









UPPINGHAM SERMONS.

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# SERMONS

PREACHED AT

UPPINGHAM SCHOOL

BY THE

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VOL. I.

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TO MY  
MOTHER,  
WITH ALL LOVE AND HONOUR,  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.  
THE FEELINGS,  
WHICH WORDS CANNOT TELL,  
MUST BE LEFT TO THE HEARTS  
OF THOSE WHO KNOW.  
SILENCE SOMETIMES IS THE TRUEST LANGUAGE.



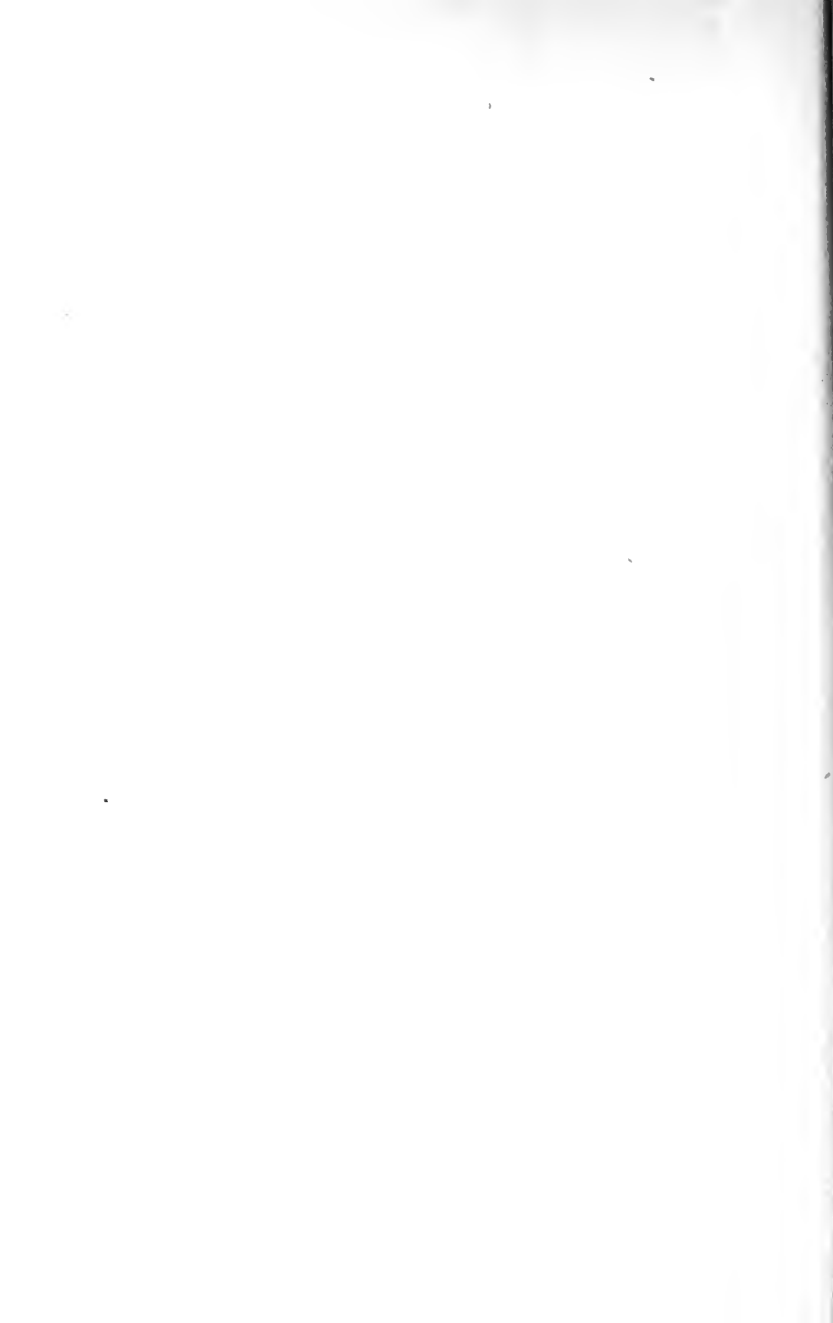
## PREFACE.

SCHOOL sermons have a certain value of their own as belonging to a current of life; just as a streamlet flowing in a valley has more of human interest than a shower of rain. There is a touch of "auld lang syne" about them, a freshness of young hearts and boyhood, which never quite leaves them. If, moreover, they have had any creative power, and have entered into the lives, and they and the Chapel have been a kind of home, in, and round, which the thoughts of the young have clustered, then, quite apart from anything else, they embody a cause, and may be loved as a sort of special property; so that in after years the man may send a brightness into them from his own soul, because his boyish recollections are bright. This is my apology, if apology is needed, for pouring forth this little rivulet of Uppingham life.

EDWARD THRING.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE, UPPINGHAM,

*May 20, 1886.*



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## SERMON I.

### SORDID KNOWLEDGE.

ST MATTH. XXV. 24.

*“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.”*

THESE are very remarkable words, brethren, and I beg you will particularly observe how positively the man speaks; “I knew thee that thou art an hard man.” He is quite sure of it, and has no fear of being contradicted even when advancing the plea to his lord himself. Indeed it is his excuse, his hope of acquittal. He trusts to it for safety, so sure is he of his ground. “I knew thee that thou art an hard man.” And indeed we may easily see even from the parable itself much grounds for the charge. Why should the man toil and work with money which was not his own, and vex himself with anxious cares at a master’s command? Was not the command hard from this point of view? Might he not well say,

“I knew thee that thou art an hard man,” as day by day he worked, and was weary, and faint, and full of care? The very force of the answer as a warning seems to lie in the truth of this low reasoning as far as it went. Let the man forget his duty as a slave trusted by his absent master, and start with this mean low opinion, and every after step would be most logically convincing. But observe, the work though done at his master’s command would have been done for himself. His great and generous lord entrusted his servants with what seemed to be work for him, but was indeed a training in honour and power for them. “Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.” This was the real purpose of it all. To make *them* rich, not himself. The niggard spirit with its low logic could not understand that. But could see clearly enough the hardships and pain of the work, and so refused to work, and so lost his own gains, the glorious gains that might have been his.

Yet he ought to have done his master’s work at all events. The right and wrong of it was not his business. The man was a slave, his business was to obey. And his lord answered him on his own grounds. He was bound to obey as a slave, and justly condemned for not doing so.

But once more. He was perfectly right in what he said in one sense. He did know what he asserted. Had his fellow-servants come to him, and argued with him about his work, his logic was really unanswerable as far as he and they *knew*. They indeed believed in their great Lord and loved Him, and their belief and love was fully justified in the end; but they *knew* no more than he did. And what an advantage in the argument he would have when he spoke of the

work and the pain, and sneered at their belief. How practical, and wise, and business-like, would he boast himself to be, pointing out with cold and skilful superiority his knowledge, and facts, and statistics, in opposition to their belief and feelings. One seems almost to hear the cold and measured voice of the man as he states his knowledge of his lord being a hard man.

Brethren, at this moment when once more our Lord is sending all you out to do a work, sending you, observe, through the loving commands of fathers and of mothers to use your talents, to do a work away from them, by yourselves, alone, trusted, and left to work in trust; at this moment, brethren, search your hearts; inquire in what spirit you are going to begin. Are the commands hard, distasteful, irksome, a task inflicted on you by external power, or a genial, loving, inward, generous call finding a ready answer in your hearts? Once begin in a wrong spirit, and every step you take will bring you a more and more certain knowledge that your low, mean thoughts are right. Because you will feel the hardships and never taste the blessing. No power of argument could make people walking in a mist believe in a bright sun over head; they must get upon higher ground to feel it, every step below would but confirm their cold knowledge. So it is with our spirits; we must rise into a higher world of love, and honour, and faith, living with Christ, looking to His glorious example, praying for help to Him, following Him in trustful love. Then we shall learn the happiness of His commands; then we shall feel that it is for our own sakes that they are given to enrich and ennoble us. Hardship there will ever be, both to the mean spirit, and to the earnest. Indeed it is the mean

spirit that knows so positively the hardness of the master's service; the generous, loving hearts of the others amidst much harder work had not felt it; it was no yoke to them, but a service that was perfect freedom, bringing its own reward even in the doing. Beware how with imperfect knowledge you scan too closely the reason of this or that task in life. Let it be enough on the whole that it is your duty, that those you love best have entrusted you with work for them. Nay, carry up your heart still farther, and see in their commands the love of our great Lord and King directing you to happiness and honour. As He did His Father's will, so let us. He was made perfect as man through sufferings. Shall we then basely shrink from following Him? Can there be a worse sort of meanness than his, who was only able to feel the hardship of his master's command, and was shut out from the knowledge of his love? How base, how incapable of a friend's place; and this is what we are being trained for. "Now are we the sons of God," says St John, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when He shall appear that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We are training for this. This is the end of our work, of the command given us, of all our life, of our knowledge. Is there not then a call to begin in a worthy spirit, in a generous, free spirit, working in no niggard, mean distrust, but with all our hearts, and all our souls, dedicating ourselves with prayer to Christ, no hard master, whatever the worldly wise may think they know?

## SERMON II.

### TWO KINDS OF SIGHT.

#### REVELATION III. 17.

*“ Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”*

IT is the striking contrast in these words to which I am about to draw your attention, the wonderful difference between the real state and the fancied state, and more especially to one word which is the key to the whole, that sin is blind. Blind in a world of beauty and light, blind in a region of pitfalls, and delusions, and deaths. But mark, for this is what makes it so fearful, it is the blindness of the mad man, who feels sure he sees better than the sane, yes, *better*. The blind think they see best. Let us first a little try to realise the extent of this truth. We walk out as it were to-day, and see the fields and trees before us in their first spring gladness, and paths through grassy meadows, and roads,

and pleasant homes of peace, we are sure of it. But imagine that a mighty spirit stands beside us and tells us that the landscape is all one vast delusion, a mirage in a desert, that our paths are precipices, our pleasant homes pitfalls, our smiling fields pestilential marshes, our lakes a sandy waste, that we see nothing as it is, that we are blind to the whole outward world. Could we believe it, unless the pictured mist rolled away and disclosed the truth of these warning words? Or, rather, there are two powers of sight, the one unreal and the other real, and if we judge with sinful eyes we never see reality. The faculty is wanting; and we do not, cannot know the want, unless we believe humbly. No keenness of the natural intellectual eye matters at all, as a telescope does not make a man a better judge of colours. We may boast and argue from the piercing powers of sight which can at the distance of millions of miles uncover hidden worlds. And suppose this was our own eye, if our life depended on knowing colours, however much we might sneer at less keen eyesight, the commonest vision that could judge colours would not only be better, but be the only true sight for us. Such a telescope is mere intellectual knowledge. And the eyes of the mere intellectual man are set in this distant focus, and the power of seeing the glory and beauty of the earth on which he lives, and things around him, is not his, however much he boasts of his sight. His sight is a useless toy; and the very power of seeing rightly is denied. A faculty is wanting; and so in all sight apart from God. Right and wrong, are black, and white, and all forms of true life and false life are coloured. Language itself bears witness in numberless examples to the *colour* that there is in the fact world, and the effect

therefore of colour-blindness in the soul. But right and wrong sight shows itself in many ways short of blindness. There are innumerable forms in the world, and each is in its reality some manifestation of God ; but even in these things which our eyes actually do see how different is the sight. A flower grows in a cornfield. Does the farmer who sees a weed ; the botanist who detects a law of growth ; the herbalist who recognises the bane of millions ; the poet who revels in dreams of beauty ; the moralist who takes it as a type of sin ; do their eyes really see the same thing ? No, surely, the same poppy is a different existence, with a different actual appearance, to each and all of them. Now add the microscope, a new power again, and you get precisely what Holy Scripture tells us, the same outward form striking the eye, but an entirely new, and true, and wondrous revelation of what it really is. A type of the power of seeing God, and all that belongs to God, in everything about us, of knowing what is true and what not, of seeing through the actions and temptations of the world, of detecting the opium in the poppy in all cases long before the fatal effects appear. But, brethren, sin is blindness, and this sight is a new power. The truth of God cannot be seen by any unholy eye. And to pass through life trusting to our own judgments, is to trust to a telescope to distinguish colours, to a microscope to show us stars, to feet for flying, or any other incongruous mixture of wrong powers and functions. Holy Scripture expressly tells us, what all experience confirms, that spiritual things are folly to the natural man. For the simple reason that he does not see them ; and so scorns them, just as a clever savage might despise electricity. For the boasted knowledge of the sinful

intellect is nothing more than this, it makes man despise the spiritual unseen. And, accordingly, no man conscious of spiritual sight is moved by worldly sneers. Those are moved, who are beginning to see, or waiting humbly for the new power. Brethren, will you fix on your hearts that to see truth is to receive a new power from Christ? Whilst to stand, and reason, and judge, as if we knew, is that most foolish of all things, the savage sneering at the new unknown power. Can you be persuaded to seek the right thing; to search humbly for this new power; and not to expect to see truth, or judge reality, without the gift of Christ and the pure earnest life which His Spirit would have us lead? To put away false trusts is much. It is much to be able to smile at the blinded confidence that mocks a good man's sight, which it does not understand, and because it does not understand it. It is much not to look to keen, and practised knowledge for what it cannot give, spiritual sight. Sin is blind. The pure see God, and there is no truth which is not of God. No impure spirit ever sees truth. A fearful curse. "Lo thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Brethren, God be thanked for His truth, and for those His saints who strive to be true. Ay, let us thank God to-day for that faithful, honest, working spirit who has just passed away from amongst us; who, though pressed down by mortal illness, went up through this school in the strength of his true heartedness, and now has left to us no fruitless memory. For he was true. I rejoice that we are fellow workers for truth; and that not only successful scholarship, but far more the



departure home of a fellow worker is cause for solemn gladness to us all. For this is of truth, when with the Apostle we can rejoice in seeing that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." His be this school, to Him we commend our all.

## SERMON III.

### THE FORTRESS-HOME.

ST LUKE VI. 47, 48.

*“Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.”*

THIS is, I believe, pre-eminently the Parable of the young. Perhaps no other passage in Holy Scripture so vividly paints life, what it is, and the periods it is divided into. More especially it belongs to us, as being the history of Christian life, of those who come to Christ, of what they do, and what happens to them, and when it happens to them. Now life, true life, is said here to be the building of a house, digging deep, and finding a rock to build on; and false life is the building a house without digging deep, or having good foundations. But this is not all, when the houses are built, and not before, the

floods arise, and dash against them, and cannot shake the one, whilst they destroy the other. There are two great periods set before us; one when the builders are occupied in working; themselves and their work being all in all. The other, when they and their work together are being tested by forces from without, and no additions can be made of importance. *It is too late then. You cannot build in a storm.* Look to this all you who are here—a time very soon comes on earth, not after death only, when it is too late to build up a really strong house, a character and faith that storms cannot shake. Now let us return to the first period. All doing of right and duty in a Christian land is a hearing Christ's words and doing them. Christ's words have touched everything we do with holy power. Every one of you is playing the part of one or other of the two builders mentioned. Every one. You are building your characters by thoughts, words, and actions, daily; and the true building is to be a fortress against coming storms. The storm will not come yet, but it will come in time. You are fortress building. But mark this, how strong, how earnest, how uninviting the beginning is. Digging deep, and building underground. What forethought, what labour, what collecting of materials, and for a long time nothing to show for it; nothing above ground, no beauty. Whilst the building without foundations begins at once to make a show, to give shelter, to excite admiration, to please the eye, and to answer every purpose of summer enjoyment, if that was life. Many a gay meeting and joyous company might revel in that bright palace, whilst the true wise builder is still toiling underground, ridiculed perhaps, scarcely sure himself of a good end, but working in faith. Yet mark well, all

these trials are trials from within, trials of weariness in head and hand, trials of sadness of heart at the work not getting on better, trials of labour in building, trials of endurance and patience in bearing his own doubts and the temptations to haste, or it may be of ridicule; no storm, no attack from without prevents work. He can work if he pleases, he has time to learn how to work, he has time to build well. But neither he nor his gay neighbour will ever have that time again. How true this is. It is not possible to describe early life, your school life more plainly, more vividly. Here you are gathered together, sheltered from every storm, with no cares of life demanding all your labour and all your time, no storm, no flood of business and harassing attacks to burst upon you, and try to the very inmost nerve your whole being, and heart, and character. No, you are set here simply to build, to build a life and character, which by-and-by shall stand like a tower in the flood of the world's business, wrath, temptations, or scorn, immoveable, unshaken, built on Christ. Once more, you are builders. First digging deep, searching first with great labour without collecting anything, getting rid of evil, getting rid of all that earthy, low nature which hides our duty in Christ from us; and next, collectors of materials, quarrying stone by stone, one by one, with much labour, from proper quarries, and then having thus made the stones your own, building them up one by one all day long, as a defence against the flood which will surely come. This is life, true life. The sun may shine, the earth be very beautiful, all around us rejoice and glow with light, and we too may rejoice in it all, *but* rejoice whilst working; these things are given us as joys whilst working, not as things to live for. What

a picture this is of early life. In childhood the true and wise-hearted are labouring hard underground, digging, and building foundations; and what they build is by-and-by to be their protection, comfort, and rest. Is not this a subject for the beginning of a half-year? In childhood the foolish are what they call enjoying themselves, building up without much labour showy nothings, or, if laborious, still worldly materials without foundations, and by-and-by there will be no time. Is not this a subject for our beginning? If one man's experience can add anything to the weight of this solemn warning from our Lord and King, I can tell you, brethren, that when the flood does come, and beat on the principles and character formed in earlier years of toil, of happy toil on the whole, one does not *understand* this only, one *feels* the rock, and wonders how all true work has been secretly framed so as to save at last in the hour of need. Nothing honestly done for good ever is lost. It is a stone in the building, and no body can ever tell beforehand on which stone or stones the flood shall beat most violently. You all then ought to be building fortress-homes for the coming hour when there will be no time, when it will be too late to think about protecting yourselves from the flood. Your trials now are self-trials chiefly, everything about you on the whole being fitted to assist you in your building up yourselves in Christ rather than to keep you back. Be then faithful, your work may soon be tested, your tasks done. This at all events we know, that no such time of peaceful improvement comes again, that it will be soon over, that a few months even will again finish this present section of it. Let no one teach you to despise your youth, that time of thoughtful work, of foundation building; when the best stones are laid in

secret of that strong tower which, by God's help, shall stem the flood of this world. Dig deep to find the rock. Be not contented with less, find Christ, be true, build on His Truth. It is a glorious thing day by day to become more and more sure that your life is on the Rock, your work eternal, to find happiness rest and peace the fruit of faithful honest work, to have heard Christ, to have trusted Him, and built your fortress-home on Him.

