in this His last question to the Jews.

I would draw, therefore, especial attention to the circumstances under which our Lord spoke what follows. Many questions had been put to Him from various motives, these had now all ceased. He had taught them by divers parables and sayings; but now at last He puts this remarkable question to them which He does not answer. *While the Pharisees were gathered together, now coming round Him in great numbers, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David.* It was the very answer which our Lord desired to obtain from them; and this appears still more evident in St. Mark's account of the occurrence, for he says that our Lord also Himself said, "How say the Scribes that Christ is the Son of David?" For indeed this is very true, but when a prophecy contains also something very different which is unexplained, this proves that the interpreter has not come to the depth of the matter; and there is something in this prophecy very inconsistent with Christ's being merely the Son of David, something which, humanly

speaking, seems to contradict it. *He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He then his Son?*

It is as if He had said, I am now going to leave you, I speak to you for the last time; but if you will look to the 110th Psalm, and consider it, you will there find the whole of this described, which is now about to take place, for I am now about to fulfil that Psalm. You think that the Christ is to be no more than the Son of David, the great King of Israel, the true Israel which you suppose yourselves to be; but that Psalm speaks of His eternal generation as the Son of God. David himself, in the Holy Ghost, speaks of Him as his Lord, and evidently as God, for he uses the same word of both the Father and the Son as God, "the Lord said to my Lord." He there speaks of His then existing in Heaven, and of His hereafter sitting at the right hand of the Father, until His enemies are put under His feet. You are now His enemies,—so are all unbelieving and wicked men, and evil spirits and death. The Christ Who is now about to leave you, being rejected of you, will shortly ascend to Heaven, and sit on the right hand of God. They that believe in Him, all Christians unto the end of the world, will see Him there by the eyes of faith, interceding for them, as that same Psalm expresses it, "a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;" but the unbelieving Jews who will not see Him there by that spiritual sight which faith gives, shall behold Him there at the last day; shall see that He is indeed the Son of God, when He is no more as a criminal standing before your High Priest, and condemned by him because He declares Himself the Son of

God ; but coming to judge the world, the Son of Man at the right hand of power, and as David describes in that Psalm, putting all enemies under His feet.

To this question of our Lord's in the temple it is added : *And no man was able to answer Him a word ; neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.*

Such is the account in the Gospel for to-day ; and we before observed, that what St. Paul says in the Epistle becomes very striking and remarkable when we read it as a confirmation of our Lord's words.

From that day even to this it has ceased to be a matter of question ; it is a matter of fact that He has ever since that time exerted this power and victory. He is sitting on the right hand of God, which denotes inexpressible power, as shown in His Church by manifold gifts and graces, whether those outward signs of which St. Paul speaks, the rich garment, "wrought about with divers colours," or that clothing of the spirit "all glorious within," which is charity. And He manifests also His victory, for He there sits while His enemies are being made His footstool. The Church, as in the short Epistle for to-day, bears witness to the one, and looks forward to the full completion of the other : having now "the testimony of Christ confirmed" in her, and "waiting for" His "coming," "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

## SERMON LXVI.

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Ephes. iv. 17—32. St. Matt. ix. 1—8.

### THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ;  
And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.—EPHES. iv. 22, 23.*

THE Gospel for to-day, in which our Lord is described as giving life to the dead limbs of the paralytic, affords us a very lively emblem of this change from the old to the new man, which must take place in us by faith in the operation of His Godhead. But let us first consider this change, as St. Paul describes it in the Epistle. *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.* Not like the rest of the nations who know not of the Gospel. But “the vanity of their mind” in English falls far short of the original expression; it implies having no good end, no hope, because without God.

*Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.* The worst

consequence of sin is, that it puts out the light which is in the mind; and therefore our Lord says, "Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness;" it brings a sort of callous hard crust over the heart itself, so that it can neither see God nor love Him, nor believe Him, and, what is worse, it cannot know its own darkness. And the nations of the world are described as being in this state, "sitting in darkness" and in "the shadow of death."

*Who, being past feeling*, or as it means, "having ceased to grieve," having overcome all pain and remorse for sin; *they have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* Sin enlargeth its desire as hell, and can never rest; it is unsatiable as the grave; for having stifled the conscience, it goes on adding to evil desires in this world, and increasing sorrow in the next. It cannot rest; for it knows not of the peace which Christ gives.

*But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.* Not that these Ephesians had ever heard Christ teaching in the flesh, but that, like ourselves, they hear and read of Him in the Gospels, and are taught by Him and by His Spirit; and thus, looking to Him in prayer, are transformed into the likeness of the New Man.

*That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, "that which destroys," "corrupted and corrupting,"* according to those lusts whereby the deceit of Satan worketh to destruction. *And that ye be renewed in the Spirit of your mind, and put on the new man.* Although St. Paul speaks of them as already "sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption;" yet he here urges them

still to go on being renewed, and putting on the new man, ever casting aside the things which are behind, and clothing themselves with the righteousness of Christ as if they had never done so before. The new man, *which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*, or which hath been once created according to God in the holiness of truth. "After God," for the old man is after the corruption of Satan.

And now St. Paul, as his custom is, mentions some particulars in daily life in which this holiness will consist. *Wherefore*, he says, *putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another*. As he had said before that "speaking the truth in love" we should "grow up into Him;" and that thus growing up into His body, we should in truth and love be ever more and more as members of each other.

*Be ye angry and sin not; i. e.* although ye be angry, which indeed may be the case without offence,—for what good man is not angry at successful wickedness?—yet let your righteous indignation be without sin; and especially let no resentment ever find a lodging in your bosom. *Let not the sun, he adds, go down upon your wrath*, take care that you never sleep but in meekness and peace with all the world. *Neither give place to the devil*, for Satan knows full well that God forgives you not, unless you forgive; and any feeling of unkindness gives an opening to him which he will be sure to increase.

*Let him that stole, i. e.* in his former heathen state, let him steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good; *i. e.* at some honest employment; that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let him not be content to leave off stealing, but now let him labour to impart to others. This is ever

the Christian law, abounding in grace where there was sin before. And so again, in the next instance, we must not be content to do no evil, but must do good.

*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.* Let your discourse be such as never to suggest an impure thought; but, on the contrary, so “seasoned with the salt” of good principle as to impart grace to others. For every word or thought which defiles drives away the good Spirit from the heart. And, therefore, he adds, *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption; i. e. at Baptism, as he said before, “After that ye believed ye were sealed by the Spirit.”*

And he sums up all by saying, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* Here we find throughout how entirely different the state of grace is to that of nature, to the state of the heathen world, to that, alas, even of many around us, and of our own hearts. It will always be on earth new, singular, unaccountable, like light shining in the darkness, and not comprehended by it. But to those to whom St. Paul wrote it was seen in strong contrast with their former unregenerate state. “We ourselves,” he says, “were sometimes serving lusts, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,”<sup>1</sup>—Oh, how different is it with us all!

<sup>1</sup> Titus iii. 3.

Now I have endeavoured Sunday after Sunday to point out to you how all that beauty of holiness which St. Paul describes, that heavenly conversation which he inculcates on us, is found full of life, when we turn to the Gospel for the day. The Sun of Righteousness there sheds His life-giving beams upon it all. By looking unto Him that change is wrought in us by His Spirit, which St. Paul insists on as necessary for us. Nor is there any occasion wherein this can be shown more strongly than in the Service for to-day. Indeed all that the Apostle says would have been in vain, had not Christ been first manifested to mankind as we read of Him in the Gospels, as having in Himself all the fulness of the Godhead, and most able and willing to work this change from death unto life. "Forgive one another," says St. Paul, "as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you;" and the Gospel is of "the Son of Man" having "power on earth to forgive sins." We are comforted and supported as we read, and look in faith unto Him in Whom is forgiveness of sins, and power of resurrection, and of a new life in all those parts of our conduct which have been dead before. Thus, Sunday after Sunday, we are brought to be in company with Christ, and to meditate on Him all the week; and may He of His infinite mercy grant that we may be aided by Him to look, as it were, at this time upon His life-giving countenance, upon His face of holiness and of love, which is the glory of the new covenant.

*Jesus entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into His own city;* that is, to Capernaum, which He made the usual place of His sojourn during this His teaching in Galilee. And here we may observe, that His entering into a ship, passing from shore to shore, and the mention of His own city,—all these things bring Him near to us.



The High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity thus clothes Himself with our little ways as men, our necessities, our journeyings, and homes, in order that we may feel the more constrainingly how He has come down to be with us. "If He had remained in His own power and greatness, He would have had nothing common with man ; and if He had not fulfilled all the ways of the flesh, the taking upon Himself of our flesh would have been without reality and superfluous. But the Creator and Lord of all things had thus straitened and made Himself small, that He might be with us in the flesh, with a human country, and city, and home, that He might thus draw out our human affection, and bind us to Himself by all love and sympathy, that He might make us partakers of His own home and country in Heaven."<sup>2</sup>

*And behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed.* The circumstance indicated a state utterly helpless, so that he could not ever have come himself, had he not been thus carried. *And Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee.* Our Lord's words are often addressed to the heart and thoughts of those to whom He was speaking ; and therefore to understand this we must consider, that what laid heavily at this poor man's heart was not so much his bodily affliction as the sense of his sins. He had probably, in the bitterness of his heart, felt that his sickness was well deserved, and only the punishment due to his sins ; and his only desire was for his sin to be removed. And that he thus needed encouragement we may conclude from our Lord's tender expression to him, calling him "Son," or "child," and

<sup>2</sup> St. Peter. Chrysol. Brev.—Abp. of Ravenna, A.D. 433.

bidding him "be of good cheer," on the subject of his sins. He was perhaps unable to speak on account of the palsy, but his heart and affliction spoke more than words. And as St. Paul tells us that we are members one of another, and that as such we are knit together in love to each other and so prevail with God, and obtain more abundantly His love, so it is especially to be noticed that our Lord takes the sick man's kind and good neighbours into part with himself; He makes them also to minister to their friend, because in love and kindness to him they themselves looked to God. For we may observe it is said, that "seeing their faith," *i. e.* the faith of those that carried him, He was thus, as it were for their sakes, gracious to their afflicted neighbour. He saw their faith; He saw his need and want; and, far more, He knew his sorrow. But this is not all; the occasion is marked by another circumstance, the presence of the Scribes. And here we may see how evil works for good, and the enmity of the wicked turns to the praise of God; for had there been no worldly men here present, with evil eyes, we should not have had that memorable and Divine lesson which follows, whereby our Lord has shown us that, in healing diseases, He was forgiving sin, which is the cause of disease and death; that He intended these as outward signs of His power and mercy, whereby out of the old man, dead in trespasses and sins, He would bring forth the new man.

*And behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. They*

accused Him of blasphemy, for which they afterwards condemned Him to death, because He made Himself God, for none but God can forgive sins. But it was very evident that none but God only could heal diseases by a word; and it was as easy for Him to do one as the other. But there were reasons in this case why He should express it in this way. First of all, there was the desire of the suffering man, which was known to the Searcher of hearts, who earnestly longed for forgiveness beyond all things, and which our Lord thus hastens as it were first to confer, pouring the healing balm into his soul before He healed his body, which was of much less consequence, and teaching us that if we first seek the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, all other things needful for the body shall be added. There was also another reason why He should on this occasion thus speak, for the sake of those that were present, that they might know what He wished them to perceive in all these miracles, "that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." And here we may observe that the cause why these Pharisees did not believe was not the state of their understandings, but of their hearts; for it was clear that Christ had power to forgive sins if He could thus work miracles, and they knew that none but God could forgive sins. But they must have been either entirely free from all sin, or else could have had no great desire to be freed from their sins, for otherwise they would have rejoiced with trembling and joy unspeakable, to hear of, and to see with their eyes, the manifestation of Him Who had power on earth to forgive sins.

It may further be noticed that our Lord does not first work the miracle, and then say that with it He forgave sins; but He first states the forgiveness of sins, and the

power given to the Son of Man to forgive, and then draws their attention to this work He was about to perform, and adduces it as a proof of what He had before stated, as the outward seal and sign as it were that His words were true. He who works such a miracle must be from God ; and if from God, His words are to be believed when He declares this removal of disease to be one with forgiveness of sin. *Then saith He to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, Who had given such power unto men.*

Now this case of the sick of the palsy may, as I said, well represent the old man dead in trespasses and sins, unable of himself to move or do anything that is good, as St. Paul represents his state, "to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." And first of all must sins be forgiven, before life is restored. It is a very awful thought, when we consider how Christ was then standing in the midst of men, with power to forgive sins, and most ready to absolve sinners, yet that many around Him were rendered no better for this, but rather perhaps the worse. Thus St. Luke says that these Scribes were collected on this occasion from every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem, and "the power of the Lord was present to heal them:" but surely they were not healed. They stood in His all-healing presence unforgiven, because unrepenting. The miracle which He wrought on the paralytic, accompanied by His forgiveness of sins, was nothing else but that living language by which God speaks ; yet they could not hear this His Divine voice, because they heeded it not. None needed forgiveness more than they ; none desired it less. "After

their impenitent heart they treasured up wrath against the day of wrath," because they knew not the day of mercy.

Now all this, my brethren, is in the very strongest manner applicable to ourselves whenever we come to church. Do we then long to put off the old man, all that appertains to our dead evil nature, and to be clothed with the new, Which is Christ? One consideration particularly in point is that of the Absolution. We first turn to God with a very humble confession of sin; and if the Searcher of hearts knows that we are sincere in thus lamenting our sins, we are in a state to receive His pardon. And He is no doubt in the midst of us. After this confession the priest, in the Name of Christ, turns round to the people and pronounces the forgiveness of sins. When the priest was ordained, it was said to him by the bishop, "Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office of a priest," "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."

Now we are all, with regard to our souls, so far in the state of the paralytic, that we need to be renewed and restored. Will it not be good for us to obtain this forgiveness thus pronounced, shall I not say daily, or twice a day? A good man is always described in Scripture as growing in grace, as going from strength to strength, as being daily renewed, as being changed from glory to glory, as increasing in stature to the fulness of Christ. Now I would seriously put it to every man's conscience, must not this Absolution, pronounced daily in the Name of Christ, in that assembly in which He has Himself promised to be present, have some effect on a penitent and thoughtful mind? Is it possible to believe anything, and to doubt that He Who said to the paralytic, "Son, be of

good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee," and Who gave him strength to take up his bed, nay, by His word, gave him, I may say, obedience also,—that He does not now meet in the same manner every penitent soul who listens for the Absolution in church, and on whom it falls as dew from Heaven on the parched ground.

And here observe that when Christ pronounced those words of old, so full of unspeakable consolation to the penitent, there were very many who hardened their hearts and believed not. They indeed looked upon Him with bodily eyes, but they believed not, because His power was then confined to a small space; we now see Him, not with bodily eyes, but we behold His power throughout the whole world. In both cases alike it must be by faith; for the temptation to unbelief is the same now as then.

## SERMON LXVII.

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

Ephes. v. 15—21. St. Matt. xxii. 1—14.

LOVE AND JOY IN THE SPIRIT.

*And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.—ST. MATT. xxii. 11.*

LET us first shortly notice the Epistle by itself, and we may afterwards further consider the same in connexion with the Gospel. See then, says St. Paul to the Ephesians, *that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* That is, take heed that ye walk with all carefulness towards those that are without, as they who have the Spirit of wisdom, and therefore, in dangerous days, obtaining good from occasions in themselves evil; delivered from evil in evil days, and by the loss of temporal advantages, procuring opportunities for eternal gain.<sup>1</sup> *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.* This wisdom will give you to know what the will of God is, and by obedience will become a light to guide you in the way of

<sup>1</sup> So St. Aug. vol. v. pp. 133. 489; and St. Chrys. ad loc.

peace. And thence will spring forth in the heart joy and thanksgiving, as he adds: *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.* Nor is this joy of heart to depend on outward blessings, but to exist under all the evils of this world; "always and for all things" is the heart of a Christian to be thus filled with thanksgiving; as it is here described. *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And to this the Apostle adds, *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.* For there is no true thankfulness to God without the spirit of obedience to man; it is the same temper in both; the peace which passeth all understanding combines both. And so St. Paul, in like manner, in his Epistle to the Colossians passes from one to another; thanksgiving to God and submission to one another in godly fear. Walking as in a dark night are they to be ever looking around, yet singing withal in melody of heart, as free from care, and casting away fear.

To this short and beautiful passage for the Epistle is attached a Gospel of the very deepest interest. When this parable of the marriage of the king's son was delivered by our Lord, it was all throughout one great prophecy; but from that time to this it has been in course of fulfilment, so that now one point only remains to be accomplished, and that is the coming in of the king to see the guests. At the time when our Lord spake, the Sacrifice was not slain for the feast, the dinner was not prepared. The king had not sent forth his armies to destroy the murderers and burn up their city; neither had they gathered into his house the bad and good of every kind,



and filled the room. But all these things have since been in the course of accomplishment. So that, at this time, the world sees two great miracles going on, the one of darkness, the other of light, like night and day proceeding together; the darkness is that of the Jews, those murderers whose city has been burnt up, wandering all over the world, which are unto this day in gross darkness, such as "may be felt," being shut out of the light of the marriage festival; but Christians are admitted into that light, both bad and good, so that the wedding is furnished with guests; and now we are waiting for the manifestation and appearance of the King to see the guests, His great Advent.

*Jesus said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a marriage for his son; and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fallings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants; and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, the king who had been so gracious unto them, pressing upon them his invitation with so much loving-kindness—he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.*

Now such has been the history of the Jews. It is here expressed with what earnestness God sent unto them; and it surely must have occurred to us in reading the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, with what pressing anxiety our Lord sent His invitation to "the lost sheep

of the house of Israel," as also through His Apostles after His death. It was to the synagogue He first went ; for the Jews He wrought His miracles, and hung about their cities as loath to leave them ; hung over them with affectionate earnestness, and never moved from them but when by persecution forced to do so. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." To them He sent forth His twelve Apostles ; to them the seventy disciples. And after His death they would not leave Jerusalem and Judea till they were compelled by violence. Throughout the world in every city it was to the Jews and to the synagogue that St. Paul himself first resorted ; though he was ordained to be the Apostle of the Gentiles more especially. It was not till all this was done, that the King sent forth His armies and burned up their city. And now they wander in all the world as witnesses to the truth of this parable, unwilling witnesses, bearing the signs of His wrath, "the wrath of the Lamb;" made like Apostles to declare throughout the earth the truth of that Christ Whom they would deny ; not indeed as evangelists whose feet are beautiful with good tidings, but as they whose feet "stumble on the dark mountains," overtaken with thick and "gross darkness."

Another point to be observed in this account is this, that our Lord represents those Jews as refusing His Gospel for the very same reasons why mankind in all ages, and Christians now, refuse to listen to the warnings and the gracious invitations of God. They were taken up with other things, "they went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." As in the days of Noah

and of Lot, and of the Son of Man, "they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; and knew not," till the time of their visitation came upon them. Thus, in this respect also, the history of the Jews continues to be a warning to ourselves.

Such, my brethren, is one half of the parable; they were of the darkness, and the darkness overtook them; "but ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; ye are all the children of the light and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

Let us then now consider the other half of the parable, or rather, I may say, of the prophecy as it then was, and of the history as it now is, except the last part, which only yet remains to be fulfilled. *Then saith he, the king, to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the high-ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the high-ways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests.* This is now already fulfilled, that Gospel which the Jews rejected has been received by the Gentiles; the net cast into the sea has gathered of every kind, and is now being drawn to the shore. One thing only remains, the coming in of the King, Who is as yet absent from the table to which He has invited so many. *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless.* He was at once self-condemned by his own conscience. And here it must, I think, occur to us as remarkable in this striking description, that the man

himself did not seem to consider that he was not as he should be, nor did it seem to be noticed by those around him. In this respect it is very like the presence of Judas Iscariot at the Last Supper. That the traitor should have been there at that time, knowing what was in his heart and what he was about to do, that he should have sat as one unconcerned at that solemn feast of Love, that occasion of Divine tenderness and sorrow, in the very presence of his all-seeing Lord; and that too quite unsuspected by his fellow-disciples, is one of the most mysterious and startling incidents of that memorable night. And here at the presence of the King, the circumstance in some degree resembles it; there is one sitting down at the table as if unconscious of where he was, until by a word he is all of a sudden, as by an unexpected burst of light upon his soul, made known to himself and to others; so as to be altogether without excuse.

*Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.* These last awful words at the close of the parable, seem to warn us that although one only is spoken of as not having on the wedding garment, yet that one is intended to represent the case of all Christians who are not in heart suitable to their high calling. The one is put to represent in a close individual manner, so as to bring the sad warning home to the conscience of each, the many which having been called are not chosen.

But what is meant by the wedding garment? Now here we must observe that acceptance at the last day is described through Scripture in a variety of ways. In one case, it is having made the most of the talents entrusted

by the Master; in another, bearing seed an hundred-fold; in another, having lamps burning at the Judge's coming; in another, it is according to works of mercy done to the poor and afflicted; in another, it is having faith in Christ, or calling upon His Name; in another, it is having charity or the love of God; in another, it is the knowledge of God, in which is eternal life; in another, it is walking by the Spirit, having the fruits of the Spirit, and the Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God; being dead with Christ in this world, that we may live with Him. Now all these express in a different way, or express by different things, that which renders us accepted of God in Christ at the last; but the wedding garment is something different again from all these. And what does it signify? It may indeed be well said that it signifies charity; or, that it is faith; or, that fine linen of the Bride which is the righteousness of saints; or, having put on Christ, and being clothed with His righteousness; or, being "clothed with humility;" all which is very true. But we want to explain it more particularly, according to the figure. Surely it must refer to something that renders a man an acceptable guest at a wedding, and the absence of which would render his presence unsuitable at such a place, so that he were better away. This marriage garment is well explained of Christian joy of heart, "the fruit of the Spirit is joy;" and we may add, delight at the presence of the Bridegroom; for this it is which occasions this gladness of heart. It is, in short, what St. Paul mentions as another requisite for receiving the crown. The Lord, the righteous Judge, shall at that day give a crown of righteousness, not to me only, but "unto all them also that love His appearing." To love His appearing, to look forward to it, and rejoice

in His presence with spiritual joy, this must be the wedding garment of the soul. The same temper, pervading our every-day life, would be shown in what the Collect expresses by cheerfulness, "that being ready in body and soul we may cheerfully accomplish" His will.

But no description can more fully explain it than the latter part of the short Epistle for to-day. After injunctions of walking with care and wisdom, St. Paul says, Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit, and then speaks of singing with each other and unto God, full of thanksgiving at all times, and that thanksgiving accompanied with mutual submission. In this passage, being drunk with wine is put as the opposite to the presence of the gracious Comforter. Thus in other places the Gospel is represented as the good wine, which the heavenly Bridegroom hath kept to the last, the joy of the Holy Spirit, which is far better than all those low and poor joys which this world can give. In like manner the Psalmist, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."<sup>2</sup> It is a joy with which the stranger intermeddled not,<sup>3</sup> which the world understands not. Thus when the Holy Spirit was first given, some said in mockery, "these men are filled with new." wine<sup>4</sup> This indeed, it might be said, is the new wine meet for the marriage supper of the Lamb; the Lamb Which hath shed for us His Blood, and purchased thereby for us the gifts of the Spirit. This then leads us to understand the wedding garment of the accepted guest, the clothing of the spirit, the raiment of light within. "He hath given unto them," says the evangelical Prophet, "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for

<sup>2</sup> Ps. iv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. xiv. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Acts ii. 13.

mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."<sup>5</sup> "The garment of praise," it is called, for such joy in the heart must need be accompanied with songs of thanksgiving; even as when Paul and Silas were in prison at midnight, and with their feet in the stocks, yet was their heart so full of gladness, that they broke forth into singing; and the foundations of the prison were shaken with the sound. And so St. Paul here, after speaking of being "filled with the Spirit," proceeds to the subject of psalms and hymns, by which that fulness of heart seeks for utterance.

At a festival worldly men in sympathy with each other, and in fever and madness of heart, pour forth songs which are indeed not unto God, but often unto the prince of this world, which worketh in the children of disobedience. They are filled with his spirit. "The end of that mirth is heaviness," and there is a sting behind which "biteth like an adder," the never-dying worm. But at that "feast of good things," to which the Gospel is so often likened, may the Spirit, as it is so beautifully expressed, "make melody in the heart to the Lord." Full of harmony, and joy, and peace, it sings to God. The darkness of the night but adds to that light within; the prison bars bind not that perfect freedom of heart which breaks forth in psalms of thanksgiving.

At the marriage supper then of the Lamb, they are filled not with wine, but with the Spirit; they are clothed with the garment of praise, making melody in the heart; and they are, as St. Paul describes, full of meekness also towards each other, as knowing into Whose presence they are come. "When thou art bidden to a wedding," says

<sup>5</sup> Isa. lxi. 3.

our Lord, "sit down at the lowest place. That when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher."

Is it, therefore, necessary for all Christians to have spiritual joy in Christ? It certainly is so. But this will mostly be the case in tribulations of all kinds. Joy will always be found in all bearing of the Cross. Thus the Prophet says, "Glorify ye the Lord in the fires." And to this he adds, "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!"<sup>6</sup> That is, that when men shall rejoice through the world in the glad tidings of the Gospel, saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come,"<sup>7</sup> many a humble soul will say, Whence is this joy to me? I am cast down, dry, and barren of heart. To this it must be said, "Are the consolations of God small with thee? Is there any secret thing with thee?"<sup>8</sup> St. Paul says, "See that ye walk circumspectly," before, he adds, "be filled with the Spirit." Is there not some sin that holds thee back? Rest not, strive more earnestly, give not over till you have obtained from God joy and comfort, a stronger sense of pardon and peace. You are no fit guest at the marriage feast till you have obtained it. Have you not some pride of heart to be mortified? Something within you that resists the will of God? If you prayed to God more, you would feel more conscious of His presence; and if you loved Him more, you would rejoice more in His presence.

Look to God's word, and look to your own heart and life. Consider whether they agree together; are they as

<sup>6</sup> Isa. xxiv. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. xix. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Job xv. 11.



suitable to God's commands as they should be? Lift up the faint hands, and strengthen the feeble knees. Pray more, through the whole night of your trouble wrestle with God; let Him not depart from you without a blessing. You may depend upon it He is glad to be thus constrained by you. Your hands and your feet are now free. Let your hands be lifted up in prayer; let your feet hasten on His service. If you do not this now, when the Master of the Feast shall appear you will be bound hand and foot, and no longer able to do anything. Labour now for the light of His countenance within the heart, for if you have it not, bearing witness with your spirit that you are the child of God, you will then be shut out for ever from that light into outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It is very true we are not to depend upon sensible emotions; and there is great fear of our being deceived into a false peace, and presumptuous confidence. But most are content to go on with a sort of indifference; never knowing what the joy of heart is, which the Spirit gives; and, therefore, not troubled at the loss of it. But joy and peace should keep watch in the heart; should watch against everything that destroys them; then it will be found of how much importance many an idle word, or evil thought, or dishonest action may be, for this joy will not return till they are repented of.

## SERMON LXVIII.

### The Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

Ephes. vi. 10—19. St. John iv. 46—54.

#### THE WARFARE AND THE ARMOUR OF SAINTS.

*My brethren, be strong in the LORD, and in the power of His might.*

EPHES. vi. 10.

WITH these words commences the Epistle for to-day, and then St. Paul expands the same with earnest eloquence. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, or in things of Heaven.* These words are surely enough to arouse us to a sense of our danger and of our strength. The life of a Christian consists for the most part in ways so meek, loving, and peaceful, that it is difficult to consider such a state as a battle, great and terrible, compared with which the wars of this world with flesh and blood are easy and light, and their consequences of little moment. Yet so did it appear to St. Paul,

looking on it with the eyes of the Spirit, and speaking of it with an inspired tongue. Great are the powers against you, he seems to say, vast and spiritual, which you behold not, because of the darkness of this your mortal condition, full of deceits against you beyond all you can imagine ; and that too for objects not earthly and of passing moment, but in high places, in things of Heaven ; imminent the peril, and great the hazard. Yet as if excited by the conflict in which he himself was engaged, St. Paul proceeds to speak with all confidence and encouragement, on account of the great power of God. *Wherefore*, he adds, *take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day*,—meaning, says St. Chrysostom, by the evil day, this present life ; *and having done all, to stand* ; leave nothing undone which is in your power to do, lest you be among the fallen at last.

But when St. Paul comes to speak of the particular parts of this armour, wherewith the Christian is to be entirely covered in every part, and provided for the war ; he describes him, one might almost say, as doing nothing, having nothing ; his being altogether unarmed and unresisting, from his entire belief, reliance, hope, and trust in God only. And the expressions are mostly such as are taken from the Prophets when they speak of our Lord Himself, for they often describe Him as a great warrior, returning victorious from the battle, when that His victory consisted in His being brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep, dumb before his shearers, opening not His mouth. Thus was He “mighty to save.” And by our Lord’s own example when He fulfilled these Prophets, may we perhaps best explain these expressions of the Apostle. *Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth*. This was the Prophet Isaiah’s expression of

Christ, and it was fulfilled in Him when standing before Pontius Pilate He witnessed a good confession, saying, "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." And again, "He that is of the truth heareth My words." He was "girded about with truth," and so must His followers be. *And having on*, says St. Paul, *the breast-plate of righteousness*, even as Christ Whose breastplate was righteousness, Whose conscience within His breast bore witness that in Him was no sin, neither guile in His mouth, fulfilling all righteousness both of the Law and of grace. "And who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" says St. Peter. This then is "the breastplate of righteousness."

*And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.* Whose "feet are like the morning on the mountains,"<sup>1</sup> or, how beautiful are their feet when they bear the Gospel; like the blessed Virgin when she hastened over the mountains to Elisabeth with the good tidings. But here, the feet being "shod with the preparation," beautifully expresses that zeal and haste with which good men are ever active in works of charity; being themselves full of the hope and joy which is in God, it gives wings as it were to their feet, in endeavouring to promote the same in others. And this is mentioned in the spiritual armour which protects against the devil, because such works are the best protection against his influence.

*Above all taking the shield,*<sup>2</sup> that large shield which covers the body, *the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* For "this is the victory that overcometh the world," says St. John,

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lii. 7.—LXX.

<sup>2</sup> τὸν θυρεόν.

“even our faith.” It is faith that extinguishes those evil thoughts which come like fiery darts from that place where Satan dwells.

*And take the helmet of salvation.* As the Prophet says of Christ, “He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head.”<sup>3</sup> Or as St. Paul says to the Thessalonians, “for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” For that salvation is as yet but in hope; but as such it protects the thoughts, the eyes, the head, the governing principle of the whole body. Thus it is said our head is Christ, our head is covered with salvation.

*And the sword of the Spirit,* adds the Apostle, *which is the Word of God.* And here it may be observed that this point differs from all the rest in this, that the other arms are to defend ourselves only, but this is to slay the enemy, “the sword.” And what is this sword? It is the Word of God. It is much to be remembered that when our Lord three times overcame the great enemy, in His temptation in the wilderness, it was on each occasion by bringing forward against him the written Word of God. By this we are taught of what infinite importance in all our temptations are the written oracles and precepts of God. And when our Lord goes forth to conquer in the Revelation, “out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword.” And hence it is, we may observe, that from knowing this the great power of the Inspired Word, that in our Lord’s temptation the devil quotes Scripture to his own purpose. The Spirit therefore must enlighten us that we use it aright; it is “the sword of the Spirit.”

From these figures of the seven-fold armour of the Spirit, taken from worldly warfare, St. Paul now passes

<sup>3</sup> Isa. lix. 17.

into plain but no less earnest words. *Praying*, he says, *always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.* To obtain this armour of God they are to be always praying in the Spirit; and in order that they may be continually praying, they are to watch; that is, to be ever wakeful and sober, in order that they may pray: these are constantly put together by our Lord Himself, "Watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." There is no prayer without watching; there is no watching without prayer. And this is to be not for themselves only, but, says the Apostle, "for all Saints." And especially for their own Apostle and minister now in great trouble, being in bonds and about to be tried for his life; while the same circumstances were also affording a great opening, and a door for the furtherance of the Gospel. As St. Peter, when in prison, had the Church praying for him without ceasing before the angel was sent to open the prison doors and release him; so now does the great inspired Apostle St. Paul himself ask for their prayers. And who knows how much it might have been owing to the prayers of others in conjunction with his own, that he spake and died with such boldness in testimony of the faith; that he shook to its foundation that great stronghold of Satan, the empire of the heathen world, made their idols to fall, and was the means of bringing so many nations from that time even to this day to the obedience of Christ?

Such, my brethren, is this remarkable passage in which St. Paul, in language so sublime and powerful, describes the Christian as covered all over with the strength of God in this his time of trial ; as having indeed put on Christ, and being one with Him, inasmuch as he applies to him, in this his warfare and victory, the very same figures which the Holy Spirit, in the Old Testament, spake of Christ. As St. Paul says of himself, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." And from these expressions of the Christian, in the power of God and of Christ, overcoming the efforts of his spiritual enemies, he passes to the Communion of Saints as all interceding for each other, and each in his own place as watching and praying.

And now, if the Word of God is said to be the sword of the Spirit, if such great things are said of it, as the "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," when spoken of the Old Testament, how much more may this be the case when applied to the New ? when we read in the Gospel of our Lord Himself, of the words He spake and the things He did ?

The Gospel for to-day speaks of an early period in our Lord's ministry, when He was first driven by the enmity of the Jews out of Judea, and retired into Galilee, and the neighbourhood of the Gentiles. And here we may observe, that not only was our Lord persecuted and hated by the Jews in general, and especially by the Scribes and Pharisees, but even the instances of faith in Him from among them were for the most part faint and feeble ; as was that of Nicodemus just before this, who came to Him by night, and although he was constrained to confess that He must be a teacher come from God, yet his faith did not rise to anything more than this at that time. The

great examples of faith came in from the Gentiles, to whom the Father Which is in heaven revealed His Son, and drew them unto Him. It was not so with the Jews, who even when they acknowledged Him did it slowly and with reluctance. And this nobleman is an instance of the kind, for he was probably a Jew, and perhaps belonged to the court of Herod, then ruler of Galilee. *There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down and heal his son ; for he was at the point of death.* The Jews sought God in their affliction, and this man's affliction brought him to Christ. So far well. But how different are his words to those of the heathen centurion, who said, "Wherefore I thought not myself worthy to come unto Thee, but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." Thy word at a distance is enough. But this man requests the Lord to come down from Cana to Capernaum, about twenty miles, and heal his son. Nor does he, like the woman of Canaan, fall down at His feet, but merely beseeches Him to come down.

And our Lord's reply seems to have in it something of complaint, as if He were not satisfied with the weakness of his faith. *Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.* This was the case with the Jews throughout, so that our Lord sighed deeply in spirit at their seeking for a sign, which He said was owing to their being an adulterous generation, *i. e.* having in heart gone away from God. And Herod of Galilee, even at last, longed to see some miracle done by Him, when he set Him at nought. Thus too St. Paul testified long after, "the Jews seek after a sign : but we



preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block." For God had so long trained the Jews, and showed His power to them by working miracles in the wilderness, and the land of Canaan, by their Lawgiver, their Judges, and their Prophets; that now, when He came to save their souls, as the Holy One of God, to Whom all the Prophets bare witness, they would not believe in Him without signs. So it is with this Jew; a miracle will convince him, but nothing less; he seems to stand erect before Christ, knowing not himself or God; but our Lord is ever looking to the heart, and desiring to heal the soul of this man, for he is more near to eternal death than his son is to the death of the body.