## SERMON IV.

### SEEDS, AND THE REAPING.

GAL. VI. 7.

*“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”*

THESE are very solemn words, brethren. If Our Blessed Lord had not come to put a stop to the one only meaning they could have had for sinful man left to himself, they would have been too fearful to speak or think of. But as it is, they are fearful words, full of solemn meaning. “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap.” There is no chance in life; that is their first lesson; but all is on a settled plan according as the man chooses to act. Nothing is lost of good or evil; that is the second warning; men may forget their sins, as Esau did, but they come back long after, it matters not whether in this world, or the world to come. All thoughts, and words, and actions, which the heart approves of, and which are really its own, are seeds hidden for a while, but sure to grow, sure to ripen; and

the hand, that sowed them, shall reap them ; our own hand, and none other, in their full power and significance. Little seeds they are, and many, scattered heedlessly enough very often, but they grow for all that, grow silently, and in secret, till they come to light, and ripen at last. Seeds they are, our thoughts, and words, and actions, seeds, and to every seed there is its own plant. Little and many they are ; and it does not matter what the covering, or husk, or shell of the seeds may be, the outside is nothing, it is the inward power that springs up and produces the plant. This secret growth, and reaping at last, is a solemn thought. There is man's heart full of seed ; and man passes like a sower up the furrows, putting in his hand, and at every step scattering them by handfuls. And the fool thinks he has got rid of them, and goes his way, and enjoys himself ; and thinks he has done with them, and eats, drinks, and is merry at home ; but a day is coming, when he will be brought back to reap the crop ; when he will be dragged back from his forgetfulness, dragged back it may be, just as the coveted prize of his life is before him, to reap what he has sown ; to reap in heat, and sorrow, what he sowed so lightly. "Whatsoever a man soweth that *shall* he reap." We talk of the power of death. But what is the power of death to the power of life, to the living power in man ? You cannot quench it. The word flies forth, or the action, and then it will live. You cannot kill it, it is a seed ; you have no power to crush it. You go away and leave it ; but it lives. You sleep, and forget it ; but it lives. You overwhelm it with other seeds ; but it lives. You lose sight of it for years, it may be for your whole earthly life ; but it lives for all that. And yet men talk lightly of sowing their wild



oats ; wild is the seed, and wild shall be the crop, and sad the reaping. The only crop that never fails. It would be better to talk of the reaping, than of the sowing. It is an exceeding awful thought how the seed grows. Directly it comes into the world out of the heart, it finds nourishment wherever it drops, and begins to grow. Nothing may seem more insignificant, but the grace of God alone can stop it. And the life of the whole world, just like the life of each person, is made up of this perpetual growth, which, like the grass and weeds, covers the whole face of creation with blessing or cursing. I say it is a very fearful thought, that such seemingly insignificant things should have such power. I know nothing more horrible than the reflection that he who is sowing evil seed in word, or thought, or action, shall one day have to meet the seed, not small, as when he sowed it, but full grown, a field of poison ; not a basket of trifling little specks, a few handfuls of seeming nothingness, but an uncontrollable growth. Moreover, reflect on the meaning of this growth, with which the sower, it may be, has nothing to do after once sowing the seed. It means, that the society in which we live, very often those we most love, are most injured ; the growth is in them ; and there is no doubt but that always in the world every action has some effect, that every thing said or done does go to swell the power of one or other of the great contending principles of good and evil. Just as an army is made up of single men, and each, however powerless, becomes part of a great power by acting with so many ; so it is in good and evil, there is so much going on always that every fresh addition is of weight as it falls in with many others. So once more we come back to the awful truth of *every*

*seed* growing, that is, having some effect; and whatever the effect is, *the sower shall reap it*. Hitherto, brethren, the text has been to us a warning voice, but it also carries with it, to the Christian, unspeakable comfort. When our great Master, Christ, speaks the words to His weary, honest-hearted, toiling servants, surely He does tell them that, though it may be long, their true lives, their honesty of purpose, their faith, their sufferings, their labour, shall have a joyful reaping. Surely He tells them, that if thoroughly in earnest, they need not be afraid of their mistakes in life; *that* is not their true life seed; nor ashamed, and disheartened too much by faults and wrong views repented of; *they* will not form the crop. Surely He does tell them that they need not be anxious, and weary hearted, because of man's judgment, or for the shooting of the archers round about, for that is not the reaping. Nay, their true lives they shall reap. The peace, and the truth they longed for, though in the midst of war, the fruit of weary days, and watchful nights, and ingratitude borne, and sins subdued. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy; and he that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him."

"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap."

Let none then lose heart in well doing, for success may be vile, and defeat precious, in the sight of God, and this we know; that a day is to come when every man shall reap. We sow our lives, and God will bless the seed.

## SERMON V.

### EVIL MAY NOT HELP GOOD.

ST MARK III. 11, 12.

*“And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And He straitly charged them that they should not make Him known.”*

BRETHREN, I have taken this text to-day because it appears to be one of the most remarkable declarations we have of a great law. Nowhere do we find more strongly expressed, the prime necessity that exists in the direct service of God that the doer must be in some sort worthy. Nowhere do we find more emphatic testimony, that God rejects, and will not admit to the honour of making Him known, some kinds of seeming homage. Jesus would not allow the unclean spirits in men to worship Him and make Him known. There is the same indignant refusal in the Law of unworthy offerings. “Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy

God any bullock or sheep wherein is blemish or any evil-favouredness, for that is an abomination unto the Lord thy God." Without at all entering into the question of what might have been the motive which prompted, or forced, the evil spirits to proclaim Christ, this is clear, that in human courts, and human judgment, the testimony of enemies is always looked on as most valuable proof. But when these men, possessed by evil spirits, fell down before Jesus, and proclaimed Him to be the Son of God, He would not allow them to do so. It seems a very serious question to me how far any of us may be allowed, or not, to contribute to God. Men generally talk, and behave, as if they thought their giving to God, and serving God, was a favour done to God. But Jesus would not allow the evil spirits to proclaim His honour. Will He now allow gifts or service, which is not pure, or striving to be pure? Will He be more tolerant of the evil heart now, than He was then? What would the Tabernacle have been, in spite of the national offerings, and the national riches, if the Pillar of the Cloud had not been there? The temple of Solomon had been but as the tower of Babel, if the Mercy Seat had been away, and God had not dwelt there. And the second Temple, though far less noble, was more glorious than the first, because our Redeemer trod its courts. The blessing of God, and His Spirit dwelling within, make the difference between a tower of Babel, which many mighty workers join to raise, and a Temple, where God is proclaimed. Jesus did not allow His name to be borne witness to by evil spirits. Let us put away then, at once, any idea but that of fear lest our offerings should not be received.

I am sure any one who sets himself to read the signs

of the times, and to observe God's truth, cannot fail to be struck with the fact how seldom riches do any great work in God's Kingdom, even any great outward work. How seldom rich men set their hands to do any thing proportionate to their seeming power. Methinks the reason is plain. Christ will not permit any agency which is un-sanctified. And so the rich are only permitted to give to the extent that their hearts can give with purity and gladness. Their gifts, as a rule, are rejected beyond what they are able to do from a free and good heart. They may be good men, and Christ then takes according to their goodness, but nevertheless their goodness may not reach to the extent it should, and so but little is done. I have often thought that the after history also of buildings and societies depends on this law. And that this is the reason why some little beginnings struggle on against all expectation to great efficiency, and have a growing life for centuries; whilst others are towers of Babel, and crumble away, and corrupt, no one knows how! Is there not a reason? Has not the life of God been breathed into the one, and the plague of a leprous spirit been on the other? Does not Holy Scripture indicate this in the wondrous types of the Old Testament, when it declares not only that men are tainted with leprosy, that is with sin, but that there is a leprosy breaking out in buildings, a moral taint in stone, and timber, a principle of corruption in house, or Temple? It is not only that association makes places unclean, but that the thing itself is unclean, and plague-stricken. And Christ would not suffer the unclean spirits to give Him glory. Battlement and tower shall crumble and pass away, methinks, if leprous, the result of unclean offerings; whereas the Spirit of the Life of God shall make lasting

glory out of mud walls, if honest hearts, and praying hands, made the offering. And these considerations are of no light import in a society like ours. In pleading the cause of one, who not many years ago was one of you, in pleading the cause of a member of our society, (for when does a good man cease to belong here?) I would have you consider the blessing of being allowed to make gifts to God in this way. The blessing of belonging to a society, which from time to time has such calls on it made, now, from others; soon, from some of you. Let us meet the claim with brotherly love, give freely. Breathe into your gifts the honest heart, the free, glad sympathy, the pure desire to be of service to God. Let us raise our hearts up to heaven, and fling away first all meanness of spirit; let us raise our hearts up to heaven, and lifting clean hands gladly give glory to God for binding us together, and making us able to give help. Let every stone put together by and from us bear on it the spiritual stamp of a clean heart, and be accepted by God. In this church that I am asking you to help to build, when the recording angel looks at the work, let him be able to see the glory of God, like the sun in clearest glass, shining through and through each little stone, each beam, each carved ornament, with the light of immortality, and Christian love. Then it shall last: O, it were a fearful thing if suddenly to human eyes the leprosy burst forth on the brows of unhallowed givers, or if passing up and down our sacred buildings, we could see the plague-spot, the unblest offering, the crumbling stones, wherever Christ had not accepted the gift. What if our ears were opened to hear the Son of Man declaring, as the unclean fall down, and worship, and present their gifts, "*Ye shall not*

*make Me known.*" There is a power not of earth, a power stronger than walls and buttresses, that day by day walks through the world accepting, or rejecting. Build no leprous house to God. Sacrifice to the Lord nothing wherein is blemish or evil-favouredness, for that is an abomination unto the Lord thy God. As you build, look at what has perished; ask the generations that have passed, why of their great buildings oftentimes not the dust remains. Ask of the Temple, why not one stone remains upon another. Shall not the answer be given, "They were weighed in the balance, and found wanting"? Judgment went out against each leprous house, and it fell. To-day, then, when an old school-fellow is asking of you here to help him in his hard work, to aid in building a church amongst many poor, purify your hearts, and thank God, if perchance He will let you help. And may God, as of old, hear in heaven His dwelling-place, and forgive, and bless us with the blessing of Solomon, and have respect unto our prayers, and receive our offerings. May we, too, say with Solomon, "Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto His people Israel according to all that He promised."

## SERMON VI.

### DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

I JOHN II. 8.

*“The darkness is passed, and the true light now shineth.”*

HOW difficult it is in health to recollect how we felt in sickness; how difficult to remember pain, when the whole body is at ease. The world is full of such strange secrets of life and feeling; the same persons cannot recall their own former selves very often, so different are they at one time from what they were at another. Much more is it not possible to live the lives of others, to feel their feelings, to enter into the unknown lands of hearts that are not our own. How then shall we, living in daylight, realise what it was to live when the world was dark? How can we go back in spirit to a time we have never known, and catch something of the glad surprise with which the first watchers welcomed the light of Christ? A little we know from the darkness of our own hearts being cleared away, but this is of ourselves alone; we have not seen the Light of Christ first rising in its glory



and its gladness on the darkness of a world that was dark. Had life been ever so happy it surely were an awful thing for us creatures of a day, everywhere, at every turn, to be met by the grave; the grave closing all with a darkness that might be felt; so thick it pressed on human life.

Mankind lay in the meshes of a net of darkness, sometimes uttering high words of defiance, as fiery and strong in youth and the courage of youth their daring rose high. But still, dare as they might, their daring passed not beyond the grave. They might fight, they might conquer, they might triumph, but then—the grave. Nothing out of the thick darkness gave any sign any more.

Or they sang, and were merry; and wine and music was in their feasts; and fair women, and brave men, cheated themselves with a false immortality. But all the while an under-song of death was there; and withering hearts mocked the outward noise and glitter; for the grave, for the grave, with its thick darkness, its silence, its stubborn, voiceless horror, drew in first one, then another, and no sign came out of the thick darkness for any one any more.

Turn where you may, a whispered lamentation comes sighing up from under all the busy, thronging, life-like splendours of the past, and all their words and deeds; like a wind in a forest, sometimes of irresistible power, but always there, always to be heard, however glorious the sun may shine, or the flowers may blossom. A whispered lamentation, as slowly, but ceaselessly, all mankind passed over the brink of the slope, every day slipping downwards; every day, whether they laughed or wept, struggled or were calm, slipping downwards, nearer and nearer, more and more certainly, closer and closer still, to the blackness of the everlasting dark,

to the grave, into which all passed; and no sound or sign came out of the horror to any one any more. Had they been happy this were a fearful doom. But the darkness was in their life, as well as after death. No one knew certainly what was good or evil; they groped in the thick darkness of a knowledge that could tell them but little of light. Every day they were in dark, not knowing where to turn, or what to do. Some clutching at each other's throats, slaying and being slain; others giving rein to their lusts till lust destroyed them; everywhere lust and blood, and blood and lust, in one form or another, made a darkness over human life and what mankind should do, no less than the darkness of the grave over what was to come, over what it all was to end in. Darkness was on life, darkness was on death, darkness was the only certainty. Hope there might be, but in the midst of the thick darkness; some unquenched rays in the heart of a lost immortality, but drowned in the thick darkness, dark in life, dark in the grave. And then came light. Light into that living grave. So thrilling was the news that passed through the world, Light and life. Light and life on this present earth; a new spirit of power in man, not only telling him what to do, but giving strength and will to do it. Light and life beyond the grave; a voice from heaven saying, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." And this glad tidings, no mere words, but visible in God's Incarnate Son. The Son of God moving upon earth, breaking through with words of power outward sorrow, disease and death. The Son of God moving upon earth, cleansing and melting with holy purity the fierceness of man's heart; passing as a Spirit of Peace into every home that would receive Him; binding up the broken-hearted;

setting free the slaves of sin; a great Light *seen* in all guiding knowledge, *felt* in all warmth of affection and love. The Son of God, and His messengers telling of Him, bringing His gifts to men, strange new gifts in word and deed, Heavenly power, and Heavenly wisdom; setting before the weary, the sorrowing, the perplexed, the unhappy, that perfect example of Man and God, Jesus Christ, His patient, unresisting life towards the wicked, His love, His power, His ever-present care for the good, setting Him forth Redeemer, King, Creator, Saviour, Friend; *then*, when the Sword of Rome was all earth had to worship; then, when the slayer alone was great, Light and Life came and abode in the world.

And even now the way in which a cry of joy, of welcome, of faith, arose from all parts of the globe is not unknown to us. O Christ, the noble army of martyrs praised Thee, the Holy Church throughout all the world did acknowledge Thee. The high places of earth caught the light: pinnacle after pinnacle, city on city, flushed with divine fire. Antioch caught it; from Antioch came out the word of power, the name of Christian; Ephesus caught it, and the great idol temple crumbled away; Corinth received the glory, and the voluptuous city woke to joy and purity; Athens caught it, and learnt to know the Unknown God. Africa, Egypt, Cyrene, Alexandria, all the old giant powers of early time passed into brighter day. Imperial Rome, with all its glorious charnel houses, was smitten with the heavenly ray; the farthest West saw the great light, a light and a life that needed the deeds of those who still loved darkness to show its exceeding power. The noble army of martyrs praised Thee, O Christ, with a joy that smiled on the sword, with a calm peacefulness, that in circus or amphitheatre

rejoiced beneath the paw of the lion, or the still more cruel scoffs of the crowd that came to see them die. The noble army of martyrs praised Thee with a great gladness that made the catacombs a place of light, that equally in peaceful homes, or at those living fires, that Nero lighted, was joy, and gladness, and love divine. These are the witnesses to light and life, to the true light shining, the first outburst of that great joy, that now for nearly two thousand years has echoed through the world. What though some love darkness rather than light, so it must ever be; but for all that the true light shineth, and we rejoice in its brightness. Yea, the true light now shineth, and Christmas is the feast of Light. Unto us a child is born, Light and Life incarnate, Light and Life in happy homes where earthly and heavenly joy are one, Light and Life in those hearts which, full of pain and exceeding wretchedness, hanging on some bitter cross, hear the words, "this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," and hearing, would not change their pain with that promise for happiest hours as they once thought them, as their great anguish is lighted up with greater joy. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." Light and Life incarnate. Living we live to Thee; and dying we die to Thee. The first Christmas is our earthly life beginning, the second coming of Christ, our heavenly; both seasons of joy unspeakable to those who love Light. Come, Lord, quickly. Be to us Light and Life for evermore. Come, Lord, quickly.

## SERMON VII.

### POLICE OR CHRISTIAN WORK.

GEN. XXI. 15—17.

*“And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad.”*

THE history of Hagar and Ishmael is full of human interest, and perhaps their very imperfections bring their case home more closely to us, make us feel with them more keenly, as we see ourselves reflected in their trials; and above all gives us a closer hold on the mercy of God when we see the mercy of God visibly exerted to protect and deliver the poor outcasts, who had been made outcasts by their own faults. God spake words of comfort and hope to the desolate mother, who had

nevertheless despised His promises made to Abraham and Sarah, God heard the voice of the lad; the voice which had so lately mocked the child of promise. And elsewhere God has taken to Himself as a special title that He is the God of the fatherless and the widow.

In the book of Exodus the command is given, "Ye shall not afflict any fatherless child." In Deut. x. 17, it is said, "The Lord your God is God of Gods and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons nor taketh reward, He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow." And in Psalm lxxxii. the command is, "Defend the poor and fatherless, see that such as are in need and necessity have right: deliver the outcast and poor." And in the first chapter of the Prophet Isaiah, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." And in Psalm x. "Thou art the Helper of the friendless: Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the poor: Thou preparest their heart, Thine ear hearkeneth thereto; to help the fatherless and poor unto their right." And in Psalm lxviii. "He is a Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widow, even God in His Holy habitation." And St James tells us that pure religion is, "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." These and many like passages show most plainly what a special work of mercy God considers it to protect young children that are outcasts, seeing that He has made it one of His own titles that He is a Father of the fatherless. To be a father of the fatherless, therefore, is in a very especial way to be doing the work of God, and making ourselves like Him. It is very plain then that God requires from Christians, in a most decided manner, to

do this kind of work. No words shall be wasted on this. It will be only necessary to show to any one who loves and obeys the word of God, that such a work is put before you to-day. The Boys' Home, in the Euston<sup>1</sup> Road, London, undertakes the care of vagrant destitute boys, who have not been convicted of any crime. It is a work of mercy intended to prevent crime, and to give to poor helpless outcasts the means of becoming honourable, good men. There are many thousand such poor children in London, I will read you the description of one or two. "No. 7, the report tells us, was fearfully destitute and helpless, yet honest. He came to Euston Road covered with a few rags full of vermin, on a snowy night, shivering from hunger and cold. His father had been lost at sea, and the boy been turned off by the captain of the merchant ship, who found him useless without his father. He was put ashore at the Port of London, hundreds of miles from his mother and his home. He made his way to the Boys' Home literally starving." There is one instance of a boy saved. Think for a moment, you boys here, of your lives and of his. How different! His helpless desolate agony on the snowy night, hungry, and homeless, his mother hundreds of miles away, as dead to him as his dead father, memories of home all that was left him, with a fearful reality of cold, and hunger, and death. What force there is in the words, "*yet honest*," in such a case, tempted even to death but not cast down, brave and true to be honest in that last extremity of cold and hunger. Look to yourselves, contrast your lots, and the duty set before you; of whom can it be said here, "*yet honest*," honest in word and deed to resist evil and do his

<sup>1</sup> Now, Boys' Home, Regent's Park.

best? Why should your lots be so different? Brethren, there is a link between your lives and his life, even the life of Jesus Christ, Who has known all sorrow, and all temptation even to death, though King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. It is His will that those who love Him and believe in Him should feel these things, and bring help to the poor outcasts. "They are all very small," the matron replied to a visitor, "they come here in a deplorable condition having been neglected all their lives." A fearful sentence, "*neglected all their lives.*" "We could hardly believe," says another, "that these mere babes in appearance were doing serious work; so stunted and dwarfed had they become from hunger and hardship, having lived in the corners of the streets, or underneath arches, even creeping into the great draining-pipes for shelter and sleep at night." "*Neglected all their lives.*" Good God! what a thing to think of, little children who have never known love or kindness, but have always been desolate, and hungry, and shelterless; that this should be in a Christian land, in the richest country in the world.

Observe, too, the rules of the Home require that these poor children shall not have been convicted of any crime. Now this is a right principle to go on. We ought not to leave the wretched till they have become corrupt in the awful life-and-death struggle which too many have to face. Then it is humanly speaking too late. Every working clergyman will tell you what little hope he has of making an impression on his elder Parishioners if evil, that his only hope is with the young. Yea, brethren, the whole scheme of Redemption, whilst it offers Salvation to all, goes on this principle, demanding from the first moment a new life, saving by giving a



new life and requiring the works of life always. Jesus Christ saves the world by changing the life of mankind, and this is especially done when they are young. No one but the culprit himself thinks repentance likely to come by and by. Nay, the good life must begin early. The great blot on our generation, that which will convict us of infinite folly in times to come, is this, that as a nation we spend millions in police, in prisons, in armies, in all the various devices for protecting ourselves from crime or punishing it, and have got no plan, and spent next to nothing in preventing it. How future generations will wonder at boasts of enlightenment from men who wait till the evil crop seeds, and then, at a vast expense set people to catch the thistle-down as it flies when they might check it and root it out at once, and who do this every year.

This Boys' Home begins before there is crime, whilst it is yet time. God, methinks, has once more heard the voice of the lad dying in the wilderness, like Ishmael of old; and is giving help to these poor outcasts. Boys, like you, tell how they have had no homes, no teaching; but hunger and misery and cold has been their portion. Will you not help them for Christ's sake? Shall not the power of the world to come so move in you as to make you take to heart the wonderful difference between their lot and yours, and to think long and deeply, that wonderful as the contrast is, an all-just, and all-loving Father equally watches over both; and in His justice and His love will sometime or other, now or hereafter, bring the balance equal? Brethren, do you help to do so now, by giving out of your abundance to them, and receiving back from them lessons of the patience, the honesty, the power of truth,

which those poor outcasts, under circumstances so deadly, have shown. Let me also remind you that however much you may now desire to help them, you cannot as a school do so worthily, without every week putting something into the Alms-boxes, or reserving it for the beginning of the month, to form a fund to meet the claims we care for. O if you did indeed care for them this would be done. But remember, God did hear the voice of the lad of old, God cares for what they do and what you do. And pure religion, a pure service of God, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, for a man to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world.

## SERMON VIII.

### JUDGMENT TRANSFIGURED AND TURNED INTO BLESSING.

GEN. XLIX. 5, 7.

*“Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.”*

WHEN man works, he is satisfied if he can succeed in one object by the sacrifice of many things in the working; but the almighty power of God is never more shown to us than when we discover that in all God's works nothing is sacrificed; that not only the main end is gained, but every lesser thing made use of is as completely made use of to an end of its own, as if there was no other end proposed but this. We catch glimpses, I mean, of this, for allwise knowledge is required to judge rightly almighty power and its working. So it happens that the great laws by which human life are governed

are so fixed that they can be taught with certainty, so fixed that ungodly men deny that God is present working in the world, and make Gods of these laws because they are so fixed, whilst at the same time they are so varied in their working, that no man can say what will actually happen in any one case, or in what way they will work out. For we have to deal with an Allwise, Almighty, and All-loving Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier working, and not with a machinery set to work, and left to its work; with a living God, and not with a dead force rolling resistlessly on. In this way the general laws, that determine that sin is itself punishment as yet not developed, and punishment, sin when finished, are awfully true; whilst at the same time the loving mercy of God to the repentant sinner is equally true; equally true also is that splendid power of Almighty goodness by which blessing can be brought out of evil, and a lost world by a greater exercise of grace become higher, nobler, more glorious, and children of Adam be made sons of God in Christ. If it were not so, how should men bear it, when they heard like Levi the words of doom, and knew surely that an evil past could never be recalled? It would seem as if the whole future was closed to Levi because of sin; yet here appears God's almighty love; and, as an example to us, His fixed judgment, without being recalled, is transfigured, and passes afterwards into greater blessing, when Moses and Aaron of the tribe of Levi become the chosen of God; and afterwards the whole tribe, because of their zeal against Moab, are dedicated to the special honour of ministering to God for ever, scattered indeed in Israel, but honoured even in this, for God was their inheritance, and His service their glory. Thus we see

the settled curse of God on Simeon's sin remaining, and on the sin of Levi not recalled, so that the sense of punishment was not entirely taken away, though changed into a signal blessing for them because of signal repentance; and punishment was swallowed up in victory. Scattered in Israel because of the curse, but this very scattering turned into a glory because of the blessing. An undersong of sorrow and woe just serving to swell the triumph with a fuller, deeper memorial note. Almighty love reconciling the two opposites of irrevocable doom, and complete restoration.

Who are they who stand like Levi at some great death-bed, some solemn epoch in their existence, when for a moment time stands still, the whirling tumultuous hours are checked, which, like a great wheel in the dark, have carried on their lives; when all stands still, and in the solemn pause they cannot choose but hear and see, as for a moment at least the darkness is burst asunder, and the light of the judgment of God traces out the past in characters of fire, and rests on every forgotten sin, when for a moment at least the future becomes a great reality; and words of prophetic warning from the spirit-world, like falling drops in a great hall, send the message of that which is to come in distinct throbs through the empty silence of the heart? Then all the past gathers itself up into words of cursing, cursed is thy life for it was lustful; thy language for it was foul; cursed thy life for it was cruel; thy words for they stabbed; cursed thy life for it was false; thy smiles for they deceived. Sin seems a light thing till it has grasped the life, and the sinner knows in some such hour as this that never, never more can the blessing of the past be his; knows as surely as if a prophet spake; for a greater than

a prophet speaks it to his heart ; that his life is doomed, that his best hopes are wrecked, that his sin has grasped the future as well as the past. Oh, brethren, in such an hour, what hope? Will God check His awful laws and stop the course of these rolling worlds in order not to crush man that is a worm, sinful man that is a worm? Yes, brethren, by the blessing of Levi, He will do so. By the salvation brought to a lost world by Christ, He will do so. The prophet voice may be true, the judgment irrevocable, man may know to the inmost depths of his poor heart, that there is that in his life which can never be undone, and yet out of that sad certainty Christ shall bring a greater blessing. He may be scattered in Israel in order to have God for His inheritance, like Levi; or dethroned and cast down in order to send words of sorrowful comfort, and be an example of healing, and of peace to a thousand generations, like David. Brethren, there is hope. Out of a sad experience of evil, godly sorrow can wring a bitter strength, a more determined zeal, and Phinehas and his brethren may win their crown. Out of the mire of sin indulged in, the spirit of God may raise the polluted one into a more utter loathing and detestation of it; and David in the sorrow of his downfall, and the sad evening of his life, may be most of all the man after God's own heart. Yes, there is hope. Two opposite principles are ever working; the one, the fixed law of punishment and sin inseparable, to bar the path of sin, and protect the innocent; the other, the overruling love of God, which through this very law of certain judgment, without altering it, can nevertheless bring the repentant sinner by means of these judgments, these pains and experiences, to a high and happy end. Yes, brethren, there

is hope for the poor lost ones. In the wonderful infinity of the power and mercy of God, in His great kingdom there is room. The inheritance of innocence, the best, the gladdest of all, may be gone, but there is room for a new inheritance, perhaps as good, yet if so, to be won by higher efforts, holier zeal, truer, deeper feelings, stronger hatred for sin.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace : and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood ; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.”

Brethren, do you so live as by God's grace to be blessed like Joseph without the bitter pains of sin, but next, if you do fall, by God's grace to hate your sin, and draw down at last another blessing.

## SERMON IX.

### HOLINESS IN WALLS.

THE FIRST SERMON IN THE SCHOOL CHAPEL.

LEVITICUS XIV. 44, 45.

*“Then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean. And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place.”*

GOD chose the plague of leprosy to be the type of sin, chose it as an outward and visible sign of the unseen corruption which works with destroying power in man.

No man was safe from it; it came and went, smote for a time or for ever, without any power of man being able to keep it off or cure it. It was a sort of living death working in many ways, but pronounced by God to be unclean, to cut a man off from his kind, sometimes indeed speedily ending in the grave, but at other times lasting through a long life of hopeless, desolate, outcast misery. And it is not difficult for us to understand how



fitly this our human body was made to show to the outward eye the loathsomeness of sin, its corruption, its destroying force. In some degree it always does so. We do see gross sins habitually indulged in, bringing the body into various forms of disease and death. And we also see even mental sins, such as pride, covetousness, and others, setting their mark on the man's face; which may teach us that all sin does in some degree stamp its character on our flesh, and might do so to a far greater extent, and a sudden leprosy might burst out on forehead, face, and limb, as evil thoughts passed through our hearts and were welcomed there, did it please God to make known the poison hidden within. There is no cause for wonder in leprosy being treated as sin made visible. In some degree the handwriting of God's judgment is always on the sinner's bodily form, to be seen by those who can read it, proclaiming that sin is corrupt and accursed.

But, brethren, it pleased God to extend this to the inanimate creation, and to put a leprosy in garments, and in houses. Walls might be built strong, and beautiful, and yet in the midst of their glory a spreading spot would appear, none knew why, or whence it came, but a spot would appear, and day by day would spread, and the owner of the house would fear and doubt, and try to disbelieve his eyes, and look again and again, and try perchance to harden his heart, but, do what he would, there was the spot, and, do what he would, still it grew, until with a creeping horror he was forced to think that his strong and glorious building, in spite of its strength and its glory, had a curse that could be seen, crumbling through it all, turning all its glory, and its beauty, into uncleanness and death.

Brethren, this is a thing to think of; is there sin in mortar and stone? Can the wood and the brick be like living things, and have a corroding curse, a clinging death, working within them till they perish? Is there a life and a death in buildings? A spirit power able to destroy, or able to preserve? As being the work of man, as belonging to his life, and parts of his inner self made visible, most assuredly there is. Most assuredly the law of leprosy, that is, the law by which God declared, and still declares, that inward corruption shall show itself in outward ruin, or approaches of ruin, still works, so as to be seen very often in man's body; and does also by God's will work in man's buildings. Spiritual life, and spiritual death, are for ever round about us, determining in God's mysterious time, by God's mysterious will, the fate of men, of nations, of buildings. How do we read, "That blood defiles the land," "that the land spues forth its inhabitants because of blood." "Thy brother's blood," God said to Cain, "crieth to me from the ground." "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," was the judgment on Adam. Leprosy broke forth in the flesh, making man unclean; leprosy broke out in the garment, and the garment was unclean, and had to be burnt with fire; leprosy broke out in the building, and the building was to be pulled down, and carried forth out of the city. Brethren, what is a leprous sin in a building? Surely it is one of two things. It is either a building the walls themselves by unholy means, and in an unholy spirit; or it is the unholy use of them when built. Nothing that had any blemish in it was to be offered to the Lord. "Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evil favour-

edness, for that is an abomination unto the Lord thy God." This is the command, "an abomination," mark, unto the Lord to sacrifice a blemished thing. And in another passage; no evil or vile profit and gain is to be offered to God. If we do not want then a plague of leprosy, a clinging, secret, cause of destruction and overthrow to be built as it were into a building with each stone of it, look well that the offering is made out of a pure heart, and from holy and worthy gains. That is leprosy in a building, the unholy, blemished offering. Be sure that whether a building lasts, or does not last, is blessed, or not blessed, depends on this first. How many wonderful temples, and beautiful erections, have perished utterly because they were blemished offerings, built up by crime, or sensuality, or pride, or vanity, and light and frivolous selfishness. "Woe unto him," saith the prophet Jeremiah, "that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong;" and Micah says, "What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." And was it not the unholy use of a holy place that brought down the temple at Jerusalem, so that not one stone was left upon another?

Brethren, there can be a leprosy in buildings, a secret pollution in the very stones, an unseen curse of God working to destroy the blemished offering, the offering given because it was not cared for, or given from ill-gotten or frivolous gains. Let us trust that this building so lately dedicated by us to God is blessed by

Him, is no blemished offering, but built up by the power of truth. Brethren, there is a leprosy in buildings, when they are unworthily used. Let us guard against this. "My house shall be called the house of prayer," says God. Let us then sanctify this house by prayer, by praying with heart and voice, by kneeling reverently, by keeping pure thoughts, by earnestly uttering, as we have begun to do, such prayers and praises as to make even the most careless and cold-hearted ashamed.