*The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die.* He thought not of God, in Whose Presence he stood; he thought not of his own unworthiness; he thought only of his child, My child will die unless you make haste to come; and our Lord, as it were with reluctance and unwillingness, granted his request, and more than he had asked. He thought that Christ must come down before He could heal the child, and that when his child was dead there would be no hope, or power of restoration. *Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way,*—He that setteth the proud afar off waits on the sick slave of a humble heathen, but comes not to the dying son of a proud Jewish courtier. "Go thy way,"—*thy son liveth.* And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. Even this imperfect belief our Lord saw working in his heart, and blessed it and gave it increase. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, *Thy son liveth.* Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. Though believing, yet still inquiring, as one weak in faith and needing con-

firmation. *And they, his servants, said unto Him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. As if they had said, in answer, you ask when he was beginning to amend, there was no beginning to amend, but suddenly, as if arrested by a Divine hand, the fever was gone. So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth ; and himself believed, and his whole house.* Under the pressure of affliction he prayed, and praying obtained, and the miracle could not be doubted, and it was known to his whole house, which were constrained to believe. Thus did our Lord, in His loving-kindness, descend to meet their imperfect faith, and began with the Jews in their weakness. *This is again, adds St. John, the second miracle that Jesus did, when He was come out of Judæa into Galilee.*

What therefore is the lesson we are taught on this Sunday? By the Gospel we learn how tenderly and mercifully our Lord watches over every spark of faith. He will not quench the smoking flax. Although "not many noble are called," though the pride of this world, and beyond all things religious pride, as that of the Jew, makes it very hard for such to humble themselves and believe, yet, when God's hand is heavy on those they love, even then, if they ask, they shall receive. His ear is ever listening ; His eye ever watching for them. And from this we may be encouraged to go on from such a beginning, to put on the "strength of the Lord," and as St. Paul says in the Epistle, "the whole armour of God."

We do not, as the Jew, expect to see signs and wonders, but why not? It is because we expect something infinitely greater than any outward signs or wonders can be. We are engaged in a spiritual warfare with spiritual enemies which are about our path, and our bed, day and

night. Sleeping or waking, at home or abroad, with others or when alone, when in business or at our prayers, they are ever with us while we are in the body, for our body occasions the darkness, and we cannot see them. Nay, I doubt not, my brethren, they are about us even here, and whispering at the ear in God's house even such thoughts as would, if heard aloud, startle both ourselves and each other. No outward sign, in the heavens or the earth, nay, not even miraculous deliverance from sickness, can be so marvellous as that we should overcome in this warfare such enemies. If we saw them, and knew them, we should say this. Yet, though we cannot see them, we can easily know their presence. That we should fall before them is but a matter of course,—many do,—we shall do so,—to-day, to-morrow, at this hour, and at all times, we shall fall, excepting, so far as by prayer and watching, we “put on the whole armour of God, that” we “may be able to withstand in the evil day.”

## SERMON LXIX.

The Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity.

Phil. i. 3—11. St. Matt. xviii. 21—35.

### THE LOVE OF CHRISTIANS.

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.—ST. JOHN xiii. 34.*

THERE is something peculiarly gentle and affectionate in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians; it is marked throughout with what we might call brotherly affection. So much was this the feeling of St. Paul towards these converts that we find him receiving support from them when he would not from other Churches. "Even in Thessalonica," he says, "ye sent once and again unto my necessity." And full of interest is the account, in the Acts of the Apostles, of his sojourn with them; it was with them that on the Sabbath day he went out of the city by a river side, and sat down and taught them. They witnessed his being beaten with many stripes, and thrust with Silas into the inner prison. What a thousand tender recollections must he have had of them in all his painful travels; of his first and early stay with them; of their first knowledge and love of Christ, that wakening of the

soul to things eternal like the first streaks of morning; what sympathy in their mutual afflictions and trials; what love and joy at their common deliverances, as when the angel opened the prison doors. Dear to him indeed must have been all his thoughts of his beloved Philippians, like the smiles and tears of an infant to its mother, who had borne so much for it. What hopes, what fellowship of prayers! All this is expressed in the opening of this Epistle.

*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, (always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,) for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that He Who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace. For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.*

Blessed Paul, a stranger and a captive in the great heathen Rome, the hearts of other men at such a time, when about to suffer and die, will turn to their home; but thou hadst on earth no home but in the hearts of these thy first children in the faith, "thy beautiful flock" by the still waters. But the light of the angel in thy midnight prison at Philippi was not so calm and bright as is the love, in the midst of thy bonds and imprisonment, which breathes throughout this sweet and Divine Epistle. Easy were thy chains and light thy sufferings when prayer bound thee more and more, in the tender mercies of Jesus Christ, to the objects of thy care and love with such hope and repose. And here we

may observe, that earnest prayer for the salvation of others fills us with a good hope that they will be saved, which may account for that strong confidence in their final perseverance which the inspired Apostle here expresses in the midst of his prayers, and longings, and thanksgivings.

This Divine love of brethren united together in Christ is well likened to a golden chain let down from the very throne of God ; for it not only binds more and more one with another, but also at the same time lifts up and draws all together more and more towards Heaven. Thus these kind Philippians, with their worldly means, and their sympathies and prayers, were aiding St. Paul, and thus made "partakers of" his "grace;" and he, at the same time, by his most prevailing intercessions, was increasing in them more and more every spiritual blessing. For thus he proceeds, after calling upon God as the witness of his affection for them :

*And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement: that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ: being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.* These last words of "fruits by Jesus Christ unto the glory of God" are even as our Lord Himself had said, in those His last discourses, in taking leave of His disciples, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." And again, "in this is My Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit."

And this brotherly love to each other of them that are found in Christ, this bringing forth much fruit in mutual

affection and forgiveness, on account of the love of Christ, is nowhere set forth in a more striking manner than in the parable from St. Matthew in this day's Gospel.

*Peter said unto Jesus, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but until seventy times seven.* St. Peter asked this question as a Jew who was used to the law, for the law lays down the exact measure of duty, how much was to be restored and the like; but the Gospel has another law which has no measure at all, because it is that of love which is to have no bounds, for it is to be like the Love of God. Look how high the Heaven is in comparison of the earth, it says, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. And again, Look how far the east is from the west, so far hath He set our sins from us. But the Heaven above our heads is without bounds; and if we were to go either east or west we might go on without end, into infinite space. Such then is the Love of God, and our love is to endeavour to be the same. Now this is the most difficult precept in the Gospel; so that in hearing of this law of forgiveness the disciples said, "Lord, increase our faith." But if it is the most difficult, yet to a good man it is at the same time the most gracious of all commands, because it expresses the love and mercy of God towards ourselves. And thus it is set forth in the following parable.

*Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.* Not at the last Great Day only, but always from our baptism to our death God is in some sense "taking account," judging, releasing, condemning. "His eyes consider the poor, and His eyelids try the children of men."

*And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. Now one talent being equal to some hundreds of pounds, of course ten thousand talents was beyond what any one could pay. And it indicates the great holiness of God, for it is on account of His being most holy that our sins against Him are so infinite ; He knows them all, He reckons them all, He is grieved by them all ; whether in thought, word, or deed, they are all offences against His infinite holiness. And every one who comes to repentance and a sense of God's presence must feel with the Psalmist, "My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me."*

*But forasmuch as he had not to pay, for his debt was immense and he had nothing, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Such is the condition of man by nature, unable to make any satisfaction or atonement to God ; upon him is passed the sentence of death. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. This is the case of the accepted penitent : although he can of himself do nothing, and has nothing to pay, yet does he acknowledge the debt, and promises to do all that he can do ; he humbles and abases himself before God, or, as it is said, he "fell down." And he pays all adoration and reverence, "he worshipped him," it is added. Then does God in Christ meet him, and lift him up with all mercy and loving-kindness, not merely grant what he asks, in affording him a respite and time to pay, but infinitely more than he could ask or think ; "he loosed him, and*



forgave him the debt." "None of the sins that he hath committed," as the Prophet says, "shall be mentioned unto him."<sup>1</sup> And this Divine love is the very pattern which is given for us all to follow, as our Lord Himself says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven." It is infinitely high, so that we can never go far enough in this temper; it is not in purity, nor in justice, nor in courage, nor in wisdom, that we are called upon to imitate Almighty God, so much as in this grace. "Be ye merciful as your Father in Heaven is merciful," and, as our Lord says, "Learn of Me, for I am meek." It is the very measure of our acceptance: "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

*But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence. This might be much for one servant to owe another, but compared with what he had himself owed his master, it was so trifling as to be absolutely nothing. And he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. Now we must not deceive ourselves because the parts of this parable find no exact fulfilment in our own case, the laying hands on him, the seizing him by the throat, and a debtor falling down at our feet; for not only do these perhaps never take place according to the letter, but in some of the worst cases to which the parable refers, there is no outward appearance whatever of this kind; it may*

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxiii. 16.

not be any matter of money due at all, it may be some overreaching in other matters, or it may be some slight, some standing in our way, some bitter word which has provoked us, or it may be some envious ill will on our part, or even no more than some dislike; and the unforgiving temper may have no means of avenging itself by casting an enemy in prison, or putting him down in any way. The worst case of this kind may all take place in the heart only, scarce, if at all, shown by outward gesture, word, or deed, but only known to the great Searcher of hearts. Such is the unforgiving temper which asks forgiveness of God, while it is not itself reconciled to man. Yea, such a one, though he may ask forgiveness of God, yet in fact feels not his own need of mercy, nor is he sensible of the weight of his own sins.

*So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.* Such an instance is a grief now to all good men, and an offence to the Church of God: but this is not all that is implied in this statement of his fellow-servants, in such grief complaining to their lord. As it is said that "the saints shall judge the world," so will the righteous acquiesce in the just judgments of God; yea, they will seem in the very name of all justice and mercy to call for that judgment. "Let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He cometh to judge."

*Then his lord, after that he had called him, for he seemed to keep silence and leave him alone for awhile; but after he had called him, he said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth.* This, with very wonderful power of

expression, is called in other places "the wrath of the Lamb," from which the sinner will call upon the mountains to fall on him and hide him ; *i. e.* even He Who had such infinite compassions, Himself so meek and forgiving, Who had wrought all the atonement for him, even He the meek Lamb of God, the very Victim for all sin, is said to be wroth ; for the weight of all His mercy but weighs down the unforgiving heart with a heavier judgment. He *was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.* All the burden of his own sins oppresses him for ever, with none of them forgiven, and with no hope of any one to release him.

*So likewise,* adds our Lord to this parable in very emphatic and awful words, *so likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

Thus, although the parable had given an account of outward circumstances, of words spoken, and deeds done, yet by this last sentence our Lord lays all the stress upon the keeping of the heart ; it is *if ye from your hearts forgive not* ; there must be outward conduct in word and deed showing forgiveness, but this forgiveness must be from the heart. And observe His words : it is not "forgive all men," but forgive each *his brother* ; it is by the bond of brotherhood in Christ, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, as St. Paul says, nor is it general but particular, each his brother.

On this subject, therefore, the great law of love, upon which more than anything else our forgiveness for sins daily incurred, and the sentence of the Day of Judgment will depend, what else can we add, but those words of wisdom, "Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life" ?

## SERMON LXX.

### The Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity.

Phil. iii. 17—21. St. Matt. xxii. 15—22.

#### THE EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.

*For our conversation is in Heaven.*—PHIL. iii. 20.

THE word here translated “conversation” means literally “citizenship.” And as such the text may serve to represent both the Epistle and the Gospel for to-day, as speaking of our heavenly citizenship in distinction from citizens of earth.

*Brethren*, says St. Paul, *be followers together of me, and mark, i. e. aim at imitating, them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* The great Apostle laboured to teach the Gospel, not only by his words, but also by his life; this he sometimes alludes to more or less distinctly, as when he wrought by his own hands, it was, he says, to show them “that by so labouring” they “ought to supply the weak.”<sup>1</sup> And he was able to say with the like confidence to the Corinthians, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” Thus has God been

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 34, 35.

pleased not only to afford us a perfect pattern in His Son, but in His Apostles also living ensamples to the flock, in men subject to like infirmities and passions as we are. They shine like lights in the world amidst the darkness that surrounds us, living by a higher rule, and as it were walking in Heaven.

*For many walk*, adds the Apostle, *of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.* Even in that saintly little Church at Philippi, even in those early days when Christians were so much purified by suffering, even among those who had witnessed St. Paul's preaching and his life, there were Christians in name who forgot the cross; nay, there were many. "Many walk," he says; and, further, it had been the constant subject of his warnings when he was with them; and now, when he thought of it, he wept. The blessed Apostle wept; and it so affected him, because it touched him in the most tender point of all, his Master's Cross. It was because the life they led made them enemies of that Cross. When he thought of it, he wept; because, as he says to the Hebrews, they in some mysterious sense "crucified afresh the Son of God." His wounds bleed again; He is again put to open shame; His enemies are not Jews but Christians. This makes the Apostle weep. He weeps because they laugh, and know not what they do; even as his Lord when He wept over Jerusalem, because it was full of rejoicing when it ought to have mourned. They are the enemies of the cross, and of Him Who is seen thereon; and therefore their "end is destruction," although for them Christ died. Our King is set forth on earth nowhere else but on a

cross ; on the cross His title is written, This is the King. It is written in every language, for all people are His ; but the cross is His only throne below. The cross speaks of our God with a body full of pain, because our bodies are full of sin. But their "God," says St. Paul, "is their belly." That is, the chief object they look to is ease and luxury, serving the fleshly mind, which is the very opposite to the lesson of the cross. The "carnal mind," says St. Paul, "is death," and is "enmity against God."<sup>2</sup> And the reason is, because in the cross is life. The things in which the natural man glories, are a shame to a Christian, because they are contrary to the cross. He is ashamed of them because they make him unlike his Master. This may be seen in St. Paul himself continually. "I will not glory," he says, "except in my infirmities. And gladly in them will I glory, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."<sup>3</sup>

And the character of these persons, the enemies of the cross, St. Paul sums up in these comprehensive words, "who mind earthly things." Their thoughts and desires, their joys and cares, their hopes and fears, are engaged about temporal matters. Would to God, my brethren, that we were not, most all of us, in this respect too like those over whom St. Paul weeps. Our employments, our treasure, our hearts, our affections are too much on earth for us to be the imitators of St. Paul, as he was of Christ.

*For our conversation,* he adds, *is in heaven ; we are citizens not of this world, but of Heaven, where "our life is hid with Christ in God," from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.* Our life is one of

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 9.

expectation and hope, not of enjoyment ; we are in a place which does not belong to us, nor we to it ; as strangers we might say, and exiles far from home. But this is not all, for we bear about with us a body of death : we have a close-pursuing and inseparable enemy ever about us, and in whose country we dwell, which is this flesh, and which will overcome us, unless by daily dying as Scripture with eloquent force expresses it, we succeed in subduing it. It is this flesh ever with us and influencing our hearts, which would make a God of this world's consolations ; which glories in subduing the immortal spirit to itself, and fills the mind with earthly things. With this we contend and labour, and long to be released from this contest with it, and therefore we look for the Saviour, *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.* These are blessed and gracious words, not new indeed for us to hear, but if we seriously meditate upon them, they will be ever new to our understanding, full of new life, new hopes. "The working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself," that is, His Spirit working within us a new body, and the power of the Resurrection. As to the Ephesians he says, "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." It was to set forth this that our Lord went forth working His miracles on diseased and dead bodies. For this did He after the Resurrection manifest so often His own risen body. And how is He forming this change ? It is by His Spirit within us, first working the living change in our souls, that thus taking up His abode within us He may in His own good time

quicken us into a spiritual and glorious body, casting off this vile body, with all its evil lusts and affections. It is, therefore, by His thus working even now this change within us, that we are raised together with Him, made to sit in heavenly places, and to have our conversation in Heaven. But if we mind earthly things we shall die: to be carnally-minded is death.

As citizens, therefore, of Heaven, we have an Heavenly King, for Whose kingdom we daily, hourly pray. He is our King even now, for our very calling and state as Christians is termed "the Kingdom of Heaven" and "of God." Nay more, as we are citizens not of earth but of Heaven, as we are but strangers, having no continuing city here on earth, so it must be said that we as Christians are of no earthly kingdom, or state, or country. And even as the Jews of old cried out, "We have no king but Cæsar!" so we, on the contrary say, We have no King but Christ! For as no man can be a citizen of two cities; a countryman of two countries; so in one sense it must be said that he cannot belong to two kingdoms, or be subject to two kings. He cannot serve two masters. Inasmuch as one is so infinitely higher than the other, that the less is lost in the greater, and is as if it were not.

Now this is a point very little understood or considered; men allow their minds to be taken up with State affairs, as if they were citizens of this world; as if such were all great substantial realities, of which they were to have the control and management. Alas, what a dream and a shadow it all is, what a mockery that deludes us with a show of something real! And yet what strong feelings are thrown away; what zeal and animosity; what likes and dislikes are engendered, as



among the Pharisees and Herodians of old, about politics. True it is that a Christian would honour and obey his king no less than others, nay, far more; but why? not because he is a citizen of this world, but because he is not; and he looks on such only as ordained of God, as representing His kingly power. For this cause he will render to all their dues; "tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."<sup>4</sup> No one serves an earthly master so faithfully, no one honours an earthly king so truly as a good Christian, because he does it for the sake of a Divine Master and a Heavenly King.

Now this the Gospel sets before us in a very memorable incident and Divine saying, to which it gave rise. When our Lord was teaching in the temple, a few days before His death, we read, *Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent out unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man: for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?* They feigned themselves just men; as if troubled by a point of conscience, they wanted Him to relieve them of their doubts; for, of course, they said, He had no fear of the Romans, and would plainly tell them the truth. For Herod having been made king of Galilee by the Romans, the Herodians, or party of Herod, maintained that they ought to submit to the Romans. But the Pharisees on the contrary contended that the sacred nation, as the people of God, ought not to be under Roman

<sup>4</sup> Rom. xiii. 7.

governors. And they thought that if Christ maintained Himself to be the long-expected King of the Jews, surely He would not have them to submit to a heathen yoke; and if they could but entrap Him by His answer to say this, then at once they would ask the Roman governor to put Him to death. For much as these political parties hated each other, they both hated Christ—the true Light—far more.

Now, in reading this account, what, I think, must most strike us, is not their malice and envy against Christ, although He was love and goodness itself, so much as the little, low, earthly thoughts which possessed them. Our Lord speaks of the great things of eternity, of loving God with the whole heart, of being made His children for ever, and as the angels which are in Heaven. But their hearts are so full of things earthly, of their petty disputes about this world's politics, that they have no room there for Him. Like Judas weighing in the balance earth and Heaven, putting in one scale thirty pieces of silver, and in the other an eternal weight of glory; and finding that the thirty pieces outweighed it. Surely, my brethren, such things as these were enough to make an apostle weep to think of; yea, and to make one, who is no apostle, weep to think how often he has forgotten the same.

*But Jesus perceived their wickedness,—their crafty design in pretending a scruple of conscience in this insidious question,—and said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? shew Me the tribute money. And they brought Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words they marvelled, and left*

*Him, and went their way.* They marvelled to see the crafty web they had woven so soon scattered to the winds.

The answer seems to imply, You accept Cæsar's money, you submit to his sway ; your duty therefore is simple and obvious, as far as that is concerned ; but stop, rendering tribute to Cæsar is not all ; remember there is something infinitely higher and more important. Render unto God the things which are His. Give not over unto Cæsar your religion, your conscience, your Saviour. For this both of you, Pharisees and Herodians, are combining together to do.

But our Lord's calling for the tribute money seems to imply that the matter of duty in such cases is generally a very simple and easy one. And if there should be any doubt, our Lord has taught us on another occasion what is the better part. When asked at Capernaum to pay the tribute money for the temple, He explained to St. Peter that from Him, as the Son of God, it was not really due, but nevertheless, by a miracle of Divine power, He paid the same, that He might not offend them.

But now, if these Jews had but known themselves to be citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, how different would their conduct have been ? Taken up with the thoughts of the earthly Jerusalem, they lost that and the heavenly also. As for the Roman Cæsars they were always raising tumults and seditions against them, and yet they rendered up to them the things of God. The reason which they gave for putting Christ to death was, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation, while by that very circumstance they brought upon them destruction from the Roman Cæsars.

And now to apply all this to ourselves ; what number-

less perplexities, and difficulties, and dangers shall we escape by having our conversation in Heaven; and thereby making God, as the Collect says, "our refuge and strength"? Many cares and temptations under which we now sink would at once vanish away, if we considered ourselves as citizens of Heaven; and if our only joy was that our names were written there. But how can we expect that Heaven should be our portion hereafter, unless our heart and our treasure are there now?

Our Blessed Saviour wept, and His Apostle wept, because with "many" it was not so; and surely that "many" has been increasing ever since, while the world goes on to its end. So that now there are "very many." And which of us may not be of that number? The Spirit of God it was that made His saints so sorrowful at this thought, because the Spirit of Truth alone fully knew how many there are who now weep not for themselves, but shall do so throughout a long—long—long—eternity. Oh! what shall that sorrow be which our Lord speaks of as the "weeping and gnashing of teeth," at being shut out from that kingdom? O sorrow of all sorrows! O sea of all bitterness, which that weeping shall be, which shall then begin, but shall never know an end!

Surely this is nearer to us than we think for, because those whom it hath overtaken have always been those who have least thought of it. So was it with those of whom St. Paul spoke. He would not have wept for them, if they had wept for themselves; if they had thought themselves in danger he would not have so despaired of them.

So was it with those who came flocking around our Blessed Lord with captious ensnaring questions; their conversation was assuredly not in Heaven, but was with

evil spirits; yet they trembled not. They stood on the brink of the bottomless gulf, with none but Christ to rescue them, but they cared not for it.

How many are there among ourselves who walk erect as if all were well with them, who know not what it is to bow their heads and humble themselves; whom neither warnings, nor afflictions, nor mercies of God, nor words, nor example, seem to have any power to move and subdue; and to all appearances nothing but the sound of the last trumpet itself will do so. Nay, many there are, our Lord Himself has declared to us, whom not even that sound itself, nor the very coming of the Judge, will move and humble; who will be taken by surprise even at the last, and will doubt even the Judge's own words, when He shall say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity!"

## SERMON LXXI.

The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Col. i. 3—12. St. Matt. ix. 18—26.

### MUTUAL INTERCESSIONS.

*For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you.—COL. i. 9.*

WE give thanks, says St. Paul at the commencement of his Epistle to the Colossians, *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.* There is nothing more remarkable in St. Paul than his earnest and constant prayers for others; so much so that we might suppose he did as much for the cause of the Gospel by his prayers as by all his other labours. No doubt his labours and prayers mutually assisted each other. But one great advantage in prayer is that it can reach cases which nothing else can, as in this instance: St. Paul was praying for a people from whom he was now necessarily at a distance, and whom he had never seen. This subject of praying for our fellow Christians is one of the greatest importance, and numerous are the ties and

inducements which in various ways should invite us to it, such as will influence every one, more or less, according to the love which he bears for Christ and His people. For our own Church in this country (oh! how dear should it be to us), for particular parishes and neighbourhoods, for the state of the clergy, especially the bishops, for the great and crying want of more ministers; our Lord has pointed out prayer as the great remedy for these evils, in the case of labourers wanted in His harvest. And how much does St. Paul's example urge upon us the same! It is a duty most pressing on us, yet most neglected. And what a view have we here of an early Church, the object of St. Paul's prayers? *For the hope, he says, which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.* We may observe how full of a heavenly mind breathes this prayer and thanksgiving; it is not for their outward increase or profession that he prays, but "for the hope, laid up" for them "in Heaven;" for their faith and love and the fruits of the Spirit. And then he proceeds to mention the instrument of this their holy inter-communion with each other. *As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.* This same person St. Paul again speaks of at the close of this Epistle in these words, "Epaphras, who is one of you,—always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." How very beautiful and impressive, my brethren, is this picture of St. Paul and his friend earnestly contending in prayer for those

Christians whom the Apostle had never seen! Here is the secret of the conversion of the world.

*For this cause, he adds, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.* You see how enlarged his desires are after all good; his hearing of their increase in grace and fruits of goodness only renders him the more urgent in prayer that such grace should abound, and such fruits should be an hundredfold. What earnest spiritual love on both sides; how blessed this Communion of Saints; what fervent longing in the Apostle for the everlasting good of those to whom he was bound by no earthly tie! How poor, how confined and short-lived appears all mortal love and friendship compared with this union which they had in God.

That ye may be, he adds, *strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.* And here he just alludes incidentally to their being in a state of external tribulation, yet not to deprecate or pray against such trials, but clothing the very mention of them with the sublimity of divine hope and joy, according to his usual manner of mentioning earthly suffering as put in the scale of eternity, "strengthened, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father."

But now let us ask what is it gives life and power to such marvellous love and faith as all this expresses? What is it that kindled such prayers in St. Paul, as to



embrace so fervently in spirit, and to bring down such blessings from the Father of lights upon those from whom he was "absent in the flesh," and had never seen in the body? Where is the hope and strength of such confidence? It is all in the knowledge of God, which is learned from the manifestation of Jesus Christ, and confirmed by habitual prayer,—the Word made flesh dwelling within and bringing forth fruit in mutual intercessions and prayers, "strengthening with all might according to His glorious power." It is therefore in the Gospel itself that we learn this strength. We have this day a remarkable instance of our Lord's readiness to answer the intercessions of love, so as to raise even from the dead; and also, at the same time, of the exceeding virtue going from Him on the touch of faith to cleanse and to heal.

*While Jesus spake these things unto John's disciples. It was on that memorable occasion in the house of St. Matthew, after his summons to be a disciple, when he made "a great feast," and had called together his friends of every kind to witness the presence of Christ. Pharisees and publicans, disciples of John and of Christ, were all there, a great and mixed company. In the midst of the conversation, it is said, Behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped Him, one named Jairus, who, when he saw Him, says St. Mark, fell at His feet, and greatly besought Him, saying, My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did His disciples.*

Now is not this manifestation of God in the flesh, even taken alone and by itself, sufficient for all things, for every intercession, marking the requisites and the acceptableness of it? Here is prayer, humble, earnest, impor-

tunate; he fell at His feet, worshipping, earnestly beseeching Him. And the answer is so marked that God at once is seen co-operating with the father, and meeting his prayer. In the midst of the feast, and of these divine discourses, He instantly rises up at the voice of prayer, and as if to show His earnest readiness to aid and second his wishes He leaves the assembled company at St. Matthew's house and goes with him. Although He might have done all by His word spoken, yet He would show us, by thus condescending, and not shrinking from the trouble of the task enjoined Him, how willing He is to meet us in our prayers, when we ask for each other. That this father, the ruler of the synagogue, represents any father who prays to God for his child, that he may be rescued from spiritual death, is obvious, a child would so understand it. To consider it so is in no way adding to the Scriptural account, but only applying it to ourselves; and without such application to ourselves all Scripture is dead and unprofitable. And the name father does in this case contain every other relationship, natural and spiritual. If of fathers in the flesh, so likewise of spiritual fathers does it speak, who intercede like St. Paul for their flocks, that they may be saved from death, or that they might grow unto all perfection. And of course wherever there is fatherly or brotherly love, that is anxious for the good of others and their everlasting welfare, this incident supplies all the encouragements and the confirmation that can be needed. The lesson is so easy, so forcible, so impressive, that if we knew nothing more than this single circumstance, it might, on reflection, quite startle and amaze us to think how remiss we are in prayers for each other. The father besought Him and He immediately arose and went with him; how much

does this contain? Why do you not thus pray for others, which are or should be dear to you? Is it that you are less anxious for them than this father was for his daughter? or is it that your faith is less than his was? or do you think that God has changed,—that He is now afar off, but that then He was near? Have you any doubt at all but that a like prayer now, faithful, importunate, and lowly, will have the same effect at any time? You cannot, you do not doubt it, but you are not sufficiently in earnest.

But it is the custom of God in Scripture to combine the love and care which we are to have for others, and for their spiritual profit, with that which we are to have for ourselves, and our own condition in the sight of God. For indeed the fountain itself of the heart must be cleansed for any prayers that issue from thence to be accepted. But they are naturally so combined together that the acceptance of our own prayers for pardon and cleansing dispose us to seek for the same for others, and enlarge the heart into active charities of intercession. Thus David, in the 51st Psalm, after such importunate supplication for mercy and the cleansing of his own heart, passes on to a prayer for the Church. After expressing hope for himself, saying, “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise,” immediately he adds, “O be favourable and gracious unto Sion, build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.” No sooner has he tasted one drop of divine consolation than he thinks of the Church of God, and intercedes for it. Ere his own tears for himself are yet dry, there falls upon them a gleam of light from above, and that light is divine love.

As our Lord was now going to the house of Jairus, with a great crowd following Him, *Behold*, it is said,

*a woman, which was diseased, with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment ; for she said within herself, if I may but touch His garment I shall be whole.* Suffering under legal uncleanness, she was afraid openly to appear before Him, and in this may well represent the sinner who would fain hide his sin and himself from the presence of God, and yet knows that he has no help but in coming unto Him. Yet great was her faith under the keeping of humility, and faith will render even the meanest things full of healing and life, while it looks upon them as belonging to God. We know how human love will invest everything that belongs to one beloved with itself, any trifle, anything associated with it, even the edge of a garment, will become filled with the object of its love. Faith will do the same in things divine. And nothing can show the nobleness and excellence of faith more than this, that it was so availing even where there was so little knowledge. She had faith to be healed, but she had not at the same time knowledge to consider that she could not be hid from the All-seeing Eye. Her faith went before her knowledge, and was the first to receive the blessing.

How wonderfully does the Divine goodness and power overflow ; it sets bounds to itself and appointed channels ; yet again, as if impatient of all limitation, it so passes over them as if knowing no bounds, wherever there is human distress to need, and faith to receive the blessing. Thus is it in our own day ; the Church of God is often likened to the garment of Christ, without seam, and many are astonished to see such effects of Divine grace beyond the visible fold ; but why should we marvel when such virtue went forth from the hem of His gar-

ment, and humility with faith received the abundant overflow of good? But we may add, if the hem of His garment had such power to heal and cleanse when touched without, what shall be His Body and Blood received within? Surely this is a subject on which the penitent soul may dwell in adoring faith and wonder, at the greatness of the gift.

*But Jesus turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.* While the ruler of the synagogue still waited, she who was shut out from Israel by the law came as it were behind, and by her faith anticipated miraculous deliverance, and received with all mildness, was comforted as the "daughter" and the child of God; and by her faith led the way and strengthened the chief of the Jewish synagogue in his weak and trembling faith.

Her example may do the same for us, in sustaining and raising our faith towards this great duty of intercessions, of which we have been speaking. The incident, moreover, is, it may be observed, peculiarly applicable to us, and full of consolation on this Sunday; for as we now draw to the close of our sacred year, in the Collect for this week we pray God to absolve us of His bountiful goodness, and deliver us "from the bands of those sins which by our frailty we have committed." And as if in confirmation of this hope, the Gospel gives us every reason for confidence that He will do so, if nothing on our part be wanting, while the Epistle which our Church has transferred to this Sunday, speaking of the inheritance of the saints, ever increasing in spiritual strength and knowledge, and bound up in mutual intercessions, may serve to carry on the same into aspirations and prayers

for both ourselves and others. And now another incident follows. For if we believe, He will show us greater things than these.

*And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, those customary attendants who had come to bewail the dead, He said unto them, Give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.* Holy Scripture is wont to speak of death as sleep; thus our Lord says, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," meaning that he was dead; and St. Paul speaks of the dead as "them that sleep," "them that sleep in Jesus." What our Blessed Lord here means is, Death is but a short sleep; and I will now show you in this instance of death that it is so.

*And they, it is added, laughed Him to scorn, so little were they impressed with the awful and mild majesty of God in Christ; like those mockers at Athens, when St. Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead. But when the people were put forth He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.* He took her by the hand, the living hand was laid on the dead; the hand of Him Who was God and Man was laid on that of a sinful child of Eve; it was life overcoming death. Thus is it when the power and grace of God comes on the dead and slumbering will of man, it arises, and in Christ can do all things. O marvellous Divine efficacy! As the body of Elijah stretched on the dead child of the widow, and that of Elisha on that child of the Shunammite woman, when his staff, the sign of the Cross, had gone before; what were these things but the setting forth of this great truth—that our dead bodies are made alive by His Body, and in Him our dead souls are quickened? How is His

presence full and surrounded with the power of all cleansing, of healing, and of life?

And now let us reflect a little on this incident. What is the dread heavy weight that ever lies upon us all? It is the consideration of death. How does it close up the view, so that we cannot look forward? How does it seem to reproach every enjoyment, however innocent? How does its unavoidable approach seem to scatter to the winds every earthly prospect of gain, of reputation, of the well-being of children? How does it seem to lie under all things, as if to suggest how hollow they are? How does it seem to cover all as with a cloud, and to surround us on this side and on that, and in the way that we should go?—I was going to say with its awful shadow, but it is not a shadow, no, far otherwise, that is the point of consideration, it is not a shadow, it is truthfulness itself. It strikes off all disguises, it scatters all shadows; it makes everything else to be shadows in comparison with it, showing us that nothing else hath anything substantial, any reality except death,—death the great certainty, death the great reality, death the great test and proof of all truth, death the universal rule which hath no exception, death the only thing unavoidable, unalienable. The inseparable adjunct of life, in all time and in all place, always near, and often most near when least known to be so. Its approach the most certain of all things, the nearness of that approach of all things the most uncertain.

Now it is from this that we are relieved by this most gracious incident of mercy. It is this that exists not in Christ's presence; He will not know of such a thing as death when He is near; He will not allow the name. It is not death, He says, as if suggesting, death is quite another matter—it is only sleep. Death is terrible, because it is

man meeting his God ; but it is no longer terrible to a sincere Christian, because it is man meeting his God in Christ.

Another point to be observed on these occasions is the apparent accident that brings Christ. Most persons in looking back on the history of their own lives, will observe that the most important points on which it has turned have depended on what are by men esteemed accidents. By this remarkable circumstance God would draw attention to the fact, that whatever it is, He is the doer of it ; that while our conduct depends on ourselves, He is the Disposer of all events. The same may be shown on the occasion of these incidents in the Gospel narrative. Had not our Lord just crossed the lake, come to Capernaum, and been present at that feast ; and when He was there, had not Jairus come when he did, his daughter would not have been restored. It was the father's faith that met the opportunity. And again, if the ruler had not come and induced our Lord to go with him, the woman with the issue of blood would not have had her opportunity also of obtaining that miraculous recovery.

We know not any day what great opportunities may be waiting for us, what this or that may give rise to, what accident, as we say, may be even now waiting at the door, and have in it the occasion of life or death.

Therefore faith and prayer should never cease, lest they be wanting when the occasion would meet them. No opportunity is to be lost in which we can intercede for the life of others. We know not what is going on in places unseen ; what conversations of God and His good angels, and intentions of good, may at any time be dependent on the opportunities which we have. The prayers of a father at no moment can be unavailing ; at all seasons they have



access to Christ, and they, we see and doubt not, can turn death into life.

Most men are too busy to pray either for themselves or others, and therefore the opportunities of life pass them by unheeded ; they feel they have no time for prayer, but they wish they had, yet all the while they have time for everything else. What they mean is, that they have no leisure of mind for it. Yet it may seem strange to say that if they were to pray ten times as much as they do, it would probably leave them quite as much time and as much leisure for other things as they now have. But even if it did not, the matters they think of more consequence are in fact but trifles, whereas this is most important. All that they need is to make prayer and intercession go before everything else, to be the one great thing at heart, then everything else falls into its place and is sanctified.

It is said of our Blessed Lord, as He went about, that virtue went out of Him and healed them all, and as many as touched Him were made immediately whole. We, as Christians, are brought into this presence of Christ full of healing virtue, and all our life is full of opportunities ; opportunities of Sacraments, opportunities of prayer, of promoting the salvation of ourselves and others ; opportunities of some active charity, whereby we may touch Christ. Our time is replete with these, and Christ is going about and meeting us, now in one way, now in another. One year of such probation is now fast coming to a close ; "lift up your eyes," the fields are "already white unto the harvest," nay, the sheaves are already standing in the fields, and the harvest is commencing ; the summer of another sacred year is just gone, another year of golden opportunities.

## SERMON LXXII.

### The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Jer. xxiii. 5—8. St. John vi. 5—14.

#### GLEANINGS AFTER HARVEST.

*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.—*

JER. viii. 20.

IN our sacred year, as well as in the natural, we have a harvest and a summer time; and one of these has now again come to a close; so that all we can now say of the year that is past is in the words of this day's Gospel, "Gather up the fragments that remain." Another season of grace has gone, with all its opportunities; it is numbered among the past; its seed is laid up in the eternal future.

The portion of Scripture which our Church has appointed for the Epistle is from the Prophet Jeremiah, where, amidst the desolations of Israel and the abounding of unfaithful shepherds, God gives the promise of Christ, the Shepherd that should feed His scattered flock, and gather them out of all countries. And our appointed Gospel describes the fulfilment of this prophecy being acknowledged by the Jews, when our Lord fed the multi-

tudes with miraculous bread in the wilderness. The one lesson, therefore, of this our last Sunday in the year, appears to be this : that amidst the desolations of the Christian Church, and whatever may be the want of faithfulness in its pastors, yet the one Great Shepherd of His flock is distributing to each the portion convenient for him ; and the question to each is, whether he has made and is making the most of what he has received. For inconceivably great is our blessing as the chosen people of God ; and equal to the blessing is the responsibility.

First of all, then, we have the prophecy, *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth.* Our Blessed Saviour is often called "The Branch," "the Man whose Name is the BRANCH,"<sup>1</sup> inasmuch as He has been pleased to take upon Him our nature, to be made very man, to be born of the stock of Abraham, of the family of David ; to be, as He called Himself, "the Son of Man." And as when He takes on Him our poverty He gives us His riches, He has graciously transferred the same name to Christians, that they should be "*branches*,"<sup>2</sup> branches in Himself, the true Vine, partakers of the Divine nature ; and as He is the Son of man, that they should be made in Him sons of God.

"The righteous Branch shall reign in the earth." Declarations of God are always fulfilled in a truer and higher sense than the words first sounded to the ear : so the King, the Son of David, reigning and executing judgment, has an accomplishment in us, the true Israel of God, at this day beyond the letter. Who does not

<sup>1</sup> Zech. vi. 12 ; iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xv. 5.

feel that there is One *reigning* in his heart, and exercising a sway there beyond that which any mere earthly sovereign could do?

*In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* "The Lord," *i. e.* Jehovah, God and man. He is our sanctification, by procuring for us the Holy Spirit; our redemption, by paying for us the ransom of His death; He is "our righteousness," says Bishop Wilson, "by satisfying the justice of God in our nature." "A man shall be a covert from the tempest."

*Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, Which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, Which brought up, and Which led the seed of the house of Israel, out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them: and they shall dwell in their own land.* That is, the mercies of God are so great in the coming time that men shall no longer swear by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Who brought them up out of the land of Egypt; but by Him, the same God, Who hath wrought things far greater, of which those were but the sign; when the Great Shepherd of the sheep shall feed His flock on the mountains of Israel, "and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." And then this prophecy in the Scripture appointed for the Epistle seems, as it were, to pass into the Gospel, where Christ on feeding His people is acknowledged as "that Prophet which should come into the world." The connexion is obvious, the teaching is one.

In the appointed services for this day before the Reformation the Epistle and Gospel were different;

the Epistle being that which we now have for last Sunday; the Gospel consisting of the striking account of the Day of Judgment which occurs in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it." . . . "and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened." Now this lesson was very appropriate and very impressive on the last Sunday of our sacred year, wherein so great a part of the book of life was closed, to be opened only on the Last Day. And this makes one the more earnest to inquire what is the full power and meaning of the Gospel which we now have, and the more so as it is but a repetition of the same Gospel which we had on the Fourth Sunday in Lent; the account of our Lord feeding the five thousand with the five barley loaves. But this is not all. For it is the account of this miracle as given in St. John's Gospel, when it might have been a statement of the same selected from one of the other Gospels.<sup>3</sup> Whereas the peculiarity of the circumstance in St. John is this, that this Evangelist seems merely to insert in his Gospel the account of the miracle, in order to introduce that remarkable discourse of our Lord at Capernaum, wherein He explains the spiritual meaning and intent of that miraculous Bread, as representing His own Body and Blood, by which He should feed His people unto the end of the world. This then, (blessed be God, and blessed for ever be His holy Name, through Christ our Lord!) this then is our altar-lesson for this Sunday, this last and best, this highest of all consolations; and yet, while it is reaching itself down

<sup>3</sup> See Seventh Sunday after Trinity, pp. 137. 147; and also Fourth Sunday in Lent, vol. i. p. 260.

to the lowest of all, as the manna adapting itself to every taste—full unto abundance for each, yet with no fragments that remain—the sheet let down by the four corners from Heaven to earth, in order to lift us up from earth to Heaven,—the altar itself, and the altar service throughout the year, and all the prayers of Holy Communion, do but sound again and again this Gospel, and seem to say, “Lord, evermore give us this Bread.”

To repeat the Scriptural account. “*When Jesus then lift up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him,—that is, after healing so many who had been brought to Him in the wilderness to which He had retired, and when He had sat down there and taught them, and lifting up His eyes saw still more and more crowds flocking to Him in this retreat,—He saith unto Philip, for Philip was of Bethsaida, that town which bordered most nearly on this wilderness, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? (And this He said to prove him; for He Himself knew what He would do.) Philip answered Him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, the friend and fellow townsman of Philip, saith unto Him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? They do but serve to show the greatness of our want, and our poverty in this wilderness.*

The boy with the five barley loaves, whom St. Andrew and St. Philip bring, may well represent the childlike spirit which Christ receives, the little ones which His Church brings to Him, looking up to Him in meekness of faith. It is all we have to bring and offer Thee, O Lord; but even this Thou wilt deign to receive, if brought

in a childlike spirit, with eyes that wait on Thee. It is enough. *And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.* That which God receives into His hands is increased always, and multiplies. If into His hands He receives our hearts and lives, they abound with blessings; if our worldly goods, they are restored to us an hundredfold in this present time; if our good intentions, they are strengthened; if works of charity, they are made to abound like the Nile; if our prayers, they return as drops that replenish the earth. But almost all His blessings He bestows through the medium of others, delighting to make them the channels of His mercy. "He distributes to the disciples, and they to the multitude."

*When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.* Why should this be added? For God is wont, in His kingdoms of nature and grace, to spread abroad with great profusion; He openeth His hand, and His gifts abound as the sea; there is no lack, and no let or limit; not only on the good ground, but also on the trodden ways, and on the rock, and amid the briars, are found the superabundant seeds of life which He scatters. So does it appear in the finite vision of man; for even the stars are in man's view as the sands on the sea-shore, in wastefulness of infinite life. But not so with God. He telleth them all by their names. All things are numbered by Him, and known in measure and weight. And so is it now; though at His table in the wilderness the super-

abundance seems great, and lavish the profusion as He opens His hand, yet it is all in measured exactness, and known of God. *Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.* "Twelve baskets," according to the number of them that gathered, and of the tribes of Israel scattered abroad, but not lost in the sight of God.

Again, it may be that this is said also in condescension as an example for the conduct of man. Let there be no waste prodigality in that which is the staff of life to the poor. What love of God's poor can there be where there is not carefulness to preserve and to distribute that which is of much account and precious to them? Has He not provided in the law that the gleanings of the field should be for the poor and the stranger? And if in the gathering of the manna "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack,"<sup>4</sup> this was likewise to convey in another form this same lesson of unselfish care for the needs of each other, avoiding covetousness or prodigality.

But further, these words have likewise another meaning, as they must sound in the ears of us all as applied to things spiritual and the opportunities of salvation in this temporal life, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Indeed I do not know any warning that comes more seasonably to an earnest Christian at all times. He finds continually a day well-nigh gone, and some little opportunities of good which he had hoped for departing with it unfulfilled; but then comes this merciful voice, "Gather up the fragments that remain," and in

<sup>4</sup> Exod. xvi. 18. 2 Cor. viii. 15.



doing so he may find more than he had at the beginning. And so with the passing year, and all its seasons of grace, instead of sitting down in despondency when he considers the gifts of God which he has abused, and the talents he has neglected, he is rather aroused by a more earnest call to repentance to "gather up the fragments that remain." Where Christ is there must ever be self-distrust, never despondency.

And why have the words a peculiar power and efficacy as thus applied which they have in no other sense? It is because God measures the work done by a Christian, not by time, but by the love which it evinces; not by external actions, but by the heart from which it flows. The Bread which He gives is His Body, and this Bread is eternal life. To partake once of eternal life is to partake of the same for ever. "Strengthen then the things which remain." That which hath power to shut out indolence, and presumption, and despair, shall enlarge the heart to receive the hidden manna. They said to Him at Capernaum, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread." It was a good prayer, the best of prayers, and better than they knew, and the Spirit of God gave them to make that prayer, and it was answered by Him that heareth prayer far beyond what they thought, or knew, or desired. But yet the prayer which they of themselves had then need to make was not only "Give us this Bread," but also, Give us to know and to understand what this Bread is; give us to long after this Bread according to our need and the value of it; enlarge our desires after it, after Thyself Who art This Bread, and art come down from Heaven to give Thy flesh for the life of the world, that partaking of Thy risen Body we may be with Thee at the right hand of God. "Lord, evermore give us this Bread;" and give us

faith to be nourished by it, and love to know its worth, and knowledge to weigh it aright with the things of time.

My brethren, in the diseases our bodies are subject to, faith in God is often of more avail than all the medicines which human skill can apply; and in some weaknesses and depressions of the mind which are connected with the body, faith in God is, I am convinced, oftentimes the only remedy and means of restoration. Men seek, and seek, and seek in vain, till they find that rest. But infinitely greater is the power of faith in that which is peculiarly its own province,—in apprehending aright the Son of God, and in discerning in mean elements His Body when we eat of that Bread.

The harvest is past, the summer is ended,—but are we not saved?—if Thou our Saviour art with us, art within us? But thou art a God that hidest Thyself, and carnal eyes cannot discern Thee. Our services on this Sunday seem to turn our eyes in hope to another Advent. “The plowman,” says the Prophet, “shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed.”<sup>5</sup>

*Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did—when they had seen: they were Jews of whom our Lord said, “Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe;” when they had seen the miracle, they said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.* The day was well-nigh gone, and the shadows of evening were spread out, when, lest they should faint by the way, He prepared for them that table in the wilderness. It was a little after, in the same night, that the disciples beheld Him walking on the sea, and drawing near unto them in their trouble, and heard His voice, saying, “It is

<sup>5</sup> Amos ix. 13.

I ; be not afraid." And it was on the next day, at Capernaum, that He taught the people in a manner so earnest, so impressive, so forcible, of what He was about to do, of which that miracle had been the sign—of His Body which is meat indeed, and His Blood which is drink indeed. They that sought and found Him at Capernaum had acknowledged that He was "that Prophet that should come into the world;" they were desirous to make Him a King, to acknowledge Him as the Messiah of God; but oh, how far short was this of that which was needed for the saving of their souls! Their hearts were still on earth, not in Heaven; and when He spake of His mysterious indwelling, and of the true Bread in which is life, they "murmured in themselves;" they said, "It is an hard saying; who can hear it?" "Many went back, and walked no more with Him." For the Father alone Which is in Heaven could draw them unto Him; the Father Who had revealed the Son unto St. Peter as the Son of the living God. He, therefore, could now say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Alas! my brethren, the harvest is past, the summer is ended; we have been saved, but we are not safe. How can we be safe, as long as we love anything more than God in Christ, and value anything more than the Bread from Heaven? Mother and sister, brother and friend, these one by one drop away as the autumn of life comes on; but all this, my Blessed Saviour, hast Thou promised to be to me. Knowledge, and honour, and possession, and rest hast Thou promised to be; and all this Thou surely art, when Thou givest Thyself at Thine holy altar to me; but the heart must be emptied and enlarged to receive Thee there. For Thou art all fulness: there is

no room for aught else where Thou art. All is summer without end where Thou art, for there is no time with Thee. All is harvest and ingathering, and nothing is lost where Thou art; for of Thy fulness do all we receive, and grace for grace.

And now, Christian friends, we have come to the end of our sacred year, during which, from Sunday to Sunday, in unfolding the Scriptural instructions from the altar, I have had one especial design and purpose, as peculiarly seasonable to these times, viz. to dwell on Him Whose delight it was to be among the sons of men; to show forth the tender compassions and sympathies of Him Who in unspeakable lowliness was ever pleased to designate Himself the Son of Man; and Whose human "compassions fail not," though He be now on the right hand of God. Let us then lift up our hearts to Him, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and End, the Author and Finisher of our faith; ever remembering this, that it is not enough for us to acknowledge the Word of God, or even that the Word was with God; we must also acknowledge that the Word was God.

Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest-time, days and years, how soon shall each one of us have to bid adieu for ever to you! Nay, Christ Himself, Whom we have known after the flesh, soon shall we as such have to know Him no more; nay, even already must it be so. That sea-shore of Galilee, where He so often taught; those places which are hallowed by the recollection of some miracle of mercy or divine parable; Bethlehem and Nazareth, Capernaum and Jerusalem; these scenes which have become endeared to us, because they have become associated with the knowledge which we have of His infinite goodness; all these things too are fading away

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like the visions of the past, or the works of His hands on earth in the pride and glory of the field ; but the Word of God abideth for ever, because the Word is God. In that world where sun and moon are not, He shall be to us no more the provision by the way,<sup>6</sup> but yet shall ever be still “the medicine of immortality,” and “the Bread of Life.”

<sup>6</sup> Viaticum.

## SERMON LXXIII.

### Saint Andrew's Day.

Rom. x. 9—21. St. Matt. iv. 18—22.

#### BRINGING UNTO CHRIST.

*Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, and again Andrew and Philip tell JESUS. And JESUS answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified.—ST. JOHN xii. 22, 23.*

THESE words occur on an occasion of great interest. Our Lord had come to Jerusalem just before His death; and some Greeks desirous to see Him were thus brought to Him by St. Andrew; and, recognizing in them the gathering together of the Israel of God, our Lord in very impressive words spoke of the fruits of His Passion, and the glory that should follow. Thus St. Andrew comes forth like a star in the glowing sunset, which betokens that glorious morrow of our Lord's Resurrection; the first star which appeared before the heavens were filled with the bright multitude, of them "that turn many to righteousness." Thus when by the overruling of God he is chosen as it were by St. Philip to bring the Greeks unto Christ at the Passover, he appears as if

offering "the sheaf of the first-fruits"<sup>1</sup> of that harvest of the world which the ensuing Pentecost was to bring in,—the first and forerunner of that glorious band whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains.

It is then this their mission which St. Paul describes in the Epistle,—the Holy Jerusalem, no longer local and temporal, but built up by faith in Christ, in Whose foundations are the names of the Twelve Apostles; for in this Apostleship, this building up "in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship," is laid the spiritual Temple of God throughout the world;—not of the law nor of the seed of Abraham, nor afar off in time and space, but brought most intimately near.

*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Thus St. John says, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."<sup>2</sup> To this the nature and amplitude of the Temple to be built without hands, on Jesus Christ, the Corner Stone, the Old Testament abundantly testifieth. *For the Scripture saith,* adds the Apostle, *Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek:* since that hour we may add when St. Andrew with Philip brought those Greeks unto Christ and He so graciously received them as the first-fruits of His Cross. *For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.* "Thou that hearest prayer," it is

<sup>1</sup> Levit. xxiii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 1 St. John iv. 3.

as it were the very name of our God,—“Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come.” In that saving Name shall the kingdom be.

And hence arises the necessity of Apostleship which is here eloquently set forth. *How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* The coming in of the Kingdom of Heaven, the rising of the Sun of righteousness, the morning upon the mountains, a light breaking forth on them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: all these are the Scriptural expressions which describe the planting of the Church of God in the world. This passage itself derives a new and peculiar force in being thus put forth on St. Andrew's day; and St. Andrew's day as clothed in this Scripture breaks forth upon us in a new light as the morning from above; the first red streak of dawn, while as yet the light and clouds intermingle and contend with each other.

*But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias, when about to describe “the arm of the Lord,” and the sufferings of Christ, saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound, as says the Psalmist, when about to speak of the going forth of Christ as the sun from his chamber, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world. But I say, Did not*



*Israel know?* Yes, indeed; for while the Old Testament dwells so much on the calling and coming in of the Gentiles, it declares at the same time that the Gospel had been first fully and with long forbearance declared to Israel. For *first Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel He saith,* implying that they had been called to long and painfully, but called to in vain, *All the day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

Thus does St. Paul in the Epistle describe the gathering in of the world unto the obedience of Christ by means of the Angelic, Evangelic heralds of the new covenant, the Apostles. And as the Church is now again about to raise her Advent trump, speaking of all the comings of Christ, in humility and in glory, by His Word and by His Grace, in His Ministry and Sacraments, so with great propriety she introduces this her minor note on her Saints' days, commemorating that Apostleship by means of which the knowledge of it hath filled the world. Nor could any description of it be found more full and expressive than this of St. Paul, showing how it all lay hidden and bound up in the Old Testament, established in the New, and bound up in the very Apostleship of Christ from the Father.

In this the Apostleship is Christ Himself calling upon the world, Twelve in One—and One in Twelve. As the foundations of His Church they are emphatically called "the Apostles of the Lamb," and as such partaking not only in His Apostleship, but also in His Cross and

martyrdom, as thereby being made conformable unto His death. And St. Andrew in his own cross might have called to mind his Lord's words when he first brought those Greeks to Him, to be fulfilled in some sense after their measure even in His Apostles. "Jesus answered them saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." And then, with awful and glad acquiescence receiving the Cup, He added, "Father, glorify Thy name." "And a voice came from Heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." After this example did the Apostles feel that by their own martyrdom this the glory of the Father and their Master's glory was sealed and ratified, and that, watered by their blood, that seed of eternal life which is the Word of God would find more abundant increase.

With this reference, and as especially appropriate to St. Andrew's day, may be understood the last words of the Epistle which St. Paul quotes from the Prophet, "All the day long have I stretched forth my hands." For this expression has always been supposed to contain a hidden allusion to the figure of our Blessed Lord upon the Cross, as there stretching forth His hands in an agonizing death, as it were, in a beseeching attitude of appeal to a people that heeded Him not, as expressing His earnest desire to embrace them in those His arms of mercy, while the day of salvation lasts. Such was the form in which He appealed to the Jews after His Passion and Resurrection, for forty years pleading with them, until the night of destruction came on that unbelieving city and nation.

The preaching of His Spirit for all that time was the setting forth of Christ crucified; lifting up His hands in intercessions for them till the going down of the sun. So is it with us, my brethren, now as with that Israel of old; with each of us during his, as it were, forty years of probation in the wilderness of this world; and so is it with His Church at large until the end. If therefore all wisdom, all power, all eloquence, and all salvation is in the Cross of Christ, as He Himself testified when St. Andrew brought unto Him those Greeks at the approaching Passover, well might St. Andrew himself have rejoiced to leave the world on a cross of martyrdom, welcoming it and embracing it, as it is reported of him, with great joy, as a privilege vouchsafed to him by his Lord, the object of his long desire, his anxious love. From that his cross in a lingering death of two days, he is said to have continued all that time to preach to the people, sealing the confession of a faithful life by the very form and circumstances of his death. "What was it," says St. Bernard, "but the Holy Spirit that helped his infirmities, through whom was shed forth in his heart love strong as death, yea, stronger than death? And oh! that we may be partakers of that Spirit, and as He rendered the death of the cross to St. Andrew, so He may make the labours of repentance to us to be not only not painful, but even desired and loved."<sup>3</sup>

Such is the Kingdom of Heaven established in the world; that net, as our Lord describes it in the parable, which was to gather of every kind; that the separation may be made by the angels on the eternal shore. And after this description of it, by St. Paul, we come with an

<sup>3</sup> Serm. ii. De S. Andrea.

additional interest to the account in the Gospel, of that occasion when our Lord first summoned them from their calling on the Lake of Gennesaret, that they might become fishers of men. And we may well suppose, with a lively and tender remembrance, that scene must have occurred to St. Andrew himself when he hung those weary hours on the cross, when he considered how much had depended on that call; how much on his ready obedience in accepting the summons; while it implied his at once bidding adieu for ever to all callings and occupations of the world.

*And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, says St. Matthew, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, (for they were fishers;) And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him.* Now if we had no account of the occurrence but this, we might have supposed that, without any previous intercourse with them, He Who knoweth the hearts of men had, by the miraculous power of His Word and Presence, suddenly worked on the minds of these whom He had chosen, drawing them with instantaneous Divine attractions unto Himself; but it was not so. In our Lord's appointment of His Apostles for their great work, all appears to have been by a gradual training, and St. John gives us a previous account of St. Andrew, of his being one of the disciples of St. John the Baptist; no doubt well prepared at that time in the practices of repentance, so as to have been singled out by the Baptist himself, together with another disciple, probably St. John, as those to whom he pointed out "the Lamb of God." On that occasion he followed Jesus, and conversed and continued with Him; and, finding Him to be indeed the

Christ, he hastened and brought to Him his own brother, the great Apostle St. Peter. They then became in some measure followers of our Lord. They were then with Him at His first miracle in Cana of Galilee, in His miracles and teaching at Jerusalem and in Judea, and had now come with Him to Galilee and Capernaum, when He thus summoned them to give up all, as the Gospel for to-day describes, calling them not as yet to be Apostles, but as disciples, out of whom afterwards, when they were again sufficiently tried and trained, He should choose Apostles. So is it with us all, "The preparations of the heart are from the Lord:" He searcheth and proveth the reins, and then by some new call of His Providence, some arduous duty or opportunity of sacrifice, He invites us to come nearer unto Himself. And blessed are we if we resist not the call. These disciples indeed, being poor, had not much to surrender; but that the sacrifice they now made was to them great and trying we may learn from what was said on another occasion; for when our Lord had been speaking of the danger of riches, and St. Peter said, "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee," his Lord seemed to acknowledge the greatness of this surrender they had made of themselves, saying, that they in the regeneration should sit on thrones; that no one should make such sacrifices as they had done for Christ, and for His Gospel, but that he should receive in this present time an hundredfold, and in the world to come everlasting life. They little thought when that was said to them, and when they asked what their reward should be, that a time would come when the highest glory, the dearest honour, they would desire on earth, would be to be made like unto their Lord; and as His earthly throne was a Cross, so should it be theirs also—that signal mark of

shame and suffering, that death of the lowest degradation, as showing that they were become, as St. Paul says, "the offscouring of all things:" for both St. Andrew and St. Peter died on the cross.

And now, as with these two, St. Andrew and St. Peter, were two other brothers, united in occupation, and united likewise as disciples of the Holy Baptist, for St. Andrew was with the beloved disciple when St. John the Baptist first pointed out to them the Lamb of God; so are they united also in this call. Thus it is that signal spiritual privileges and blessings often come on those who are before associated in family, or neighbourhood, or occupation, or friendship. *And going on from thence, by the sea and shore of Galilee, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and He called them. And they immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed Him.*

Thus it is that neither in the Epistle nor the Gospel does St. Andrew stand alone as brought before us on this day: in the Epistle it is as if he represented the Apostleship as first called; in the Gospel he is with the three most eminent Apostles; and indeed it is from his union with those three, and in his combination with them, he is best known. He seems to stand next to them in priority and dignity; and if those three are admitted on some occasions to be alone in the nearer presence or manifestation of Christ; yet in one instance, on that memorable discourse respecting the Day of Judgment on the Mount of Olives, St. Andrew is present with the three. He seems to have been, as it were, an intervening link between them and the rest of the twelve. Thus, on two occasions, his neighbour and fellow-townsmen, Philip

of Bethsaida, seems to look to him ; in both instances Philip goeth and telleth Andrew, and then they both together come to Christ. It is St. Andrew's privilege to bring first of all St. Peter, the most eminent and chief among the twelve Apostles, and then in those Greeks at the Feast to bring the first-fruits of Israel scattered abroad among the Gentiles also. His attitude at all times seems to be that of reverently watching to see what his Lord will do, looking up, as it were, to His countenance, and as if pondering on His words. Thus we see him on one occasion with St. Philip, and with the boy by his side, with the basket of loaves, as if expecting from his Lord some manifestation of power and goodness, and saying, "You spoke of Bread, here are five loaves." At another time the introduction to that discourse on the Mount of Olives may have arisen from the like inquiring watchfulness in St. Andrew, as if saying, "You spoke of the stones of the Temple being overthrown." Thus to these beginnings of St. Andrew we owe perhaps the two most memorable discourses in the Gospels—that on the Bread from Heaven in St. John ; that on the Last Day in St. Matthew. Closely connected with this disposition is that of bringing others to Christ: first, his nearest of kin, whom he immediately goes to find ; then, his neighbour in St. Philip ; then, the strangers in those Greeks.

Now there are some persons who do not stand pre-eminent among others for powers of mind or strength of character like St. Peter and St. John the Evangelist did among the disciples, but yet are made by God to be the instruments and occasions of perhaps as much good, and that is, by their constant watching and waiting upon God, and taking all opportunities of bringing others to Christ.

## SERMON LXXIV.

### Saint Thomas the Apostle.

Eph. ii. 19—22. St. John xx. 24—31.

#### *SLOWNESS IN BELIEVING.*

*Thomas saith unto Him, LORD, we know not whither Thou goest ; and how can we know the way ? JESUS saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.—ST. JOHN xiv. 5, 6.*

THERE was a time when the testimony to our Lord's Resurrection was incomplete ; it was when He appeared in the midst of the Apostles, but St. Thomas was absent ; and having been absent from that assembly he doubted. Then was there something wanting to the full confirmation of the faith : there was a note out of tune ; there was one of the foundations imperfect on which the City of the Lamb was to be built. But on the following Sunday the Holy Jesus again made Himself known, dissipated all doubts, and St. Thomas made that full confession, saying, " My Lord and my God." Then was the testimony to the faith full and perfect, the foundations for ever established : all was harmony in the Apostolic choir ; the Holy Jerusalem from above was filled with the



Light of the Lamb in which walk the nations of them that are saved.

Now, I think, we may consider the Epistle for to-day with reference to that circumstance, as if in commemoration of that event the Church with one heart and one voice took up her triumphant strain of thanksgiving throughout the world unto the end, saying, in St. Paul's words: *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

The Apostle is here speaking of the Gentiles, who, having been as strangers and foreigners, admitted at best to but half-privileges of God's house, as proselytes in the Temple, were now fully received into all the rights of the Holy City, being as fellow-citizens with the true Israel, and of the family of God, builded up as living stones into that spiritual House, that Temple wherein God through His Spirit will dwell. "And He came," St. Paul had just said, "and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh," bringing us all into one faith; "for through Him," he adds, "we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." And thus was it, as we may apply it on this day, when He came to meet St. Thomas in his unbelief, and appeared a second time in the midst of the disciples, declaring His peace, and brought the doubting Apostle to a full confession of His Godhead, to understand that which He had declared to him at the Last Supper,—that He is Himself the Way,

the Truth, and the Life, by Whom alone is access unto the Father.

Those that were afar off He Himself comes to meet if there is any desire to return to Him ; He Himself seeks the lost sheep ; and, oh ! that He may bring us all into the unity of His one fold, strengthen what is weak, make up that which is wanting, establish what is imperfect, “till we all come in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man !”

The Evangelical narrative then of St. Thomas is this. *Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.* He was not with them in that upper chamber in Jerusalem, where the Apostles were gathered together in mutual fellowship and prayer on the day of their Lord’s Resurrection. Whether it were from accident, or unavoidable hindrance, or from weakness of faith, or want of sympathy, to be absent from the gathering together of the Church can seldom be without some loss ; and if it be a voluntary separation from the unity of the Apostles, then faith itself must needs be obscured and darkened, though they themselves that thus suffer may not be conscious of it. And, oh ! how great is their loss, who are not in the assembling of the faithful on the Lord’s Day, when Jesus by His marvellous power comes to be in the midst, saying, “This is My Body which was given for you !”

*The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, alluding perhaps to the description of that interview which they had given. Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.* How mysteriously do all things work together for good to them that

love God ! And thus at the very first the Apostles were all the gainers by St. Thomas's slowness, for it was the occasion of their again seeing their gracious Lord among them ; and they were made the more strong by the weakness of a weaker brother. *And after eight days, i. e. on the following Lord's Day, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them ; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side : and be not faithless, but believing.* Not only by His Risen Body and His wounds, and His appearing thus in the midst of them, the doors being closed, but also by showing a knowledge of his thoughts and his words when absent and unseen, He manifests His Godhead, meeting the very words of his former unbelief and the wants of his distrustful heart. *And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord, and my God !* This was a full confession indeed—and the first confession to our Lord's divinity since His Resurrection : out of weakness had strength been perfected ;—the words are full of devout affection also and awful overwhelming joy, as claiming Him as his own God in his own former Lord. It is *My Lord* and *my God*—not merely general, as St. Peter's great declaration had been, “Thou art the Christ—the Son of the living God ;”—but it expresses that new doctrine which our Lord had expressed to Mary Magdalene, “I ascend unto My God and *your* God.” Before this Thomas had loved Christ well and faithfully, but he had loved Him as man ; and therefore he said, “Let us go and die with Him :” but now he loved Christ as God, and therefore he had within that strength whereby Divine love “hopeth all things and believeth all things.” He

thinks no more we will die with Him, but He is our Life, and we will live with Him and for Him, for He is our God for ever and ever; nay, he loved Christ now as both God and Man in one Person, and therefore he has not now to say, as before, "We know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" but he knew him as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" "our God for ever, our Guide unto death," and could say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

*Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Thus, in consideration of the weakness of St. Thomas, our Lord has given His Church unto the end greater and more palpable proofs of His Resurrection. "Think not," says St. Gregory, "that this happened by chance that a chosen disciple should have been absent, being absent, should have doubted, should doubting have handled, should handling have believed. All this occurred by a Divine ordering, whereby the mercy of God brought it about by wonderful means, that that doubtful disciple should feel the wounds in his Lord's flesh, and so heal the wounds of our unbelief. For the incredulity of Thomas hath done more for our faith than the belief of the disciples."<sup>4</sup>

*And many other signs, adds the Evangelist, truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name. If we ask, why St. John and others have not furnished us with*

<sup>4</sup> Hom. 26 in Ev. 2.

more signs when so many might have been recorded, we may find the reason in this our Lord's mild reproof of St. Thomas, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." The lesser degree of evidence we require, in order that we may believe, the greater and more acceptable our faith. St. John himself required no evidence at all of his risen Lord, no sensible manifestation, and was the more blessed on that account; "seeing not, yet believing, he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory." There is no blessing, here pronounced on St. Thomas for his good confession; on St. Peter there had been; and why? "Because," said his Lord to him, "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in Heaven." And to whom is it that the Father reveals the Son? Not to the wise and prudent of this world; not so much to those who, like St. Thomas, are prudent and wise in the signs and evidences which they will require; but it is this child-like, confiding love that calls down the especial blessing, and is the cause of thanksgiving: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." That which needed not sight had found wings, and gone before and already obtained rest in its accustomed place on the bosom of God, in St. John; that which needs evidence is slow, and moves with difficulty, and is but too happy if not altogether left behind in the race of eternity.

There was no doubt something in St. Thomas which called forth this signal mercy of God. In the explanation of his incredulity we must remember that the Apostles generally had shown themselves slow to believe. What the women first reported to them of the vision of angels appeared to them as idle tales, and they believed them

not. They seem not to have noticed what occurred to Mary Magdalene; and although they had just acknowledged to the disciples returning from Emmaus that the Lord had been seen, yet when, at that same moment, He Himself appeared in the midst of them, they were at first affrighted, and thought that they had seen a spirit. It is true that St. Thomas's unbelief greatly exceeds this, in not receiving the testimony of more than ten disciples, who had seen Him with His wounds and heard His words, and this too confirmed by His earlier appearance to St. Peter and others. It was a reprobable want of faith; yet this slowness to believe did not arise from the indulgence of any positive sin, such as covetousness or pride, as in the case of Judas and Caiaphas, but probably from a peculiar temper of mind. Our Lord seems to have chosen for His Apostles persons differing much in their natural characters and dispositions. And St. Thomas seems to have been one of those who, however faithful and blameless they may be in life, yet are slow to realize things spiritual and Divine. Thus he was not only a sincere disciple who had given up all for Christ's sake, but one of hearty devotion and what would be considered faithful loyalty to his Master, as was shown on that occasion when our Lord, on hearing of the illness of Lazarus, was about to venture again among His enemies at Jerusalem. St. Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."<sup>5</sup> He was ready to die with his Master; nay, desirous to do so. But even here there appears to be a slowness to perceive His Almighty Power and Godhead. And in like manner, at the last Supper, when Christ said to them, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye

<sup>5</sup> St. John xi. 16.

know," it would seem as if He implied that the Apostles generally had some spiritual discernment and understanding of those heavenly truths of which He spake, of His going to the Father to prepare a place for them; but yet St. Thomas, as if in an honest and good heart he was willing to learn, but found a difficulty in understanding things that were of Heaven, answered to this: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" In all this there is much affection, much honesty and simplicity, and something of that single eye to which God is sure in His own good time to reveal the fulness of His light. And He has chosen St. Thomas as an especial instrument for confirming His Church, for encouraging the weak, and setting forth an example of His own loving-kindness and forbearance; as if saying by him more powerfully even than by His prophet, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord;" yet "walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."<sup>6</sup>

It is remarkable that all we know of St. Thomas is from the Evangelist St. John. Now St. John, while he dwells on the highest mysteries of Divine Wisdom, evinces also the most tender concern for Christ's little ones; and it may be for this reason, that he makes known to us the history of one so infirm of belief, for the encouragement of those that are weak in the faith, by these evidences of our Lord's condescending care, as showing that He is not by His Resurrection removed from us in time or place, or in the sympathies of our common nature, but is most intimately "touched by the feeling of our infirmities."<sup>7</sup> For all these circumstances we

<sup>6</sup> Isa. l. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

have alluded to, together with the mention of St. Thomas as one among those disciples by whom our Lord was seen afterwards by the Lake in Galilee, occur in St. John's Gospel. In like manner St. John, though he himself had needed no such sensible proof, yet in consideration for those that do, commences his first Epistle with the words, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life,"—dwelling altogether on the evidence and testimony of the external senses.

But to return to the one great lesson of this day, as the Collect has pointed it; not only on the belief of St. Thomas is there no declaration of blessing, but even his acceptance is not without reproof; and the same Scripture that details this mercy on human infirmity, mostly confirms the blessing of that faith which needs least of external and sensible manifestation. This is our own peculiar calling and privilege, and may be, if we fail not of it, our exceeding great blessedness.

And we, whom the Epistle describes as "strangers and foreigners," now admitted into "the household of God," have at this season the first-fruits of this faith without sight. It is already kindled, as a star in a dark place, in the breast of the Wise Men who from the birth-place of Abraham are on their way to the cradle of Christ ere yet He is born, seeing afar off, and rejoicing to behold His Day. The Sun has not yet appeared, but the star in the dawn is enough for them; till the star shall disappear in the Sun of Righteousness, and faith be swallowed up in love. Thus the winter's shortest noon gradually lengthens into summer, and the faith of the just shines more and more unto the perfect day.



## SERMON LXXV.

### The Conversion of Saint Paul.

Acts ix. 1—22. St. Matt. xix. 27—30.

GRACE NOT GIVEN IN VAIN.

*By the grace of GOD I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me.—*  
I COR. xv. 10.

THE Gospels are full of mercy as detailing the life of Him Who came not to judge but to save the world; yet I know not whether manifestations of the same mercy after His Resurrection are not still more affecting and impressive, as shown to the weeping Mary Magdalene, the penitent Peter, the doubting Thomas, and, above all, as we this day commemorate, to St. Paul. A conversion so great and wonderful is well worthy of our especial memory, for its effects reach to the bounds of the world and the end of time. It is like another publication of the Gospel—the first through friends, the second by an enemy: and so important on this account, as an early Bishop observed, that Inspiration speaks in St. Paul through fourteen Epistles, while those of the other

Apostles are but few in number.<sup>1</sup> And we may add, that the history of the early Church in the Acts consists mostly of an account of St. Paul, and that written by his own friend and fellow-labourer St. Luke. Moreover, what is very remarkable, no less than three times is the account there given of this his conversion. Well, therefore, does the history of this event stand for the Epistle of this day.

*And Saul, who had been consenting unto St. Stephen's death, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus, to which the Christians had now fled, as the first place of refuge out of the Jewish provinces, to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.* As he himself also testifies, both at Jerusalem and before King Agrippa at Cæsarea, appealing to the knowledge of the High Priest and Elders, that he had "persecuted this way unto the death," "being exceeding mad against them," "punishing them oft in every synagogue, and compelling them to blaspheme," *i. e.* to deny Christ. It is observable how it is always stated of his acting under authority of the chief priests; it marks his strict zeal for the law.