Moreover, as prayer is the offering of an unselfish, generous heart, God's house of prayer will also be a house of almsgiving, and that it may be so it is our purpose to have a collection every Sunday, and a notice of the objects to which the alms will be devoted will be given so that all may know what they are giving to. So let us purge out leprosy from the house of God. All things in the first temple were sanctified by the blood of the sacrifice, to show us the need of purifying holy things in the blood of Christ. Let each stone here, each beam, cry aloud of salvation, redemption, faith, purity, and love. *We begin.* With us, in some degree, rests what shall go forth from these walls. In spirit we may even now see not stone and wood, but the life power that really upholds these lower materials, a life power, we trust, no leprous poison passing in secret corruption through timber and wall, crumbling it all slowly but surely into death. No—let life reign here, such a life as may easily pass onwards even to the likeness of the life of the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, where dogs, and everything that maketh a lie, all filthiness, all impurity, is shut out. Purify your bodies which are temples of the Holy Ghost, and so come pure and holy with the power of life into this house, our offering to God. Surely there is a mysterious

awe in these unseen workings of sin, that can make a glorious house *leprous*. Surely there is a mysterious awe in those unseen workings of holiness, that can breathe life into frail things, and make the very glass of the windows of the house of God more durable than the massive towers of imperial Rome, that have perished utterly, for blood makes a leprous land. Brethren, if God be with us who shall be against us? And God will be with us if we make this building no blemished offering, but built up in holiness and truth, then it will not perish; it will be a portion of the heavenly Jerusalem, and no curse shall work within it to have it broken down, with the stones of it, and the timber thereof and all the mortar of the house, to be carried forth out of the city of God into an unclean place. Brethren, so work, so live, as to make no blemished offering. Let there be no leprosy here.

## SERMON X.

### COMMEMORATION SERMON.

I KINGS VIII. 62.

*“And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the Lord.”*

BRETHREN, there is but one family, one church of God, from the beginning of the world to the end. Moses made everything after the pattern God showed him. Solomon building the Temple did the same. Both of these workings were copies of a heavenly reality, dim far off copies indeed, but still copies; and our worship, in like manner, is a nearer better copy of the same. In heaven is the reality from which all our efforts, all our worship comes. But there are some broader, clearer, and stronger outlines in the earlier copy which have been lost as yet in our more perfect one. At present the sight of a whole nation with one heart and one soul, gathering together to dedicate themselves, and a noble building, the work of their hands, to God, is not, and

cannot be seen. We may trust that Christian power may be united enough on earth before the day of judgment comes to show this sight on a greater scale ; but now, it is not, and cannot be. Earth has not yet seen another day like that in which Solomon the king, and all Israel with him, stood to offer sacrifice before the Lord. Glorious to see, and glorious to hear, must that vast assembly have been, as thousand on thousand voices rolled up their deep heart prayers in answer to their king. Many a leader there has been, from time to time, with grateful heart returning thanks to God, but where shall we find a congregation like all Israel on that memorable day ? Liberal hands, and joyful hearts, a nation with its cry of joy at being found worthy to offer themselves before the Lord. And still from heart to heart thrilled the emotion of that vast multitude, and every tongue gave praise, voice answering to voice, and rousing, each from each, fresh enthusiasm from end to end of that surging mass of living worship. But our commemoration is a true, though faint, continuance of that day of dedication and joy, and in some respects singularly so ; for here we have the possibility, and in some degree, the reality of that oneness of purpose in our worship which was their great glory. We are one body, as they were ; with one common life, as they had ; nay, hereafter with a still wider sphere to work in, and with greater blessings and nobler hopes. Our Chapel also gathers into one for us the heart-life of the school, and its best energies, as the temple did for them ; it is the centre point of our life, to which in after years your memories will go back most fondly, and cling to most enduringly. Let us be worthy of it. We now begin a custom and a day that a thousand years hence, by God's

blessing, may yet be celebrated with joyful mysterious memories. How strange it is to stand within walls like these, that for a thousand years may still be a shrine of unseen lives, and heart vows, and hopes innumerable, and spirit-power; to stand, as we do, at the birthday of that which a thousand years hence may well be strong, and full of richest treasures, heavenly recollections of the holy dead, and Christ their Lord. How then, in those far off ages, will those who assemble here look back with awe and secret curious wondering at what is now so fresh to us; how shall we be to them old history. And if a name remains, even a mark of chisels on the wall, that window, this pulpit, how they all will speak to them, breathing forth unheard solemnities, old prayers, old, forgotten, eager thoughts of love, and duty, and death, and sacrifice. Look round you, not a stone but, if it remains, will be in itself embodied life, a message from the dead; not a beam, which shall not, as a hand stretched out from the grave, beckon on the generations to work for God's sake. The whole will be full of voices. The life of the place begins now. See some records of the holy dead, as well as memorials of unselfish gifts, and unselfish work, already gathering in here. A time will come when every window will tell its own story, its own message, of those who have worked, and lived, and gone; when not a little bit of stone shall be here which will not have a memory carved deep into it: and on you depends, in no slight degree, what that full tide of memories in the coming years shall be. On us rests the beginning of the long roll of generations, of the spirit life, that shall by degrees make its home here, and dwell within these walls. We cannot grasp the subtle power, we cannot see it, but we surely know that



year by year fresh additions are made to the traditional character of a building like this, fresh heart blood as it were is poured out to sanctify the senseless stone, fresh life is breathed into it, fresh associations with that spirit world, which day by day takes some one from our sight, and adds something by so doing to the unseen mystery of this our central point of united life. Surely, brethren, it is an unspeakable blessing to have such a home given us for our best efforts; no faltering faint sound of prayer and praise ought to go up beneath this roof. Let them not say in years to come, yes, it was a noble building, strong and beautiful, but those to whom it was given were not worthy of it. If so, then it will perish; mouldering walls, and ruins, a few buttresses, and a green mound or two, will then be all that shall remain to attest that God gave, and God has taken away, His blessing from a people who were not worthy. Be sure it will perish, unless our hearts beat high and strong, and the living spirit of truth, and the power of Christ, hold up the timber and the stone. There is one true rejoicing, one true repayment, one only, a holy earnest use of holy things entrusted to our care. Offer this sacrifice before the Lord, and this birthday of ours may yet usher in a deathless power.

## SERMON XI.

### LIBERTY, AND ROADS.

2 COR. III. 17.

*“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”*

LIBERTY and truth, truth and liberty. The world is always ringing the changes on these words. Good and evil men alike take them ; in very different senses they are in both camps the trumpet notes that call men to the battle. In the present day, *liberty* is *the* watchword, slavery *the* reproach. Freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, freedom in a thousand ways, is on the lips of men, and claimed as the characteristic of an age which thinks itself the foremost age, the greatest age, in all the generations ; and for a man not to agree with this claim is at once to be set down as a narrow-minded incapable, a slavish adherent to old and worn-out ideas.

Well then first of all I claim for God, and the people of God, the watchword of liberty, and for them alone ; “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty,” and

with liberty progress, which is but another name of liberty ; and having done so will endeavour in a few plain words to prove this. What is liberty? I suppose we are all agreed that liberty means, the being allowed to do what we like ; but we are probably equally agreed on the fact, that we do not like what hurts us, or destroys us, or prevents our being happy, or stands in the way of any great good. And it makes no difference, provided this is really the case, whether we know or believe it to be the case at any given moment or not ; for instance, a baby crawling over a precipice after a flower might cry at being pulled back, but it would not really like to be killed or crippled ; nor when grown older call it liberty to have been allowed to do it. There may be coercion, and yet true liberty. But we may go a step further ; all true liberty is obedience to law ; and the higher the result the greater and more exact the obedience. Look to common examples first. Why do we have roads? Is it not that travellers may have liberty to pass from place to place, instead of wandering slowly amongst pathless wilds? But roads are the work and will of other men imposed on the traveller. He gives up the power of going out of his way for the liberty of keeping on a prepared course. What slaves we are to roads. Or again, what a slave the seaman is to the compass, if a strict observance of rule is slavery ; how entirely he guides himself by it. Yet this slavery to the compass made him paths over pathless waves ; and the slave of the compass gains the freedom of the sea. What slaves too we all are of our eyes. How we follow where they lead us, and are free of earth by doing so. It were a strange liberty which began by blindfolding the eye, as many would have us do in religion and politics, and

then called the blinded wanderings, liberty. Certainly no man who sees would go about in such strange ways, his liberty prevents him from doing so, but only by making him obedient to the law of his eye.

And so it is in all things, the higher we go the more necessary it is to follow law in order to be free to go. High studies demand patient obedience to the experience and rules of those, who have by degrees found them out ; this gives the liberty of mastering such studies ; this and nothing else. The ignorant and the blind certainly are ready to go where the wise and the seeing are not because they are prevented by wisdom and sight. But this prevention is—liberty. Not to go on further, liberty in every case, as can easily be proved, means obedience opening out a clear path for the free spirit to move along, it means right law acting, it means a most rigid and impassable barrier set in the heart against all unnecessary danger, wandering, and unhappiness. Everybody who takes the trouble to think means this by the word. Everybody consciously or unconsciously means by liberty obedience to a law. Even false pretences mean this ; but in true liberty the law is good, and comes first, so as to be felt and seen ; in false liberty the restraint and coercion come later from danger and death, when there is no escape from them, and it is a law of death. Now to apply this : in this kingdom we boast of our liberty, and rightly so, as far as righteous law prevents wrongdoing, and gives freedom in all good. And is there then no law in the kingdom of the world ? will this earth so steadfast in all its lower existence, for thousands of years continuing the same, with fire and hail, snow and vapour, wind and storm, summer and winter, all acting according to a settled plan, full of a liberty to exist

which is not hindered by want of law, will this earth in its highest life, in the life of man have no law of liberty? Where is our boasted reason if we are to believe this? This would be a miracle of death indeed. All creation preaches to us a law of liberty from God. There must be a law of liberty for man. God would have given up all share in this world, and given it over to perdition if there were not. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," the liberty to act where almighty power and goodness clears the way. Neither can there be any difficulty in knowing and recognizing God's law of liberty. The very earliest record of this earth's history, with an unbroken series of witnesses amongst men down to this present hour, claims to declare the law of the will of God, from the beginning, till the witness enlarged into the great Christian Church. There have always been men to declare this law, and a law to declare. And we know, as well as we know anything, that light and progress, truth and liberty, innocence and honour, have invariably been in the nations, or peoples, that followed this law, and received this grace, and have not been elsewhere. Who can call this a hard thing to find out? Are we to believe that God made this world, and that God has permitted all light and truth, and love of truth even to death, and progress and liberty, to accompany these men, and the Bible, and nevertheless that all this truth and liberty grows out of anything but truth itself, comes from anyone but Him? If the earth is the Lord's, it follows as a matter of course, that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Does then law hinder liberty? Is it liberty to blind the eyes, and to go wrong, to put away the power of the divine law, which has worked so great things, and to begin afresh from

nothing—because men scorn a progress which prevents them from wandering, and has prepared a compass over the sea, a road over the land, for their feet to walk in ? There is no progress, no liberty, in being allowed to go wrong ; there is progress, and liberty, in being made to go right. It is a strange liberty, which begins by throwing down all prediscovered truth, and wants to reconstruct the world in defiance of all that to this time has been proved to be truth and liberty by perpetuity of life, by the mighty victories already won. Freethinking indeed, false name for an obstinate blindness, which boasts of rejecting proved truth. As well might a man be called a free Mathematician who rejected the axioms of that science. Many thousand years have proved that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Truth does not come out of lies. God is true. The conquering truth, which generation after generation continues its work of light and life, must be from Him, as He has shown it to be, and does not come from a lie. If to obey that, to love that, is loss of liberty and narrow-minded, let us gladly welcome a loss which brings such glorious gains, a narrow-mindedness which closing indeed some paths of selfishness and pride, opens out the infinity of all God's worlds. It is my intention to show somewhat how liberty works next Sunday, to-day I have endeavoured to put before you that the word means obedience to right law.

## SERMON XII.

### LIBERTY A CONQUEROR.

2 COR. III. 17.

*“ Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”*

WE talk great words about Heaven and Hell and a life to come, and very often lose ourselves in words, building up an unknown future into shape, and play with it, and treat it as a toy to take our attention off from things close home which we do not want to see; or else out of conceit with its unreality, throw it aside, and turn eagerly to some present fact, as we call it, and fix our eyes on earth, and make that our reality. Whilst all the while, whether we like it or not, equally apart from our grand wordy dreamland, and the sordid earth life which is not more real, hour by hour, and day by day, that life, which we dream of as far off, is being lost and won now; that life, which we throw ourselves into the mire to forget, is the one present ceaseless reality of all creation. Yet bare, hard facts of sorrow, and sin, float by us unheeded; fierce, devouring, perpetual miseries

of human flesh and blood pass before us unheeded. What happens to others, alas! how little effect it has. Someone else is always ready to catch the purse as Judas casts it down to go out and die; someone else is always ambitious to climb into Pilate's seat, and wash his hands in fear and anguish as he crucifies the Lord. 'Tis the old old story, how can it be otherwise, when our own facts, what happens to ourselves, bring so little knowledge; when we day by day are content with present unhappiness no matter how often deceived, provided we still have some new hope for to-morrow to deceive us.

It might be thought that ignorance was the cause of this; that in the vast multiplicity of things to be done, or left undone, there was such confusion as to make it a matter of chance what ought to be done. This is not so. Nothing is better known than the manner in which each man's real life begins, goes on, and comes to maturity; nothing is better known than that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and that these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Nothing is better known, in other words, than that every living being has at once if he wishes for liberty and happiness, to set to work to master his fleshly appetites. There will be no want of reality or interest in life to anyone who in good earnest, with Christ's help, sets to work to try and do this; and there is no indistinctness. A very positive, present, real warfare will at once begin; but with all the interests, and hopes, and high thoughts, and manly delights, of the strong and the brave by degrees coming out of it. There will also come out of it such a present sense of truth, of the Spirit of Christ, as to make heaven and heavenly life no matter of great



words, but of actual grasping in the heart. There is no uncertainty in this; test it, brethren, try it in your own lives; take a day; all that is painful or tempting arises from the force with which the flesh pulls you back from what you know, if done, brings happiness, and honour. And it is very difficult indeed to get such a mastery over the body as to be able to make it leave bed, work patiently, bear hunger, bear pain, bear being tired, give up quietly and without ill-temper food, or drink, or play. Yet where is liberty if this cannot be done? But there is more known than this. It is absolutely certain that when any living being welcomes into the heart, and deliberately chooses any form of lower life in preference to higher life set before him, that in that very moment a beginning is made of evil which is certain to run a given course of daily increasing wrong till the blow comes, the curse and punishment of sin, that is fitted to the man's case, in order to check him if possible. Mark, I do not say, that the struggling tempted person, who may give way in his temptation, falls under this law of sin working onwards to a given point. But what I do say is this, that no one deliberately welcomes and chooses lower life, and evil life, even in its first approaches, without being of a certainty led a certain distance on the path till some bitter check gives a chance of turning back in tears and pain along the road he came so jestingly. It must be so by God's laws on earth. For no man is dragged to good. Good must be loved, and evil hated. If anyone therefore begins by taking evil, he must be taught, if he is taught at all, by its bitter fruits to hate what he has taken; in other words, he must be allowed to go on till his eyes are opened on the way he has chosen. But people do not think this when

they begin. A little more bed, or a little more food, or a little more fireside, seem so innocent; yes, but not if truth and true life is betrayed because of them. Thirty pieces of silver was not much, there was no harm in the silver; perhaps the very smallness of the price blinded Judas somewhat, as it has done so many, to the greatness of the sin it bought. He could not believe that thirty pieces of silver would do so much harm; a very large sum of money would very likely have startled him and made him pause; he would have understood the value of crime if measured by a money value, and not by its baseness in itself. So you too, brethren, sell life by pennyworths, and wonder that self-indulgence at so small a price should be worth thinking about. You sell life for minutes; and the price is so small you know not that you have sold it. You know not; because you will not know that all your fleshly longings must be conquered or you die; and the smaller the price the greater the sin, the more deliberate the throwing away of good. Beware of the penny bribes. And this is a positive certain law that a deliberate choice of the worse, a temptation welcomed, never stops until the foolish chooser reaps pain and shame enough to turn him back. And, remember, liberty, complete power over self, is the object of this training, of this self-denial. It is no true self-denial in the pursuit of a favourite object to suffer much, as Esau did; in the fierce excitement of the chase, as it were, to endure bodily pain, and then, when the strong self-indulgence in excitement, is over, to be self-indulgent in ease and lust. To be able to move quietly, but firmly, in the midst of the world and worldly things, in the world, but not of it, knowing, with the Apostle, in whatsoever state we are to be content; knowing how

to be full, and to be hungry, to abound and suffer need, equally master of self in both extremes, this is liberty. Not the liberty of Esau, who was first impatient of quiet home life, and carried away by his passions to leave that, and next was the slave of excitement in hunting, and next the slave of his appetites in his times of ease, never master of himself in anything, and therefore an example for ever of a lost life. It is quiet, daily temperance, and daily endurance of work, that does great things, even in bodily strength, and the same is true in the mind, and in our real life. Happiness is a plant of steady, never-ceasing growth, hardy and strong, and not a gift, a random gift, won in a scramble.