And now, as we have lately had to consider the vision of St. Stephen beholding the Son of Man standing on the Right Hand of Power, we see how that Power was exerted as that dying martyr prayed. *And as he journeyed he came near to Damascus; he was just at the end of his course, breathing vengeance, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven;—"sud*

<sup>1</sup> St. Cyr. Jer. Cat. Lect. x. 18.

denly" as the Angels to the Shepherds—"suddenly" as the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost,—with lightning-like suddenness as Christ's appearing on the last day will be. *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* Through both eyes and ears, as St. Bernard observes, the truth inserts itself, as at our Lord's Baptism, at His Transfiguration, and, we may add, on the day of Pentecost, the sight was seen, and the sound was heard. *And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* When our Lord was persecuted in His own Person, He opened not His mouth, as the Lamb of God, but now He is not silent, but speaks aloud; now as the Good Shepherd, who had laid down His life for His sheep, He interposes for them; He acquits the objects of that persecution of all charge, and says that it is for His sake,—for His sake as seen and found in them; confirming His own words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me." Hereafter none better than St. Paul himself shall know how Christ is in His faithful ones, when he says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The words express for His persecuted followers the most intimate care and love; and at the same time their invincible strength against their enemies, according to that comprehensive proverb, "It is hard to kick against the pricks." What is it to fight against God? "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken."

*And he, trembling and astonished,*—not at that light or that voice, but to find that in that light and voice was Jesus whom he persecuted,—*trembling and astonished, he said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the*

*Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* It was like Lazarus coming out of the grave and acknowledging that powerful voice that awakes the dead; putting forth his hands as seeking for light, and the grave clothes still about him which others must loose. God speaks to the heart, but appointed means must follow in the restoration of the soul—the ministry of the Word, and the laying on of hands, Absolution and Baptism. “Go into the city, and there it shall be told thee:” it is commending, says St. Bernard, the services of social life.<sup>2</sup> *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.* In another account it is that they heard not the voice, that is, that they distinguished it not as a voice, nor saw Him that spake, as St. Paul did. Thus the lightnings of God, and His Providences, and His grace, single out one among many. *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.* So thorough was his humiliation; so deep had that light gone into his soul: no doubt in that light within, more than in the light without, was Christ seen by him—in His agony in the garden, in His sufferings on the Cross, with the scourge, and the thorns, and the nails, and the spear: as if saying, All these have I endured for thee, and for thy sake; and that I might win thy life and thy love; why is it then thou persecutest Me, Who have suffered all this for thee? “The light without,” says St. Augustin, “was for awhile withdrawn, that the inner light in his heart might shine

<sup>2</sup> Serm. i. In St. Paul. Conv.

the more; and then, while he beheld not other things, he saw Jesus. In his very blindness was expressed the mystery of believers, who ought in faith so to behold Christ as to reckon other things as things that be not: while the creature becomes vile, and the heart knows the sweetness of the Creator."<sup>3</sup>

*And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.* Probably, as St. Chrysostom observes, this Ananias was not one of any eminence amongst Christians; he does not appear to have instructed St. Paul in anything. God often works by humble instruments. And, indeed, all things with respect to St. Paul appear to have been by direct interposition of God Himself. Such was his conversion; such his Apostleship; such his knowledge of Christ; it was by express revelation from God.

*And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.* Not his supernatural call, not his ready offer of obedience are mentioned, but, as in the case of Cornelius, that his prayer had come up as a memorial before God—"Behold, he prayeth." It is this that makes meet for the New Birth. Here again, as at our Lord's Baptism, and His Transfiguration, and at the descent of the Holy Spirit, all is on the part of man with prayer. Prayer was the evidence that the call had not been in vain; he was not "disobedient to the heavenly vision," which he might have been, as others have been to supernatural visitations; blindness might have fallen on him as on

<sup>3</sup> Serm. cclxxix. De Paul. Apost.

Elymas; many witnessed miracles, reported them to others, but were not themselves amended by them. "Behold, he prayeth." These are the words by which the Heavens and earth are moved; they are alleged as the constraining reason for the interference of Christ, and for man's hastening on ministrations of mercy. "Behold, he prayeth." After a state of sin, and a high mind, and ambitious projects, or disquietudes, what a resource to think of these words, and to know of the avail which they have with God! But then how deep and full of meaning is the expression! for what a prayer was that! "Behold, he prayeth," implies that his prayer was, as it were, a prayer of prayers, a prayer earnest, deep, affectionate, and, from its earnestness, depth, and affection, powerful with God.

And these his prayers were not at the time without the consolations and preparations of God. *He prayeth, it is said, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*

*Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy Name.* These words of Ananias show the consternation which the very name of Saul occasioned among Christians, and the terror in which he was held. *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, one of especial choice; as to the other Apostles, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you,"—to bear My Name before the Gentiles, which St. Paul mentions as the object of his calling, "that I might preach Him among the Heathen;"<sup>4</sup>—and kings,*

<sup>4</sup> Gal. i. 16.

and what is yet more remarkable, than even kings, as Agrippa and the Cæsars,—*and the children of Israel*. And this not with impunity or without a life of, as it were, daily crucifixion, the best crown that his Master had for his faithful ones:—*For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake*. So shall he be “a vessel sanctified, and meet for the Master's use.”<sup>5</sup> “How great things he must suffer,” not against Me, nor as a punishment from Me, but for Me—for My sake—and shall esteem it his highest glory and joy to do so.

*And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul,* so does he address one whom he had just spoken of as the fiercest of persecutors. *Brother Saul, the Lord, (even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest,) hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.* Sight restored, and the Holy Ghost given. Light from without, and at the same time light within. In the goings forth of the Gospel body and soul are together healed; such is the exercise of charity and the mystery of our salvation, of body and soul restored, through the New Man. *And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales,* showing the miraculous nature both of his blindness and its removal; *and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* However miraculously God works, yet neither in the case of His own Son, nor that of others, does He set aside or supersede Baptism. *And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.* He had long fasted—in fasting was baptized—and then took meat—and was strengthened. Thus of the jailor at Philippi, it is said, “he was baptized

<sup>5</sup> 2 Tim. ii 21.

straightway, he and all his," and then "he set meat before them, and rejoiced." <sup>6</sup>

*Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.* "Not that He is risen," observes St. Chrysostom, "nor that He liveth;" but the one great saving doctrine of all—that He is the Son of God.

*But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this Name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.* So simple is the Scriptural narrative of an event so great. The persecutor had become the Preacher; out of the wolf had come forth the faithful Shepherd; the Lion had become the Lamb.

The Gospel for to-day is not a little impressive as taken with the whole history of St. Paul, who stands forth so pre-eminently among those that had forsaken all and followed Christ, as containing the promise made to sufferings so great. But the whole of this lesson is more strongly pointed to ourselves by the concluding words; whether we consider them as applied to St. Paul, who, though the last called of the Apostles, was the first of all in labours; or the first in Divine gifts, and the last in his own estimation of himself; or as a caution to ourselves, that the first in this world may be the last in the next; nay more, that those that are first now in the peculiar privileges of God's kingdom, may be found to be the last hereafter;

<sup>6</sup> Acts xvi. 33, 34.



that in any sense it will thus be if they labour not as St Paul did, according to the greatness of the grace given.

*Peter answered and said unto Jesus, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee ; what shall we have therefore ? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Christ is King on His holy hill ; to Him is given all power in Heaven and in earth ; and in this power His saints shall partake with Him ; as He expresses in other words, that they shall sit with Him on His throne ; that to him who keepeth His works unto the end He will “give power over the nations ;” that such shall receive of Him as He hath received of the Father.<sup>7</sup>

*And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* “An hundredfold in this present time with persecutions.” How wonderfully does St. Paul's history, written as it were by the sun-beam of God's light, glowing and fresh from the heart, testify to the truth of this : “As sorrowful yet always rejoicing ;” “as having nothing and yet possessing all things.”

*But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.* So is it from the beginning to the end, in all manner of ways and degrees, in the awful race of eternal life.

Such was St. Paul, and such his conversion. His Lord appeared to him in a light which surpassed in brightness the midday sun then shining in that Eastern sky ; but

<sup>7</sup> Rev. ii. 27.

more wonderful than that light was the inward illumination by which his spirit from that time was turned from darkness unto light, which shines unto the end of the world, converting many unto righteousness. He fell to the ground at that light and that voice ; such may represent the exceeding humiliation of his after-life, which ever accompanied that marvellous grace shed abroad in his heart, for he was ever after among men as one bowed to the earth under a sense of that knowledge. What else but Christ's voice, and His light could it be, that made this Apostle so lowly, with all his endowments of grace ? What love and what humiliation is there in all his Epistles ! in all his actions and words how is self swallowed up in God ! If when he rose up he said, " Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ? " what could more express that entire devotion and obedience which marked him until the end. His after-life with the tongue of the heart, seems to speak these words ; or with Samuel, " Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth ; " and the answer to the same seems continued in what was said to Ananias, " I will show thee how great things thou must suffer for My Name's sake. " All he asked was what he should do ; and the answer of Christ was that in which a penitent of such exceeding love would most rejoice, that for His sake he should suffer. " Therefore, " he says, " I take pleasure in infirmities, in distresses, for Christ's sake. " Oh, what a force and beauty is there in that type on which the ancient Christians loved to dwell ; that this is that Benjamin, the beloved child, he that would have been called of his mother " the son of my sorrow, " Benoni ; but was named of his father Israel, " the son of the right hand, " to whom is given the double portion among his brethren ; in beholding whom Joseph, his brother, wept

aloud, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. What yearnings of heart, what relentings on the recovery of the lost one! "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still; my bowels are troubled for him."<sup>8</sup> This is that Benjamin who in the morning was to "ravin as a wolf;" but oh, in the evening, what lamb more gentle than he! a lamb among wolves, converted himself by the gentleness of the Lamb of God, whom he persecuted while himself a destroyer. The last hath indeed become first; the youngest, the one born out of due time, the "little one," is among the eldest and first of all. Saul, observes St. Augustin,<sup>9</sup> that fierce and proud king of the tribe of Benjamin, the persecutor of David, has become Paul; a name of humility, which in the Latin language signifies "a little;" as he himself says, I am "the last of all," and "the least of the Apostles;" the follower of Him Who was meek and lowly, and hath said, Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom.

And what were the grounds in this case for such a miraculous interference of grace? As our Lord pleaded for His murderers with the plea that they knew not what they did; as St. Peter repeated the same to them at Pentecost, as reasons for their conversion, that "through ignorance" they did it; so St. Paul states of himself, that he obtained mercy because he did it "ignorantly in unbelief." Yet not that he or they were therefore innocent, for such ignorance was of sin; and the conscience of St. Paul, enlightened by the Spirit of grace, never forgave in himself that sin, which rendered him in his own eyes "the chief of sinners," and acquitted him not of being

<sup>8</sup> Jer. xxxi. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Serm. cclxxix. De Paul. Apost.

“a blasphemer, and injurious, and a persecutor.” Judging himself, he obtained mercy; yet his sin had not been presumptuous; there was that in it which pleaded for God’s interposing grace.

To conclude. We commenced by observing those great instances of mercy shown to St. Peter, to St. Thomas, to St. Paul, yet something similar to these occur perhaps in the life of each one of us; undeserved mercies, gracious interpositions, and healing restorations, all of which were not of ourselves, but of God. Such must serve in after-life as solemn warnings, and should be met on our part with a corresponding humiliation and obedience; lest the very mercies and calls of God should induce in ourselves, and those around us, a persuasion that we are among the first, merely because we have received more, and had more talents intrusted to us, and it break upon us suddenly after all, that we are among the last, because we have on our part fallen short of privileges and callings so great.

## SERMON LXXVI.

THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE,

COMMONLY CALLED

The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin.

Mal. iii. 1—5. St. Luke ii. 22—40.

THE REFINER'S FIRE.

*He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.—*  
MAL. iii. 3.

FULL of import is the passage from the Prophet Malachi on this day, whether we consider it as the Purification of the Virgin Mother, or as the Presentation of the Holy Child. It speaks of God's coming near in some mysterious way ; in judgment indeed, yet tempered with such mercy, that in consequence of its purifying power, His people should be able to offer unto Him an acceptable service.

*Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me.* All visitations of God are with preparations beforehand of His messenger, yet when they come, appear sudden. *And the Lord, Whom ye seek,* even "the desire of all nations," and who will "shake all

nations " by this His coming, *shall suddenly come to His temple, i. e. to this His temple at Jerusalem, for of that the glory was to surpass the former from this His Presence;<sup>1</sup> even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: foreshown by that Angel of His presence in the wilderness, promising to lead them, if obedient, unto the place He had prepared for them.<sup>2</sup> Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

*But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.* Strange that this His coming in love should be thus spoken of as a day of fear; the day of the Lord, to many who desire it, is "darkness, and not light."<sup>3</sup> And so it was, His Presentation on this day sets Him forth as a sign to be spoken against, whereby many shall fall; twice again His coming to this His temple is with signs of wrath, and driving out; and when in the last days of His ministry He sat in the temple, it was "as a refiner," with parables of His Kingdom, whereby "many shall be made clean and white;" but the temporal Israel, amidst the ruins of their own temple, shall fall. Thus of this His Coming, which they desired, it is said, "Who shall abide it?" "The Priests could not stand to minister by reason of the Cloud," when "the glory of the Lord filled" the temple of Solomon;<sup>4</sup> and now, when He comes in greater glory, hidden, as it were, in a deeper cloud, they stand not before Him, because they perceive not His glory in the humiliations of His death on the Cross, and His cross-bearing life.

*And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them*

<sup>1</sup> Hag. ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Amos v. 20.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chron. v. 14.

as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. It speaks of God's coming in some mysterious way, in judgment indeed, yet tempered with such mercy, that in consequence of its purification His chosen ones should be able to make an offering pleasing to God; as St. Peter says, "an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup> This is the winnowing of Him that hath "the fan in His hand;" the gathering of His own Israel; as the Prophet says, "It shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."<sup>6</sup> Such was the Incarnation, and the oblation of Himself to God in His Temple. The fire of His Godhead burns, and the manhood is not consumed thereby, but purified; and therein He speaks to us, the everlasting God, I AM, calling us out of the world unto Himself.

*And I will come near to you to judgement, and I will be a swift witness; one that no longer will delay, against those whom the Law of Moses condemns, against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of Hosts.* So was it when He came to His temple; the words of the Prophet, "I will come near to you to

<sup>5</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Isa. iv. 3, 4.

judgment," were fulfilled in the circumstances with which this day clothed itself, coming home so intimately to each, in the lowly ways of every-day life, the obscure, the infirm, the poor. An Infant in the arms, the solemn Witness drew near. So also afterwards when His Godhead was disclosed in holiness and power. It cleansed by the spirit of burning, and separated the dross; the rejection of light testified to the darkness, and sealed the condemnation. And then more signally was the drawing near of "the swift witness," when He came by His Spirit convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Such then is the Prophet's account in anticipation of this day, and now succeeds the Evangelist's narrative of the same.

*And when the days of her purification, says St. Luke, according to the Law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord; as it is written, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.* Our first lesson taught in the Temple by the Master of masters, the Priest of all priests, is humility; He had yielded Himself to the circumcision of the Law, though He alone of all that have been born needed not that rite, for He alone was born without sin; so the Virgin Mother submits to that Purification, though she alone of all that have given birth needs not that cleansing, for she alone hath conceived without sin. Such humility for love's sake dishonours not His Godhead, nor His mother's purity. He is brought, "the First-born of every creature," to be presented to His Father for us, that we may in Him be sanctified by this oblation of Himself to the Father in our flesh; as saying, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not; but a body hast Thou prepared Me. Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it



is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God.”<sup>7</sup> “His public oblation of Himself in the temple is the sign, and, as it were, the sacrament of His internal and perpetual oblation, begun at the moment of His Incarnation in His Father’s sight, upon the altar of His own heart.”<sup>8</sup>

*And to offer a sacrifice, according to that which is said in the Law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.* The offerings of poverty, as having become poor for us, that we by His poverty might be made rich, and by faith the heirs of His eternal treasures; now Himself to be redeemed by two turtle-doves, or young pigeons, as expressive of lowliness, and typical of purity; the one for a burnt-offering to be consumed by fire, as signifying that judgment which is due to us; the other, the sin-offering to be eaten by the Priest, or by those that offer, in token of Him, Who not only hath given Himself to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance. He comes to be redeemed in this oblation of the Morning Sacrifice, thence all His life to bear sin as the Victim; and soon as the Evening Sacrifice on the Cross, Himself to redeem all mankind.<sup>9</sup>

And now the Prophet had asked, Who shall abide the day of His coming? who shall stand when He appeareth? and to this the Evangelist here gives the answer: it is such as the Blessed Virgin, the righteous Joseph, the aged Simeon, the devout widow Anna. The Prophet Haggai had spoken of the surpassing glory that should be in this house, with the promise “in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.”<sup>1</sup> And Simeon acknowledges that he there bore in his arms “the glory of Israel,” and that he himself had found that “peace.”

<sup>7</sup> Heb. x. 5. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Quesnel.

<sup>9</sup> S. Bernard, In Purif. B. Mar. iii.

<sup>1</sup> Hag. ii. 9.

*And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.* The Psalmist had said, "We wait for Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple."<sup>2</sup> All the life of faith consists in a waiting upon God, and a waiting for God; they of old for His coming under the veil of weakness to redeem; we for His manifestation in glory for judgment. The state of both alike is to be a "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God;" in justice towards men and devotion towards God, waiting as true children of faith for the consolation of Israel; and in going out and coming in, in looking before and in looking after, in actions and in words, full of the Holy Ghost, and recognizing God.

*And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ,—the desire of his heart, the longing of his eyes, his strength in death—the vision of peace. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the Law, then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God.* Great indeed was the privilege, and great the blessing; but it would have been no blessing to him, had it not been for this, that he had faith in him to behold Christ. It was not flesh and blood, but the Father Which is in Heaven Who had revealed unto him the Christ, and this was his blessing. It was this that made him ready to depart in peace, that his eyes in that sight beheld the salvation of God. It was this that gave him to know what even Apostles were so long in

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xlviii. 8.

learning, that He was to be the Light of the Gentiles, as well as the glory of Israel. Nay more, he puts the Gentiles first, unto the light of Whose rising they come, and acknowledge in that light the glory of Israel. The Spirit that gave hath embalmed his thanksgiving to perpetual memory in the Church which unites the Gentile and the Jew. Holy Simeon, "unknown, yet well known!" even unto this day, often as the shades of evening are stretched out, in his words we lift up our eyes, and ask for "peace."

*And Joseph and His mother*, it is added,  *marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him*. None so marvel at the works and words of God as they who know Him, for they by faith perceive their power and greatness; as even our Blessed Saviour " marvelled " at the faith of the Centurion, as knowing what great things God was about to do in thus revealing His Christ. And now to the Holy Virgin herself Simeon becomes the Prophet by whom God speaks to her, pronouncing on them both the  *blessing*  from above, and to her declaring beforehand the mystery of the Cross, as a savour of life and also unto death—that mystery which the Apostles heard of so often, yet could not comprehend beforehand;  *the fall and rising again of many in Israel* , of which Daniel spake; by which " many shall be purified, made white, and tried," and " the wise shall understand," but " none of the wicked;" of  *the sword*  that was to go forth on earth, being first sanctified in her that was most dear; the sword that divideth asunder, the discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart, entering into the soul of the Virgin Mother; of Him that shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, beginning first with those nearest of all, that the trial of faith, " being much more precious

than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise at the appearing of Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup>

But again, Is there anything else "in the sight of God of great price"? For when we offer up our children we bring around those that are most near and dear; and the sons of kings have a chosen and kingly company to witness their first presentation unto God. There may be angels and archangels there; but from among men we must have what is most esteemed of God, and it is that which is most despised of the world. The widow—aged, infirm—wherein that which is Divine is hid, as it were, in the tabernacle of God, in the humiliations of the flesh. *And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity: And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years; which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.* Seven years married, but unmarried seventy and seven: one that might have often said, "Lord, how long?" "My sight faileth me for waiting so long upon my God." But when things appear most forlorn, God is often most near. *And she coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.* She had before been a prophetess, that her words might have weight; she is now at last more than a prophet, even as an evangelist and Apostle.

And here we may observe what purification is needful in us, that we may come before God, and present before

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. i. 7.

Him the all-prevailing Sacrifice of His Son; and in Him, and for His sake, present ourselves also as a living sacrifice acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ. The pure in heart, they shall see God; but none else, either now, or when He shall be manifested in Glory; when to all who are not meet to behold Him He shall be a consuming fire. It is for this cause that He now comes and sits in His Church as a refiner, and purifying the sons of Levi—that is, all who have to take part in the service of God and to do with holy things. For this purpose He hath sent forth on earth His fire, that “the offering of Jerusalem may be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old.” He is now the refiner and purifier in His Church. And this day itself will furnish examples of this His purifying fire—needful for all—even the Blessed Virgin herself, although in all that are now present we see the pure in heart which behold God. Our Lord Himself said of His disciples, “For their sakes I sanctify Myself;” so likewise did He sanctify those who most approached Him, were most able to behold. He gave them to drink of His own Cup; to partake of His own Baptism of fire. Joseph in persecutions of Herod; the Virgin with the sword in her soul; Simeon waiting for peace which he long waited for in vain, in ways of God and in the Spirit who most dwells with those that mourn; Anna, bereaved and at the door of the grave, and in fastings and prayers night and day. Ere the lamp went out in the house of God, she heard the Voice that called.

*And when they had performed all things according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. Set at nought at Bethlehem, unknown in crowded Jerusalem, no light around them but*

that of obedience and humility, they retire to its meet abode in the despised Galilee and poor Nazareth, from which no good, it was thought, could come. *And the Child grew,—the Everlasting God grew as a child,—and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: the human soul within increasing in stature even as the body: and the grace of God was upon Him.*

What an awful lesson that we despise not the day of small things! This is the purifying fire burning in secret, that it may bring down our high thoughts, to the Child, to Nazareth, to poverty and obscurity, to growth in daily discipline of ignoble labour and subjection.

One word more on these concluding words of the Gospel. Some persons, it is said, in contemplating the vastness of the material universe, as opened to us by astronomy, and indicating the infinite and unspeakable creations of God, feel a difficulty in reconciling this with the humiliation of Christ as seen in the flesh, and known as Son of the Carpenter. But if so, it must be from not sufficiently considering of what far greater worth that which is moral and spiritual is to any manifestation of what is material, however great. As our Lord says, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" intimating that the worth of one soul is so unspeakably great, that it admits not at all of comparison with anything which we behold which is earthly and perishable; so that among the highest creations of God there is joy over one soul that escapeth.

In this light, then, we may estimate what love is; it is of a nature infinitely higher—it is Divine; nay more, God Himself is Love. In this, then, the appearance of Christ as a little Child in the Temple, and growing up as a Child in a poor household at Nazareth, it may be said

without doubt, that when lost in our speculations on the extent of the visible universe, "the thousand times ten thousands that minister before Him," of suns of suns, and worlds on worlds, noted and numbered, and without number, infinite and innumerable; yet, after all, it is not so overwhelming to human thought, so inconceivably great and wonderful as is this love. Human knowledge may trace out, and understand something of the former,—nothing can in any way fathom or comprehend the latter but that which passeth knowledge—the love which is of God.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Since writing the above the Author has read "An Essay of the Plurality of Worlds" with much interest, but no acquiescence in its conclusions. For, 1st, inferring, as we naturally do, that the other worlds are inhabited, we suppose it must be in a manner totally different from our own; and therefore, to show that the Moon and Planets are not capable of sustaining an animal existence similar to our own does not touch the question. 2ndly, We are in a state of corruption, with all nature groaning and travailing in pain together, a life made up of death: and hence we may infer, a state of exception and anomalous; and therefore, to judge of other creations of God, we must draw our notions not from our present condition, but from what it would have been before the fall or will be after the restoration of mankind,—states of which we can form no conceptions whatever. 3rdly, To us, as fallen creatures, God is especially revealed as a God of Mercy: in this we are called upon to imitate Him, and put on His resemblance. We have no reason to believe that any mere cultivation of the intellect raises us nearer to God.

## SERMON LXXVII.

### Saint Matthias's Day.

Acts i. 15—26. St. Matt. xi. 25—30.

#### THE LOST CROWN.

*Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

REV. iii. 11.

THERE is something sad and awful in this Festival, which affords it the same suitableness to the season of Lent as the Annunciation afterwards has to that of our Lord's Passion. For our thoughts dwell less on St. Matthias than on that fallen Apostle into whose place he was chosen. The history of Judas is so striking and impressive; it reminds us of the angels that kept not their first estate—of our first parents falling from Paradise—of the Jews, the chosen people of God, being rejected—of individuals also forfeiting great privileges, as Esau, and Saul, and Balaam—and especially of the Christians which fall from their state of grace. It is in itself so fearful and wonderful; the suddenness of his fall, its irremediable nature, the blessedness of his privileges, the trifling temptation for which they were sold, his apparent sanctity



even throughout, so as for him to have been suspected of none; our Lord's many warnings to him, the many tokens of His love to the very last; his indifference to them all; the vast change in a few days, as from Heaven to the depths of hell,—from sitting with God to be the companion of devils; and all these things left on record as an especial warning to ourselves. Thus we may observe in the passage from the Acts appointed for the Epistle, St. Peter dwells much on the history of Judas; but very little is told us of St. Matthias. And the Gospel that follows with its call to meekness, so suitable to the awful subject of the day, points out the way to escape downfall so terrible; warning that we be not high-minded, but fear, with our Lord's own peculiar consolation under terrors so great.

It was now in that "upper room" at Jerusalem, in which, after our Lord's ascension into Heaven, "they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," waiting for the coming of the Holy Ghost. *In those days, it is added, Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.* Our Lord Himself apparently alludes to the same, saying, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me." But the Psalms, indeed, as speaking so much in the Person of Christ, often allude to Judas, as throughout the 109th Psalm.

And here we may pause to observe how everything, great or small, good or evil, or apparently indifferent,

is said to have occurred in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, with the intent, no doubt, that we should consider all things as the ordering of God. The effect of thus showing that God had spoken, and that therefore it is His disposing or by His permission, speaks immediately to the heart of man ; if it is something apparently trivial, it arrests us as to what is great and Divine ; if something that seems to us unaccountable, it suggests that there are reasons for it we know not of ; if it is something grievous to bear, it teaches resignation ; if prosperous, it refers us to the Giver of all good ; if something irritating in the conduct of others, it disposes to forgiveness and forbearance. It tells us in all cases that it is God's doing, and therefore infinitely wise and good. It is thus observing with awe the hand of God which makes the Apostle to speak with such calmness of the traitor, applying to him no word of reproach or anger. Oh, most needful lesson for us ! A stronger case of aggravation at successful wickedness could not have occurred, yet no expression of irritation escapes any one of the Apostles. St. Peter simply speaks of him as "*guide to them that took Jesus.*"

*For he was numbered with us, he adds, and had obtained part of this ministry. He was one of the Twelve sent forth to preach the Gospel, to heal the sick, and to cast out devils. But this his end, and all the circumstances of it so well known, were predicted of God, as also this filling up of his place. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity ; and falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem, inasmuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Acedama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written*

*in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein.* This, indeed, is spoken in the Psalms in the plural number, and with an evident application to the Jewish nation ; of whom Judas was throughout so signal a prelude, as St. Chrysostom observes, and whose habitation became indeed an Aceldama. *And his bishoprick, as says another Psalm, let another take.*

*Wherefore, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John,—even as Andrew, and John, and Peter, and Philip were with John the Baptist, the herald and witness of the Messiah, when he first pointed out to two of them “the Lamb of God,” and from thence continued with Him,—from that period, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.* For in His Resurrection, the very corner-stone of the faith, He was “not made known to all the people, but unto certain witnesses chosen of God :” and that he be taken unto the number of the Twelve, it was needful that such should have been trained by His words and works, and habituated to the Person and Presence of Christ before His death ; and that such experience should be sealed by the testimony of His risen Body, “shown by many infallible proofs and speaking of the things pertaining to His Kingdom.” For such must be one of the twelve Foundations on whom in the Holy Ghost, the faithful witness, He would build His Church. Witnesses in secret of the Resurrection, as foundations laid out of sight in the earth, but the superstructure built thereon is seen of all.

*And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, or the son of Sabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.*

They were said by early writers to have been both of the Seventy disciples ; and thus our Lord Himself, after spending the night in prayer, "called unto Him His disciples, and out of them chose the Twelve." *And they prayed and said, Thou, Lord, Which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen ; that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots.* As our Lord Himself had so often spoken of the Twelve as those whom He had chosen, and as the Holy Ghost was not yet given for the guidance of His Church, they refer the matter to Christ, the heart-searching God. The appointment of the Apostleship was by our Lord in an especial manner reserved to Himself, so that, in adding St. Paul to that number, it was throughout in all respects by His own Personal interposition. And here, that the disposal of it may appear to be entirely of God, after the manner of the Old Testament, and as so often prescribed in the Law, it was by lot.<sup>1</sup>

It is as an example to ourselves also, that it must be by prayer on the part of His Church, but that the election to the Chief Pastorship is of God.

*And the lot fell upon Matthias ; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.* Thus was the appointment with awe and humiliation : and the first act of the Church, in the absence of the Bridegroom, was with mourning ; and the occasion itself spake to him that was chosen : "Because of unbelief that branch hath been broken off the Living Vine ; and thou standest by faith."

Many are the thoughts that crowd upon us, and, as it

<sup>1</sup> As Lev. xvi. 8.

were, knock at the door of the heart in the contemplation of this awful event, as on the servant being cast out that had not on the wedding garment. The first entrance into His Kingdom our Lord declared to be poverty of spirit: the fall of an Apostle was from covetousness. In furtherance of this He had required His disciples to give up all; and it was in speaking also on this subject that our Lord said, as if looking into the heart of that Apostle, and perhaps with His eye of warning falling on the eye of Judas, "There are first that shall be last." As with Balaam, the fallen Prophet of the Old Testament, so with Judas, that of the New, the occasion of that fall was covetousness.

Another impressive circumstance is this: that as no doubt want of faith in Christ as God was the reason of his reprobation, the touchstone by which he was found wanting, so the first mention of Judas as having a devil, and also the last full entering in of Satan, was connected with the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood. For it was when speaking of that mysterious doctrine a year before His death, when in consequence "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him," and He "said unto the Twelve, Will ye also go away?" as if explaining that expression of fear, He added, that out of those whom He had chosen one of them was a devil.

Another reflection which may bring home these general observations with a peculiar power to each is this: from the history of Judas we may infer, that although some powerful sin, such as covetousness, may lurk in the heart, make it more and more its own, stifling, by degrees, more and more the calls of conscience, and extinguishing faith in the Son of God; and although while this is going

on, a person may have a fair character with those around, be trusted by them, and unsuspected, may speak among them with some authority, and in the cause of charity, and have influence with them as speaking even with a tone of sanctity; although this thick and entangling web may be woven around him by self-deceit; yet that God does not cease to expostulate with him by His Spirit within, and by His Providence from without. So was it with Judas. Our Lord still continued throughout to warn him, not only by His general admonitions respecting the danger of covetousness and the like, and by manifestations of His power and goodness, but even by close appeals to himself; words directed to him, which he could not but have understood; and peculiar instances of love and goodness, as by washing his feet, by eating out of the same dish with him, and by the kiss of affection's friendship. But in the midst of these the end came, "suddenly and without remedy." Oh, how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end, even as a dream when one awaketh!

But there is no comment, no sermon, no subject for meditation on this awful day, like that which the appointed Gospel supplies in the teaching of our Lord Himself; Who after declaring the woes on those cities of Israel that heard Him and repented not, encourages us amidst the sad desolation and disappointment which man works on himself, to lift up our eyes to the Father of lights, from Whom cometh every good and perfect gift, to seek for refuge and repose in God; delighting in His choice, acknowledging His free grace, and those on whom He bestows it. *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent,*

and hast revealed them unto babes. It was in considering this subject of the free election of God, that St. Paul in adoring awe and wonder exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"<sup>2</sup> And David gave thanks unto God for what was so fearful and wonderful<sup>3</sup> in the mystery that surrounds us, in this, we may suppose, the secret fashioning of the vessels of His grace in the new birth. And our Lord teaches us, with a joy and thanksgiving peculiarly His own,<sup>4</sup> to look up and adore this His inscrutable mystery. For He had just called upon His disciples, those Seventy among whom St. Matthias was one, to rejoice because their names were written in Heaven; when He Himself also "rejoiced in Spirit," and thus spake, adding likewise in thankful acceptance of this the Father's disposal and distribution of His own gifts, *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.* Thus he that "hath the mind of Christ" notices in glad and awful acquiescence this mysterious Providence, whereby, while they who are wise in their own wisdom are disputing, the childlike spirit of obedience by poverty of spirit enters into the promised inheritance.

And blessed be God, that all these His gifts, the fountains of mercy, and predestinations of the Father, are in the Hand of Christ, Who, while He is One with the Father, hath made Himself also to be One with us, hath taken us unto Himself, and incorporated us into His own Body; that we may know God, and love God in that unspeakable love and knowledge of the Father. *All*

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. cxxxix. 13. 15.

<sup>4</sup> See St. Luke x. 21.

things, He adds, speaking to men after that, His thanksgiving to the Father, *All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.* All the blessedness is because it is of God; nor will it profit to know Christ unless this be revealed, not of flesh and blood, but of the Father drawing unto the Son, and revealing Christ unto the secret heart in unspeakable union.

Yet all is of free will in man, for it is added, *Come unto Me;* and He would not invite those who have it not in their choice to come. And who are they that are to come? *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.* If any then are heavily oppressed, and laden with fears and misgivings lest they be not in that calling and election, or lest they should not "make sure" that their election and calling are of God; then let their very fears and sorrows be to them the sweet evidences of that calling, and the constraining motives to make sure that election; by bringing them more near unto Him Who is their rest. "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Here the mourner finds the comforter; the sinner the Saviour; the wounded the Physician; the lost sheep his Shepherd; the accused his Advocate with the Father; the dying man his Life and Resurrection.

But what is the meaning of this "coming" unto Christ? Is it in desire and intention? is it with the wings of the dove to fly unto Him Who is afar off in Heaven? Not so? it is by the will that moveth the heart in faithful and loving obedience, being made conformable unto His Will. For He Himself explains, *Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and*



*lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* “Strange paradox!” says a holy writer, “that a man, already weary and overloaded, must take a new weight upon him, in order to be eased, and to find rest.” But so is it with many a truth of God, encompassed with contradictions, and hidden in apparent difficulties, lies the pearl of great price. There is no freedom but in this service; no real joy but by being united to the Man of Sorrows. The very earnest of the Spirit is that His commandments are not grievous. And therefore He adds, *For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.* “He invites unto Him,” says St. Augustin, “all that labour; and why, but that they might cease from labouring? And what is the reward for this service? And I will give you rest. Take My yoke, He says, upon you, and learn of Me; not to form a world, not in the world itself to work miracles, and to raise the dead, but, ‘for I am meek and lowly in heart.’” “If thou wouldest be great,” says the same writer, “begin by being the least. The greater the structure which any one would raise, the more deep must he dig the foundation, and that foundation must be humility.”<sup>5</sup>

“Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden!” What is the lesson which Lent itself would teach us, but that which is contained in these words? It would have us more and more to be “grieved and wearied” with our heavy burden, in order that in so doing we may come the more to Christ, and find His rest. That must indeed be a Lenten festival which can bring us to this. Every thing knows and seeks its place of refuge, has its escape from the enemy and the storm—the hart to the water-

<sup>5</sup> Serm. lxxix. De Ver. Dom. x.

brook ; the wild beast to the covert ; the sun-stricken sheep to the shadow of the rock ; the ship to the haven ; the bird to its mother's wing ; the dog to his master's side ; every thing seeks because it knows its own place of safety ; and hast not thou, O my soul, thy place to flee unto ; art thou alone without a covert, an anchor, a shelter, a home ? or hast thou only need of none ? How many fears are thine ? how many regrets ? how many dangers ? how many disappointments ? how many temptations ? how many compunctious visitings after how many, many sins ? how many infirmities ? how many enemies ? Doubts, and disquietudes, and distresses are with thee on every side. And why are all these ? Surely they are intended as scourges in thy side, as motives to urge thee to Him Who is thine only rest. In Him in all these things is thy remedy and thy refuge, at all times, and in all places. When is not the thought of Him the very healing and strength of the soul ? when is not His work its own peace ?

## SERMON LXXVIII.

### The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Isa. vii. 10—13. St. Luke i. 26—38.

#### FAITH IN THE INCARNATION.

*If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.*—ISA. vii. 9.