The subject will not be complete without a few words being said of the management of money, for after all, mastery over self practically soon comes to that question. Now everyone must see that the manner in which we spend our money tells more of selfishness or unselfishness than anything else. I shall waste no words about it, but merely observe, that constantly to spend money on self, and not to have money to spend on good which is not selfish, is learning to be a slave. At the outside reckoning this morning 163 gave something, out of more than 300 present; only 49 of these gave more than one penny; and of the remainder, 73 gave a halfpenny each. Now I do not say that a halfpenny necessarily in each case was a mean gift; but it is clear that the 150 boys who gave nothing, and the 100 and odd who gave less than a penny each, cannot have right views of liberty, and free life, and happiness, as a body. The contributions of at least 250 boys this morning reached the sum of 6s. 5½*d.*

Nothing I can say can add to such a fact as this. I

pray God that a more real spirit of liberty may be vouchsafed us, that the Spirit of Christ may work in our lives, and both in and out of school give you power and freedom. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

## SERMON XIII.

### LOST OPPORTUNITIES.

ST MATTH. XXII. 14.

*“Many are called, but few chosen.”*

WHEN we begin life, all perhaps have a feeling of a wide, open world before them, which fills them with hope, or fear, or various forms of expectation, curiosity, eagerness, or shrinkings, but however they regard it, seems open, wide, and full of choice and chance. Language bears witness to this ; good and bad luck, good and bad fortune, what do they mean excepting the wide open field for choice, chance, confusion, and the like, where different things happen on no fixed plan ; or at least without a complete plan ! This idea of luck is the common excuse with which conscience is blunted. But in what a different light the words of the text put our life. “Many are called.” Christ with His loving, awful voice, standing in the world He has made, gives a call to many. One by one the call summons them ; one by one they come

or not. This is life; life in its working. Where is the chance in this? Well did the Centurion declare, I say unto this man come, and he cometh, and to another go, and he goeth, and ask of Christ to give *His* orders. He saw, soldier as he was, that the great King had only to command, and all creation must obey. But the great King does not command us as a king; *He calls*. "Many are called, but few are chosen." A wondrous revelation of life as it is. Few chosen. *Lost opportunities*—what a fearful thought that those who might be chosen *are* not. Methinks there is no sadder history in Holy Scripture, though we do not know the end, than that of the rich young man, whom Jesus loved as He looked on him, and gave a call to as one of His chosen apostles, but who went away sorrowful because he had great possessions, and did not come. How it touches the heart to hear it now; now, when for so many hundred years his great possessions have left him. No doubt, good as he was, the pleasant fields that were his, the house, the furniture, and the respect it all brought him, *were* very pleasant; poor fellow, and for this,—Christ called him, and he did not come, but went away sorrowful. How looked the landscape to him that evening as the sun set over his possessions, lighting up rock, and vineyard, and stream, and forest, with a dying fire; and he the seeming master looking out empty-hearted, and sorrowful, on it all? *His possessions*—and Christ had called him, and he would not come. With what a strange unreality must the trees he remembered since he was a child, the rocks he loved, the running water that owned him as master, have stood before his eyes that night, as he gazed on them with the hunger of a lost life gnawing at his heart. *Lost opportunities*—the

call of Christ put away. An apostle *called*, yet not an apostle, for he would not come. How does it seem to us now looking back on him, that type of lost opportunities? was it worth it? Judge for yourselves, brethren; rock and fountain, vineyard and forest, honour and praise on the one hand, and on the other, the call of Christ. What do you think of it? what do you think of those few years of the hungry heart, and anxious splendour, and the grave, as compared with the living energy, the glorious interests, the rejoicing even in tribulation, of an apostle called by Christ to help in saving a perishing world?

Who then are called? and what is the call? Let me ask you all, whatever you may think about a wide and open world with chance and random tossing about in it, what do you actually find in your own case? Is not your path clearly marked at present in the main? Is not all done for you as far as the path goes? How came you here? And being here, is there any doubt whatever of the purpose for which you are here, and what you ought to do? Can anyone here say that he does not know day by day what he ought to do, and is required to do? What uncertainty is there here? Nay, is it not your call? And the sort of call is plain; you are called on to do honest, true, work; to resist evil; to learn what your forefathers, and the wise customs of your country, and Church, hold to be good. Is not this the call of Christ? Do you not think it plain enough? We are not living in a world made and created by a power different from that which calls us. Christ ruling in the world He has created calls us through the things He has created, and through the means of grace He has sent into His creation. I say nothing now of that unseen Spirit

Power, which is to-day as really within these walls calling your hearts as on that day, when, seen and heard, Christ called the rich young man—and he knew not it was Christ. Those who in their spirits see Christ, and hear Christ, as He works salvation in His Church, they want no proof of His call, no proof of life being all planned and directed by Him. I speak to those who are beginning; who as yet walk more by sight than by faith. I say boldly that the common reason of the worst boy here, if he will listen to it, cannot help acknowledging that there is a very plain call, which, like the rich young man, he cannot help acknowledging to be a call from a power worthy of his respect, even though he may not yet know that power as the power of Christ. Alas, for lost opportunities! Must we not sadly say here also that “Many are called, and few are chosen”? That few, very few, take full benefit of the life set before them; or reach within a great distance of what they might have been.

True, there are many calls in life; true, all day long the Lord of the vineyard is going in and out giving fresh opportunities; but the first call is the highest, the easiest to obey, and the best. The lost apostleship at all events never came back again to the rich young man, who when called, drew back sorrowfully. Is it nothing as we pass on in life to be perpetually casting away greater happiness, and better things, by not listening to the call of Christ at once? *Lost opportunities.* The many called, and the few chosen—and lost, what for? Look back at this half-year and tell your own hearts honestly what you have gained by following your own will, and not obeying the daily call! What you have lost, no man can tell, neither you, nor anyone. Men act, as if Heaven was something put into their



hands; and Hell something in like manner put into their hands; and the happiness and misery of this life now a chance. But, brethren, the glorious beauty of the love of Truth, which is Heaven beginning, is an everlasting, never-ending growth in ourselves which God increases and satisfies, and the hateful misery of loving evil, which is Hell beginning, goes on from depth to depth also; and this life begins one or the other; and this life is happy, or wretched, according to which begins. The rich young man went away sorrowful, in spite of his riches, to pace his halls a weary-hearted man, to look out over his fields empty, and with a hunger of the soul, nevermore to know peace amidst his riches unless he came to Christ. *Lost opportunities.* "Many are called and few are chosen." So says the King of Heaven and Earth. And we on earth see it to be so as far as we can see.

Brethren, on whom the call of Christ has come gathering you together from many homes into this place to do true work for Him, in word and deed to be true, to have no lie dwelling amongst you—brethren, an end has come, yet a few days, and a fresh period begins; and so the circling months roll you onwards, false and true together, true and false, those who obey the call, and those who don't, and to some here there is no more room for repentance as far as their life here is concerned; they go forth in their honour, or in their shame, never again to enter these doors as members of the boy-life here. They go forth, and soon we shall all go forth, and others take our places; be wise in time, whilst there is a fresh beginning possible, begin, for the King of Heaven and earth has spoken to us called ones, and warned us early, "That many are called and few are chosen."

## SERMON XIV.

### THE OUTWARD AND THE INWARD.

ST MATTH. IV. 4.

*“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*

IT is a very strange thing if we consider it, that we not only do not see God by whom the world exists, but that all the higher things for which men strive are equally not open to sight. Knowledge, wisdom, honour, truth, everything that is not directly bodily and animal, is unseen. It is clear that the whole value of our existence here, the whole value of our earthly trial, depends on how far we grasp the higher unseen life, and in comparison disregard all seen things. The highest form of this truth is set before us by our Blessed Lord in the text, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” And it is set before us as a law of God. “Man shall not live by bread alone.” Bread as the support of bodily life, containing in its meaning all things of bodily life—and

the word of God is contrasted with it. Yet our Lord bade us pray for our daily bread, undoubtedly in its first meaning intending the support of bodily life by the prayer, but bodily life, though a thing to pray for, is not a thing to be put in the balance with spiritual life. "He that loseth his life shall find it," may be true here. Yet if a starving man is to starve rather than in any way disregard the word of God, God will not accept a less thing as an excuse for disregarding it. If a starving man can find a higher life in the words proceeding out of the mouth of God, and dying feel he lives indeed, will the word of God fail to bring life in less awful trials?

But all this is a heart test and needs to be learnt. We see, remember, the poor man's trials, and the dying man's face of pain, and not the peace within; the famine that starves him sets a visible mark on the face; the living power stronger than death is hidden from our eyes. We see the rich man's plenty, not his aching heart. We hear the worship given to rank and success, the cheering of the mob, as in the case of Pilate, and not the sad echoes in the silent judgment hall within the man himself. We see, as it were, Herod on his throne, in his royal robes, we hear the applause which tells him he's a god; but we do not see the avenging angel at his side; we do not see the uplifted sword of God which smote him as the people gave him praise; and he was eaten of worms and died. This power of knowing truth must be learnt. Poor men learn it most easily; unless they despise the lesson of their life, and give themselves up to evil readily, they learn by the mere force of circumstances how little the great realities of life, its happiness, its sorrow, depend on the full barn and the heavy crops; they have not got them; and their daily

dependence on God is a good school of daily faith. But richer men find it harder to learn this; unless good, they find it hard to strip away the bright unrealities that are seen, and when one idol breaks they go to another, loth to give up their seeming strength. The more of outside power there is the more room there is for self-deceit. The building is seen, but not the pain that went to build it. The Pyramids stand silent, and tell us nothing of the agony of Israel as they toiled, and died in toil, to raise them for their cruel masters. Earth is full of dumb memorials, speechless appeals to heaven of evil or of good, of tears, and groans, and curses, petrified, as it were, but voiceless; of walls again that are prayers in stone, and yet tell nothing to the common passer by. Yea these walls in which we are, are silent like the rest, and do not unlock the secrets of their inner life to every eye that sees them.

Is there then no key to this spirit language, no power, no lens, to let men see the heart-blood that binds the silent stones, the human feelings and life divine that have taken this or that shape? Yes, brethren, there is. Work in the same spirit, pour out the same feelings, disregard what is seen, live by the unseen, let your own blood, your own heart power, and, if need be, heart anguish, be freely offered to Christ, and your eyes shall open; and you shall see the unseen spirit life that moves the world; and learn where others have trod the path before you, and have worked like you; and your ears shall open; and spirit voices from all time shall breathe a secret wisdom from storied hill and dale, from building, wood, and stone, as life answering to life unfolds like things to those who tread like paths. But those who are full of bread, and

live for bread alone deaden all their senses. In an old civilised country as ours is, rich, and powerful, public opinion like a thick mist clouds everything. It is hard to rise above it into purer air, hard to believe that the foggy landscape we see is not the world, and that the common laws of common thought about us are not true. We are positively walled in by false judgments. Respectability, success, rank, riches, make a seeming-solid barrier round us, and everyone who does not learn to deny himself, and work, and endure, and give up, never gets beyond this wall, or arrives at any true idea of the world-work going on on every side.

Now, I think, this last week, a picture, a photograph of a different and truer world was brought into this school; and the simple words, which from a Bishop's lips told of Church life in a colony, for a moment at all events brought fresher, truer ideas into the closeness and selfishness of English life. The rough cart, the pouring rain, the unfinished road, and God's work there, came home to our hearts with a clearer, truer ring than all our boasted civilisation, where to be unsuccessful is a crime. Yet failure, even faulty failure, may be a priceless gain, and success a curse; and most certainly no man sees truth who stops his eyes by fulness of bread, self-indulgence, and pride. And this applies to you, boys, as well as to men, nay it applies more, for it is easier whilst life is fresh and active to learn to love active unselfish joys than it is to break through habits, when old, and to unloose, with failing strength, and perverted appetite, the deadly comforts of lying respectability. Surely, brethren, there are mighty, thrilling, human interests both in our own land and in our colonies. Let us get out of the stifling air of our

narrow self-loving idleness and greediness. We are quite able to do what the Bishop put before us, and far more; we are quite able to establish a School District, an Uppingham School District, in that diocese, beginning with the Parsonage House at Allora, and going on, as more is wanted, and the balance of the Offertory every half-year, after other claims are satisfied, shall be paid to this. It seems to me it would be to us all a very solemn thought of strength in years to come, to know that a great kingdom had received from Uppingham the Gospel of Christ. This is no ignoble ambition; it is one which at the throne of God we shall not be ashamed of. And the work set before you is nothing less than this; the first planting of a new colony is as the acorn to the oak; we can give sufficient to this acorn life, and by and by the oak, which far o'ershadows us, will be ours by right divine. But do not suppose that God permits a great true work to be done by mean false hands; not so; the idle heart, and the greedy heart, and the self-indulgent heart, have not strength enough. You must learn in your own everyday life to know that man lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. You must learn this at any cost; and then you will be able to give true gifts and work true work. Ah, brethren, this great world with all its weal and all its woe was not made for you to play the fool in. Make your own lives day by day teach you by God's blessing that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The true soul sees truth.

## SERMON XV.

### COMMEMORATION SERMON.

I KINGS VI. 7.

*“ And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither : so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.”*

IN this way rose the Temple of the Living God in days of old. Every stone brought from afar, quarried out of the distant hills, and carved and shaped with noise and din of workmen, there, out in the common world, hewn and measured, a bit cut on this side, another on that, amidst dust, and tumult, and words of command, and sweat, and heat, till each was ready for its appointed place. Then the scene changed ; on the top of God's holy mountain, in silence, strangely fair, the glorious building rose, rose like a dream, rose as it were out of the earth like a prayer taking shape and carved in stone, a perfect majesty of noiseless power. And men stood still, and looked, and held their breath, so full of awe was that strange vision, so wonderful in the bright daylight tha

soundless growth of stone, the busy silence in the sunny air, as every block and every beam moved into its own place, and there was fixed, wherever it came from, fixed for evermore, till the spirit of the Lord should depart in the day when Israel forgot their greatness.

In this way the Temple was built. In this way God wrought a Parable in stone, and made the beams preach to his people evermore, telling them, that even this Temple which they saw with their eyes had a wonderful unseen life, a mysterious inward unity and spirit, which was a foreshadowing of a Temple yet to come, made without hands, eternal in the heavens. Many stones there were, quarried from common rock, many trees, from many a green hill side, that grew, and were cut, and shaped far away, and had nothing in common till, brought to God's holy mountain, they rose like incense, and became one building, and stood in beauty, bonded together, The Temple of the Living God. Thus did God teach them that the building in which His Spirit would rest was far more than what met the eye, that it embodied the life of the nation, purified and made fit for God's presence. The life of the nation, cut and shaped in their homes, on their native hills, by common tools and common work, made ready in the turmoil of busy movement, blows, and dust ; whilst the great master builder appointed for each, by daily trials, his own peculiar station in the wall. To the eye of faith every stone was a finished life, every carving a saintly spirit, every precious gem a pure heart, and the whole building one great spiritual shrine. The high thoughts, the searchings of heart, the holy prayers, the purity, the manhood, the bravery, the patience of the people of God fixed, fixed as a silent witness to their posterity, a voiceless but unceasing cry calling on them



to be also worthy, calling on them to give themselves up as living stones to be built in for power and beauty, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them. But the fool heard nothing of this, saw nothing but the stone and wood; and so the light died out of their hearts, and the glory of the spirit life departed, and tower, and battlement, and column tumbled down, for there is a life in holy buildings—and a death.