THESE words occur immediately before that passage of the Evangelical Prophet which is given us as the Epistle for to-day, and which is best understood in connexion with them. And surely no Scripture can be more suitable to this festival: for faith in the Godhead of Christ is all in all to us: this is the blessing of the Virgin which comes on the children of the faithful Abraham; the want of this is the condemnation of Israel after the flesh, because they understood not that the Son of David is the Son of God.

*Moreover, the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask, thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. In fear of Samaria and Damascus he would lean on the Assyrian for aid, as*

if God's promises to the house of David would fail. But as Israel ever seeks for a sign, and as our Lord said to them, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," so He condescends to their weakness, and offers them a sign. His son Hezekiah asked in faith, and he had a sign vouchsafed him in the height above, when the Sun went back, and a sign below in the destruction of the Assyrian host and his own recovery from death. But Ahaz and his unbelieving house refuses to accept the sign which God offers, as the Jews hereafter will in like manner refuse the sign which God gives them.

*And he, the Prophet Isaiah, said, Hear ye now, O house of David; is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Is it not enough to try the forbearance of His prophets, will ye weary the patience of God? Thus Israel rejected the Son of Man, and then filled up the measure of their sin by rejecting also the Spirit of God.*

*Therefore, he adds, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel.* God's promises to Israel shall not fail, but shall be fulfilled by a sign so great and wonderful, that faith only, which is of God, shall receive the same; for to unbelief such as thine it shall be a stumbling-block and stone of offence, that unbelieving Israel shall fall, and be broken without restoration. Because they understand not that to David a Son is given, Who was from everlasting, Whom David in the Spirit calleth Lord; because though his Son He was before Him. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth," saith the Lord, "so are My thoughts higher than your thoughts."

*Butter and honey shall He eat, even as others of tender*

years,<sup>1</sup> *that He may know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good.* “He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,” He shall be nurtured even as the infancy of man is reared, though He be God over all. And thus, as our first parents aspired through pride to be “as gods, knowing good and evil,” He on the contrary shall in His humiliations be exercised in the discernment of good and evil, and grow in wisdom, being trained in human wants and their appliances, as man among men, as an infant among infants; although He be the Everlasting Wisdom of the Father, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

And now, what was yesterday matter of prophecy for the Epistle, becomes to-day clothed with history for the Gospel, and the declaration of Isaiah is fulfilled in the narrative of St. Luke. But the mode of reception of the Divine message is in strong contrast: for as the Prophet said of Ahaz and of Israel, “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established,” of the Holy Virgin it is said, “Blessed is she that believed;” it is, as it were, her title — “she that believed;” she that believed, in contrast to Eve that believed not, and as believing beyond all; and therefore “there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord,” though the miracle be above every miracle. Her blessedness is in this: she is “Blessed among women,” because her title is “she that believed.”

<sup>1</sup> “Parvulus erit et vescetur infantilibus alimentis.” S. Bernard. In Adven. Serm. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xi. 1–3.

*And in the sixth month*, says St. Luke, that is, after Elisabeth had conceived, *the angel Gabriel*, signifying "the strength of God," who was always sent on the messages of salvation, *the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth*—not unto Jerusalem, the Holy City; not unto Rome, the capital of the world; but unto a poor village in an obscure country, both of them despised even unto a proverb,—*to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary*. The Prophet had said, "Behold, a Virgin shall bear a Son;" and now the Evangelist seems to say, "Behold, this is the Virgin; this is the Son." And never was a time when, humanly speaking, the promises of God might seem so much to have failed: the house of David had departed from the sight of men, was unknown and forgotten, and Israel itself under bondage to the Heathen; the prince of this world seemed, as it were, established above the sanctuary of God. But man's helplessness is God's opportunity, and nothing was lost in His sight; the fulness of the time was come; and it was fitting that the vessel, meet to be the recipient of the Divine grace, should be nurtured not in kings' palaces, but in obscure poverty. Poor in spirit, that hers might be the Kingdom of Heaven; mourning over the desolations of her household and people, that she might be comforted and their comforter; pure in heart, that she might see God.

*And the angel*,—in the hour pre-ordained from all eternity of the Father, and now in its suited and appointed season arrived,—*And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women*. Not above, but among women; not raised above thy kind, though

about to be the Mother of our Lord: one among the daughters of Eve, but by whom they shall receive a blessing, and not a curse.

*And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.* Slight, but very beautiful is this indication of the Virgin's mind; "she was troubled," for the humble are troubled when they hear their own praise; and with that peculiar thoughtfulness which marks all that is said of her, she "cast in her mind" what such a salutation might import. Even as at the last, they who shall hear the words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father," shall say, as it were, Whence is this to me? yea, and be, as it were, even troubled at the saying, as beyond their worthiness.

*And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb.* Here the mystery is alluded to but not declared; it is said, "thou shalt conceive," but not in what manner. *And thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS.* This is the Joshua that shall bring his people into the promised inheritance of God. *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest;* this is He Whom Eve expected should be born of her when she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," or "a Man the Lord;"<sup>3</sup> but the lowliness of faith was not in her. *And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.* This is the promised Son of David which is to be, of Whom it is said, "His seat is like as the Sun before Me;" and "Sit Thou on My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy foot-

<sup>3</sup> Gen. iv. 1.

stool." *And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; this is the Shiloh promised to Israel; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.*

And here, though supernatural birth is implied and received in faith by the Blessed Virgin, yet it is not as yet fully stated or understood; and she asks in faith for an explanation. *Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from Heaven;" and here also our own new birth begins, for "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."<sup>4</sup> And this by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and the will of the Father; by His call, and by our accepting the same in faith.

*And behold, thy cousin Elisabeth; for Mary was of Priestly as well as of Kingly family, as Miriam, or Mary, who led the companies of thanksgiving, was the sister of Aaron, whose wife also was named Elisabeth; she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.* The Almighty power of God is the first foundation of faith; the first Article of the Creed. And here a sign is given, not to correct, but to strengthen and enlighten; for signs are the language of God.

*And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel de-*

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 47. 49.



*parted from her.* Wonderful moment, on which depended all the destiny of mankind: for in the things of the Spirit the will of man must ever co-operate with the Divine call. And here was perfect faith, humility, and submission. Sanctified by the Holy Ghost, her heart had already by faith conceived the Son of God, before He was conceived in her womb. Calm as deep waters and thoughtful; as the morning cloud that discloses the rising sun; as the star that first appears when the storm is retiring. Sarah laughed at the strangeness of that salvation beyond all that she looked for; but Mary is composed and reflective, as one that wondered at nothing from the power and the goodness of God. Zacharias doubted, and by a sign was corrected; Mary doubted not, but by a sign was strengthened.

And now it is impossible to conceive a lesson of greater moment than that which is conveyed by the Epistle and Gospel for to-day, as both taken together; the one with the warning to those who will not believe, with the declaration that a Virgin shall bear Immanuel, and the sign refused; the other the full acceptance of faith. It is with reference to the Incarnation it was said, "if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." And both before and after the birth of Christ, in all its varied significations, types, prophecies, and modifications, by this faith all shall stand or fall. "For the grace of God," says an ancient Bishop, "by which all the saints are justified, is by the birth of Christ increased, but not then commenced. And this great sacrament of godliness was in its signs so full of power, that they who believed in it when promised, obtained no less than they who received it when given."<sup>5</sup> And another holy man on the

<sup>5</sup> Leo. Serm. iii. De Nativ.

same subject : " Oftentimes when I reflect on the longings of those who looked forward to the presence of Christ, I am filled with compunction and confusion, and even now at the thought can scarce refrain from tears, of so much lukewarmness savour these most sad times. For which of us is as much affected with joy at the exhibition of His grace, as the promise of it alone kindled in them of old ?"<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, if we consider the difference between the greatest Saint and the most reprobate of men ; between the beloved disciple and Judas Iscariot ; we shall find at the bottom of the heart, that it has been connected with belief in the Godhead of Christ ; in the reception of this word Immanuel in all the various degrees and significations in which it is fulfilled. To read the Gospels, to meditate on Christ Crucified, to receive the Sacraments of the Church, and live in its ordinances, to lead apparently blameless lives ; these all are as nothing, are of no avail, excepting so far as they take root in this the foundation of the faith, of Christ the Son of God. These things are indeed full of power and grace because they are connected with that belief ; but it is that belief which gives them this grace and power. For as " with God nothing shall be impossible ;" so it is given to faith to partake of this power of God : and it is said, " all things are possible to him that believeth."

" Adam, hide thyself no longer, for God is with us."<sup>7</sup> Son of Adam, fear not, only believe, for God is with us. " Ask thee a sign, either in the depth, or in the height above." A sign is given thee beyond all height, and which transcends all depth ; it brings up from the lowest

<sup>6</sup> S. Bern. Serm. ii. in Cantic.

<sup>7</sup> S. Bernard.

depth, and ascends into the Heaven of Heavens; where the Son of David descends, and where the Son of David is gone up on high. "It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know?" If I climb up into Heaven, Thou art there, the Son of Man exalted above the Angels of God; if I go down to Hell, Thou art there also, the Son of God made subject unto death in wondrous humility; God and Man united in the height above, and in the depth below.

She shall call His Name Immanuel, or "God with us." As St. John testifies, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory;" among us, as God manifested in the flesh, and "going in and out among us;" "God with us" as our Defender, greater than he that is against us; "God with us," not only as partaking of our nature, and made one with us, but giving us to partake of His nature: "God with us," as conferring on us a new birth in Himself, and making us to be sons of God; He hath dwelt among us, nay even, He hath "tabernacled within us:"<sup>8</sup> "God with us," as coming down to us in the unspeakable Gift, the Holy Ghost; with us as indwelling, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, coming to make their abode with us in a manifestation unknown to the world; with us, as incorporating us with Himself as parts of His Body; "God with us," as taking us to be with Him in death, for to die is "to be with Christ," and to be with Christ is to be with God; and more especially, and above all at the last Day, of which it is said, then shall "we ever be with the Lord." "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God"

<sup>8</sup> ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν.

But as in the Blessed Virgin, the germ and origin, the Mother of Him Who is our God, and from whence we are in Him, as in her all was of faith; so "if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee!" said one to our Lord Himself; but He said, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it." Blessed indeed to have conceived Christ in the womb, and to have given birth to the Saviour of the world; more blessed is it to have conceived Christ in the heart by faith, that He may there indwell and abide for ever!

## SERMON LXXIX.

### Saint Mark's Day.

Ephes. iv. 7—16. St. John xv. 1—11.

#### VALUE OF AN INSPIRED GOSPEL.

*And He gave some Apostles ; and some Prophets ; and some Evangelists ; and some Pastors and Teachers ;  
For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST.—EPHES. iv. 11, 12.*

THE Gospels for the Sundays during this season of the year, that is, from Easter to Trinity Sunday, are taken for the most part from our Lord's parting discourse with His disciples at the last Supper, as recorded in St. John's Gospel ; and perhaps it may be for this reason, that the appointed Gospels for this and our next Saint's day are from the same source. For there is often found this agreement between the Saints' days and the greater Festivals, with which they are connected. And again ; the Epistle for to-day has also the like harmony with the sacred season on which this day usually falls. For it speaks of the gifts which our Lord left below for the instruction of His Church after He ascended to Heaven. And the concluding words of the Epistle, as the Text

itself shortly expresses, speak of the purpose of those gifts being to build us up, to form and mould us into the Body of Christ, which is the Head over all; and thus they set forth under another figure the very subject of the Gospel for to-day, which is of Christ the Living Vine, and of the branches which by love abide in Him. Now St. Mark, whether or no he might have been the companion of Apostles, and whether he might have been himself one of those here called Pastors and Teachers, or not; for both of these circumstances are recorded of him in the early Church; yet to us he is only known as an Evangelist, from the Gospel which bears his name. And therefore the Epistle and Gospel for to-day, as combined together, may be considered as bringing before us a lesson of the very deepest interest, namely, how far a written Gospel, as that of St. Mark, may be the means of uniting us unto Christ, and building us up in Him. For of all those miraculous gifts which were poured upon the early Church, and of which the Epistle speaks, none has been so important to us, none comes down to us, and continues with us, in the same way as the work of an inspired Evangelist. Add to which, that when our Lord speaks to us in this day's discourse of His words abiding in us, we must remember it is only by a written Gospel that those His words reach us.

*Unto every one of us, says St. Paul to the Ephesians, is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, each has his own appropriate gift, his talents lent him, his own assigned office as a member of Christ's Body. Wherefore He saith, in the Psalm of David, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower*

*parts of the earth?* For the expression of ascending, when spoken of God, implies that He had previously come down, and had "become obedient unto death." *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.* It is this same Christ, the Son of Man Who died and was buried, that sent down the Holy Spirit, and endowed persons with His various gifts for the establishing of His Church in the world. *And He gave, appointed by these His gifts, some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists,* that is, either preachers or writers of His Gospel;<sup>1</sup> *and some Pastors and Teachers;* shepherds with assigned flocks in the different orders of local ministrations. But none of these offices thus variously endowed were for themselves, but all severally working together for the one great end. *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* Not as if the Christian faith were to be once planted and left, but all is in progressive building up unto perfection. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* The one faith "once delivered," the knowledge of Christ, ever growing and advancing, these lead to the fulness of life. And this, in distinction from those seeming wise, who are "ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth." *That we henceforth be no more children, ever changing their objects and pursuits in the levity natural to their age, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* For error is manifold, but

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrys. ad loc.

truth is one. And as speaking to the Corinthians on this subject of the diversities of spiritual gifts, St. Paul concludes by saying, "Yet show I you a more excellent way, which way is charity;" so now, after speaking of these supernatural endowments of the Church, he comes to their one final purpose, which is that of building up in Christ through faith and love. *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, Which is the Head, even Christ: from Whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.* As the Head supplies the members with nerves and senses, and the principle of life, according as is suited to each; while all the members thence deriving their power mutually aid and support one another, and tend together to the well-being and increase of the body; so is it with Christ and His Church. The same thing likewise is taught by the Gospel which ensues, in wonderful harmony but under another similitude; for the Epistle speaks of Christ as the Body, and of us as members of the same in Him; the Gospel, of Christ as the true Vine, and of faithful Christians as the branches in that Vine. But perhaps they differ in this,—that while the Epistle speaks more of the Church at large, the affecting appeal in the Gospel is of more close individual application, and, as it were, home interest to each; and also of peculiar impressiveness, as addressed by our Blessed Saviour to us all on the last night of His being with us. The Epistle spoke of His ascending to Heaven, and leaving gifts below "for the perfecting of His saints," as living stones fitted without sound or noise in their appropriate places in Himself the living Temple; in like



manner the Gospel is of His going to the Father, and yet here below by His own indwelling, keeping each in Himself.

*I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman.* The Father as God over all ; Christ as God and man, made One with us ; the Mediator between God and Man. *Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away ; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* The sufferings of the elect are in Christ, even as they are in Him ; and the Father that chastened His own Son for us all, chastens us if we would be in Him and like Him, in order that we may bring forth more fruit, and partake more of the living Vine ; but from them who bear no fruit, He taketh away His Spirit, and they cease to be parts of the Tree of Life.

*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.* In the previous verse it was the Father that purgeth the Vine ; but here again it is the Son Himself that purgeth His own Vine ; and as they that bear fruit are by the Father rendered more fruitful, so they that are clean are by Him more and more cleansed through His Word. By His saving Word at Baptism, as St. Paul says to the Ephesians, “that He may cleanse His Church with the washing of water by the Word ;”<sup>2</sup> by His Word in the Scriptures ; He Himself, the Living Word, by Himself and by His Spirit, in all works of repentance cleanseth us. *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.* “But not in like manner,” says St. Augustin, “are they in Him, as

<sup>2</sup> Eph. v. 26.

He in them. For the branches are in the Vine, not as conferring, but as deriving thence their life; but the Vine is in the branches not that it may receive, but that it may minister vital nourishment unto them.”<sup>3</sup> First of all He spoke of the branches as already in the Vine, and of the Father and of Himself as making fruitful and cleansing; and then of man as co-operating with God, saying, “Abide in Me.” *I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing.* Nothing without Thee, O blessed Saviour! but all things are we able to do with and by Thee. They abide in Him; and then He bringeth forth fruit in them; for it is not the branch that bears fruit of itself, but it is the tree that bears fruit in the branch,—He bears in them fruit like Himself, a life like His life, His works of mercy, and lowliness, and constant prayer; and their words are His words; for if He abideth abundantly in the heart from that abundance the mouth speaketh; and their prayers are His prayers; for it is His Spirit prayeth in them, and heareth their prayers, and He knoweth that their prayers are heard. Therefore, all is of faith—of “faith which worketh by love;” and all is in humility, which is a perpetual prayer for His aid. It is ours to hunger and thirst, but it is His to fill with righteousness.

*If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* “The branch must be in the Vine,” says St. Augustine, “or in the fire.” It is the peculiarity of the vine-branch, as the Prophet says, that “it is meet for no work;” if it bears not fruit

<sup>3</sup> In Joan. Tr. lxxxii.

it is good for no other use, but is burned.<sup>4</sup> O how awful a type of the human soul, which, if it lives not to God, can live no other life, but is lost! *If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* They are one with Christ, and being one with Christ, they are one with God; and by prayer they derive all that they can ask or think. *Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.* As the husbandman glories in the fruitful vine; as the vine itself seems to glory and delight in, and to own for itself its fruitful branches, so in those that are made conformable unto Christ is the Father well pleased, and the Son in them rejoices. And oh! how great and mysterious is this union with Christ, that as He by His works in the flesh glorified the Father, so shall they also! *As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love.* He first loved us, that we in return may love Him; and as He is One with the Father, so would He have us to be one with Him. Infinite and beyond man's comprehension as is that love which is between the Father and the Son, even that bond Which is the Holy Ghost, Who is love itself; even so in like manner, great beyond all thought, and infinitely higher than all the understanding of man, is that love wherewith Christ hath loved us. *If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.* His love is the law within the soul; and if that law is obeyed, then that love is not impaired or broken. *These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* His joy is in choosing us for His own; and we partake in that His joy

<sup>4</sup> Ezek. xv. 1—5.

when we accept this His choice, and rejoice in Him as He in us. But that joy is not full, till love is full and perfect; and that love is not full, till obedience is perfect also. That joy is the first-fruit of the Spirit shed abroad in the heart, when it rejoices in the commandments of God, which are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. That joy in the heart is as a drop from those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore, as a ray from the everlasting light of His countenance; where there is perfect love without fear, and perfect obedience without hindrance or pain.

And now to apply the whole of this to St. Mark's day. "Ye are clean," says our Blessed Saviour to His disciples, "through the word which I have spoken unto you." And afterwards, "If My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." And again, "These words have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Now from all such expressions it is evident that the words which our Lord spake are, like Himself, to abide in us, in order that we may partake of all that great blessedness which He here describes; and where have we these His words, and Himself as in these His words, except in the written Gospels? And St. Mark's Gospel itself is peculiar in this: that it sets before us in the most living manner, by numerous details and incidents, the very Image and Person of our Blessed Lord. We behold Him therein as in a Divine mirror. We behold, as it were, His very countenance in approval or rejection, in joy and sorrow. Its characteristic may be said to be "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ.*"<sup>5</sup> How great

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.

a gift then is this among those of which the Epistle speaks, which our Lord after His ascension has bequeathed to His Church, this work of an inspired Evangelist! How powerful a means of bringing us “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;” of so conforming us to Him as that we may obtain all those riches in Him, which the Gospel describes! If they who knew nothing but the Old Testament could say with the Psalmist, “All the day long is my study in it;” if it is said by Joshua, “This book shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night:”<sup>6</sup> or in the figurative language of the Law, “These words shall be in thine heart,” and “thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house:”<sup>7</sup> how much more must all this be the case with a Gospel which contains the very history of Christ in the flesh; His very demeanour and bearing; His sayings and doings on all the occasions of daily life! We are so familiar with this great and inestimable privilege, that we consider not its value, nor what a loss it would be to the inner life to have been without it. How can we read over it, and pray over it, and meditate upon it, and make it our own too much? What a refuge is there within it from the conversation of the world! for here our conversation is in Heaven and with God. Here is “the mind of Christ,” and we by devoutly dwelling on it may make His mind to be our mind. It is true that there are other means of grace whereby we are to Christ united,—by Sacraments, and prayers, and His Spirit in the heart, whereby “beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord we are changed

<sup>6</sup> Josh. i. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Deut. vi. 8, 9.

into the same image ;” but over and above all these is an inspired Gospel, and that too subsidiary to all the rest ; His Sacraments and prayers, and His Holy Spirit are never more powerful with us than when quickened by reading and thinking over the words of His Gospel. Its power in building up “in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God” is great indeed ; when day after day, without omission, “precept upon precept,” and “line upon line,” we make it our rule to meditate on the Gospel, and throughout the day to make it our own by obedience. When does it not kindle prayer—and compose the thoughts—and afford the rule and measure of duty ? What a shield against every temptation of the enemy is there in those words, “It is written !” What a tower of strength against the new philosophies of the world, and doctrines of religion spun from the imaginations of men ! This is the wisdom revealed of the Father. But His Spirit Which gave must be with us to understand His own words. It is a sealed Book which the Lamb must open. It is not by reading, but by praying thereon that it gives out its sweetness. It is “a garden inclosed,” on which the winds of Heaven must come, in order “that the spices thereof may flow out.” It is “a well of living waters,”<sup>8</sup> unfathomable indeed, and too deep for man of himself to draw therefrom ; but from whence a mist goes up to water the whole face of the ground. The tree planted thereby “will bring forth His fruit in due season ; his leaf also shall not wither.”

<sup>8</sup> Song of Sol. iv. 15, 16.

## SERMON LXXX.

### Saint Philip and Saint James's Day.

St. James i. 1—12. St. John xiv. 1—14.

#### THE SEVERE AND SOCIAL VIRTUES.

*Every man hath his proper gift of GOD, one after this manner, and another after that.—1 COR. vii. 7.*

IT does not at all appear why St. Philip and St. James have been combined by the Church on this Festival; for they are not at all alike in character, nor in their history; nor are they placed together in the Gospels, when the Apostles are mentioned by two and two. And we may observe that in the service for this Festival they are not altogether united, but spoken of separately; the Epistle having reference exclusively to St. James,—it being from his own Epistle,—and the Gospel to St. Philip.

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.* There was something peculiarly suitable in St. James addressing his Epistle to the twelve tribes of Israel, as he himself was the Bishop of Jerusalem. It was a position too of great authority and weight in the Church; for as

such we find he was president of the general council held there by the Apostles.<sup>1</sup> St. Paul, in speaking of his going up to Jerusalem to see St. Peter, says, "Other of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother;" and on the same occasion he puts him first of all, saying, "James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars."<sup>2</sup> He also mentions that our Lord after His Resurrection "was seen of James, then of all the Apostles,"<sup>3</sup> as if his Lord's thus appearing to him might have had reference to this his office. And St. Peter, on being released from prison by the angel, says, "Go show these things unto James and to the brethren."<sup>4</sup> There was none therefore so suited to speak with authority to the tribes of Israel as he who was thus first in the Holy City itself.

*My brethren, he says, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* None were so severely tried as the first Jewish converts: driven from Jerusalem; ill-treated among the Heathen as being Jews; and persecuted by the Jews themselves as being Christians. St. James therefore at once holds up to them the Cross of Christ. The object is the same as that of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, writing to them as to those who "after they were illuminated had to endure a great fight of afflictions," setting before them the example of suffering saints, and bidding them "look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross;" and reminding them that "the Lord loveth whom He

<sup>1</sup> Acts xv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. i. 19; xi. 9.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xii. 17.



chasteneth." But it is of great interest to observe something of a resemblance between this Epistle of St. James and that of St. Peter; it is to St. Peter, and the language of his Epistle, that St. James, as well as St. Jude, seems to look, as having his thoughts associated in affectionate meekness and humility with the chief of Apostles, so honoured by his Lord.

*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.* Wisdom is to know God and the true end of man; and this is to be found in Christ, "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" Who being the Wisdom of the Father was also perfect patience. St. Peter speaks of this trial of their faith "in manifold temptations" as more precious than that of gold that perisheth; and here wisdom is spoken of as seeing and knowing aright the end of those trials, and bringing forth from them that "meek spirit which is in the sight of God of great price." "God giveth," says the Preacher, "to a man that is good in His sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy."<sup>6</sup> And David speaks of it as the fruit of deep penitence: "Thou shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly;" "Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness." And Solomon, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, the gain thereof is better than that of fine gold."<sup>6</sup> "Let him ask of God," the fountain of all wisdom; Who, as a heavenly Father and with infinitely higher love than is understood by evil and sinful man, giveth "His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."<sup>7</sup> He giveth not as man giveth; for "He giveth, and upbraideth not:" to ask and importune of man is

<sup>5</sup> Eccles. ii. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Prov. iii. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Luke xi. 13.

ungracious, and occasions reproof; but to ask and importune of God is to bring down His more abundant acceptance and blessing. *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.* But let him that asketh for wisdom remember how our Lord required faith before He granted any request; it was like His proverbial saying, "If thou believest," and "according to your faith be it unto you." He impressed it on His disciples as essential for effectual prayer, saying, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them;"<sup>8</sup> "If ye have faith and doubt not," "all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive."<sup>9</sup> And to St. Peter, when sinking on the waters, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"<sup>1</sup>

And now, as he had spoken of their "joy in temptations," and as these trials consisted in great measure in their poverty as Christians and loss of goods, he shows in what manner these things may be a subject of joy. *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; the poor man may have joy in the blessings of the Gospel, which has so highly exalted him and given him the Kingdom of Heaven.* And he that had much to lose may have joy in reflecting how perishable were those his riches which he has lost,—those riches which are compared, according to the frequent figure in Scripture, to the fading flower. *But let the rich rejoice in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.*

<sup>8</sup> Mark xi. 24.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. xxi. 21, 22.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiv. 31.

*For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth : so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.* And thus understood it is much to the same effect as St. Paul also speaks to the Hebrews, “Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience.”<sup>2</sup> Or the passage of St. James may be understood without any such reference to supposed loss or privation, that the rich man on becoming a Christian, under a sense of the short-lived nature of earthly riches, may find joy in considering how the Gospel hath already weaned his heart from them, and set them at nought. A rich man may find much more substantial joy in the humility of the Gospel than he ever could have done in his frail wealth. But all the Epistle for this day is summed up in this short saying : *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.* The words are much like our Lord’s own promise to the Church in Smyrna, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer—be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”<sup>3</sup>

And now from this sweet and beautiful Epistle we pass to a Gospel of no less interest. It may be seen that both as taken together correspond and connect themselves with those of the fourth and fifth Sundays after Easter,

<sup>2</sup> Heb. x. 34. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. ii. 10.

that season of the sacred year on which this Festival usually falls; for on all these three days alike they are taken from St. James's Epistle, and from this discourse in St. John. But here the Epistle and Gospel has also its appropriate meaning as applied to these two Apostles themselves; and perhaps we may here notice the relation which they respectively bear to the characters of them both. St. James, surnamed the Just, was remarkable for the severities of a mortified life, and a meek and austere sanctity; so that the violent death to which he was put by the Jews was looked upon even by their own countrymen as bringing down the Divine judgment on their nation. His Epistle is best understood when we bear this in mind. Hence its memorable precepts of the blessedness of patience, of wisdom sought from above, of faith and prayer; hence its sententious, short proverbs of heavenly-minded wisdom, and the sayings of a man of God, interspersed with that sweetness which is ever found with self-denying devotion. St. Philip, on the other hand, seems rather an example of social and brotherly charities, easy of access to all, seeking and sought for in Christian friendship; as when he goes to Nathanael, to St. Andrew, and when the Greeks, who would see Jesus at the last Passover, come to him. Great as is the blessing of such a temper both to itself and to others, yet its deficiency is apt to be in this, that it less realizes those spiritual mysteries of God which are disclosed to the heart in secrecy and solitude of spirit. Hence that complaint in our Lord's words in the Gospel for to-day, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?"

Nevertheless it must be observed, that Christian grace so harmonizes and fills the character, that such personal

diversities are not to be pressed too far. St. James the Less was greatly beloved of all Christians for his singular meekness; and no doubt St. Philip, in the practices of mortification, came to understand the secrets of Divine wisdom; yet, nevertheless, under the same Spirit some such diversities and differences of character do remain; in the words of the Text, "Every man hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, and another after that."

And now let us enter that sacred "Guest-chamber" at Jerusalem, where our Lord at the Last Supper is bidding adieu to His sorrowing Apostles. *Jesus said unto His disciples, Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me; have the like faith in Me as ye have in God; in Me made One with you as Man, in Me the Mediator between God and man. Though ye look to Me no more as seen in the flesh, yet have faith in Me unseen as ye have in God. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. Among the heavenly habitations of God there is one for man, the lost sheep which the Shepherd hath found. There is for you "an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens;" and I go that mankind may in Me have access to that place. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. "I will come again" in My Kingdom; "I will come," together with the Holy Spirit, that I may prepare a place for Myself in you; for according to the love of God which each hath, so are the "many mansions;" "I will come," at the death of each to receive you that you may be with Me; and "I will come again" to be seen by all on the last Day, when ye "shall ever be with the Lord."*

*Thomas*, in that simplicity and slowness of heart which characterized him, *saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?* Thou art going to leave us, and we would follow Thee, even unto death; but we know not whither it is, nor how, nor in what way all this is to be. *Jesus saith unto Him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.* They that have been with Christ, who behold Him in the Gospel, and look to Him habitually in prayer and a holy life, they know far more than they think they know; it is not afar off, that they should ascend into Heaven, or go down to the deep; but very nigh, in their mouth, and in their heart: for faith is even now far more blessed than it knows.

*Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.* Having heard our Lord speak so much of the Father at all times; as of His own strict union with the Father; of His coming from Him, and going to Him; and of our heavenly Father Which hath such love for us, St. Philip thus replies; hardly knowing perhaps what he said, like St. Peter on the Mount; or as Moses when he asked to see the glory of God. But nevertheless it was from a deep voice beneath the soul of man, which ever asks to see God, its only home and rest; to behold His countenance which alone "sufficeth," and can satisfy all its wants. *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?*

And then after speaking to Philip, He thus addresses

all the disciples in the plural number. *The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake.* Oh, how great this blessedness of faith which knoweth both the Father and the Son; the pearl of great price; the light of true wisdom; the treasure hid in Christ; the wisdom revealed from above! But even unto us, weak in faith, how great the privilege of reading the miracles of Christ in the Gospels, and thus to "believe Him for the very works' sake;" and so to go on from strength to strength, coming to know Christ better, and in Him to know the Father!

*Verily, verily I say unto you, as by the solemn protestation of God to respond to the full assurance of our faith; He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.* Faith in Christ when unseen hath the greater blessedness, and therefore hath the greater power; when Christ Himself was manifested in the flesh, it was, as it were, in great weakness, as bearing sin, and circumscribed by the laws of suffering humanity; but now in Heaven, He is "on the right hand of power," "with all power given Him in Heaven and in earth;" and therefore faith in Him can do greater things. Hence the works of Christ in the flesh were in great measure the healings of the body soon to perish; but now they consist rather in healing the disorders of the soul which is to live for ever. "Doth he not," says St. Augustine, "do greater works who worketh out his own salvation with fear and trembling, which in him, but not without him, Christ worketh? I should say this were certainly greater than Heaven and earth, and

whatever things are beheld in Heaven and earth. For Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the salvation and justification of the predestined shall not pass away."

This power, and the working of this faith is by prayer, the golden chain that connects Heaven and earth, whereby man is united unto God, and God through him worketh miracles. *And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it.* How can we think sufficiently of these words, and dwell on them, and put them to the proof, praying and watching in prayer, and watching to observe how far, and when, and in what ways our prayers are answered !

To conclude ; we are reminded by this Festival, that the Apostles we commemorate, St. James the Less and St. Philip, were both present when these most gracious and memorable words, and many others no doubt of the like import, were spoken. They heard these words so full of Heaven ; they gazed on the sacred countenance of Him that spoke as "never man spake." Independently of their testimony as Apostles, of their subsequent acts and their martyrdom, this circumstance of itself endears them to our memory, and gives them a peculiar sanctity in our eyes ; the rays of their Master's countenance ever rest upon them ; it is good for ourselves to be thus brought into company with those who were admitted into that close fellowship with Christ ; it greatly adds to our power of realizing the history of our Lord Himself, and the things spoken by Him ; it is one of the means we have of approaching Him : while remembering them we seem in a manner to see with their eyes, and hear with their ears ; and this brings us, as it were, with them into the company of Him Who is our Lord and God. And oh,



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how invaluable is everything that can do this ! How poor is all converse with mankind compared with the recollection of Thee !

This circumstance, I say, of our being brought into nearer contact with Apostles, and through them into closer intercourse with Christ, is of itself of no little value in observing appointed Saints' Days.

## SERMON LXXXI.

Saint Barnabas the Apostle.

Acts xi. 22—30. St. John xv. 12—16.

GO AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.

*The FATHER of mercies, and the GOD of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of GOD.—2 COR. i. 3, 4.*

THESE words of St. Paul seem especially suited to describe the character of his fellow-labourer and companion in tribulation, whom we on this day hold in memory, the Apostle St. Barnabas. The very name Barnabas was, we are told, given him by the Apostles, as signifying “the son of consolation.” And whence did he derive this character? It is said in the Scripture for to-day, that he was “full of the Holy Ghost,” full of Him, that is, Whose name is “the Comforter.” Hence it was that he had the singular gift of comforting them which were in any trouble, being himself comforted of God, Who is the God of all comfort, and the Father of mercies. And it is remarkable, that whatever is recorded of St. Barnabas partakes of this character, such as marks the

Son of Consolation. When he is first mentioned, it is as selling the land which he had possessed, that through the Apostles' hands it might be distributed to them that were in need. When St. Paul on his conversion was avoided and feared by the disciples, it was Barnabas that took him by the hand and brought him to the Apostles.<sup>1</sup> And the account which is given us of him in to-day's Epistle, is all of the like spirit of consolation. When believers were first heard of in Antioch, where the persecuted Christians had fled from Jerusalem, it was Barnabas who was sent to them to exhort, to comfort, and establish them in the faith ; and their joy in the Holy Ghost was his joy. Such persons are full of expedients to comfort others ; and what could be more of this character than his going at once to Tarsus to seek St. Paul, taken up there probably in self-mortification, to bring him forth to comfort others, and himself thereby to be comforted ! And then at Antioch, in mutual labours with him, it is brought about that we should all be called by that blessed Name of all consolation, should be named Christians from Christ, the Anointed of God, from Whence the Anointing of the Holy One is with us, and the Spirit of love. And when he leaves the Church of Antioch to return to Jerusalem, it is with St. Paul in the like labour of love, to bear their alms for the relief of the distressed. He goes forth from Jerusalem to Antioch full of spiritual consolations ; from Antioch he returns back to Jerusalem, the Son of Consolation still, with his hands full of temporal charities. Such was St. Barnabas. And as our Lord said of Nathanael, that he was "an Israelite indeed," as being "without guile" ; and of Zaccheus, that he was "a son of Abraham," from the greatness of his faith ; so may it be said of St. Barnabas,

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix. 26, 27.

that he was a Levite indeed, partaking so much of that true anointing of the Spirit which shows itself in mercy and consolations. Thus it is that as the Holy Innocents, and the disciple of Divine love, and the first of martyrs, are the appropriate companions of Christmas Day ; so may it be said of this Saint, that he becomes full often no unmeet attendant of Whitsuntide.

*Tidings of these things, i. e. of many believing at Antioch, came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem ; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.* For Barnabas being himself of the island of Cyprus, and these who were making converts among the Grecians at Antioch, being, as it was said, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, he was the most suitable person to be sent to them. *Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad ; and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* This simple narrative beautifully describes the Son of Consolation : “ he was glad,” not envious, not despairing or doubting, but, with charity that “ rejoiceth in the truth, and believeth and hopeth all things,” delighting in the evidences of God’s grace, and in fruits which he himself had not sown ; and while rejoicing and encouraging them in this their “ first love,” urging them on to that perseverance and steadfastness, without which it would pass away as the early dew. And that this account is meant to describe his characteristic goodness and love appears from what is added, *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.* Moreover, such charity and zeal is ever expansive, and not only builds up but extends. *And much people, it is said, was added unto the Lord ;* unto the Church which is the Body of Christ, and to Christ Which is the Head.

*Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus for to seek Saul, who had now retired to his native city from the persecution of the Jews ; for the Son of Consolation ever seeks to do good by the instrumentality of others, rejoicing in their good, and "not seeking his own," nor the praise of his labours. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch.*

*And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. Nor was their labour in vain, for the Church at Antioch became one of the three Patriarchal Churches of the world. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Whereby the Prophet's words were fulfilled, "I have called thee by thy name ; thou art Mine." <sup>2</sup> "Thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name." <sup>3</sup> The Name for which the martyrs died ; in which angels rejoice ; at which devils flee ; the Name which is above every name ; which is "as ointment poured forth ;" for then was fulfilled the Psalm, that the anointing which came on the Head had gone down and filled all the raiment, which is the Church. All is of Christ and in Christ, the Anointed. Blessed union, and love of brethren, "as the dew," from Heaven "that descended upon the mountains of Zion."*

*And here we may notice, that the Scripture for the Epistle, as we find it in the Latin Church, used to terminate here ; but our Church has added what forms part of the Epistle on St. James's day, and this passage further adds to the description of St. Barnabas's character. And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signi-*

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xliii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. lxii. 2.

*fied by the Spirit*, for prophecy was one of the supernatural gifts then bestowed upon the Church, *that there should be great dearth throughout all the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.* Such therefore were the firstfruits of the faith thus planted and watered by the Son of Consolation. "Unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness; he is merciful, loving, and righteous. The good man is merciful." "He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor."<sup>4</sup> Surely it is for no little purpose that the early Church is so much set before us in the bountiful giving of alms. It would almost seem as if the pressure from without was purposely sent of God to exercise this living charity which He hath planted within. So was it with the Church of Pentecost at Jerusalem; all was selling of goods, and giving of alms, and distribution made, and "one heart and one soul." And so with the Church at Antioch, it "took root downward and bore fruit upward." And the Son of Consolation led the way; rich in all that relieved sorrow, or strife, or need; "poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, an yet possessing all things." And with him is united St. Paul; prizing so much the opportunities of relieving others, that he not only gave, but, in addition to all his spiritual labours, worked night and day with his own hands, that he might have to bestow rather than to receive. "These hands have ministered," he says, "unto my necessities." "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye

<sup>4</sup> Ps. cxii. 4, 5. 9.

ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, what among men can be more blessed than this character of the Son of Consolation? Like a shadow in the heat, as waters in a desert, nay, even like the Voice of our Blessed Saviour Himself in the storm, saying, “Be not afraid, It is I;” so are the words, and the countenance, and the presence of the Son of Consolation in every distress. He takes out the thorn from every trouble; has oil and wine for every wound; sees light through every cloud. His “tongue is health.” “When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried.” “I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor.”<sup>6</sup> Such are the sheep that follow the good Shepherd, who layeth down His life for the sheep; such are the sheep set on the right hand of the Judge; the blessed of the Father, because they have given meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty; have clothed the naked, and visited the sick; and consorted with those that are in prison: that is, have omitted no form of consolation under every human ill, from the abundance of consolation which they themselves have received from God, Who has had Himself called “the God of all consolation,” and known to us by the Name of “the Comforter.”

Nor is it only the universality of this goodness, but the absence of self throughout; “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these,” says our Saviour, “ye have done it unto Me:” of which we have the outward signs in this,—St. Barnabas sold all, but laid it at the Apostles’ feet; it was the Church of Antioch to the

<sup>5</sup> Acts xx. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Job xxix.

Church at Jerusalem, by the hands of Apostles to Elders there ; self is lost and hidden ; it is all in Christ.

And now we come, in the Gospel for to-day, to the fountain-head of all consolation. *This is My commandment*, said our Blessed Saviour at the Last Supper to His disciples, when He appointed His Body and Blood to be their life, and spake of the coming of the Comforter, Whose Name is Love—*This is My commandment*,—My one, great, and new commandment,—*That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* He was made Man, and became our Example in the perfection of all love, that we should love each other as He hath loved us ; our Elder Brother loving us as brethren, that we may be to one another as He Himself to us. Holy and good was the old commandment, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ;” but this new law is more than that, for it is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour for the sake of God, thou shalt love him in God, and God in him ; and therefore thy love for thy brother shall be as the love of God, shall be lost in thy love of God, which must be with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. And this, though so much higher and better than the old law, yet is easier of fulfilment, in that the Spirit of Truth shall write this law on the heart ; and he that is made one with Christ shall partake of His Spirit, Which is infinite, eternal, never-failing Love. For “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him,” so that his love is as the love of Christ, which is the love of God. And if he would be perfect as his Father in Heaven is perfect, he will be merciful even as his Father in Heaven is merciful.



Christ, indeed, laid down His life for His enemies, that they might become His friends; but here, perhaps with more immediate reference to the Eucharist which He then was celebrating, He speaks of His life given to be the food and support of these His faithful ones; it was the mystery of His Kingdom, that by His dying they might live in Him, and by doing His will come to know of the doctrine. *Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you; by doing the will of My Father ye become to Me as friends, yea, even as brother, and sister, and mother. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.* As Abraham was called "the friend of God," and God, conversing with him as friend with friend, made known to him His secret counsels; so to those who are by faith the true children of Abraham He reveals His mysteries. How often had He spoken to the Jews in words that they understood not, as of Himself the true Bread that cometh down from Heaven; as of Himself the living water in the wilderness, of which whosoever drinketh shall never thirst: but they understood them not at the time, nor were they in the way to learn them, for they had not in them the love of God. But to these He makes known His own unspeakable love for them, which shone forth in all His works and His words, in His life and in His death for them; and as they came to understand and know this His love, as it became engraven on their hearts by the Finger of God, then they could also love each other, consoling others in all their actions and ways of life by those consolations wherewith they themselves were comforted of God; loving others from a sense of His Love, Who had laid down His life for us.

All is of God : we love, because He first loved us ; not that this love in return is of ourselves, but this also is His gift ; for God the Father in His Son hath chosen us, nor can we come to the Son unless the Father draw us, and mark us for His own by the Spirit of adoption. *Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go, that ye should leave Me, and go forth into the world, and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain ;*—should be of that abiding character which passeth not away. Thus Peter, and James, and John, and Matthew, by Himself were drawn unto Him, and by Himself chosen and called ; and when He would appoint Apostles He continued all night in prayer, and then called unto Him His disciples, and out of them He chose twelve, that they might be with Him,—that the election might be of God, and not of us. And now this choosing them unto Himself, and grafting them into His own Body, and giving unto them of His Spirit, was, that still they might by prayer receive of Him more and more, and in Him more abundantly have life ; as He adds, *That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you.* He had chosen them that they should bear fruit, and this fruit was the keeping of His commandments, and His commandments were love ; and it was by loving each other, by deeds and words of love, that they should ask in prayer in His Name, and their prayer should be heard. And therefore, on all occasions when He spake to them of prayer, and of all things being given to prayer, He connected with it the forgiving of each other, or faith in Him. For brotherly love and faith were essential requisites to this power of prayer.

And now to return to the great subject of this day's Festival, how it is that the sons of consolation have such

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power with God. "If ye abide in Me," our Blessed Lord had said just before, "and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you;" "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." Thus it is; for the commandments of Christ are of brotherly love and compassions,—by keeping them they abide in Him; by ministering to others their own faith is increased; the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts; they turn more instinctively to Him; and they have good hope of mercy from being merciful themselves. Thus the merciful obtain mercy; the peace-makers are called God's children; they bear on earth the nearest resemblance to Him Whose hands were ever full of blessing; meek in heart, they are refreshed with the multitude of peace; relinquishing earthly possession, they have the "manifold more in this present time" in joy of heart. The good Samaritan given us for our example was the very type of Christ Himself, Who added to that parable the memorable saying with which we may conclude all our reflections on St. Barnabas, "Go, and do thou likewise."

## SERMON LXXXII.

### Saint John Baptist's Day.

Isa. xl. 1—11. St. Luke i. 57—80.

*JOY AT HEARING THE BRIDEGROOM'S VOICE.*

*Many shall rejoice at His birth.—ST. LUKE i. 14.*

THESE are the words of the Angel to Zacharias; and in a like strain the Prophet,—*Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.* Strange words these to announce the birth of one whose only place on earth was in the wilderness and the prison; who was pre-eminently, like his Divine Master, “a man of sorrows!” Yet surely never did man know such joy as did the holy Baptist, from that well-spring itself of everlasting joy which is with God; he who yet unborn “leaped in the womb for joy;” he who afterwards “rejoiced greatly to hear the Bridegroom’s Voice;” he who in prison, before his second birth in martyrdom, had no doubt that the last and brightest crown of beatitude, which is given to persecution for righteousness’ sake—that he “leaped for joy and was exceeding glad.” At his birth therefore well may “Jeru-

salem" be called on to rejoice, "which is the mother of us all."

*Cry unto her*, says the Evangelical Prophet, *that her warfare is accomplished*, her sad period of trial is over, *that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins*,—her sorrow hath been for a moment, but "everlasting joy" shall be her portion.<sup>1</sup>

*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness.* It is emphatically the Voice, inasmuch as John wrought no miracles, but preached and bore witness. That Voice which, as St. Augustine says, united in itself the voices of all Patriarchs and Prophets that had gone before, being no less than that Voice which preceded the going forth of Him Who was the Word—the Word that "was with God and was God."<sup>2</sup>

And what is the preaching of this Voice, but the forming of the royal road for the King's coming? *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.* And what is to be the termination of this the Conqueror's high road through the desert? Not an earthly Canaan, but like the expanse of Heaven itself after a dark woodland way. *And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh—not the Jew only, but all mankind—shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* The Mouth hath spoken; the Voice in the wilderness hath gone forth; and the Word that abideth for ever shall be manifested, and remain.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxi. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Serm. cclxxxviii. In Nat. Joan. Bap.

And now the commission is more distinctly given to the herald voice to proclaim aloud, as by a trumpet, the great changes to be ushered in. *The voice said, Cry. And he said, "What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.* "The Voice" went forth not in Canaan "flowing with milk and honey," but in the desert; it spoke not of temporal rest and wealth, but the contrary: that the flowers of the promised land were withering; Israel after the flesh coming to naught; its ordinances, its temple, its nation passing away, as the flower of the grass. But the Word with His spiritual kingdom was to last. St. John representing the old dispensation was to decrease, having seen Christ; the Law, having disclosed the Gospel, to depart; but He was to increase more and more. St. Augustine with striking aptitude applies this expression to the seasons of the natural year. "That man may be humbled," he says, "on the day when John is born the days begin to decrease. That God may be exalted, on the day when Christ is born the days begin to increase. Let us also in man be diminished, and grow in God. In ourselves let us be humbled, that in Him we may be exalted."<sup>3</sup>

From this the nativity of the Baptist catching a glimpse from far, and beholding the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness, the Prophet now lifts up his voice, as if himself uplifted on high, and unable to speak for himself from his beacon-tower, he calls on the thousand

<sup>3</sup> Serm. cclxxix. in Nat. Joan. Bap.

tongues of the Jerusalem from on high, the Pentecost itself approaching to proclaim it. *O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain : O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength ; lift it up, be not afraid : say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God !* With what wonderful love, my brethren, beyond all thought of man, was this fulfilled when the Baptist pointed out the Christ, saying, “ Behold the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world ! ” Thus was God revealed as a Lamb ; and in this was His strength of which the Prophet speaks. *Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him : behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd ; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

All this latter part, which has been added by our own Church to the ancient Epistle, is of our Lord's own teaching ; as if it were her design that the herald should be lost in the presence of his Lord ; the star that preceded should disappear in the rising morn. St. Augustine, who has left several sermons on this festival, and speaks of it as a festival which they in his time had received from tradition, and devoutly transmitted to the commemoration of posterity,<sup>4</sup> yet observes of it, that it is the only day on which a nativity is celebrated except that of our Lord Himself. And indeed the Baptist had in him this faint resemblance to his Lord, that both were wonderfully born ; both announced by an angel ; both were foretold of prophets ; both had baptisms of their own ; both had

<sup>4</sup> Serm. ccxcii.

disciples. But one as man, the other as God; the one as the flower of the field, soon to pass away, the other as God, Who endureth for ever, the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God.

And this observation respecting the Epistle may be applied to the Gospel also for this day, as the same thing has taken place in both. For the Gospel, as it formerly stood, terminated with the account of the birth of the Baptist at the commencement of the hymn of his father Zacharias; which hymn, as we know from daily use, consists, not in an account of his own son or his birth, but of rejoicing in the spirit at the coming of that promised Saviour of whom he was the Messenger. And therefore, in both the Gospel and Epistle alike, our Church by a gentle transition passes on from the sight of the herald that preceded to Him before Whose face he came. By which, if it burthens the service by more length of detail, yet in its general effect it speaks the language of all the sermons of St. Augustine on this day, who throughout dwells in contemplation, by comparison, by contrast, and illustration on our Blessed Lord Himself. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."<sup>5</sup>

The greatest of those that had been born of women, "a burning and a shining light," he looks forth from his watch-tower, and pales and wanes away in the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

*Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. "They rejoiced with*

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 10.



her," it was the first fulfilment of the angel's declaration, that many should "rejoice at his birth;" the first keeping of that Nativity which we at this day celebrate with the Christian Church in all parts of the world. *And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.* But he was the child of faith, born beyond nature, and from his very birth must he have the "new name" given of God; as Apostles and others, when set apart for the high calling of God. *And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.* Their very objection marked how peculiar and sacred was the name. *And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John.* Not that it shall be, but is already, as pronounced by the angel of God. *And they marvelled all.* They perceived that there was a mystery and a Divine interposition, though they knew not how great it was. *And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake and praised God.* Faith and obedience had more than restored him; had filled his mouth with inspiration, and given him a prophet's tongue.

*And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: where God is, where His presence is known and acknowledged, there is always a holy fear. And all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judæa. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.* There was prophecy, and expectation, and stirring of men's hearts sufficient to kindle faith, as in every visitation of God,

and tokens of that favour wherewith God is used to invest those whom He marks and chooses for His own.

*And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying.* Here we must remember, that it was in answer to his prayer as a priest, on the great day of the Atonement, and by the altar of incense, that the angel had appeared with the promise of this son from God. It is not therefore of himself, nor his own house, or his son, that his hymn of thanksgiving is; nay more, it is not of Israel after the flesh, nor of temporal deliverance; but of all mankind lying under the shadow of death, and the forgiveness of sins shed abroad like healing wings.

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David.* In the Spirit, and in faith he speaks of it as already accomplished, although the Saviour was as yet unborn. *As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.* If, as it has been said, the law is the Gospel hidden, and the Gospel is the law revealed, we may observe that here, for the first time, the stream of Divine light seems to break in throughout this prophetic hymn, for all here is of that which is evangelical, spiritual, heavenly, and eternal. *That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant.* Such is the fulness of faith in the power, the goodness, and the truth of God. It is as if he also heard the Bridegroom's voice, and rejoiced.

*The oath, so often appealed to in the Scriptures, which He swore to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies,*

—those enemies of which Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar, the Roman Cæsars, and Herod, were but the outward signs; that in this miraculous deliverance,—*we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.* In those “new heavens, and new earth,” of the Kingdom of God, “wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

And then, as if arrested in this glorious vision of Christ's Kingdom by the presence of the infant child before him, *And thou, Child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.* Blessed and glorious privilege, to prepare a way for the reception of God in the hearts of men! *To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us.* Heavenly morning in the heart of each, first streak of light of the Everlasting Day, how beautiful is thy coming, when the clouds of sadness fall in tears; and the shadows of darkness flee away! *To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace;* into the way that leadeth to that true Jerusalem which is “the vision of peace,” whose walls are Salvation, and whose gates are Praise.<sup>6</sup>

*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit; and was in the deserts, till the day of his showing unto Israel.* Thus God works in secret, and by slow preparation, that all may wait and watch for Him in patience.

In conclusion, I will add one further reflection. To them who first met together to celebrate the Nativity of

<sup>6</sup> Isa. x. 18.

the Baptist all was in the dim uncertain future ; to that they looked with more or less of faith, hope, and knowledge : and now, in these last days, when we celebrate this Festival, and once more carry on the view, and look forward to Advent and Christmas, the day becomes connected with a subject of solemn import to us, though full of mystery. Our Lord said of John the Baptist, that he was the Elijah that was to precede His coming ; yet John himself had said to the Pharisees that he was not Elias ; and our Lord has Himself so spoken on a subsequent occasion, as to have left an indistinct apprehension that, in some fuller and greater sense, there is an Elijah still to be expected “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” This is surely a matter of very awful interest ; in what way a witness of God, or many witnesses may appear, it would probably do us no good to inquire, any more than when the Pharisees of old inquired of John the Baptist ; but the Voice of God will find us out, and if we have His Spirit we shall not reject that Voice. And of this we may be sure, and we may take it home as the lesson of this Day, that, as in the case of John the Baptist, obedience to the warning calls of God, by His Messenger, will be the test by which the spirits of men will be tried.

## SERMON LXXXIII.

### Saint Peter's Day.

Acts xii. 1—11. St. Matt. xvi. 13—19.

*THE STRENGTH OF GOD IN MAN'S WEAKNESS.*

*If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the LORD GOD in your hearts.—1 PETER iii. 14, 15.*

**T**HIS day used to be the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul; and the Sermons of St. Augustine are on the subject of these two great Apostles and their martyrdoms, with no allusion to our present services. But perhaps this is rather to be considered not as the continuance of that festival, but another transferred by our Church to this day, from the first of August, which commemorated the chains of St. Peter. For it is from that service that both the Epistle and the Gospel for to-day are taken.

The incident recorded in the Epistle is one of much interest in the history of St. Peter. It was now again after ten years at the return of the memorable Passover, at which the Lamb of God had been slain. Herod Agrippa, who had been made king of Judæa by the

Romans, began to persecute the Christians, and *killed with the sword James the Great, the brother of John*. Perceiving that this gratified the Jews, from whom all persecutions of the Church arose, he laid hands on St. Peter, and wishing to defer his death till after the Feast, *he put him in prison*, with a guard of soldiers to keep him, *four quaternions*, that is, four for each watch in the night. In this interval, the Church, neither presuming on the miraculous care of her Lord, nor distrustful from the loss of St. James, ceased not to pray. Such was the strength of God; Christ in Heaven, and His Church on earth, interceding for the great Apostle in bonds.

It has been often observed how great a difference appears in the character of St. Peter after his Lord's resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Spirit; and this is a beautiful instance of it. At one time it might be said of his whole character, that "the spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak;" his faith was unequal to sustain the greatness of his love, for his love had in it too much of that which was earthly; and it seems remarkable how, after he became strengthened, his Lord seemed to meet him again with blessing in incidents that might recall his former weakness. When he first heard of the Cross, he said, in his human infirmity, "That be far from Thee, Lord;" but his Lord gave him afterwards abundantly to bear his own cross in manifold sufferings, and to die upon it with joy, while he shrunk from exaltation so great as to be made in death so like his Lord. Thrice did he deny; thrice did his Lord commit His sheep to his charge, the tokens of His love. At the miraculous draught of fishes he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, O Lord;" but after the day of Pentecost, when the net of the Church was of a sudden so

miraculously filled, according to his Lord's promise,<sup>1</sup> with earnestness did he cleave with all praise and thanksgiving to Him, and preached aloud to all salvation in His Name. In like manner of contrast is his conduct at this Passover, when compared with that of ten years before. He is now, on the night before his own execution, calmly asleep in prison, as if free from all perturbation or care. On the former occasion, when he had drawn his sword in his Master's defence, he was reminded that at his Lord's prayer "twelve legions of Angels" would come to His assistance; and now, while resting undisturbed in faith, he has no more recourse to carnal weapons, his Lord, as if mindful of those His words in the night of His agony, sends to him one angel to do for him all that he needs. How different from the passionate resistance, and the subsequent trembling and failing of heart on that terrible night, is his light now in darkness, his freedom now in chains, his calmness in the midst of danger, his Divine strength in human helplessness! For all hope of human aid is now far removed. He is *asleep*, when there is no self-assistance; he is *between two soldiers*; he is *bound by two chains*; and *keepers before the door are keeping the prison*. He is asleep, as it were, on the bosom of God in full and quiet confidence. "He that keepeth thee will not sleep. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord Himself is thy keeper."<sup>2</sup> As a child asleep, and in such weakness overcoming by the strength of God all power of the enemy: as a child asleep, in the very teeth, as St. Augustine says, of the devouring lion.

*And behold*, says the account, *the angel of the Lord*

<sup>1</sup> Luke v. 6. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxxi. 3. 9.

came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side; in his deep sleep he saw the light of an angelic presence, and felt an angel's hand which aroused him from sleep, saying, *Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.* He bids one to arise who is asleep and in chains; but whenever God commands, He gives power to perform. *And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.* It was all so marvellous; it went on in a manner so noiseless and calm, and withal so rapidly, so unearthly; that it appeared like one of those visions which God sometimes vouchsafes to His Saints, and had done to St. Peter himself, before now, as on the house-top at Joppa. And withal the deliverance was so great, as of one coming out of the grave, that it hardly yet appeared as a reality in this our sad life: "when the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then were we like unto them that dream."<sup>3</sup> But indeed the whole narrative itself, as of an occurrence that so set aside the impediments of our ordinary life, seems like that of a dream, when the spirit is free from the trammels of the body, and moves with its own spiritual nature; he was free from his chains, a supernatural light was around them; the guards and keepers were as in a sleep, and noticed not; *they passed the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate towards the city, which opened of its own accord; they went out, and passed through one street; when the angel disappeared.*

<sup>3</sup> Ps. cxxvi. 1.



The transition had been great and sudden; and now St. Peter left to himself to recover his own bewildered thoughts, perceived the truth and reality of it all, under the stillness of the midnight sky, and in the streets of the deserted City; that *the Lord had sent His angel and delivered him out of the very jaws of the devourer; out of the hand of Herod, and the expectation of the Jews,* looking forward to his death on the morrow.

Thus is St. Peter set before us on this his day; not in his bold preaching as on the day of Pentecost; not in his working of miracles; not as receiving visions of God; not in any of his Apostolic acts, nor sitting on a throne in his Master's Kingdom, but in chains. And well may we believe, that with no other circumstances would St. Peter himself have so wished his memory to be associated; as he says to others under like trials, "Think it not strange, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."<sup>4</sup> And if we call to mind that memorable passage of St. Chrysostom on the Ephesians, where he dwells with such eloquence on the chains of St. Peter and St. Paul, we may well say, that in nothing else could the dignity of St. Peter be so much set forth. "I am ashamed," says that holy Bishop, "to compare to these bonds earthly riches and golden attire. To them that understand the love of Christ, that chain will appear to be of all things the most blessed. Were any to offer me my choice, the whole Heaven or that chain, I would prefer that chain." "Not for this do I bless those bonds, that they conduct to Heaven, but because they are worn for His sake, Who is the Lord of Heaven. How great an

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 12.

happiness, how high an honour ! Fain would I ever dwell on this subject ; ever cling to this chain. Fain would I, though I have not in reality the power to do so, yet would I, in thought and intention, bind this chain around my soul by a temper like his.”<sup>5</sup>

And now we have in the Gospel for the day the account of that Divine power thus exhibited in St. Peter, that germ of life implanted by the Father Which is in Heaven in the revelation of His Son, which ever since that time had in the history of St. Peter been deepened and enlarged, matured, perfected. Herein was the secret of his great strength ; the Stone against which whosoever fell should be broken ; it was within him, not without ; as taught by experience he says to others, “ If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye ; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts :” that is, take care that your faith in His Godhead be right, and all will be well. Hallow Him by adoration and worship within ; take heed of that light, the shield from God, and you need fear nothing from without. Blessed Apostle, indeed, and blessed chains ; but yet not blessed because he was an Apostle, nor were those chains to be accounted blessed because they were borne by him : but his blessedness consisted in this, that the Father Which is in Heaven had revealed to him the one great secret—that mystery in which consists the salvation of the world ; which to have known is to have found the pearl of great price : that which made his Apostleship full of power, and his chains to be as a crown of gold.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. iv. Hom. viii.

When Jesus came into the coasts of *Cæsarea Philippi*, says St. Matthew,—when they were now withdrawn in retirement and prayer from the more active sphere of His ministry, He puts to them the solemn inquiry for which sake He had come into the world,—*He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?* The confession on the part of Christ is that He is the Son of Man; the confession on the part of man must be that He is the Son of God: on both of these together is His Church founded and built up,—the Son of God upon earth, the Son of Man in Heaven. “Whom do men say?” The inquiry and answer is as if to point out that flesh and blood had not found out the one great truth, the truth of all truths. No; manifold are its shadows, but the truth itself is one. *And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist*, whom Herod supposed to be risen from the dead; *some, Elias*, who is to precede Christ's coming; *and others, Jeremias*, or one of the prophets,—some prophet such as Moses was understood to have foretold. But, what is very remarkable, these opinions have in them this indistinct reference to a great truth, that they intimate an apprehension of one arising at this time in great power from the dead. *He saith unto them, But whom say ye—ye My Apostles*, the Church whom I have chosen—Whom say ye *that I am?* *And Simon Peter*—speaking for himself, and for all to whom the question had been addressed, as one in twelve, the unity of the faith on the twelve foundations—*Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*: the Christ, not merely such as the Jews expect, the Son of David, but such as David himself and the Prophets foretold, the Son of God; not a Christ the son of dying parents, who after having served

their generation should be laid unto their fathers, but the Son of the Living God, in Whom is the fountain of life.

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in Heaven.* Great must be the wisdom, and great the knowledge which is revealed from Heaven: the only knowledge worthy of the Name—the fruit of the Tree in the Paradise of God, which maketh men indeed to partake of a Divine nature. But why this blessedness? for flesh and blood to have imparted this knowledge would have brought no blessing, but because it was disclosed by God Himself to the secret heart.

*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter;—*this is the new name by which thou art known of God, on account of thy maintaining this faith; on this that thou hast said, as St. Augustine explains it, on this declaration of thine, this confession of faith in Me as the Son of God, will I, as on a Rock, build My Church; and thou also art called the Rock, as maintaining this faith revealed unto thee from above;—thou art Peter; *and upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* I, the Son of God, Whom thou hast confessed will, by My Divine power, build My Church so strongly, that the unseen powers of darkness shall be broken, as waves that beat upon a rock, and that rock is no other than faith in Me as the Son of God. “No man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him;” “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.” The gates of Hell, the judgment-seats which are beyond the grave, shall not prevail against those

whose life has been that of faith in the Godhead of Christ.

And on this day, with a peculiar and expressive power, do these words come to us as receiving their fulfilment in the Epistle; not only in God's miraculous deliverance of His Church, so that the gates of Hell prevailed not, but doing so by means of St. Peter, for whom His Church was praying to Him, and of St. Peter's confirmed faith in His Godhead. Christ left him to himself, and he was found to be a man; now Christ was with him, and, strong in the power of God, on account of this faith, it might be said to him, as it was to Jeremiah the prophet: "I have made thee a defenced city, and an iron pillar and brazen walls; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."<sup>6</sup>

But more than this is the gift, as flowing from this His Godhead and the acknowledgment of it, which our Lord now vouchsafes; for the kingdom of Heaven was come, because God was upon earth in the Son of Man. *And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.* "Great is the mystery of godliness," says St. Paul, in speaking of "the Church of the living God." Let us, then, not dispute about the meaning of these words, but, with fearfulness and humility, take care lest those keys should at last be found to shut us out; and lest the bonds which are here spoken of be such as may bind us hand and feet at the Day of Judgment. This Evangelist, St. Matthew, soon afterwards records

<sup>6</sup> Jer. i. 18, 19.

these same words as addressed by our Lord to His Apostles generally ; and therefore we may consider it as a power delivered to St. Peter and the rest. "These keys," says St. Augustine, "not one man, but the unity of the Church hath received."<sup>7</sup> Whatever they may fully mean, this we know, that the Church is spoken of by our Lord as a living Body, with power to retain or remit sins, to bind or to loose, to speak with authority ; and that because He has given her this power,<sup>8</sup> if any one will not hear her, he is to be to us as an Heathen man or a Publican was to the Jews.

And now, Christian brethren, what are we to learn from this Festival and its services as we now hold it ? What would God thereby teach us ? That the power and the faith of the Church, though it be founded on the Godhead of Christ, as secretly revealed by the Father to those whom He hath chosen unto life, yet it is not to be looked for in high and dignified pre-eminence, but in tribulation, in prison, in the distress of the faithful and their prayers. St. Peter found his great strength through repentance ; and the Church, which hath fallen from its first love, must do the same : every individual who hath sinned must do the same. Well for him if at last his chains fall off, and he passes forth from his prison of death, and is able to say with the Psalmist, "Praised be the Lord, Who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare ; the snare is broken, and we are delivered."<sup>9</sup>

The lesson which the Collect would inculcate in prayer, when speaking of those "excellent gifts" which Christ

<sup>7</sup> Serm. ccxcv.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. xviii. 17, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Ps. cxxiv. 5, 6.

had bestowed on St. Peter, as recorded in to-day's Gospel, passes altogether into another part of his history,—the earnest exhortation which his Lord made to him to feed the lambs and the sheep of His flock, as the proof of his love upon his restoration and repentance. It is for this object that he is more than once released by an angel from prison; it is for this that his feet are set upon the Rock,—that he may carry on his Master's own work upon earth; it is for this that “not once—not twice only,” as St. Augustine observes, “but three times did the Lord commit to him the charge” of feeding the sheep which He had purchased with His own blood. It was in fulfilment of this thrice-commissioned charge that he was found worthy to be crowned with martyrdom. This is his own solemn appeal to all pastors unto the end: “Feed the flock of God;”—“and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pet. v. 4.

## SERMON LXXXIV.

### Saint James the Apostle.

Acts xi. 27; xii. 3. St. Matt. xx. 20—28.

*HIDDEN WITH CHRIST IN GOD.*

*And he killed James the brother of John with the sword;—ACTS xii. 2.*

OUR Church seems to have appointed the passage in the Acts for the Epistle of to-day on account of these words which occur in it; and perhaps they may afford us as much matter for reflection as those moving appeals in which the Epistles abound on the sufferings of Saints and Martyrs, not only from what it states, but from what it leaves unsaid, that so little should be recorded of one so eminent: indeed his very death itself is only mentioned, as it were, incidentally.

The Church of God had now taken root in Antioch, in consequence of which Barnabas had been sent there from Jerusalem, and had brought St. Paul thither from Tarsus, when the account thus proceeds: *In those days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the*



*world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. In this we have an interesting picture of the early Church: Barnabas sent to Antioch with gifts of the Holy Ghost, and returning to Jerusalem with alms; and the Church in affliction not only from persecution, but from famine also. And then it is added, Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.*

Such was the martyrdom of St. James, and thus was fulfilled his mother's request in a manner far other than she thought of: first of Apostles is he deemed worthy of this crown, enthroned on Christ's right hand: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne."<sup>1</sup> But before considering it more particularly, let us proceed to the account of this his mother's petition in the Gospel.

Here we must remember, that annihilation of self is the secret of the Cross, which sets forth the depth of our sin and unworthiness, together with our life in the Crucified. But the mystery of the Cross was not yet known, nor the Spirit given to unfold its depths, and adjust its bearings. It was at a time when even the Apostles, though they believed Christ to be the Son of God, and had now been with Him for three years, yet when they found that He was on the eve of establishing

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 21.

His Kingdom, they began to dispute about their respective places in it. And now He had been speaking to them of His approaching death, which it is said they did not at all understand, when it is added, *Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left in Thy kingdom.* There was, indeed, an ignorance of the Cross in this request, and something of human infirmity and the natural ambition of a mother's love, yet it was not without faith. Notwithstanding all appearances she believed in His Kingdom. She was herself one of those faithful women that ministered unto Him: and these her sons had given up all for Christ's sake,—a parent's home, with their father Zebedee, their trade, and livelihood: in allusion to which sacrifices a little while before St. Peter had himself asked, "What shall we have therefore?"<sup>2</sup> when it was said to him, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones."

*But Jesus answered and said, turning from the mother to her children, Ye know not what ye ask. If it is worldly precedence ye desire, such has the effect of setting you further from Me; but greatness in My Kingdom and nearness unto Me is a pre-eminence which ye think not of, in suffering, shame, and sorrow. Can ye partake of these with Me? Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of,—that cup of untold agonies of soul within from which all that is human must shrink,—and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? that baptism of blood without, with all the painful inflictions*

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xix. 28.

of that terrible death. The throne below on which My kingly title is written is the Cross, and the places on My right hand and on My left are the crosses of two thieves on a like painful bed of death. *They say unto Him, We are able.* They speak in ignorance of what it meant, but their gracious Master accepts the words in a higher and better sense. *And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with : but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give ; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.* Yes ; in this My Kingdom below I can select and dispose at My will to the positions of suffering for My Name, in which consists the kingdom of the Cross, but in that final Kingdom it is not Mine to assign by partial choice : those glorious rewards are in the eternal predestination of God, proportioned to well-doing and suffering, in the Kingdom prepared of the Father for the blessed. But in this My Kingdom ye shall have with Me of My portion ; one of you shall drink of My cup in sorrow of heart, longing for and praying for My return ; and the other shall be baptized with Me in the death of Martyrdom ; yea, both alike shall partake of My Baptism and of My Cup. And they that partake of these with Me shall be loved of My Father. But this is not a time for sitting down on thrones, but of entering into the Kingdom through much tribulation, of the narrow gate, of the warfare, and the race.

Our Church has added to this Gospel in still further warning to ourselves. *And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren, that they should have sought to obtain such precedence for themselves above the rest, which shows that they all had the like desires, from whence alone envy and disappoint-*

ment could arise. Happy he who knows not what such feelings are, from the love of Christian lowliness. *But Jesus called them unto Him and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.* Their petition and your displeasure with them arise from the same cause, that ye are judging from the kingdoms of this world. *But it shall not be so among you : in My Kingdom such carnal passions have no place ; the love of these things, honour, and place, and station, will lower you in My spiritual Kingdom which is to be for ever. You must be emptied of self that God may fill you. But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.* If any of you wishes to be exalted, to be near Me in My Kingdom, to approach Me and to be like Me, it will be by doing as I have done to you,—by lowly, servile offices of love, by yielding his life for others. If highest angels serve Christ's little ones, such must be the noblest honour of His saints on earth, to do Christ's own work, of serving and ministering to them ; yet not for station or wealth, but for the love of Christ. *Even as the Son of Man, in this His kingdom, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.* To love God more than himself, and to love others in God, to spend and be spent for them, to feed the sheep of Christ and to be willing to die for them, this is the only greatness of which My Kingdom knows. In this strife there will be no envy, no ambition, no seeking advancement, nor indignation at others being preferred.

Wonderful patience ! they had these disputes among themselves before, and with like words did He teach

them ; and again do these disputes occur, and again in like manner does He instruct them. And full of love and blessing were these His sayings, as dew from Heaven on the tender grass, as spoken to those Apostles who should so soon exemplify the same, bearing through life their Master's Cross, and yielding up their lives as Martyrs for them for whom Christ died. Words full of power, and mighty to bestow all that they required ! "He spake the word, and they were made ; He commanded, and they stood fast." So is it with the New Creation, with the pillars in the temple of God. They are established by His word and His grace. "They stand fast for ever and ever." "He hath given them a law which shall not be broken."

But to return to the Epistle for to-day. This incident, which the Gospel brings before us in the history of St. James, is combined with that of St. John ; but what the passage from the Acts records is of St. James alone, and is in fact the only thing which Holy Scripture does mention of St. James by himself, and apart from his brother. It is remarkable that so little should be recorded of one so eminent. Indeed, his very death itself is only mentioned as it were incidentally : "And he killed James the brother of John with the sword." Yet even this of itself indicates his eminence, that among Christians and among Apostles, he should be the first, either from his station in the Church, or his zeal, or his character and labours, to have attracted the notice of an enemy of the faith when he came as King to Jerusalem. He killed James, and then proceeded next to take Peter, whom we know to have been as it were the bold leader of the Twelve. And that St. James the Great should have been thus prominent among the Apostles, is what we should

have supposed from the mention of him in the Gospels, where he seems so highly admitted to our Lord's favour ; and no doubt from the greatness of his faith and love. He is called by Christ to be a disciple, together with St. Peter and St. John ; selected, together with them, to witness His power in raising of Jairus's daughter ; to behold His glory on the Mount ; to be with Him in His agony in the garden ; to receive His awful prophecy of Judgment on the Mount of Olives. Again, his being coupled with the beloved disciple in that one name given to both of Boanerges, or Sons of Thunder ; and also united with him in the like promises made to both, as recorded in this day's Gospel. And further, he is not only spoken of together with the other two, but his name is placed between them, "Peter, and James, and John, the brother of James." Thus would it appear as if he were admitted to privileges not less high than they by Him who knew what was in man.