Shall we not think of these things to-day, brethren? This is but the second year these massive walls have risen for us. How come they here? Answer *that*. Those that have hearts to answer, let them return answer to themselves. Ah! your own lives perhaps may teach you, by and by, the hidden message of those strong buttresses; and many a generation yet to come may read it. Like a great hieroglyphic in an unknown tongue it stands before you all to-day, telling something, but concealing more. The most earthy, the most self-confident, the most shallow here sees already some records of love and work hallowed by death, and cannot quite pass by with shut eyes; the dullest carnal heart cannot put away entirely the thoughts of the long future, when, year by year, the little congregation within these walls will be less and less compared with that vast multitude who shall have passed the grave to their rest; who were once here as we now are; who in years of centuries to come shall in turn make these stones witnesses of hopes, and fears, and prayers, and then go as we are going; and yet not so, for is not the real building spiritual? Look not round on these walls as at a thing done, look at them as an outward sign of a building ever going on; for ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, quarried out of English rock, partly shaped here, bearing England's

name hereafter either at home, or in many lands, you are having your lives hewn for an appointed place in the great Temple, which this our Chapel represents here. Your lives build the true building, or, if not, bring all that is mortal and perishable in our earthly works to the ground. Say, will you build for eternity; or will you build so that sooner or later God's enemies shall lead you into captivity, and destroy the works of your hands? Glorious as the Temple was, yet by the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept in after years, wept, when they remembered thee, O Sion. Tears by the waters of Babylon, bitter regrets in years to come, the fragments of a broken life, a hard slavery in the great market of the world, are an ill exchange for the liberty of the children of God. Every year, as it passes, brings this question; years before stone was laid to stone in this place, the spirit work was going on preparing it; years after, when we are in our graves, this will continue to go on. I have no belief in stones, and beams, and buttresses. But in the living power, the pure hearts of those who build them, of those who use them, in these, under God, I trust. If the Spirit of Christ be indeed here, the very glass in these our windows shall have a life longer and stronger than the Pyramids; and time, the destroyer, shall not destroy, as day by day quarried from many homes, shaped in many lands, fresh lives are built into this great building, fresh heart-blood poured out to cement it. And silently, without stroke of axe or tool, unseen by the eyes of fools, the real Temple shall rise of which this one is but the scaffolding. And both shall live. Wherever the life of Christ is, the voice still goes forth, *an evil and adulterous generation, blind and deaf, asks for a sign. But, he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

## SERMON XVI.

### THE LEGACY OF HEROES.

2 TIMOTHY I. 13, 14.

*“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”*

WHAT would we not give to know the burning words which heroes have uttered for victory or in defeat, when brave men's hearts have beat high in those moments which decide for ever their own and others' fates. Some few we know, or partly know. Down the long centuries have come the confident high notes of freedom with which Miltiades turned the scale for battle. Others there are in our own English history, thrilling through the hearts of those who read them. Some Holy Scripture tells us. We know what was said, though we little heed, at the greatest battle-deed that earth has seen, when the young man unarmed stepped out between two armies looking on to meet the champion, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the Living

God?" The last words of Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, the disciple of St John, are ours, when standing before the Roman he refused to buy his life by shame, and said, "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and He has done me no injury, how then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?" Bishop Ridley's farewell to life and all he loved on earth we have. Latimer's great words at the stake, as the fire was lighted, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out."<sup>1</sup> His too in France, who in the last years of a persecuted life when exhorted to rest answered, "What, have we not all eternity to rest in?" These, and countless others, have nerved men, and shall again do so, these stirred the heart, and breathed deliberate earnest purpose into the generations, each in its time. But had we any words which we knew had been the support, the watchword, the war-cry of good brave men for many many hundred years in the hours of their greatest heart searchings, and most high thoughts of earth or heaven, words consecrated by the memory of more courage, more love, more self-devotion, than any others ever spoken, full of memories, laden with the glory of the past, rich as it were with the best heart-blood of young and old, how precious would such a legacy of power and honour be to us. How, methinks, eye should kindle, and tongue be glad, at being allowed to see and utter such a living record.

Brethren, we have these words; and I have observed with pain that just the words you least honour are these very words, this legacy of the holy past; this living power fresh with the heart-blood of the ages; the Creed,

<sup>1</sup> Arnould.

the Creed. For such and no less is the Creed; thought too solemn, too great, in early days, for the daily service of the Church, only repeated by the converts at Baptism, when repeating it too often meant imprisonment or death; and if not that, when repeating it meant the decisive step of enrolling as a soldier of God, at a time when throughout the world the first great struggle between good and evil, Christ and Satan, took a world-wide range. So the convert stood at the font, turned towards the West, the home of darkness, dashed out his hand as against an enemy standing there, in sight, with the words, 'I renounce thee, Satan'; then turned to the East, the home of light, and repeated the Creed. How anxious, how earnest, the hour was we may gather well, in those early days when a man visibly and literally came out of the world to join a small and despised company. Even when some 400 years had passed away we have a striking witness to the intense interest of such an hour in an account given by St Augustine of the Baptism at Rome of Victorinus, a renowned lawyer of that day. For many years he had been a Christian at heart, but had feared the heathen world, feared to descend from his intellectual throne to repeat the Creed, feared the false philosophy of his day, and after having been honoured by a statue in the Roman forum, feared to forfeit his renown in the imperial city. But at last, this eye witness relates, he feared still more the word, that if he denied Christ before men, Christ would deny him before the holy angels. And so the aged senator came forward in the full Church, to the astonishment of all Rome, to the wonder of the Christians, and I now translate the very words: "When it came to the hour of making profession of his faith, which those who are

going to receive thy grace, O Christ, generally do by a certain form of words, committed to memory, from a platform, in the sight of the Christian congregation of Rome, the offer was made to Victorinus to do it less publicly, but he would not accept it. He said, he had taught rhetoric publicly, which was less precious than the faith of Christ, and he would do this publicly. So when he got up to repeat his confession, a murmur of his name passed through the congregation. For who did not know him? And there went a subdued sound from mouth to mouth through all the joyful throng of, 'Victorinus, Victorinus,' a sound of exultation as they saw him, then a deep silence of attention to hear him."

Such was the repeating of the Creed in those days. Thousands on thousands, generation after generation, made their solemn avowal, often in times of danger, persecution, and shame, repeated the great war-cry of the Church, the Creed; and within sixty years of the death of St John, Irenæus, who had been his disciple, tells us, "that the Church throughout the whole world to the ends of the earth received from the Apostles, and their disciples, that faith which says, I Believe in one God the Father Almighty, who made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is, and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation, and in the Holy Ghost, who spake by the prophets the ordainings of God, and His coming, and being born of a Virgin, and how He suffered, and rose again from the dead, and how our dear Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven in His body, and how He will come from heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things, to raise all the human race, that every knee may bow to Him." And this he calls, "the unalterable

rule of truth which every one received at his Baptism." This, he says, throughout the whole world was the one rule of faith. This was heard in Asia, in Africa, in Europe, in the mighty cities of the ancient world, a challenge to the idol powers. In the catacombs amongst the dead, in times of deadly peril, every where, from every life, that took the side of Christ, as year passed into year, century into century, all generations took up the cry, and they have passed it on to us.

So when after prayer for forgiveness, and after hearing the commands of God in the Lessons from the Old and New Testaments, the congregation is prepared and ready, lo, as it were, a cry, "The King has come to marshal us," and we are to declare our faith, to cast in our lot with Christ, by repeating the Creed aloud, the most time-hallowed record, the most thrilling response, the fullest casket of human and divine memories, that this earth holds, or shall hold. And these, these, are the words you select to dishonour, by your silence, or your apathetic heartless lip-sounds. Yet, brethren, these words as they have already sounded calm and high through all the storms of twenty centuries, shall still, till the last trump awakes the dead, convey the vows of faithful men in centuries to come. Brethren, be worthy of the coming of Christ; pass on His watchword from no base lips; let His war-cry come from your hearts. The new year begins for us to-day. What is it going to bring? One thing we know. Wars and rumours of wars are on every side, all government, and all society and order, is to contend for life; and there will be fierce tests of honour and dishonour applied to high and low, there will be great searchings of heart, great heroism, and great meanness. It will be a time that calls for men, for

true men, who do not take their character second hand. Well, what is that to you sheltered here, too young to be engaged, learning life? It is because you are learning life that it is to you also everything. Heroes and traitors are a natural growth from the sowing of life in boyhood. You recruits in the great army, with the solemn creed from many a martyr's life given to you by Christ to sound from your lips, as your soldier battle cry; you recruits have a great life before you as leaders of men. Believe me you cannot lead unless you learn in little things to do the truth. Honour and truth will be tested here as truly as on any battle-field. This term will begin to make the heroes or the traitors of the coming world.



## SERMON XVII.

### COMMEMORATION SERMON.

I ST PETER II. 5.

*“Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”*

BRETHREN, in a perfect world everything that is seen, that takes outward form, will be an outcoming of inward truth, and the form will be a true declaring of the true spirit within. And so it was at first in this world, when God put His Spirit in the outward form of things created: “God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.” All form is a language, and the language ought to speak truth, just as words when true represent the unseen thought of the speaker truly, and are false if they do not. And if men have glorious thoughts of God, and Christ, and love, and truth, they will not, cannot, rest till to the best of their power those thoughts are put in an enduring shape, to tell to mankind their heart belief. And so we have had passed down to

us, from generations long since gone, buildings, that are awful witnesses in stone of great beliefs, anthems as it were that gathered shape and became fixed, embodied prayers—buildings the power of which does not die, which as long as one stone remains upon another proclaim their message, and call on all who have the heart to hear, at least to use them rightly, even if they want life to send on a new message themselves to others. A great building, a truly great building, does always represent the true heart power of its time, it ought to represent the true heart power of its actual builders. Unlike a book, many take part in it, unlike a book, it stands up and speaks to all that pass, rich and poor alike, day by day, and year by year, perhaps for centuries on centuries, a language which every heart can read something of. And so, we are met here to-day to pray to God to bless in the coming years this our great prayer in stone ; somewhat too to recall to mind how it was that it has risen out of the earth so strong, so fair ; in gratitude not unmixed with awe that a thousand years hence, perchance, this voice of ours, hewn out of many lives, may still be telling out the love of Christ to mankind here. For it *is* hewn out of many lives. A very few years ago not a stone was here, and never would have been, had untruth in work, mean false ways, self-indulgent ignorance, and the many follies of mock manliness and school conceit gained the mastery. But it has been quarried out of many hearts, and many lives, of those who honestly have striven to do true work, however humble the work might seem, in this school. That is the true quarry which God has blessed, and this which you see to-day is built out of it. I do believe to my heart-core that no bit of honest life is ever wasted even here below ; I do believe that

every stone and beam in this place, to higher eyes than ours, is a heart work of someone's laid in its place, and that Christ sees, not stone and wood, but the strivings, the hopes, the tears, the very blood as it were of many wrought into a lasting fabric to His glory, in His name. If this be so, if we are indeed met together in a building not of wood and stone, but of human hearts and human truth, which have taken shape in wood and stone, because this is one type amongst many that good creates new power, that good does not die; if the gathered life of many hearts is here speaking strength from these strong walls, patience from each wrought stone, self-sacrifice in the clear-cut polished pillars, the beauty of holiness in storied windows, upward longings in the lofty roof, love and truth everywhere: if the building is so living, what a worship should be here, what an answer from the living hearts and living lips here assembled, to this cry of "holy, holy, holy," in the midst of which we stand; this cry of "holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty," which shall never cease here till the same unseen powers which raised, shall again destroy, these walls that speak, when generations come unworthy of them, and swine in heart make them their home. And will it *then* have perished? No, brethren, this is but the earthly house, this may perish, nay, ought to perish when its message is heard no more; let us look above and beyond this to that building in the heavens which shall not pass away, in which ye are being built up as lively stones into a spiritual house. Here—how much do we fall short of what we might be, how like a dead weight the dull, heavy, heartless life and service of some hangs on the spirit, and pulls our worship down, even when there is nothing worse, so that the voice we ought to hear from these walls is not quickened by the

living power of those who meet here, so that this chant of friends and fellow-workers ever present, though they themselves are gone, falls tuneless and empty, because it is not swelled and upborne by the living, as it might be, into one great thrilling cry of past and present united in one. Yea! this may perish, why should we mourn to think so, *must perish*, whenever it becomes a dead carcass with no life in it; but the life does not perish though it go out, but as these stones embody past living power, and give it shape on earth roughly and rudely, hard to read, and hard to feel aright, so these same lives, theirs, and yours, and ours, in a far more true way are every hour being shaped by Christ into a spiritual house, unseen, yet to be in heaven, shaped in every land, in every walk of life, shaped in the noise and dust of earthly trial, to rise in silent glory hereafter, each as he leaves his place after this rude and painful handling, being at once put in his appointed course in the living temple in heaven, a living stone. May it not be that, as united lives of one society made this building which we to-day commemorate, in a still truer way the same union more perfect, without any mixture of what is false and base, may in heaven also be built up into a living glory which shall be our own, as much as this is our own—our own, and not another's; and just as that noble window represents one true life, though part of this manifold structure, our lives also may become one votive offering, blended together into one orb of colour and light in the vast holiness of the great spiritual house on high. Is it not worth striving for, now, and hereafter? *Now*, in this England, the glory of which we love to think of, working as a great power under Christ, brought together by Him into one place to show what can be done by simple efforts, by young life, young

hearts, when drawn upwards they care for what is gentle, and brave, and true, becoming strong to do the right, until as years pass on, scattered in all lands yet one in purpose, they form a brotherhood, helping and being helped, and become a might, and a movement, strong in the name of Christ, visibly strong as this great building is visibly strong, this building our central home. *Hereafter*, in that commemoration yet to come when as we die, for so men call it, we all shall go to our appointed place, welcoming and welcomed with joy and triumph, as parts of the everlasting spiritual house, some weary and hewn from the dust and din of earth, others early called, but whether early or late, each and all rejoicing in their Lord, rejoicing in the finishing a glorious work, in commemorating it; perchance remembering then this day, this hour, which was the beginning, as that will be the end. Now the beginning and the end is Christ.

## SERMON XVIII.

### COMMEMORATION SERMON.

PSALM XLVIII. 11, 12, 13.

*“Walk about Sion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses, that ye may tell them that come after. For this God is our God for ever and ever. He shall be our guide unto death.”*

THERE are times when heart and brain fail and are weary beneath the weight of the years that have been and the thought of those that are yet to be. Times, when the whole being sinks back overwhelmed by the endless range of life and creation, appalled at the springing up and dying away of creatures innumerable, and we amongst them ; generation after generation rising, living, dying, passing out of sight, whether they be man, the seeming lord of this earth, or the worm, his seeming subject. And all the while Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter, go on in an endless circle, and bring into existence, or put out for a time, the same vegetable life. Hill and mountain remain. The river rolls its shifting

hurrying, unchanging change, never resting, ever the same to the eye. And man perishes, the trees he has planted stay on, but man perishes. Then this soul of man with its strong, active life-power, refuses to believe that this short perishing of its seventy or eighty years is its boundary, determines to grasp a greater inheritance, will hold fast and make the ages its own, and by abiding works, by deeds that live, conquer the coming years and bid them do its commands. It is part of our immortality to feel this. It is the secret witness in each man of the truth that the breath of life was once breathed into him, of life from God. And though that life was cut off, and lost by Adam, yet its evidence remained in these deathless longings; and God in Christ has both given back again the living power, reunited man to the great Life King, and also given it back with a higher and intenser strength; so that the humblest Christian now bears within his heart the unutterable longing for some enduring monument, and also the good cause to strive for, with the possibility, nay the certainty, of success. Life from Christ. That is the starting point. And every high thought, every humble, true effort, every faithful hope is a fruit, and a witness also, of that life of which it is the fruit. We have such a witness. And God's people in earlier days had too. Gathered together out of the nations, first as a wandering family, but with a great promise; then enslaved and degraded, yet bearing still the promise; then a nation in the wilderness tried by many hardships, still only with the promise; tried in many battles, still with the promise only; at last they won their city, and built their temple, and enshrined in that city and in that temple the promise of God to their race. And this was done by God's command.

It was needful in the childhood of the world to have a strong city and a glorious temple as the rallying place and visible fortress of the people of God. Nay more, no great idea ever can win its way in this world of men, whose bodily eyes can, and must, judge of bodily things, without, as it wins its way, taking shape, and receiving a body of outward glory as a fitting habitation for the glorious life. Life on earth always appears in a bodily form, and the living thought, the heart power, cannot shake off this law, and will have a form, by degrees, proportioned to its goodness. So Jerusalem became the central point of earthly beauty and earthly strength; and so her king, having seen the baffled enemy fall back like a broken wave from those strong walls, bursts out in the stirring song of triumph and of worship. "Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, even upon His Holy Hill. The Hill of Sion is a fair place, and the joy of the whole earth; upon the north side lieth the city of the Great King. God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge, for lo! the kings of the earth are gathered and gone by together;" and then, after praising God, he concludes:—"Walk about Sion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses, that ye may tell them that come after. For this God is our God, for ever and ever. He shall be our guide unto death." The strong walls, and the glorious temple, telling, as they did, of many a past year of holy trial and holy victory, and speaking in their strength of years unnumbered (so it seemed) yet to come, satisfied the craving for an enduring record, and became a home that could be seen of national honour, a home to Israel for Israel's God upon earth. It seemed impossible that any change could



touch those mighty bulwarks. "Walk about Sion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses, that ye may tell them that come after, for this God is our God, for ever and ever. He shall be our guide unto death." So spake the Psalmist, setting a firm hand on time, looking in holy pride on the hill of Sion the joy of the whole earth, his heart full of the life of God, and, in the strength of that life, telling sun, and moon, and stars, and seasons, to roll on, for they should not conquer the city of the living God. "On the north side lieth the city of the Great King. God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge." So on that day of joy and triumph when they celebrated the retreat of the enemy, they passed in solemn service to the Temple; they saw, as they passed, the walls, the bulwarks, the fortress, and the beauty crowning the hill of Sion, and their song rose resolute and joyous, breathing immortality; people, and priests, and king, high and low, with one common cause, one hope, one joy in every heart; so they passed into the Temple, and spake their words of power, and defied, in the name of God, all the destroying might of time, and looked onwards to the generations yet to come, and fearlessly made their claim of lasting, enduring life. And the sound of their song rose and fell under the great roof; and wall and column seemed to strengthen as they sang, and they as they saw the strength rejoiced. But we—even as we tell it, in our ears there are other words ringing:—"Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." A mournful under-note, a low sad cadence heard beneath the swell of triumph and joy.

To day, brethren, we meet here in somewhat the

same way ; we meet, if ye know why we meet, and many will know who know not yet, we meet to show a sober joy in the setting up of this strong temple-bulwark, as a sort of fortress-home for true school life, and honest training. These are days of change, days of stirring of heart for good and evil, and these walls have risen in time to be a shelter for the cause we love ; and in their strength and massiveness tell of an enduring hope, whilst in their beauty, and in the memorials of carving and windows, in the stone, and glass, and wood, year by year intrusted with some new message from hearts that care for the work in this place, they proclaim that not strength only, but every grace of thought and feeling that makes man's life a precious thing, is intended to find fit expression here. If to you I seem to make the dry facts of this wood and stone, the hard reality you see, speak unintelligible dreams, to myself, believe me, the stone, this great building seems the dream ; and the feelings, and thoughts, the struggles, all that passed before any shape rose to the eye, the years so heavy, when nothing seemed certain but the pain, and the cause of education that was worth the pain, these are the great realities, the wood and stone are the dream. And so it was of old. The Temple is gone, the mighty bulwarks of Sion are gone, but the rejoicing of that day of joy is not gone : the very words they used, we use ; their song of joy we sing ; out of the deep fountain of divine power and love comes from them to us the living ever-rolling stream outlasting stone and wood. When the life departs from one land, its towers fall, its bulwarks crumble away, its Temple may have not one stone left on another, but the life passes on, and in other lands and other generations builds up new shapes of strength and beauty, new temples,

true and rightful children of the old, telling evermore the same story of the strength of God working amidst the tumult and evil of the world, till it raises a rampart, and within the rampart, a temple, to stand as long as they shelter truth and life. And is not this enough? When the life departs do we care for the dead form, or do we wish to see walls, once the home of our best heart-thoughts, become heathen abominations, godless halls of knowledge, or of lust? Nay, let the walls be the dream and pass away, or only stay to mark as ruins, that men once lived who cared for better things, which those who came after them corrupted. We do not love the walls as walls, but because of those who live within, because of the truth they hold. Well indeed I know that all do not feel this; there is no company on earth where all are true; some, as in the Apostle's day, "have gone out from us who were not of us;" others will go, who have no heart for the truth we love, for the work we work, or the joy we joy. Yet time enough has passed to make it sure, that a brotherhood of sober, honest, working believers in the possibility of making the life of a school true and honest, and of continuing the same with greater power in all after manhood has already risen, ready to carry on the best lessons and holiest truths of this old Foundation, men who look back to this our Chapel in which we rejoice to-day as to a tower of strength; and who yet are able to send on active life should these great walls prove dreamlike and melt away because of the treason and meanness of them who shall dwell therein. Yet, if they do melt away, the Temple and bulwarks of Sion did witness of the enduring life that gave them birth, and these walls have a tongue likewise, not the less healthy, strong, and true because we believe in life, more

than in walls. *They are a language*; the voice of a brotherhood crying in this English land of ours to all who have ears to hear or eyes to see; crying aloud that there is an enduring life, something better than the base victories of a few strong knowledge-worshippers, a few active brains, something mightier than science, something worthier than wealth, and that this is found wherever, either here or elsewhere, men band together in the name of Christ to do whatever they do with complete true work as far as they go; wherever men form a brotherhood of helpers, to help the weak, to make every one helpful and useful, to leave no single one uncared for and without interest, to draw out and nourish into self-respect and quiet efficiency common powers and common every-day efforts, which are in truth the life and strength of nations. Still more would I say such a place is found, where those beneath—those many, who cannot look for great personal victories, nevertheless have a genuine hearty strong feeling for truth, where the many are deeply impressed with that silent, secret, prevailing power of never doing an untrue thing, or saying an untrue word, where each in his place believes his place to be a worthy one, and looks on himself as the sentinel of an army might do, who, though only a common soldier, may perchance betray or save an empire by common duty not done or done. This is how we look on you, and such a place we trust this is; so to-day we also take up the old song of life, and look on these strong walls and yearly increasing beauty with faith and hope, as witnessing, and crying aloud our confidence that truth is strong; and take up the old song, and say:—“Let the Mount Sion rejoice, and the daughter of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. Walk about Sion

and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof; mark well her bulwarks; set up her houses that ye may tell them that come after. For this God is our God, for ever and ever. He shall be our guide unto death." The Temple has perished, but this remains, yea compared with this our walls are a dream; and as a dream let them melt away whenever the strong reality of life is gone.

## SERMON XIX.

### SIN MUST BE UNRAVELLED.

GENESIS XLIV. 12.

*“And he searched, and began at the eldest and left at the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack.”*

NO one probably has read the history of Joseph and his brethren without wondering at the strange treatment they received from him in Egypt, and most of all at the pain of mind he must for a time have caused his favourite brother Benjamin. I propose to-day to draw attention to one great lesson conveyed by this history, the lesson how little men know when they are being tried; I would endeavour to suggest how perpetually every generation, nay, every living being in every generation, may be, and is being subjected to the same kinds of tests and probings of heart without their knowing in the least when this takes place. Let us see this going on in the history of Joseph and his brethren. Joseph’s brothers, as you all know, had been very envious of him, and sold him as a slave, and gone back to his father

with a heartless lie about his death by wild beasts. Just think for a moment what all this really means. What kind of home had those men, living, as they did, a wandering life, without neighbours, by themselves? Imagine these selfish, unfeeling, rich, young proprietors with no power to check them; what a family-life theirs must have been with their different interests, and the unscrupulous tempers which could intend to murder a brother, and which actually did make them go back to the old man, their father, the blessed of God, the heir of the promise to their race, with a cruel lie, and allowed them to go on for years with this lie between them and him in their daily life. Rough, and self-indulgent, and proud, how little they thought they would be called to account. Doubtless there were many holy influences also at work in that circle where Israel, the Prince with God, was both ruler and father; there must have been searchings of heart, and times of great mental pain, and distress amongst them; still on the whole a great crime had been committed, and kept up, and it must have poisoned their homes. Twenty years afterwards, and twenty years can bring many changes, twenty years afterwards, these men stand before Joseph, the mightiest prince in the known world; and they knew him not. Now observe what happened. He puts them in great fear, at the same time demanding their youngest brother. This demand at once brought to their minds the remembrance of Joseph, and the certainty that their father would look upon Benjamin's going with them as a sort of second loss of Joseph. How will *they* behave? Are they the same reckless, unfeeling men who in his own case had behaved so ill, or have they gained better hearts in this long time? Then he increased the mystery

and the fear, first by taking Simeon and imprisoning him. Doubtless Simeon's voice, for we know he was cruel, had been loudest for the murder in old days; and it seemed to them, as indeed it was, a secret judgment of God working out, to find him taken and bound. And then again, the money in their sacks filled them with supernatural fear and a sense of the unknown. So they went home with hearts failing, and afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us? And they had to meet their father once more, without a brother; and worse still to demand *the* brother, Joseph's brother, from the old man they had dealt so cruelly by. Then Reuben, the eldest, had to feel himself a father's sorrow: "Slay my two sons," is his vehement pledge, "if I bring him not unto thee." But he has the due reward of sin, in not being trusted. So the prison, and their father's reproaches, and Joseph's demand for Benjamin, all concur to call up the old sad scene, and act it over again in a parable. At last the famine presses, and they set out again full of fear; fear of their father, and the old crime, and the responsibility which the old crime made so grievous, of having Benjamin with them; fear of the stern ruler who had put Simeon in prison; fear about the money returned in their sacks. And this fear and mystery was increased when they were invited to the palace of the great unknown prince, and by the same secret knowledge that took Simeon, found themselves set in order according to their age, man by man, as if God Himself was sorting them.

Now then think of the agony with which these men saw the cup taken from Benjamin's sack. Think what they felt when they stood before the throne and heard the judgment which took him from them hopelessly.



As they had done to Joseph and their father, so now did this strange turn of doom do to Benjamin and to them. Did they envy now as they did twenty years before? Were they prepared to go back with another cruel story, this time only too true, and not through their fault? So the whole crime was being acted over again for them; the whole circumstances were called back into life again; excepting that they were not as yet risen against their favoured brother.

Joseph tried them by a wondrous glass, as it were, that reflected the old sin, and the long-sleeping sorrow again. And they knew it not, knew not that the brother's eye, the eye of him they had wronged so deeply, the eye of the only man besides themselves who knew the history of that cruel day so long ago, was watching them, seeing their countenances change; reading their very thoughts; hearing their words of fear and secret counsel; weighing them in the balance of his power; ready to deal out according to their then decision. They were unfolding their inmost hearts by look and word in the presence of the one being who knew all, the man whom they had sinned against, the man who was their judge. Had they faltered, what had been their fate? ruin and endless overthrow. Had they tampered with their souls, and admitted the leaven of the old envious lie to work, there stood the calm, resolute, though loving-hearted prince, the very image of God in His mercy and His justice, looking on them, searching them out, hearing their inmost thoughts, though they knew not of it. With what a fear must they have thought afterwards how their lives trembled in the balance, and they—ignorant and unknowing. What thankfulness, what awe, must they have felt that they

were enabled in that blind hour of their fate to put away the temptations of selfishness and falsehood which most surely did cling to them, and suggest mean ways, as it seemed, of escape. Escape—Who ever escapes? How it must have thrilled through them to recollect their thoughts, their words, in the presence of their all-powerful brother, whilst they were utterly unconscious that they were in fact passing their own sentence. And if in any heart amongst them there still had lurked the leaven of the old lie what unutterable relief must Judah's manly story, and his giving himself up as a slave, have brought by saving them from the exposure, and giving back freedom, and joy to all of them. Surely they drew breath as men who had come by a hair-breadth escape out of a great peril; as a man might do who in the dark has stepped over a viper, and known nothing of it till a light is brought.

Such is the history. And by such trials God deals with men. And as we live, if we live true lives, we shall perpetually be discovering that the old trials and scenes are being presented over and over again to mankind, who act for the most part quite unknowing that this is the case. A school particularly day by day is putting out these trials which really influence, or in many cases absolutely determine, the main character at all events of future life, though the things seem little, and unlike anything that has happened before. How could Joseph's brothers recognize their own deed in the cup in Benjamin's sack? Yet it did test them again in exactly the same way. Brethren, all our lives are these unconscious choices. God grant us the true hearts not to sin, or at least, if we sin to undo it whatever it costs later, to trust heart and soul to Christ.

## SERMON XX.

### GUILT AND SIN. THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

GENESIS XLIV. 12.

*“ And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack.”*

LAST Sunday I endeavoured to show how Joseph made his brothers go over again the same circumstances in which they had sinned so deeply in his own case, and undo as it were in a figure all they had then done. They did not know that they were thus tried. There was not the least resemblance outwardly to the old day of envy, and sin, and selling a brother ; but nevertheless as they had then sold a brother, deceived and cared nothing for a father, so now they had to redeem a brother, a favoured brother, at the seeming cost of their lives, and to show that they revered their father above their own liberty. I drew attention to the fact that all mankind are perpetually being tested in this unconscious way ; and that our own lives, though we know it not at the time, constantly go over again scenes which are quite familiar to us in the word of God, scenes which

we read and pass judgment on ; judging ourselves in so doing ; just as Joseph's brethren passed their own sentence of acquittal in the presence and hearing of their brother and judge, who heard, and knew all they said, and ratified it.

But there are two points, besides this strange going over again and undoing as it were the old crime, well worthy of our consideration, one of which we will take to-day. The first, that, though all ended well, there was a dark cloud of sorrow, of guilt, over many many years of the life of those men ; and it is no light thing to cloud half a life or more with sorrow. The second, that there was no restoration for them till they had untwisted the guilty thread out of their life, and cast it from them with repentance and pain. I have already touched on what their homes must have been during the twenty years between their crime and the meeting Joseph again. Just think of that guilty secret working amongst those few families during twenty years, the suspicions, the quenching of love, the mutual distrust, the fear lest their father should hear it, their having constantly to meet him, to hear his loving words, his holy faithful advice, his zeal for God, and to feel all the time that they were to him what they were. Those few tents pitched in the green plains, could they have unfolded the thoughts of the hearts within, would have told a strange tale. And then when they met Joseph, instead of coming full of joy, and hope, and love, to their powerful brother, they felt like culprits ; and the fear never left them that he would some day or other take vengeance on them. When their father died they come before him for forgiveness in the name of their dead father ; for they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us,

and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. All those long years their hearts had never known rest. And whatever we may think, when we read a history, of the end of the history, the actors in it, *they* think of the long years of uncertainty, sorrow, and dread, which were to them their real lives. That was their lives; and it is a bitter thing to pass through years of suffering which might have been happy had we chosen early to do right; and even if, as in the case of Joseph's brethren, the thing feared does not come, it is none the less real at the time. How little of our unhappiness is actual; in fact, it is nearly always fear of what does not happen, or sadness about things which are often blessings disguised. Rightly does the Psalmist speak of the valley of *the shadow* of death. It is the shadow of death, not death itself, that in so many cases comes over us, as it did over Joseph's brethren. Their suffering was real, but it was a shadow that caused it, the shadow of death, which God mercifully sent on them instead of death itself; and which would never have clouded their lives at all, had they not chosen to draw it on themselves. An humble, faithful, true heart either does not pass through the valley of the shadow of death at all, or else fears no evil in it, but is able to see the comfort of God there, and to find in the midst of misery pools filled with water, and a passing on from strength to strength. The burning desert sand, the thirst, the heat, the seeming hopelessness, gave the most vivid image to the Psalmist of the vale of misery, with the striking addition that the good man uses it as a well to drink in strength even from the driest seeming sand of burning pain. Whilst in the other well known passage, "the valley of the shadow of death" is the expression used for the great trials that

beset man in his life. And surely this history of Joseph's brethren may show the mercy and goodness of God to guilty man in sparing as far as possible, and sending shadows of death to waken repentance, and fears of evil that did not come.

Yet to us, if we look at this, other thoughts come, thoughts of the shadowed, clouded years during which they, by their own act, shut out the gladness of life from their souls. Why should those forty years, which passed from the time of their sin to their father's death, have been always more or less shadowed, never free from fear? It was a heavy price to pay, the forty best years of life, for the guilty sweetness of wronging their brother, mixed as that feeling must have been even at the time. A heavy price—the days, the months, the years, that dragged on one by one, always worsened, often acutely painful, because of that day. How many have killed the beauty of the time to come before it is born; how many when quite young destroy by their own act the excellence and happiness they might have had. Is it not better to walk with Joseph through the trials of his early days, accompanied by the pure thoughts, and peaceful strength of heart of the man, of whom it was said, that the Lord was with Joseph, with him, even in his dreariest hour; better than to walk in the valley of the shadow with the men of power who wronged him, who had an ever present shadow on them, instead of the brightening onwards, the bright heart passing into sunny hopes, the deliverance, the throne? And, believe me, brethren, in its degree this choice comes to all. We need not be guilty to live amidst the shadows; any want of earnestness, or faith, as far as it reaches, surrounds us with a self-made cloud. Perfect faith clearly would love

and trust, and feel God's love always, and not be deceived by seeming sorrows, or make them. The moment the heart clearly grasps the feeling of God's love so as to see that it is impossible for God, the Father, to deny a child's prayer, unless He is going to give a better thing, that moment the valley of the shadow loses its terror, and patient hope, and peace, and power are there. We make our sorrows almost always, either by actual wrong doing, as Joseph's brethren, or by refusing to accept what God plainly intends us to do, as we know He does from the strong circumstances which mark this intention and bar our path; or else by want of loving trust in the love of Him Who died for us, from Whom all good, all happy, all beautiful things come; Who never denies a true hearted prayer except to give a better thing hereafter.

Brethren, bethink you how sad a thing it is in this short life of ours, when one of us hugs his own fancies, makes his sorrows, and walks through the valley of the shadow in fear and gloom, because, shadowy though the grief be, a thing which does not come, he chooses to believe it real, and clings to it rather than do true work and trust God.

## SERMON XXI.

### TRUE FORGIVENESS MUST BE IN THE FORGIVEN.

GENESIS XLIV. 12.

*“And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack.”*

JOSEPH put his brothers to a searching test before he forgave them. He made them, so to say, unravel their past lives, and with great pain of mind go over again and undo the guilt of their great crime, and prove that the guilty heart was no longer in them. Now observe, Joseph had no intention whatever of punishing his brothers; as far as he was concerned his heart was full of love and longing for them. He felt no malice, he had forgiven them in that sense long ago. He had not the slightest wish to visit any consequences on their heads. These two things are often confounded; I mean, forgiveness in the sense of not intending to punish, and forgiveness in the sense of really doing away with all remembrance of wrong. The first of these Joseph had done years before, very likely had never felt the



bitterness which needed he should forgive. But the second it was not in his power to do *till they deserved it*. Not in his power; it belonged to them, not to him. Could Joseph have gone back amongst them as a younger brother without power, and lived with men whose hearts were ready to murder him any day? Clearly not. But in this heart-work what difference did his power make? Could Joseph live with those men as brothers, trust them, love them, feel a secure affection for them, though he sat on Pharaoh's throne, unless he knew their hearts were free, and loving towards him? In this sense forgiveness was impossible, unless the men to be forgiven were true-hearted. It is one thing not to punish, another to live with men, and love them, and trust them. Life is not arbitrary, as many think it, no not even amongst ourselves. A friend is not a friend by chance, but because whether rightly or wrongly we believe him trustworthy. If he proves false, there may easily be mercy which will not punish, and pity, and kindness, but the lost place in the heart cannot be given back. It must be won back, as Joseph made his brethren win it back, by staking their lives to save Benjamin and shield their father from grief.