Yet how remarkable is this difference between St. James and these other two Apostles ! Of St. Peter and St. John we know comparatively very much ; many circumstances of great interest are mentioned of them both before and after our Lord's death ; incidents which illustrate so much their respective characters that we have become, in a manner, acquainted with them ; we see, hear, and know them ; their own words too have descended to us in their writings ; they stand forth to us as seen in their Lord's presence, favoured beyond all the children of Adam,—one as the Chief of Apostles, the other as the Beloved Disciple ; and sayings and actions are known of both, suitable to these exalted privileges. But how different is it with St. James ! We hardly know anything of him, we do not even know why he is

called "the Great;" whether from age, or any other reason, to be thus distinguished from St. James the Less. During the ten years that had now intervened since his Lord's Ascension, not once does his name occur. Nay, in the Gospels by himself we do not know of him at all. It is only with his brother that he is mentioned, as in to-day's Gospel; and on that occasion when James and John, it is said, wished to call down fire from Heaven on a city of the Samaritans.<sup>3</sup> Of St. Andrew, St. Philip, St. Thomas, St. Jude, St. Bartholomew, something is said; nothing of St. James. How does he seem, as it were, withdrawn from our notice; and that too on some occasions when one would expect to find him mentioned! St. John, his brother, stood, we know, at the foot of the Cross, and his mother, Salome, is spoken of as being then present. We cannot but suppose that St. James too was not on that occasion far from his mother and brother. It is mentioned in the Acts, "Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer."<sup>4</sup> We may well believe that St. James was not separated from them, any more than in the Gospels. But how does he appear to fall into the shade, or rather, we might say, to be lost from man's sight under the shadow of the Almighty! "In the shadow of His hand hath He hid me."<sup>5</sup> "Thou shalt hide them privily by Thine own Presence:" "The shadow of a great Rock in a weary land."<sup>6</sup>

What then, Christian brethren, are we to learn from this? Much, doubtless, of repose and peace. In their own lifetime, indeed, it was no enviable notoriety that the Apostles enjoyed: when St. Paul speaks of them as

<sup>3</sup> Luke ix. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Acts iii. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. xlix. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Isa. xxxii. 2.

being made "a spectacle to angels and to men," he connects it at the same time with their being made "the offscouring of all things." But some good men might consider it the most blessed of all earthly privileges, that their memory should be embalmed, as it were, in the Church by their good deeds and words; so that their example might convert many to righteousness, and that they might thus shine like stars for ever, giving light in our firmament here below. Such have been St. Peter and St. John; their memories are ever blessed, and, like their lives, fruitful in good. And such a wish might have been not unworthy of them. Yet he who said in his repentance, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee;" and he who leaned on his Lord's breast at supper, would have left even this wish, as all others, on the bosom of His infinite love. Whether by life or by death, by good report or evil, so likewise, by being known hereafter, or unknown among men, let Thy will be done in me; whether to be below as a lamp to guide the feet of penitent souls; or with the good angels and spirits that are with God, to do good to mankind in some hidden ways that are only known, O Lord, to Thee; and not to those themselves that receive the benefit of them. All shall be well, so long as no mingling of self shall spoil the perfect sacrifice of ourselves unto Thee.

He that hath left father, and all that he had, obedient to the call of Christ, may afterwards come to think what great things he would do for His sake; but Christ may alter for him this wish, and show him, as He did to St. Paul, not how great things he must do, but "how great things he must suffer" for His Name's sake. This is his crown.



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What earthly glory, what seat of pre-eminence, what place high in the Church can he need, for whom and to whom, O Lord, Thou hast given Thyself, given Thyself upon the altar of the Cross, and in the Holy Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood ; Who wilt Thyself be our light and guidance below, and wilt Thyself be our life in death !

## SERMON LXXXV.

Saint Bartholomew the Apostle.

Acts v. 12—16. St. Luke xxii. 24—30.

*DO GOOD, HOPING FOR NOTHING AGAIN.*

*They that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so.—ST. LUKE xxii. 25, 26.*

ST. BARTHOLOMEW has been sometimes supposed to be the same person as is mentioned in St. John's Gospel under the name of Nathaniel.<sup>1</sup> But there is no allusion to this in the service of our own Church for this day, nor in those of the Latin Church. And this seems to be the case, not merely because it may have been considered more satisfactory to admit only into such offices what is clear and certain, but because the Festival is of much earlier date than this opinion. But the Scriptures for the Epistle and the Gospel for the day, although indeed they contain no mention of St. Bartholomew himself, but only refer to the Apostles generally; yet are they in themselves highly interesting and beautiful in

<sup>1</sup> On St. Bartholomew, as the same as Nathanael, see "Plain Sermons." Vol. vi. Serm. clxxxiv. and Vol. x. Serm. cccxxi.

this their application to the memory of the Apostles, and especially when considered in connexion with each other. In the former the Apostles are seen as full of all power of good, benefactors to mankind in the highest sense, such as the world had never seen the like; in the latter they are taught that this power of conferring benefits on mankind is not connected with any wish of being thought benefactors, as is the case in the world, but, on the contrary, with an entire denial of self, as flowing from the love of God. Again; the Gospel for to-day might at first sight appear to speak of the same circumstance as that from St. Matthew, which we had on St. James's Day, our last festival. But it is not so; for the occasion on which they occur is different, and this has a peculiar force of its own, as spoken at the Last Supper. For the disciples were slow of understanding the things of the Kingdom; and their gracious Master often taught the same things, and repeated the like expressions.

*By the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.* This was after the outpourings of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, while the Church was being formed together "in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship." *And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.* As on the day of Pentecost, "with one accord," and "in one place." Mention is made in St. John's Gospel of our Lord walking in Solomon's porch; and it is before spoken of in the Acts, as the place where the people came together to Peter and John after the miracle of restoring the lame man. *And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.* It is uncertain what is meant by this expression, that "no man durst join himself to them;" whether it is that under a sense of awe at the

miracles which were wrought, and the fear which was just spoken of on account of the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira, they did not venture to unite themselves with the Apostles ; or whether by "the rest" we are to understand, in distinction from the common people, those of the Pharisees and the upper sort, who are often spoken of in the Gospels as fearing to profess themselves disciples of Christ. However, it proceeds : *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Insomuch that, on account of those great wonders wrought by the Apostles, and the effect thus produced on the people, they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.* What a lively emblem, my brethren, is this of mankind under the Gospel ! all sick with various diseases of the soul, and lying helpless, but looking up in faith that the healing shadow of the Church might at all events fall upon some of them. *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits ; and they were healed every one.*

We have before had occasion to observe, that the preaching of the Gospel was always accompanied with the healing of bodily diseases ; so was it with our Lord Himself, He both healed and taught at the same time ; so was it when He sent forth His twelve Apostles, and also when He sent forth the Seventy afterwards, it was with this commission, "Preach the Kingdom ; heal the sick." Nor was this merely for the purpose of showing by outward signs the power of God, and His authority ; but it flowed from the very nature of the Gospel itself, the manifestation of Christ the Son of God and Man ;

and it is the expression of Divine love at all times. The Christian is to be always engaged in relieving the bodily wants, the natural infirmities, the worldly inconveniences and distresses of others, at the same time that he is endeavouring to promote their spiritual welfare. Body and soul both are diseased from the old Adam, both affected with evil spirits, both relieved and sanctified in the New Man.

Secondly, we may ask how far we ourselves at this day may be partakers of such blessings as the Church then bestowed, for surely we may hope that they are not passed away, but are for us and our children. The gifts of God, the gracious workings of His power, are not to be considered as altogether withdrawn, but under change of circumstances the mode of their operation is changed; the same faith will obtain the like benefits under another form—the like gifts are still continued, but in some manner often higher and better. We read of our Lord “going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.” A good man in distress might say, “If our Lord were thus now on earth I would go to Him—I would tell Him of my sorrow: may I not do so still?” And surely to the eye of faith He is equally present, equally able and willing to answer every request. But there is this difference, that our spiritual knowledge now in the Church is much greater since our Lord’s death and the gift of His Spirit, so that if we are rightly minded we seek not to be relieved from temporal evils, but that such being the signs of God’s love should work for us more abiding good. Martha and Mary could ask for their brother to be restored to them, but they would not make such a request as this now; for to die and to be with Christ “is far better:” but looking to Him Who is the

Resurrection and the Life, when suffering from the loss of those dear to us, we would rather pray to Him "to raise us up from the death of sin to the life of righteousness." So likewise the powers of the Apostles in working miracles are not to be considered as ceased in His Church, but changed; the marvels of God's grace, could we behold them, are not less than were of old those appeals to the sight and outer sense. And this may be one reason for a difference in the operation of the miracles here mentioned in the Acts, as wrought by the hands of Apostles, from those in the Gospels: for although an instance is mentioned of a woman healed by touching the hem of our Lord's garment, and it is stated that "virtue went out of Him and healed them all;" yet, for the most part, it is by means of His own word and hand that our Lord's own miracles were wrought, and not as this, that "the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them;" or that of St. Paul, that "from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." For in these latter the visible means of restoration in the will or act of the Apostles is less manifest; and our attention is more directed to faith working by love in those that received the benefit of them. For observe in these cases how much further removed is He that confers from him that receives the benefit, or rather the links of the chain are less visible to sense that connect the effect with the cause: for it is still Christ alone that works the miracle, yet He is not seen thus working, but it is through His Apostles, by His Name and by His authority; and not thus only, it is still further off; it is not even an Apostle, but his shadow passing by. But all this apparent distance and separation

from Christ is made up by faith, which has eyes to behold Him afar off; nay, in beholding brings Him near, nearer than the eyes of flesh could have done. It is not the shadow of Peter—oh no! it is not Peter—nor any Apostle, but it is Christ, spiritually present and spiritually discerned. Now this is to us of this present day a great encouragement. Though we cannot see our Lord, nor see His Apostles, yet we are in His Church; we are surrounded by His marvellous goodness; we have only to ask that we may receive the riches of His Kingdom, and tread under foot all the power of the enemy, who would bring on us all temporal and eternal harm.

But of spiritual miracles, that is to say, of the healings of the soul in the Christian course, it must be said, "This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting." Now prayer and fasting must both be, as far as may be, in secret, in order to be effectual. They both imply humiliation of self in the presence and before the eye of God. And we may connect this consideration with the Gospel for to-day. From the Epistle we learn our blessings, that there is nothing we can desire but we may obtain it; and from the Gospel we learn our duty, that as receiving so much of God we are to do all the good we can to others, "hoping for nothing again," that we "may be the children of the Highest."

It was at the Last Supper, when our Blessed Lord was about to give His life for the world, and had taken the form of a servant, and washed their feet, and after saying that one of them should betray Him, it is added, *And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.* For though their Lord had admitted some of them to the privilege of being nearer to Himself, yet He had not set any one as chief above the

rest. It was indeed a strange time to be thinking of pre-eminence when their Lord was about to die, and one of them about to betray and the others to desert Him: but it shows how unnatural at all times is ambition among Christians. *And He said unto them*, with the same meekness and forbearance that He had always taught them on this subject, *The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority are called benefactors.* This is one of their titles of honour among the Gentiles, "the benefactor;" they seek the praise of men, wishing to be considered "fathers" and "friends" to mankind: but He, Who emptied Himself of His glory for our sakes, hath established a higher law of true greatness. With regard to the chief places in His kingdom now on earth, eminent in wealth and station, a good man will shrink from them, from fear of temptation and a sense of unworthiness before God; he that does not, though he may procure the good opinion of the world, yet the power of Christ, the secret of God, is not with him; he may have many goodly pearls, but the pearl of great price is not his; he knows not the treasure hid in a field: he enters not into the joy of his Lord. The only joy mentioned of Christ was because the Father had revealed wisdom unto babes: "the joy set before Him for which He endured the Cross," was the joy of saving others; He had no joy but the joy of Love, for which He humbled Himself; such joy in ransomed and repenting souls as angels learn from His countenance: so that, following His steps, St. Paul could say, "What is our joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not ye in the presence of our Lord at His coming?" This joy in saving souls, from the love of God, is not compatible with the love of this world and the desire of pre-eminence. *But ye shall*



*not be so, says our Lord; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.* When just before He had girded Himself as a slave and washed their feet, He said, "What I do Thou knowest not now, but Thou shalt know hereafter." And much as He had taught them by His example, by His words of lowliness, and by many touching incidents, nothing but His Cross on the following day could give power to it all. That alone showed the nature of that washing which we all need, and the spirit with which it must be accompanied—that likeness to the Son of Man in which the strength of good men consists.

But when our Blessed Saviour had occasion to reprove His disciples, He did so with great gentleness and forbearance; while He lamented their infirmities, His love still dwelt on every proof of their fidelity; and He does not now say, as the occasion might to us appear to warrant, *Ye are they over whom I have so tenderly watched, and who are now about to forsake Me; but He adds, Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.* He passes over the evil, and sees nothing but the good; He had chosen them, had enlightened them by His doctrine, had strengthened them by His miracles; all the good they had was from Himself; yet even this He attributes unto them, rewards them for it, and admits them to share with Him His own inheritance. *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me,—in His own humiliations, which they shall share with Him, God hath unspeakably exalted them,—that ye may eat and drink at My table in*

*My kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; shall sit "at My table," i. e. shall enter into My joy; shall "sit on thrones," i. e. shall partake of My glory; as in another place, He shall "sit with Me in My throne, even as I am set down with My Father in His throne."*<sup>2</sup> All which seems to speak of that mysterious union with Himself, "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One."<sup>3</sup> And thus, though it be true that our Lord Himself is the one and only foundation, yet in some sense also there are twelve foundations, and in them are written the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

And now, Christian brethren, what is all this to us? no doubt much, even as much as it was to them; first of all, it notes the unspeakable privileges of this Apostolic union, and, secondly, that lowliness of heart on which that union and those privileges will depend. At this time, indeed, this Apostolic union of the Church is very much impaired and broken, and with it is to be feared our union with each other, our union with Christ and with God the Father. And the serious question is how we may keep what remains, or what we can do towards the restoration of it. There can be no doubt but that this union has become thus broken on account of the pride and selfishness of men, working in various ways; and that we can only recover it by humility. I do not mean that any one of us can do anything towards restoring the robe of Christ, now so outwardly rent and torn

<sup>2</sup> Rev. iii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> John xvii. 21, 22.

throughout the world: this must be God's own doing. But I mean, How can we preserve inwardly, each for himself in his own station, that Apostolic fellowship, and derive through it this blessed union with Christ and God? It is through humility that the peace of God watches over and keeps the heart in that love.

With the lowly is wisdom; humility is the nurse of filial obedience; every one owes something like filial respect to that form of Christianity in which, by God's providence, he has been brought up. He will look upon all things connected with it with some degree of partiality, of the same kind as he would on his own parents, king, and country. Now if by God's grace he should become more enlightened, he will be able to add to this faith; to improve it if imperfect, to correct it if erroneous; but yet in all this he will still preserve a sort of dutiful, filial preference to that faith in which he has been from childhood reared; bound by the cord of old associations, whereby he has learnt to love God, he will not rudely or rashly disturb them; he will build up in all meekness and reverence, waiting upon God, with humble confidence that if anything be lacking in his faith God will reveal even this unto him.

Since then this habit of mind is so connected with a reverential trust in God, it cannot be doubted but that God will preserve such unharmed in things essential to salvation, and reveal to them, if need be, any higher and more perfect way; and moreover, what is a strong ground of consolation for such meek tempers, if they should be wrong, God will not be severe in imputing to them such deficiencies or errors in their faith, as have arisen from those circumstances of life in which He has placed them; whereas if they had ventured to judge for themselves in

such matters, the whole weight of that responsibility would have rested on themselves. On subjects of such moment we may be sure that the path of humility is the path of safety. And, blessed be God! it is thus that He reveals to the meek what He hides from the wise and prudent.

## SERMON LXXXVI.

Saint Matthew the Apostle.

2 Cor. iv. 1—6. St. Matt. ix. 9—13.

### THE GOOD EXCHANGE.

*What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for CHRIST. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD.—PHIL. iii. 7, 8.*

THE Evangelist St. Matthew has been supposed to be represented by one of those four living creatures which are spoken of as being in the midst of the throne of God; and that passage which describes them in the Apocalypse, used in consequence to form the Epistle for this day. But on account of some uncertainty in the application of those symbols to the four Gospels, or from that passage being used as our Epistle for Trinity Sunday, our Church has appointed another Epistle for to-day. This, taken together with the Gospel, affords us an instructive lesson, which by her Collect the Church has turned into a prayer. Let us consider this lesson.

St. Paul and St. Matthew had renounced all, not in heart only, but also in deed; not in deed only, but also in heart. Hence the wonderful power unto salvation unto

this day in the Epistles of one, and in the Gospel of the other. The treasure is in earthen vessels, but the excellency of the power is of God. Having relinquished all, they were clothed with poverty of spirit, through which so strongly shines the light of Christ. They had the single eye, and their whole body was full of light. "For it was not," says St. Chrysostom, "as Moses when he came down from the Mount with the stony tables in his hands, but with the Holy Spirit in their hearts, that the Apostles went forth dispensing spiritual doctrines and gifts."

*Therefore, says St. Paul, speaking of marvellous transformation into the image of Christ in beholding of His glory—therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; by His mercy we are entrusted with this service; by His mercy we endure, and faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty—the works of darkness which bring shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully,—not corrupting God's word to render it acceptable to the worldly mind,—but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. They that are of God will hear His words; the spirit within will answer to the call, if it hath ears to hear. The appeal of truth shall not be in vain to the sincere heart which hath renounced the world. Thus the love of God in the soul will multiply images of itself, and be a witness in every place as the savour unto life and also unto death. But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; for to see the light and to love darkness is itself condemnation. "He that believeth not is condemned already." In whom the God of this world, the mammon of unrighteousness, the deceivableness of*

temporal pursuits, the carefulness about many things, the glare of this world's praise, *hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them* : for to believe in Christ crucified is to love Him, and to love Him is to despise the world. *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* This manifestation of Christ in all godly simplicity can only be by the servant which is as his Master was in this world ; it is not for nought that this relinquishing of things temporal was bound up by their Lord Himself in the first Apostolic commission ; that they should go forth to preach His Kingdom, possessing nothing, desiring nothing, but freely to give as they freely had received. With this their likeness to their Lord, Who being rich for our sakes became poor, was intimately connected their power of converting souls. *For God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*—He Whose mercy is our all in all—Who brings life out of death—gives to humility exaltation, to unlearned men the highest wisdom, to poverty of spirit true riches, to the broken-hearted the very Comforter, to the weak things of the world the strength of God ; Who brings out of darkness His marvellous light,—He *hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*

How beautifully were these last words of St. Paul fulfilled in St. Matthew. He himself in his Gospel says that when our Lord came to dwell in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled—that “by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people that sat in darkness saw great light ; to them that sat in the region and shadow of death,

light is sprung up." It was "by the way of the sea," it was by the mouth of the Jordan, by "Galilee of the Gentiles," that he himself sat, a Gentile tax-gatherer "in the region of death;" it was then that the light out of the darkness of God's great and free mercy shined in his heart; it was then that he beheld "the light of the knowledge" of Christ, which is "the glory of God;" it was then that he beheld in faith, no doubt, and then in unspeakable adoration and love, "the face of Jesus Christ." All this in him was, oh how fully and literally fulfilled! Our Blessed Saviour saw him, and cast His eyes upon him, and he beheld that gracious Divine look, and instantly cast behind him for ever all the world. "In that human face," says St. Jerome, "there shone forth the brightness and majesty of the hidden Godhead, and might at first sight draw unto itself them that beheld. For like as power is in the magnet to unite things unto itself, much more might the Lord of all creatures draw unto Himself whom He would."

But it is not necessary to consider that this call and conversion of St. Matthew was altogether sudden; from the example of what took place with some of the other Apostles it is not improbable that faith and knowledge had been at work in his heart, and had preceded that call. At all events, He who Himself predisposes the heart, knows also the thoughts long before, and knew that His invitation and call would not be in vain. How must his heart within him have sprung and leaped for joy at that summons, that choice, that word, that countenance directed unto himself! And surely one who dwelt by that lake, near Capernaum, in Galilee, himself in the midst of a concourse where he sat, and if he went forth amidst crowds that followed, could not but have known some-



thing of the works and the words of Jesus of Nazareth. It cannot be that such should have been unheeded by that lowly Publican: that He who was spoken of as the Friend of Publicans should have been altogether unknown to one who was himself a Publican, and as such held as an outcast by his own people—of Israel.

However this may be, let us come to the Evangelist's own account of his call. *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, that is, after healing the paralytic in a house at Capernaum, and forgiving his sins; "as He went forth again by the sea-side," He saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him.* St. Luke says, "and he left all, rose up, and followed Him." And St. Mark and St. Luke afford him a more honourable name than that of Matthew the Publican, for he was known as an Israelite, "Levi, the son of Alphæus."

*And it came to pass, the account proceeds, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many Publicans and sinners came, and sat down with Him and His disciples.* Now we might have supposed from this account that this circumstance, which he is about to record, took place at the same time that he was called, viz. that Jesus then sat at meat at his house with Publicans and sinners, and there gave that very touching answer of His compassionate loving-kindness and tenderness, as the Physician of souls, keeping company with sinners. But, from an attentive consideration of the circumstances as they are mentioned in this and the other Gospels, we find that it was not so, but that this occasion took place long after. Why then does St. Matthew hasten to mention this, introducing it at once when he has spoken of his own call? You can see in this, as in other places, what was in this Evangelist's

mind in the order of his narrative. As St. Paul ever delights to dwell on the goodness of God to himself, "a sinner, the chief of sinners,"—as "having received mercy,"—as "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, having shined in his heart," and the like ; so we can see by the very order of his narrative what was deepest in the heart of this lowly Publican. He wishes to explain how it was that his gracious Lord should have had mercy upon him, and no doubt he thought over with himself, and treasured most tenderly in his memory, that conversation in his own house ; he associated it in his mind with his own call ; he loved to think of them together, and together he naturally mentions them, as if saying, "You will wonder how He should have cast His eyes on me, and had mercy on me, a sinner—it was of His own compassion and loving-kindness, because I was sick and needed His Divine aid ;—do not think it was from any merit or goodness of mine : let me think of His love. He shall himself explain to you how it was : He sat down in my house—with sinners such as I had been."

*And when the Pharisees saw it,*—Here again let us pause. St. Matthew had got all his former friends and associates about him, that they might hear and see and converse with his own gracious Master, the Saviour, whom he had found. This was natural ; but the loving and meek Publican had invited all, without exception, and the proud and unkind Pharisees were there too, the mourning and bereaved disciples also of John the Baptist, together with Peter, James, and John, and the rest. This feast of the Evangelist's was like his own Gospel, embracing all of every kind, bringing all into the presence of his Lord, Who was full of virtue and healing for all ; and

this circumstance also shows the loving patience and lowliness of St. Matthew, that he should have invited to his house these Scribes, from whom he could receive nothing but ill-will and malicious complainings. *They, the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto His disciples, murmuring against them, says St. Luke, Why eateth your Master with Publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Sacrifice, indeed, is good and necessary, but it is of no avail at all without mercy, which sanctifieth the gift; but both sacrifice and mercy were found together in this lowly Evangelist. He made a sacrifice of all that he had, but in doing so was as if he had made no sacrifice at all on account of love. He had found the treasure hid in a field, and, as in that parable he has himself recorded, for joy thereof he went and sold all that he had and bought that field; he sat at his custom-house as a merchant seeking goodly pearls, but found them all counterfeits, till in the knowledge of Christ he found that One Pearl of great price, and went and sold all that he had and bought it.<sup>1</sup> In poverty of spirit he found the door into the Kingdom of Heaven. In giving up all, he had, no doubt, found that "manifold more in this present time," which our Blessed Saviour promises to them that do so. He had parted with shadows, and had found great substance; he had given up things temporal, and had found things eternal. We indeed know not—no understanding of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 44, 45.

man can know—what he gained. It is ever spoken of as a thing hidden ; it is treasure hid ; it is the hidden manna : as our Lord adds in the Apocalypse, “ I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.” Such is the love of God in the soul ; the heart which is in Heaven, because the treasure hath been laid up there.

But though the love of God which makes these sacrifices is itself hidden, yet it is ever accompanied with lowliness of mind, such as appears in this the first Evangelist ; such as ever feels its need of mercy and is full of mercy to others ; being so knit to Him Who is the Friend of Publicans, Who receiveth sinners, Who is the Physician of the sick, Who bringeth light out of darkness—the knowledge of the love of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And this is the danger of wealth, that it prevents this lowliness of mind : “ Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and naked.” And to this the advice and command is given, “ Buy of Me gold tried in the fire,” “ and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.”<sup>2</sup> That is to say, in this case there is a film or veil upon the eyes, something must be done to remove this before you will be able to see the truth, and to love God. As our Collect expresses it, “ to forsake covetous desires and to follow Christ,” the forsaking of covetous desires must come first, before we follow Christ.

And here arises a question, how far it is necessary for all to do as St. Matthew and the Apostles did—to give up their possessions. For our Lord seems to speak generally, as if to all : “ Sell that ye have and give alms,” and “ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.”

<sup>2</sup> Rev. iii. 17, 18.

This is, indeed, a point of no little difficulty, for the love of riches is incompatible with the love of God, so that both cannot exist in the same heart together; and it is almost impossible to possess riches without in some degree trusting in them and loving them. And no doubt it is the case that there are some who cannot be saved without parting with their possessions, on account of the love of money in the heart. And what renders it still more dangerous, where this is the case, the persons themselves are the last to see the necessity of it, because, as St. Paul says, in the Epistle, "the god of this world hath blinded their minds;" and our Lord speaks of "the deceitfulness of riches," and their needing eye-salve to anoint their eyes, that they may see. "I counsel thee," He says in this passage, "to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."<sup>3</sup> Now, to buy, implies to give up something in exchange: the necessity of buying shows that it is not to be obtained for nothing. So likewise in the parable, he who would possess the treasure hid in the field, or the pearl of great price, sells what he has in order to purchase it; so did St. Matthew, so did St. Paul, and the other Apostles.

It will be of some assistance to us to apply the example of St. Matthew himself; whatever might have been in his heart, he did not give up all till called upon by Christ to do so; and he that watches his own soul and the providences of God, will find numberless calls of Christ to make sacrifices out of love and mercy. Let him do these as they occur, and God will open his eyes to see more clearly what to do—to know the things of God and Heaven, and to know what is needful for himself to do in order to attain them.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. iii. 18.

## SERMON LXXXVII.

Saint Michael and All Angels.

Rev. xii. 7—12. St. Matt. xviii. 1—10.

WAR IN HEAVEN.

*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?—HEB. i. 14.*

THE Collect, Epistle, and Gospel of our Church for this day are the same as in the Ancient Missals, and of great interest. Our Lord calls His Church upon earth “the Kingdom of Heaven;” now Heaven is full of other beings besides the Saints of God. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said, that as Christians we “are come” “unto the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.” Well, indeed, may they be “innumerable.” When we look below us in nature we are overwhelmed with astonishment to find how everything is filled and carried on by the agency of living creatures, till they are lost from our sight and from all powers of tracing them, smaller than dust or motes in a sunbeam; and no doubt, in like manner, above us, and beyond us, and around us, in spiritual, intellectual, and heavenly worlds, all is filled with countless multitudes of living beings,

most perfect in beauty, and power, and harmony. Thus, as it is given us in the night of this world to behold the heavens studded with stars, great, glorious, and beautiful, in like manner has Scripture opened to our view a sight of the blessed angels. They appear as stars around us. But no unconcerned spectators on their silent watches. One thing, indeed, is mentioned of them by our Lord Himself which at first on hearing it might well amaze us, viz. that the highest of these glorious spirits watch with intense interest over the most humble Christian. Yet on a little consideration we may see, that so far from this being a thing of itself to us incredible, in fact it must be so. For if the love of God towards us is so infinitely great, and His merciful humiliations for our sakes surpassing man's understanding, those blessed angels who approach the nearest His throne must partake of that love. It is strange to us, because it is so unlike the pride of corrupt man; yet such must be angelic love, because it is heavenly and Divine. It is very unlike man; but it is very like all we know of the love of God and Christ.

Now our Lord's own expressions in the Gospels, as of the angels in Heaven rejoicing together with Him "over one sinner that repenteth;" of the most glorious among them being the guardians of His little ones; of our already being in the Kingdom of Heaven, wherein we know innumerable angels attend His throne; and of His sending them forth to separate the evil from the good at last;—add to which their often having appeared to good men in difficulties, to Jacob, to Daniel, to St. Paul, to St. Peter, to Cornelius, to our Saviour Himself, their King;—and in connexion with these the saying in the text, that they are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of

salvation ;”—these and other like circumstances will explain to us the meaning of this passage in the Apocalypse.

*There was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels ; and prevailed not.* The allusion is to the time foretold by the prophet Daniel, when “Michael shall stand up,” and “every one shall be delivered that shall be found written in the book.”<sup>1</sup> When “the Kingdom of Heaven” is come, and the good angels rejoice, and defeat the purposes of the evil. And it shall be with him that is in Christ as it was with our Lord Himself ; when He was tempted of Satan the good angels ministered unto Him ; when it was the hour of the powers of darkness the good angel was at hand to strengthen Him. The accuser of the brethren bears their evil report day and night before God ; the good angel offers up as incense the prayers and alms of the saints.<sup>2</sup> While Satan brings thee occasions of falling, Christ gives His angels charge to keep thee in all thy ways. They “prevailed not :” so was it when our Blessed Saviour “rejoiced in spirit” that the Lord of Heaven and earth revealed Himself unto babes, and said, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven.” Or again, when He said, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me ;” when Satan had desired to have His disciples, and to sift them as wheat, but “prevailed not.”

*Neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, that first tempted mankind, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* In anticipation of

<sup>1</sup> Dan. xii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. viii. 3 ; Acts x. 4.



which hour our Blessed Saviour, when about to drink of the cup of His Passion, and looking on that little band of martyrs which surrounded Him, said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." In furtherance of which St. John afterwards could say, "Ye have overcome the wicked one."

And surely if the angels were heard rejoicing at our Lord's birth; if there is joy in Heaven over one sheep that is brought back to the fold; if the angels are ministering spirits which wait on the heirs of salvation; if one of them was seen strengthening our Lord in His agony, in His conflict with powers of darkness; it must needs be the case, that when our Lord, by His primitive martyrs was establishing His Kingdom in the world, and overthrowing the strongholds of Satan, great must have been their triumphant rejoicing; as the following words express it:—

*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. For under his dominion every day that passed added to sin and sorrow. But now there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.*

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. In the words of one of them, when speaking of tribulation, and distress, and persecution, and peril and sword: "Nay, in all these things," he adds, "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." <sup>3</sup>*

*Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in*

<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 37.

*them.* For the tabernacle of God is with men, and in the secret place of His dwelling shall He hide them. *Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea; to all them who are still of the earth, earthy; whose hearts are still on this evil world, which lieth under the wrath and condemnation of God; who give place to "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

It has been said that notwithstanding the warnings of Scripture, people are slow to believe in the existence of the devil: perhaps it would be more true to say, they are slow to consider it, and how much they are under his power. But delightful is it, and encouraging to reflect on what is revealed to us of the good angels, of their eternal blessedness in the Presence of God; of their great love to us; of their deep concern for our welfare; of their active ministrations about us day and night; and especially of their peculiar regard for those who are of a meek spirit, and despised of the world, as being, in the sight of God, "of great price."<sup>4</sup> What a dignity does this passage from the Apocalypse shed on our daily life! how does it literally raise it up to Heaven with all its little concerns and pursuits, as tended on by angels, as of the keenest interest to them; exalting the humble, and putting down the lofty.

Again; this Scripture for the Epistle is brought home to us with a twofold force and power when it is set beside another, which is given as the Gospel for to-day. How do each of these support the other; how does one reflect light from the other! What a wonderful combination do

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 4.

they both form together! If it may be said of one that it raises our mortal life to Heaven, no less is it true of the other, that it brings down Heaven itself to us. Moreover, if we are tempted to high thoughts in the contemplation of natures so excellent; of a state of things so sublime, in which we ourselves have part; of a scene so transporting and ennobling, as is here presented to us in the account of this contest, in which spiritual beings are engaged together with us; what a lesson does the Gospel for this day connect with it! What a cloud hath come upon us! what a veil is there upon our sight, when we estimate greatness as this world does, judging from honours, and station, and wealth, and the natural desires of our own heart, seeking for the first place, for more room, more honour, more for self! How do all such things partake of the nature of evil angels; and are altogether foreign from the good. We belong to another household, which is all humility and love, one family of angels and men; if evil angels would exalt thee with pride to be as themselves, the good angels shall love thee in lowliness. But the Lord of Angels Himself shall teach us.

*At the same time, says St. Matthew, when our Lord had come into the house at Capernaum, came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Ye must get rid of your worldly thoughts to find an entrance into that kingdom at all; for there they are altogether of another spirit. Not but there are degrees, and ranks, and orders therein; but their greatness, blessedness, and glory is quite of another kind. Whosoever therefore shall*

*humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.* It needs must be so. If Thou, gracious Lord, Who art the God of Angels, by Whose word they were made; by Whose will they are sustained; by Whose favour they are blessed; by Whose gift they are holy; if Thou madest Thyself lower than the angels for our sakes, and out of love for us; then surely, amidst those blessed companies, the highest and best must be such as are most like unto Thee in love to us and humility; and if we are admitted to be with them, we much more must be such as Thou; and must do Thy will as they do in Heaven, and wish that the same in like manner may be done in us. For Thou hast taken upon Thee the nature of man, but not of angels. Thou hast been a little Child. Thou Thyself hast taught us as a little Child; Who art God over all, blessed for evermore.

Yet further; he that thus humbleth himself, will love others of a like character; this is the witness in himself that he loves God, when he loves the brethren for Christ's sake; and oh, the inconceivable blessing! in them he beholds, he loves, he receives Christ. All things are reversed; in the lowest he receives the Highest. For these are His own words; *And whoso shall receive one such little child in My Name receiveth Me.*

But where Christ is in any sense, awful is the privilege, as great the blessing. He comes with His holy angels to protect, and to avenge. And therefore it is added, *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* His little ones are to be as lambs among wolves, and therefore the Almighty is their protector. He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye. So infinite

the cost and the value of one soul in His sight. But the salvation not only of our own souls, but that of others also is, in a measure, in our own hands; and we must be from day to day either like the good or the evil angels, and take part with one of them. Either accusers of our brethren, pleased with their infirmities and sins, contributing to them, causing them pain of body or mind, and envying their temporal and eternal good; or, on the contrary, by charity excusing or helping their infirmities, and thinking nothing unimportant that may further their present ease or eternal welfare. Thus our part must be with good or evil angels, and with them must be our portion.

*Woe unto the world because of offences; i. e. occasions of sin and temptations to fall: for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. Wherefore, if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire.* We must, I said, be in this life, as the good or the evil angels; and what renders us like the latter, is having particular ends of our own to serve; having desires and affections of our own without reference to God; our own selfish pride to gratify; these things lead us to oppose God, and His gracious designs, and to dislike, to injure, to envy others. But the blessed angels are only known to us as ministering to all good, as themselves entirely lost in the will, the service, and the love of God. They are only known to us as angels or archangels; that is, as messengers, or

chief messengers of God; as ministering spirits sent by Him; as shadows of His Presence; of themselves individually they are unknown to us; of themselves they are not, but as they are of Him in His goodness towards us; even their names, as mentioned to us, signify this and nothing more,—Michael, “Who is as God;” Gabriel, “the strength of God;” Raphael, “the healing of God.” The distinctions and the greatness of men in themselves, and their delight in these things is of human infirmity, and has no place in the City of God; that company which is made up of angels and of saints, the family of God made one in Christ. Whereas of evil spirits it may be said, “there be gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but One God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him.”<sup>5</sup> So good men have no will but the will of God; they are lost in Him; all is union and harmony; their diversities are as Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael; for all their mind is, “Who is like God?” their strength is “the strength of God;” their healing is “the healing of God.” And if in the Kingdom of Heaven one star differeth from another star in glory, yet that glory depends on the degrees of love for Christ and His little ones. For God is Love; and as they partake of love, they partake of God.

*Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; “Take heed,” that is, there is a danger ye are liable to, of contempt for lowly persons, and of disparaging the value of single souls. For I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father Which is in heaven.* So different is the estimate of God

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 6.

and His good angels to that of men. It is in the presence of God that the angels learn this love; from beholding His countenance, from their nearness to Him. And how are we to learn the same but in like manner, by drawing near to Him in reverential approaches; by prayer, by His written Word, by the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. One of these things may be mentioned especially, as in the power of all at all times, in which we may resemble the holy angels, and become like them; and that is, by prayers for others in all their necessities and needs, both temporal and spiritual. Thus we may do them good, like the blessed angels, unseen and unknown of those who receive from them that benefit and aid which they most require. He that "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," spent His whole nights in prayer.

But it is said, "*their* angels behold the face of God;" that is, their guardian angels, those who more particularly watch over individuals. This is again to be noted by us in speaking of the example of the holy angels, as applicable to those who have the guardianship of others, in any way, especially of Christ's little ones. If they are not ministering to them in more active services, how unceasing should they be in this duty of intercession, by beholding the face of God in prayers, in sanctifying themselves for their sakes, in order that they may pray for them the more acceptably.

## SERMON LXXXVIII.

Saint Luke the Evangelist.

2 Tim. iv. 5—15. St. Luke x. 1—7.

HEALING AND PEACE.

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.—ISA. lii. 7.*

THERE is something peculiar in St. Luke's day, something calm and soothing connected with it; it occurs at a time when summer often revives a little before it finally goes, and sheds on us a parting smile; there is something in St. Luke's own character which speaks of healing to both body and mind, like the good Samaritan, into the wounds of both pouring oil and wine. We connect his Gospel especially with the Atonement, and the mercies of God to penitents; it is the storehouse of consolation, in incident, and parable, and precept; the source of evangelical hymns. To these we may add the personal history of St. Luke himself. In the service for the day he is brought before us as the faithful companion of St. Paul in the last view we obtain of the great Apostle. While St. Paul is strengthened for his last trial, and ready to encounter death with calm hope and joy, the



good Physician is found by his side in his chains. The recurrence therefore of this day is like the last gleaming of the year itself at this season, when a serene and bright interval precedes its close. The Epistle for the day, which is found the same in our own Church as in the Missal, rivets our attention to this one view of St. Luke. It is not St. Luke in his Gospel, or in the emblems that denote it; nor in the Acts of the Apostles which he wrote; but by love made partaker of St. Paul's bonds, having the privilege of being with that great saint when, after all his labours, his Lord seemed at last about to draw near from behind the veil, and to say unto him, Thou hast been "faithful unto death, I will give thee a crown of life." We are indeed familiarized with the idea of St. Paul and St. Luke being together by this slight incident in the Acts, that at certain periods in the history the term "we" is introduced instead of "they," as "we kneeled down on the shore and prayed;" "we took ship;" "we abode with the brethren." And in St. Paul's Epistles he appears as his fellow-labourer. Thus he says to the Colossians, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you;"<sup>1</sup> and to the Corinthians he speaks of St. Luke as "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches."<sup>2</sup> But none of these things has so connected his memory with St. Paul as this his faithful adherence to him, when all seem to have forsaken him at the eve of martyrdom. This passage too from St. Paul's second Epistle to Timothy is remarkable, in being expressive of the period at which it was written; not full and flowing in style, or impassioned, like his other Epistles, but short and sententious as of one strung for his last trial, and by brief incidental notices bringing

<sup>1</sup> Col. iv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 18.

before us his friends and the great Apostle himself, his sorrows, his desertion, his little wants, his great consolations,—all touched with the simple solemnity of approaching departure.

*Watch thou*, he says to Timothy, having just charged him before God and Christ, and appealing to the Judgment,—*Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.* And all this on account of the many perils to the faith of which he had been speaking. *For I am now*, he adds, *ready to be offered*, literally to be poured forth as a drink offering, in allusion to the shedding of his blood in martyrdom; *and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight.* There is something, as St. Chrysostom observes, unusual with St. Paul in this high language, the reason of which is that he was speaking for the consolation of him to whom he wrote, and of those around him. And we may add it was the light of God in the darkness, amidst the desertion of friends, the triumph of enemies, the apparent failure of his course; it partakes of the peculiar blessing attached to persecution for Christ's sake, that of being exceeding glad, yea, of leaping for joy. *I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.* Before this he had said, "I count not myself to have apprehended, but reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling."<sup>3</sup> He strove for the mastery, he said, as one contending, and kept under his body lest he should be a castaway.<sup>4</sup> But now in calm

<sup>3</sup> Phil. iii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 25. 27.

and humble hope he looks up and beholds the crown of martyrdom held out in the Judge's hand. But here how careful against preferring himself, and excluding others from this hope! *And not to me only*, he adds, *but unto all them also that love His appearing.* And who are they that love His appearing? They, says St. Chrysostom, who rejoicing in that His coming, for joy thereof cast away substance, if need be, and life itself, and do all things to ensure a particular coming, each to himself, before that His appearing.

And now wishing to see Timothy before his death, he says, *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.* The fidelity of Luke here appears in sad contrast with the falling away of Demas; and the more strongly from their having been mentioned together in former letters. He sends their greeting together to the Colossians; and to Philemon he speaks of Demas and Luke his fellow-labourers. But now the trial had sifted the chaff and the wheat, and they are parted asunder. How awful is this separation ever going on between the good and bad! It is as our Lord says, "Two shall be together, the one shall be taken and the other left." Demas was buying a little present ease, while St. Luke was incurring danger and trouble; but after a few years how great for ever the separation between them! How awakening and impressive are our Lord's words respecting this great exchange, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

And now with regard to the remainder of this Epistle, and the little circumstantial details of ordinary life which

it introduces. God has been pleased to afford us a more intimate knowledge of St. Paul than of any other of the early saints ; and this has been partly owing to the accounts of him which St. Luke has given us in the Acts, and partly to incidental particulars, many of themselves of little moment, which occur throughout his letters. *Take Mark*, he says, *and bring him with thee : for he is profitable to me for the ministry.* Though there had been some disagreement between them, this had been quite forgiven and forgotten, except perhaps to suggest this little act of kindness before his death and word of strong approval ; while no prospect of death had made the great Apostle omit the care of his charge, which needed the ministry of another. *And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee ; and the books, but especially the parchments.* Books and parchments containing such documents probably as he would leave for the future guidance of the Church.

*Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil : the Lord reward him according to his works. Of whom be thou ware also, for he hath greatly withstood our words.* This too is a memorable passage ; St. Paul has not only the desertion of a friend to grieve him in this, his last trial, but also the active opposition of enemies of the faith, which was dearer to him than life—it is an instance of the seducers of the last days which he had just been speaking of. But observe, he leaves him to the judgment of God, and only gives the warning to Timothy, bidding him to be on his guard against him. As our Lord Himself says, “Beware,” or “Take heed” of false prophets, and “Leave them alone ; they be blind leaders of the blind.”

And now we come to consider the Gospel for the day, which is the account of our Lord sending forth the Seventy disciples. It may be asked what is the reason for this selection. It has been thought that St. Luke himself was one of the Seventy, but there is no sufficient authority for this opinion. First, it may be this: among the Jews there were three orders—the High Priest, the Priest, and the Levites; and in the Gospels our Lord Himself, and then the Twelve, and then the Seventy disciples; and it may be intended that as St. Luke does not rank among the Twelve Apostles, he is to be considered as one of the larger number thus sent forth to preach the Gospel. Or, again, it might be, that as the Twelve were more especially for the Jews, and the Seventy for the calling of the Gentiles, St. Luke, as the companion of St. Paul, and the writer of that Gospel which was more especially for the Gentiles, is therefore associated with this second mission. Or, thirdly, it might be because this important account is given only in St. Luke's Gospel, and therefore thus appropriated to his memory. For all these reasons we may see that this selection from Scripture is not unsuited to the day. This sending forth of disciples throughout all the world, by mercies to both body and soul to prepare the way for the coming of Christ, has this admonitory lesson for ourselves, that it invites us to look forward to that Advent to which, in the course of our Sacred Year, our faces are now turned. It bids us prepare for the gathering in of the harvest by the joint endeavours of ministers and laity, labouring together in prayer; when "the harvest" of our natural year "is past, and the summer is ended," to fill our thoughts with the work of another harvest, wherein "he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together."

*The Lord appointed other seventy also, that is, after the mission of the Twelve, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come. Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.* Here we may see something of that mystery of love wherein God works the great marvels of His grace—they are sent forth “two and two,” that they may mutually aid and support each other; from whence, as in the instance of St. Paul, and St. Luke with him, faithful unto death, we have such beautiful instances of Divine union and concord, which is the strength of the Church. And oh, how sad a sign of these last days, that harmony is now so seldom found between two ministering together at the same altar! In the next place, we have all the Christian body united together in prayer with those that are sent forth, co-operating and associated with them in one heart and soul, as striving together with them in prayer; and both of these dependent on each other. The multitude are not saved without the labourers sent forth to gather, and the labourers are not sent forth without the prayers of the multitude. And, thirdly, these are by prayer united unto God, the Lover of concord; for it is said, “Pray ye the Lord that He would send;” and, again, it is of God in Christ, for our Lord Himself says, also, “Behold, I send you.” All these are necessary; for if the Lord did not send them that go forth, unity would be broken; and if God sent them without the prayers of His people, their going forth would be for condemnation, for there would be no love.

*Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.* It is I that send you forth thus to con-

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quer in unarmed meekness; it is "the Lamb" that leadeth, and therefore ye must go forth as lambs, and ye shall overcome the wolves. *Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.* Your labour cannot be lost; the Word of God shall not be void; "it shall turn to you again," and bring peace to your own bosom. The more destitute of human means, the more will ye look to the Lamb Who was slain for us, and find health in the great and good Physician, "by Whose stripes we are healed." Your peace which shall rest upon them is the peace which Christ gives, but it is through you, His ministers, that He bestows it upon "the son of peace." For the son of peace may be in that house, but while separated from the Body of Christ he has not that peace, till ye entering in as the servants of Christ, and in His Name proclaim His peace. O peace beyond all price, mayest thou never by us, His ministers, be pronounced in vain!

*And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire.* Here again is another fresh bond by which all things are held together in Christ. Not only are the people to pray for their ministers, but also to support them. Thus are all associated together in one common endeavour to the furtherance of the Gospel, labouring together in mutual aid and charities. Nor can any Church flourish or abound in the grace of God, unless for spiritual blessings and gifts it restores things temporal. Not that this is needed, it may be, in the present times for the aid of your own immediate minister, but it is required most urgently for the

needs of the Church of Christ which is abroad. It is needful for the salvation of those that send, as well as for those to whom they are sent.

It is to this sending forth to preach that St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans applies the fulfilment of the text from Isaiah, for he says, "How shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace!"<sup>5</sup> And surely in no part of Scripture are these words more fulfilled than in the Gospel of St. Luke, which so peculiarly declares peace to the penitent. St. John speaks of love, and St. Matthew of power, but St. Luke of healing and of peace, and of these in the highest and best sense—not merely of the kingdom of peace in a general way, but of that which our Lord gives in this mission—His own peace to each house, and to each in that house who is "the son of peace." As the prophet Isaiah adds, "that publisheth peace; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"—that Kingdom of God which is within. Such is St. Luke's Gospel and mission of good tidings. And how many on their knees since St. Luke wrote have prayed over the things which he alone mentions in his Gospel—of the Prodigal son; of the woman that was a Sinner that loved much; of the Penitent thief; of the Lost sheep; of the Publican in the Temple; of the good Samaritan;—how many, I say, from that day to this, in praying over these have found peace!

<sup>5</sup> Rom. x. 15.



## SERMON LXXXIX.

Saint Simon and Saint Jude, Apostles.

St. Jude 1—8. St. John xv. 17—27.

*THE SACRAMENT OF UNION.*

*Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, LORD, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?—ST. JOHN xiv. 22.*

**I**N the Old Testament the Psalmist says, “The secret of the Lord is among them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.”<sup>1</sup> But in the Gospel our Lord speaks to His disciples rather of love than of fear, “if a man love Me,” is His answer to St. Jude; and He explains what this His covenant, the secret of the Lord is: “If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.” Now this answer of our Lord to St. Jude’s question, taken together with the Epistle and Gospel for to-day, may teach us, that in days when “iniquity shall abound,” the secret covenant of God will be found in brotherly union, in loving each

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

other, and loving God ; thus the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, will be made known to His faithful disciples, although unknown to the world ; and make their abode with them ; according to our Lord's prayer, " that they may be one as We are One ;" " that may be One in Us." These two Apostles, thus taken together, may represent the sacrament of union ; in maintaining that " faith once delivered unto the Saints ;" for this faith they contended in life, and in death are not divided. Thus they teach us, that " joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine," we may be made meet for the indwelling of God.

*Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James ;* he was the brother of James the Less, the son of Alpheus and Mary ; *to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called, i. e. sanctified by the Father, preserved in the Son, called by His Spirit ;* to all Christians, throughout all the world unto the end, *mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.* Three-fold is the description he gives of them, and threefold the blessing of God, which he pronounces upon them, in which they are more and more to be " refreshed in the multitude of peace."

And now we may observe, that when our Lord spoke to His Apostles of " the mysteries of the Kingdom," which He said it was given to them to understand, He represented these to consist in great measure in the evil which should exist together with His Church ; He spoke of it as of tares among the wheat ; of the Word of Life being in a great measure wasted and lost. And four of the Apostles, St. Peter, St. John, St. Jude, and St. Paul, have borne solemn witness of this corruption which was to abound in the last days, and the beginnings of which they themselves witnessed. St. Jude's short Epistle

indeed consists of nothing else but this warning. They all too agree in saying, that this falling away will consist in the denial of the Son of God.

*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.* “Earnestly contend;” our Lord uses a similar expression of “striving,” or earnestly contending, to enter in at the strait gate; and St. Paul, with a word of like import, “in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.”<sup>2</sup> It implies struggling, as in a contest, for something we are in danger of losing. And thus St. Paul, at last, with the same figure, “I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith.” The faith is that of the Holy Trinity, into which we were baptized, which the Creed explains, and to which the Church bears witness.

*For there are certain men crept in unawares; they are described as tares sown “when men slept,” wolves in sheep’s clothing; Satan transformed into an angel of light; seducers, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; “ordained,” or it may be, who were “described beforehand” (προγεγραμμένοι), spoken of throughout the Old and the New Testament in warning, in precept, in parable, in type, as false prophets that were to come, as the Antichrists that precede the great falling away from the faith. For all things happen as Scripture hath foretold; the mystery of the Kingdom as ordained of God; ungodly men, or men without reverence, “having the form of godliness, but denying the power;” turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, grieving and*

<sup>2</sup> ἀγωνίζεσθε, Luke xiii. 24; συναθροῦντες, Phil. i. 27.

quenching the Holy Spirit by Which they were sealed, *and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*; “denying the Lord that bought them,” says St. Peter, and St. John, “denying the Father and the Son.”<sup>3</sup>

And of these St. Jude, together with St. Peter in the second Epistle, takes three especial types or admonitions which are given us in the Old Testament, and leaves them as the great records of warning: first, that of the children of Israel, who after their deliverance from Egypt fell in the wilderness; secondly, the angels that fell from their high estate; and thirdly, that which our Lord Himself has given us as an especial warning for the last days, the destruction of Sodom. For the judgment on Antichrist has some reference to that type. He is “cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.”<sup>4</sup>

*I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this*; that is, he writes to those well instructed in the faith, bearing witness to the warnings of God rather than teaching them, *how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not*. In a few words he comprises all that wonderful figure of the Christian's state, with its many types, of Baptism, of the Bread from Heaven, the guidance of the Spirit, the providences of God, the temptations, the dangers, the falling away from their high privileges, and failing of that rest to which they had been called.

But again; as our condition is infinitely higher than theirs, as things in Heaven are above their earthly shadows and types, the Apostle, therefore, adds another warning. *And the angels which kept not their first*

<sup>3</sup> 1 John ii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xix. 20.

estate, or their principality, *but left their own habitation, even the dwelling-place of God, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgement of the great day.* "Chains under darkness;" these fearful expressions may serve to describe too those bonds of unrepented sin which hold the souls of disobedient Christians; the powerless will, the blinded conscience, the presumptuous unbelief; signs of judgment going before on those who have fallen from grace, and their high privileges, as adopted sons of God.

Thirdly, that temporal and visible warning of the last judgment fires, and of those sins which call them down. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah and the cities about them, the Pentapolis or five cities of the plain, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication; "giving themselves over," as past feeling, and "working all uncleanness with greediness;" and going after strange flesh, following after unnatural lusts, they are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.* A memorial which continues to all ages as a sign of those eternal fires which the Scriptures speak of.

*Likewise also these filthy dreamers; these filled with their own impure imaginations, so contrary to the sobriety and wakefulness of the Christian, defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.* It is remarkable how this despising of dominion is connected with sins of impurity; even as purity of heart and meekness are inseparable graces of the Spirit. Such then are the tokens of "the lawlessness," of the coming of "the lawless one;" expressions by which Scripture describes the last times. What then is to be our tower of strength; our light in the darkness; our refuge in the evil day? We shall find it in the Gospel for this Festival. "The Name of the Lord

is a strong tower ; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." <sup>5</sup>

*These things*, said our Lord to His disciples before He left them, *I command you, that ye love one another* : that is, as taken with the preceding verse, this is the fruit which ye are to bear and for which I have chosen you ; it is this which will render your prayers in My Name so effectual with the Father. This love is the light in the City of God, while chains and darkness are without. It is by this ye shall know that ye "have passed from death unto life," while the whole world around you "lieth in wickedness ;" it is "because we love the brethren." But as love will embrace all whom God loves, even "the unthankful and the evil," it will be a sore trial to find itself requited with the hatred of the world : here, then, in Christ will be a refuge from this great mystery of evil. For "the world," says St. John, "knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.* This will be a proof of your fidelity, and therefore a consolation to you, that the world, which was the enemy of Christ, is your enemy also ; for it is Christ in you that the world and the prince of this world hates ; it is your resemblance to Him, and your fidelity to Him. Here, then, is an explanation of that mystery of the Kingdom of which St. Jude a little before had asked, How it is that our Lord would manifest Himself unto them, and yet be hidden and unknown to the world. In love which is like His own love will His Presence be continued ; but it would be like His own Presence with them in the flesh, unknown and unacknowledged of the world. *If ye were of the world, the world*

<sup>5</sup> Prov. xviii. 10.

would love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. The world will hear those that are its own, but will hate those who by their lives and by their words testify of it that its deeds are evil. The love of God cannot be where there is the love of the world ; for the world is at enmity with God.

Think not by any means,—by eloquence, or wealth, or power, or gifts of body or mind, or by gentleness and benevolence,—to escape or overcome this hatred of the world. This were to think that ye can do what your Lord could not do. Yet, alas ! how many seek to be popular and at the same time good Christians,—to combine in themselves things contrary ; such must needs end in shipwreck of the faith. Remember the word that I said unto you, *The servant is not greater than his lord : if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you ; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.* It is a mistake to suppose that the world can ever be so brought to the obedience of Christ as that hatred and persecution should cease. Nay, they are necessary for the perfection of the faithful, for their strength and comfort. For as dangers and storms without are the occasion of the hen gathering her chickens under her wings, to be cherished there together, so these things increase in the saints the love of God and of each other.

*But all these things will they do unto you for My Name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me.* Here is another great argument for patience in our suffering evil from the world,—that it is from men's ignorance of God. Yet nevertheless this ignorance is not such as will justify them in His sight ; for He sends a judicial blindness on those that reject the light. And therefore

He adds, *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin*, that is, the one great sin of rejecting the salvation of God in Christ; *but now they have no cloke for their sin*. The manifestation of Christ has been "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." It has left them without excuse. For the rejection of Christ has been the rejection of God. *He that hateth Me hateth My Father also*. For to love Christ is to love God. He is the Image of the invisible God.

*If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father*. Our Lord here states it first of His words, and then of His works; in both of them is the manifestation of God the trial and test of the souls of men; it is the appeal to the inward conscience with which each is born; whether or not it is capable of the renewal of God, and of the life which is in God. And therefore this manifestation of Christ becomes in every place the seal of salvation or of death. It is so now, and will be unto the end; for the words of Christ are spread abroad wherever His Name is known; and wherever His words are there are His works also, in the marvellous operations of His grace.

And this the rejection of the Gospel is foretold in the Old Testament: *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause*. "They that hate Me without a cause," says Christ in the Psalms, "are more than the hairs of Mine head; they that would destroy Me guiltless are mighty."<sup>6</sup>

All these things took place while our Lord was with

<sup>6</sup> Ps. xl. 15.



His disciples in the flesh ; but they could not understand them, nor see therein the mysterious economy of God “manifest in the flesh” until the Spirit was given. Then were they knit together “in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship,” and became in themselves the “City set on an hill,” and were “the Light of the world.” Then was the power manifested which is of God, “Who only doeth wondrous things ;” for among those who put Him to death were many who were found willing to die for Him and the truth of His Gospel. *But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, Which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.*

What, then, is the great lesson which this Festival would inculcate? it is the Holy Catholic Church, built on the foundation of the twelve Apostles, come down to be most intimately near to those who by faith and love inherit the promises ; while the Epistle would impress upon us the great danger of our falling away from this high inheritance. St. Jude, after having been, perhaps together with St. Simon, the companion of Christ, even from his childhood ; having become afterwards the witness of His miracles and hearer of His discourses ; having been chosen by Him for an Apostle, and gifted with the Holy Ghost and the indwelling of God ; having learned in very deed and truth the blissful reality of that manifestation of Christ to the soul of which he had inquired, yet comes at last to leave the world with one awful record of his Apostleship, to endure unto the end ; it is this short Epistle ; wherein he appears, as it were, to labour to find words and figures sufficiently strong, to leave as a warning,

of the peril of those who have received the Unspeakable Gift. Among our Lord's twelve Apostles there were two of the same name of Judas, both chosen to be, as it were, angels of light; one continuing to be really such, and the other ending most miserably: both, as it were, calling out to us to remind us of our danger; the one by his warning words, the other by his sad example. St. Jude's Epistle is altogether of admonition, and stern, mournful prophecy of evil; but these evils he urges as incentives to us of more earnest care and diligence, beginning and ending with words of encouragement, if we thus live. "But, ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God." This is, as it were, his one lesson of advice for this day.

There were also we know two Apostles of the name of Simon: the one whom we celebrate on this Saints'-day, and the other Simon Peter; both alike full of the zeal of God; as it appears in one case from his name of Zelotes, or the Zealot; in the other as is shown by all his actions: but there is this difference between them, that one is the most memorable, the other the least known of all the Apostles. For of Simon Zelotes nothing is recorded. But both are alike among the twelve foundations of the City of God, both sitting on thrones in the regeneration together with Christ. For God is pleased to work sometimes by means seen of men for all generations, sometimes altogether unknown and in secret. All alike are His, all alike accepted of Him, if they seek for the honour which cometh from God only, in faith, whose praise is not of men, but of God. He will manifest Himself unto them, and they will be content to be like Himself unknown to the world, having a "life hid with Christ in God."

## SERMON XC.

### All Saints' Day.

Rev. vii. 2—12. St. Matt. v. 1—12.

*THEY WHICH SHALL BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY.*

*Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.—HEB. xii. 22, 23.*

WE pray in the Burial Service that it may please God “shortly to accomplish the number of His elect.” This expression, “the number of God’s elect,” is described in the beginning of the passage from the Revelation which forms the Epistle for to-day. It is set forth in the temporal Israel and the closing of that dispensation, which is given us as the image and pattern of the true, so much so that Heaven itself is described as the “Jerusalem which is above.” And therefore in the Apocalypse, on the destruction of Jerusalem, God is described, in figures mostly taken from the Old Testament, as waiting till He had filled up the number of His redeemed, that “remnant” of His elect, predestined and known of Him, of whom not a

hair of their head shall perish in that destruction. All shall be as pre-ordained of God "in measure, and number, and weight." And after this, the description of the sealed of Israel, the Epistle proceeds to speak of the gathering in from all nations unto the end. And oh! my brethren, that you and I may be of that blissful multitude!

*And I saw another angel, says St. John, ascending from the east having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.* This passage is so awful, and at the same time so exceedingly beautiful and sublime, that one fears to lower or limit it by any human explanation; it is a subject rather for devout meditation and prayer. For even unto us in like manner has come "the Messenger of the covenant" ascending from the East, as the rising Sun with healing on His wings: we have been sealed on the forehead with the seal of the living God, the cross of Christ signed on our foreheads at our Baptism; and our souls have been sealed with the anointing of the Holy One. But as then they were "not all Israel that were of Israel," oh, that we may find this our calling and election of God in Heaven!—that we may be of that predestined number known of God, when all shall be found to be in exact fulness, completion, and perfection, however indefinite and uncertain things may now appear. For such is represented in the exactness of the numbers, the hundred and forty and four, the Patriarchal and

Apostolic number of the Twelve multiplied by itself, and thus counting the thousands on that basis. Thus as it is described afterwards in the Apocalypse, "the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, hath twelve gates, and names written thereon of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." And here we may observe that although, humanly speaking, the twelve tribes had become so broken and lost, and ten of them had entirely disappeared from sight, so that no one knew what had become of them, yet not so in the sight of God,—each is singly and particularly specified; of each alike there *were sealed twelve thousand*. And so it may be now in the Christian Church, though it be so broken and divided, yet it shall fulfil those ends which God hath ordained for the gathering in of His elect. Though hidden from the world, they are known unto Him Who "telleteth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names."<sup>1</sup> He calleth them, and they answer on their watches, "Here we be."<sup>2</sup>

Such then is, as it were, "the pattern shown in the Mount," the figure and type of that heavenly Jerusalem. Without sound or noise the living stones were builded up and fitted into the spiritual temple by the hand of God. From all the countries of the world, from East and West and North and South, do they "come and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven." *After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, for they "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;"*

<sup>1</sup> Ps. clxvii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Bar. iii. 34.

*and palms in their hands*, as tokens of victory ; for they have overcome through His Blood ; they are “ more than conquerors through Him that loved ” them ; they are innumerable, having come, and now coming, and yet to come while time shall last ; and from all the world, with every distinction of race and nation for ever done away—admitted unto the throne and the presence of the Lamb, where God wipeth away all tears from their eyes for evermore. *And they cried with a loud voice* ; though they were many, yet it was as it were with one *voice*,—one heart and tongue ; “ they cried with a *loud voice*,” as overwhelming all things else, and heard throughout all the universe of God ; and the voice was, *saying, Salvation to our God Which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*. In this alike are all the redeemed, that they attribute their salvation altogether to God and Christ ; for there is no other Name by which we are saved ; “ that no flesh should glory in His Presence.”

And now the wonderfully sublime thanksgiving of the angelic host that surround the throne will naturally recall to our minds some expressions in Scripture respecting the holy angels, and their intense interest in our salvation. As where our Lord says that “ there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” He represents Himself as calling upon the angels to rejoice with Him on bringing home the penitent, saying, “ Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost.” And again, when our Blessed Saviour was born into the world for our salvation, a multitude of the heavenly host were heard, praising God. Much more then, when “ they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest,”<sup>3</sup> when all the redeemed are being gathered

<sup>3</sup> Isa. ix. 3.

into the heavenly barn, having "come out of great tribulation,"—will the angels on receiving them in the presence of the Lamb, take up together with the saints the strain of thanksgiving and adoration. *And all the angels, it is added, stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

Which of us, my brethren, is not moved at "this great sight,"—this vision of peace in the heavenly Jerusalem? They are all one, and yet how many! Patriarchs and Prophets are there, and Apostles, and Martyrs, and Saints. They are "for ever with the Lord;" "they see His face;" He giveth them to drink of the pleasures at His right hand for evermore: "they see Him as He is;" and though we be on earth, yet if our conversation be in Heaven, we must needs join with them in that their worship and praise. "Out of the throne," says St. John, even from the Lamb Himself, "came a voice, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great."<sup>4</sup> It is then our Lord's own command: none of us can be too small to fear Him, none—be they even babes and sucklings,—can be too insignificant to join in hymns with the Church, saying, "With angels and archangels, and with all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name, evermore praising Thee."

They see Him as He is, for they are made by Him meet to partake of His glory. We see Him not as He is, but as He once became for us; for such a sight is most needful for us; that in His humiliation we may be

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xix. 5.

humbled; in His sorrows we may grieve; beholding what He hath become for our sakes and for our sins. "Not to all His members," says St. Bernard, "doth He appear alike, for to some it is as the Head rough with thorns, bowed down on the Cross; that they together with Him may be abased, and together with Him may be pierced. But to others He appears glorious, that they in Him may be glorified, and may glory in Him, being made like unto Him, and seeing Him as He is."<sup>5</sup> And we may add, he that would be His where He wears His crown of glory, must be His also where He wears His crown of thorns.

Now this vision of the saints, as here represented, is not anything afar off, but we know not how intimately near it is thus "to be with Christ," which is "far better" than anything in this world. Some of those most near and dear to us may be now of that company; nay, more, any one among us to-day may, if found worthy, be among that number to-morrow; and what is to us most concerning and constraining, they of that heavenly company are most closely united to us in affection and Divine love. For such is "the Communion of Saints," in which we profess to believe. Oh! with what earnest desire do they long and wait for us; as those on shore look out for friends who are still abroad on the dangerous and troublous sea, all whose dangers and troubles they themselves once knew, and now have for ever escaped; safe are they harboured in that peaceful haven, which is the bosom of Christ and of God. They know what true love is, and therefore are more one with us and with each other than we, compassed about with the infirmities of the flesh, can

<sup>5</sup> In Fest. Omn. Sanc. Serm. v.



understand. "Behold," says St. Bernard, "in our friendships here below there is no security, no perfection, no rest ; yet, even here, how good and joyful for brethren to dwell together in unity. For, whatever from within, or from without, occurs to trouble us, is found more easy to be borne from the communion of friends, with whom we are one heart and one soul towards God. How far more sweet, delightful, and blessed that union where no suspicion can exist, no cause of dissension, but perfect love binds all in a bond that can never be broken !"<sup>6</sup>

Delightful, indeed, are such anticipations, and full of peace are such thoughts ; but now the Church, in great wisdom, by the Gospel for to-day, would bring us from the Mount of Glory to the walk with men—would recall us from these contemplations to consider how far we have in ourselves those marks which denote that we belong to that heavenly society. As if she would say, in the words of St. Paul, "Seeing then that we are compassed about," as it were, closely and intimately encircled and surrounded in this our daily walk, "with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith."<sup>7</sup>

Our Lord Himself gives us the tokens of those that are His, resemblances of Himself, "on that day when He shall make up His jewels."<sup>8</sup> The jewels on the Breast of our High Priest, the precious stones which garnish the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem, are varied in character ; jewels in earth, and stars in Heaven, differ in glory ; such are the graces of the saints and their rewards ; yet all

<sup>6</sup> In Fest. Omn. Sanc.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. xii. 1, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Mal. iii. 17.

have in Him their fulness, partake of His light, and are from Him derived ; as may be seen in what follows.

*Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain ; and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him. And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* This is the first entrance into the kingdom, after the example of Him Who, being rich, for our sakes became poor, that by His poverty we might be made rich. By pride Satan himself fell ; by pride he tempted our first parents ; and his offer to Christ Himself was “the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.” But the blessed of God covet no riches but those that are in Christ—they attribute all their salvation to Him Who had not where to lay His head ; they are in His hand ; they are as He was in this world ; His life is manifested in their body that they may with Him be glorified. And as this is the entrance, so nothing guards them so much and keeps them safe in that blessedness as poverty of spirit. Many are the promises of good, the false creeds, and temptations to fall away, which are abroad, but nothing throughout will so preserve unharmed, as that poverty of spirit, which ever asks, and asking ever receives help of God.

Secondly,—*Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.* It is their mourning which brings them to the Man of Sorrows, and unites them unto Him, so as to partake of His anointing, which is “the oil of gladness.” The Comforter Himself comes to be with them, and the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity hath promised to dwell with him that is of a contrite spirit.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Isa. lvii. 15.

The more they mourn the more they are comforted of God ; for every shape of sorrow seeks of Christ for relief as of old, and according to its need partakes of His healing virtue. Thus, the nearer they are brought unto His Cross now, the nearer are they unto the Throne of the Lamb hereafter. "He shall lead them forth beside the waters of comfort." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you ; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup>

*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* To Christ the inheritance of the earth is given, and in Him is it here found. "Learn of Me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest for your souls ;" —that rest which is the promised inheritance, the true Canaan, the Sabbath of God—being "refreshed in the multitude of peace." They shall inherit, "not this earth," says St. Jerome, "the ground which is cursed of God, which brings forth briers and thistles, but that of which the Psalmist speaks, as the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." "Take My yoke upon you," adds He that promises ; "for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." A yoke every child of Adam must bear, the yoke of death and the burden of sin. But to Him that is born in the Second Adam death hath become a sleep and rest in Christ ; and the burden of our sins He hath Himself taken from us, Himself to bear ; and hath given us instead to bear the burden of His charity. "Bear ye one another's burdens," says St. Paul, "and so fulfil the law of Christ ;" and He Himself hath said, "Cast all your care upon God, for He careth for you."

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxvi. 13.

And what are the riches of the earth and the fulness thereof? They are given in the next promise: *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.* They who consider themselves righteous are not so; but they who earnestly desire, even as with hunger and thirst, to be so, shall be filled with Him Who is our Righteousness. They shall partake of His fulness. "That ye might be filled," says St. Paul, "with all the fulness of God." For in Christ to hunger is to be filled; to be humbled is to be exalted; to mourn is to be comforted; to be poor in spirit is to be rich indeed. "Let him that hungers," says St. Bernard, "hunger yet more; and let him that desires desire yet more fully; for according to the greatness of his desires shall he receive."<sup>2</sup> And blessed be God, Who hath given into our own hands the measure of that mercy which we need; for, He adds, *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.* They are like the continuance of His own visible presence on earth; for He that shows mercy and He that receives mercy is Himself, in every shape of human bereavement: "As ye have done unto these ye have done it unto Me." "It is I." "I will repay." It is He Himself in the heart of him that gives, and in the person of him that receives.

And oh, who are they that shall have eyes to behold Him! *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.* "They shall see Him," says the same holy man, "on Whom the angels desire to look; Whom to behold is eternal life. Thy face, Lord, will I seek: for Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and what do I desire on earth in comparison of Thee?" "He that hath this

<sup>2</sup> In Fest. Omn. Sanc.

hope," says St. John, "purifieth himself, even as He is pure." And in this and each of these we must remember that the Hand Which opens, shuts also the door, and declares with the same voice, that miserable are the impure in heart, for they shall not see God.

But the wisdom from above being first pure, is then peaceable; for, to see God is to obtain His peace, and therefore, it is added, *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God*; the brethren of Him Who is the Prince of Peace, Who is our Peace, the Peacemaker and Mediator between God and man, Who maketh men to be of one mind. These are they who, being at peace with God, are at peace with themselves, and therefore promote peace among men. They have the mark of the First-born, they are especially God's own children, they bear His likeness, they do His own work upon earth.

Thus it is fulfilled in His seed, which are as the stars of Heaven, what was said to the Father of the faithful: "I am Thy exceeding great reward." Christ is Himself the Way and the Life; and, as in all the other Beatitudes, so especially in this, the last and greatest of all, inasmuch as it bears the perfect resemblance of Himself, as in the Martyrs and Saints of old. *Blessed are they Which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

Such especially were the Apostles whom our Lord here addresses with a more particular appeal in the end of these Beatitudes. Such too were all they of whom St.

Paul speaks in that Epistle from which the text is taken. These may be said to be our Lord's own crown of joy in Heaven—the joy set before Him for which He endured the Cross. “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.”

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