Wicked men always think the good and evil of life, with its blessing and its cursing, chance, fancy, favouritism, a mere caprice, which can alter at any time. They stand like Balaam and Balak on the heights, and imagine, that to bless is a mere act of power, and to curse a mere act of power; and they separate both from the hearts and lives of themselves and others; and suppose that after learning to hate good for years by some sudden, juggling, trick, without their trouble, they will find it easy to love it, and be

blessed they know not how. Or by some trick curse their enemies they also know not how. All seems to them a confused exercise of power, instead of the holy working of love ordering all things with a certain order dependent on love. If Joseph had been going to live apart from his brothers and leave them to themselves, then he could have given them pardon and left them, left them with the envious spirit, left them with the murderous heart. True, but what of *them*? What sort of lives would they have led? What would have been their happiness, if the being cut off from a brother's love, and a prince's favour, and being banished to an ever-increasing weight of sin, was the only possible life for them on earth?

Let us turn our thoughts now from earth to heaven, and see in Joseph a type of God dealing with men. The forgiveness of God—Is it simply pardon for sin, and then, as the sin remains, perpetual banishment from His presence, and His love, with the corroding curse of ceaseless crime in the heart? If this is not hell, I know not what is. Yet to live with God, whilst all the devils of unforgotten ever-active sin and hate are in the heart, to live with God in the light of His love, in the splendour of His trust, *that* is impossible. What is God's pardon, if the pardoned man turns away from the great throne carrying with him in a heart that does not die hatred, and lust, and envy, and pride, to work their deadly works within, year by year, and century after century, in a perpetual banishment from God. Think as each age passed by in that unperishing existence, how every hundred years would unfold the endless misery of being left. Left to the fierce passions and desires, no better if we grant the full means for gratifying them; left to the fierce passions and desires that are never

satisfied, that set between heart and heart barriers of hate unquenchable; that make each an enemy to his fellows, unbearable to all who meet him, a curse to himself. Think of this ever-deepening from hundred years to hundred years, for ever. Yet this is what men do choose to imagine when they look on blessing and cursing as chance acts of power, and go on learning to hate more and more, day by day, the holiness they must love, if ever they are to be happy, on the far off dream of a repentance, which means, if it means anything, untwisting out of their heart-strings with exceeding agony the guilty thread of guilty love and guilty hate, which all these years they are so busy in weaving in with daily closeness of care. How live with God, when the whole being revolts from the life and love of being with Him? How be in Joseph's court wishing to murder if we could? Things do not end abruptly. Heaven is only earth on a nobler scale, amidst glorious excellencies, with power able to deal with them. The ruler over ten heavenly cities will have to employ the powers he used on earth, for they gained him his post, in the same way, on things which are to heavenly minds the same as cities are to our earthly ones, whatever the actual difference may be. The judges of the twelve tribes of Israel will exercise their powers, in the same way as they did on earth, on subjects which are to heavenly minds the same as sovereignty is to our earthly minds, whatever the actual difference may be. The talents are given back to be used again. There are many mansions there, and places prepared in palaces, which will be palaces to heavenly minds in the same way as on earth, whatever the actual difference may be. In that great festival of happy life, in the marriage feast of nations and of

worlds, how shall we, brothers of Joseph the Prince, stand before His throne, if we have not laid aside our hate? How join in that great song the scriptures speak of as ever rising up, which doubtless is no voice of words, but the eternal harmony of hearts and thoughts in time, through endless space rolling the cry of "glory, glory, glory"? For thoughts are the speech of spirits in heaven; heart answering to heart, and thought flowing into thought, through the vast ocean of the living waves of the great sea before the throne, a ceaseless movement of goodness, love, and power. How then shall we, brothers of Joseph the Prince, stand with the guilty thread not torn out of our hearts, desolate, banished, amidst the perpetual happiness of that great festival, the perpetual happiness of making others happy, and being made happy, by everlasting, active interchange of help in the rest of unwearied strength? How live on a life like this in heavenly cities, palaces, homes, banquetings, giving and taking all that the most glorious powers can give or take in glorious worlds, where all things are one great melody of love thrilling to and fro, if here on earth we are day by day destroying and corrupting the heart-fountain that is to be the means by which we should reach it? If we are faithless in that which is not our own, a mere copy of the inheritance, a far-off imitation of heavenly wealth by which we are now tried, "who," said the king, "will entrust to you that which is your own?" Hear His judgment. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's,

who shall give you that which is your own? no servant 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."

Earth is the preparation for heaven, and all the powers and feelings we have on earth, are to be taken into that other world, and there we are to live with them. Live, not merely have a pardon, and be dismissed, but live—Live a most active life in the exercise of the same feelings, and the same faculties, which we have been learning to use rightly, as parts of the great harmony of all peoples, spirits, and worlds, working glorious work for Christ and with Him. There is no break, no chance in it, no sudden metamorphose. Joseph's brethren must bring loving hearts, or they cannot live in Joseph's glory. There is nothing more plainly written throughout the whole of Scripture than the unity, the oneness of life. The same being that lives here, and dies here, passes unchanged, excepting in his powers, unchanged in nature, and habits of heart-thought, into a world full of ceaseless energy, and happy exercise of strength, a world in which there is everything to do worthy of being done, everything to love worthy of being loved; and this earth-life has been framed to make us able to do and love that which is to come. The one condition is, that we shall be able to live this busy happy life in harmony with all that live. And Jesus Christ has come upon earth to show us how, and to make us able. People may dream as they please, but the life to come is plainly declared as a practical truth for us to be only this life inconceivably amplified, and made pure, without impediment. Joseph's brethren if they are to live with Joseph in His glory must untwist the guilty thread out of their hearts.

## SERMON XXII.

### HONOUR AND LOYALTY OR A TEMPTER'S POWER.

DEUT. XIII. 1, 2, 3, 5.

*“If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams....And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death.”*

THE only point I propose to treat of in these remarkable words is the utter condemnation of mere power-worship. The worker of deeds of power, if he speaks against God, is to be put to death.

And this subject is appropriate to the season of Lent, when we consider that the greatest instance in all the world of power laid aside in order to work good is the coming of our Blessed Lord on earth, “Who being

in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." We shall the better learn to follow Him, if we learn to love the humility, the entire giving up of self, of which He is our great example. And perhaps we can better understand the condemnation of mere power as an instrument of work so strongly given in the text, than we can the humility, which left the highest heavens to win the love of men.

Now let us turn to the great practical rule laid down in this chapter. One of the most striking principles and rules which I am acquainted with in Scripture. Preternatural knowledge, everyone will agree is as high a form of power as can be shown. God tells His people, that if there arise amongst them such a wonderful person as to be able to foretell the future, and give a sign to prove it, if this wonderful person speaks against God, he is to be put to death. And the reason is given, this mere sign of power is set against the goodness of that God, Who brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of Bondage. God Himself appeals not to His power only, but to the blessings which His people had received through it. This is very intelligible. Every Jew knew that he was in the promised land; every Jew knew that all he called his own, all his happiness, came to him in that land; every Jew knew that his fathers had won the land, and the history of their winning it; Joshua and Moses, and the wilderness, the Red Sea, Pharaoh, and Egypt, and the mighty wonders in Egypt, were household words to all of them. Not mere history, but the

history which told each man how he had received his house and lands from God. And a Jew had to account for his nation and himself being in the land, to entirely rewrite the history of his race, if he did not acknowledge these blessings as coming from God. We see then clearly that no single sign or wonder coming to pass, no amount of power-display, however new or striking, could be set in the balance, by a reasonable being, against the years of blessing going on and on, further and further back, till they reached Sinai, and the throne of God, the Red Sea, His avenging and life-giving power, the wonders in Egypt, His great judgments. Present facts of common life, resting on past facts of divine power, were the proof to the soul.

Still let us look at the case practically. New wonders and signs are very striking; power is very fascinating; new facts, which cannot be accounted for, very puzzling; doubts which flatter our immediate knowledge, and self-love, very subtle and inexplicable. What did God order in such a case? No attempt was to be made to account for, to explain, or to meet by like wonders the power-worker, the new light; the only question allowed was, "is he clearly against the God to Whom you owe your land, your everything? if so, argue not, *kill him*." For under the law the sinner and the sin met with the same sentence; *kill him*. This was the sentence of God on mere power divorced from good, and on power-worship. The most unlearned and simple were perfectly good judges of the question at issue, however subtle or wonderful the new power might be. All they had to decide was, whether the teaching *really was* against the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, really, I say, for we must never



forget that it was under this very law that the Chief Priests put our Blessed Lord to death. But the poor and simple heard Him gladly.

Now brethren our case is exactly that of the Jew over again. A Christian land, compared with the old heathen times, is indeed a land of promise, a home of peace. We live in such a land, we have these blessings, but what is the history? Simply the same; the history goes back step by step, through all the heathen trials and the deliverance from them, to Christ's Apostles, to Christ, to His miracles. It is easy to take to-day sermons preached 1400 years ago, translate them, and make use of them now. What are St Paul's Epistles, and the other Epistles, but the fountain-head of such teaching? And as soon as we get to the coming of Christ, we have reached the Jewish nation, and their promised land, with its history. Thus every year the world grows older adds another link to the chain of blessings leading up to Christ, and then to Canaan, the Red Sea, and the deliverance from Egypt. Every year adds another bit of fact to be accounted for, and so it strengthens as it goes on. God therefore gives us the same stern sentence against mere power-worship, as He did the Jews. New intellect-wonders, new signs, new seeming discoveries, new works of power, are not to trouble us if they set themselves against Christ. We have a world of goodness, felt and seen by all, to set against the prophetic eye of intellectual power, or its dreaming of dreams, even if one or two of its wonders come to pass. The power is good, if used in God's service. But a Balaam standing on the heights of Baal, with their borrowed ceremonies and imitative falsehoods, trying to prophecy against the weak outskirts and corners of Israel's camp, prophet though he

be, man of power though he be, is to be despised. Our hearts are to kill his pretensions.

Why should we think ourselves omniscient that we must needs be able to understand, explain, or refute, everything that can be urged? We have eyes to see the blessings of Christian life, hearts to feel them, a history of four thousand years to account for them; there is the plain, simple strength of everyone learned, or unlearned. God does not ask us to know everything. He bids us set our hearts firmly and strongly on the broad great fact which we do know, that all we possess, all we enjoy, our land of promise, we have from Him; and then, being sure of this, to kill quietly in our hearts insinuations and doubts of His goodness and Power; and not to revolt from Him, till greater blessings and more undoubted good is brought us; but to kill the thought at once which is against Him, though it comes with a sign, with a wonder, with power, yet far oftener as a dream of a dreamer of dreams. This is the stern judgment against power-worship.

Now search your own hearts and see how far your ideas of life turn on being able to get the power to do something which to you is great, some single act or other; the very love we covet we want to win by being necessary to those we love, doing something which may bind them; and we imagine opportunities coming in life which will give us a sort of Victoria Cross in the circle in which we move, or the way of life we think best. There is always the coveting power more or less disguised, the craving for a mastery over men and things, even when we work to use that mastery lovingly; the kings of the earth, that exercise authority, are called benefactors now as of old, and in our dreaming

of dreams we would fain be kings over at least the little spot in which we live, the few people who form our circle; but "be not ye like unto them" says our Lord, "he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve, for I am among you as he that serveth." Servant work not master work, work from beneath of quiet loving everyday need, not work from above, is God's work for ever. The lifelong patience down the silent years, the still unobtrusive, forgetful, unconscious habits, the influence that is felt not seen, these are what Christ means. No single great acts, no dashing forwards clothed with victorious strength to rescue one or two, to weigh down with a weight of gratitude those we deliver, even if we do use strength to deliver and not to oppress; this is not the idea. The idea is an ever-present sense of Christ and His work; an utter disregard either of love or reward, honour or loss, in the daily certainty of serving Him. That daily certainty being nothing less, than looking on everyone with whom we have to do, every act we have to perform, every thought we think, as part of an humble life-plan given by Him to be daily done for His sake. For His sake, who came on earth without His power, and trod the path to Calvary, and hung upon the Cross, Redeemer, King, Creator—hung upon the Cross to save a lost world. Leaving us a command to follow Him. So then let there not rise in our hearts any dreaming of dreams of power, or far-seeing prophetic thoughts of wonders in our own name, or in any name, to make us worship power. Let us look at Christ crucified, and see in His coming down to us, what we ought to do—loving servant's work from beneath, considering

everything in our life that meets us, higher than we are, for it is from Christ, and so for ever quietly going on unfolding a perpetual newness of life-knowledge, and divine wonders, as every man must do, who works as a pupil under God.

## SERMON XXIII.

### COMMEMORATION SERMON,

REV. VII. 5.

*“Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand.”*

BRETHREN, lift your hearts, for a time, from this our earth and all its cares, upwards and onwards to that true world of which we are citizens. Stand in spirit round the throne of God, in the Kingdom to come. Human life is over. We shall look back on the little span of time which was once so full of interest to us; it is all over; gone as yesterday is gone. We look back out of the eternity of the Kingdom on the days, and months, and years, once so weary, or so joyous; all is gone; gone as yesterday is gone. We look back out of the great throng of God's saints and warriors, on the busy scenes in which we once moved, their temptations, and their work; all gone; all in the grave, as surely as yesterday's grave, with its fresh sod, covers one who is gone from us yesterday. But we shall then, at that great hour, look back on this our life as a seed time; gone, because the seed has grown—as on a cradle time; passed away,

because the infant has become a man—as on a beginning, of which we then know the end. Old scenes, old haunts, all that the years have brought in their full hands, all will be there, but in another shape. Old familiar names will be heard again ; old faces welcomed ; all realities of old brought out of the darkness, and dimness, and distorting lights, of this lower earth, into the marvellous clearness of the truth of the Kingdom of God. All, all will be there that true love can want ; all, all, that will bear the searching light of truth ; that heavenly day will see human life transfigured. The old, old, earthly, Christ-like memories, and Christ-like men, transfigured, even as Christ is transfigured. The same men, the same lives, but a glory and a truth, that knows no concealment, shining in them, through them, from them. “Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand,” Holy Scripture tells us, speaking of the Kingdom of God on earth and in heaven. The chosen company of the tribe of Judah, —each tribe in turn, that was not apostate, being recognised and sealed by the angel of God as one company, under its own name—a happy band of brothers, thus enrolled as brothers in heaven ; a brotherhood on earth sealed and sanctified into an everlasting name of power.

So God deals with men. He breathes His Spirit in no uncertain way on the earth. Christ comes and chooses first twelve Apostles ; and they build up Apostolic companies or churches ; and these Apostolic churches take outward shape ; and noble buildings, and wondrous works of beauty and excellence, like a language, declare the glory of the living power that made them, like a growth, shoot out in all directions, as the inward might struggles to make itself an earthly home. Then, as

time passes on, the life too often dies out of the noble earthly body it once made and animated, and goes elsewhere to find itself another home, and to cover the earth with fresh deeds, and fresh signs of its presence. Every great deed, every great word, every great work, every great visible structure, is the Spirit speaking one language or another to the heart of man, it comes from the heart, it goes to the heart—"He that hath ears to hear it, let him hear." For ever and for ever this low, clear, sweet voice sounds through the lands wherever Christ has set His foot. The voice of Christ's Spirit speaking in many languages of word and sign, to heart, and eye, and ear—He that can hear, let him hear. And still the main burden, for man, of the song is, be it on earth, or be it in heaven, "Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand;" that is, each community bound together in the name of Christ, to do Christ's work, is sealed; is recognised as a brotherhood; and has in Heaven the brotherhood maintained that earth began. And this is the plan of God's Kingdom.

Methinks it were a heart-stirring thing to stand amongst the chosen, the noblest brotherhood, the twelve thousands, and know each and all of the royal company, and having, though perchance, not knowing it, been with them on earth, to be with them, knowing it, and known, carrying on the eternal work in Heaven, with true powers, in a true world, where all things are fitted to the work to be done—"Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand." And now is the seed time. We here are sowing our lives. We are a brotherhood. Most assuredly, in this great school the Spirit of God is for a time dwelling. Here is the home of a tribe of the people of God. And the angel passes to and fro sealing them.

This building, and our Commemoration are outward expressions of the Spirit of this Life; are one of our speeches, which a thousand years may listen to, of a Christian brotherhood striving to do Christian work. It is the cause that hallows it. All names but the name of Christ, taken as watchwords, degenerate into chains and bigotry; but a cause lives. I speak to-day of a cause, the cause of true, honest work for God in school; of true, honest life in boyhood; of that work, and that life, broadening, deepening, passing out into all lands; coming back, and going out from this place; going and coming in a great invisible stream. This very building is a voice, solid and strong, and massive, with genuine width of wall and height, but bare and half finished, like the life it shelters; the strong truth first; the dust, and the hewing, and the sweat first—the ornament, and the beauty, and the finish afterwards. And yet not all to be waited for. First-fruits are here, first-fruits in that great window you all see. Something of grace and holy memories, in sculptured stone, of the living, of the departed, even here where I stand, and around me; something, yet far more to come. We commemorate something, we hope for far more; yea, in your lives we hope it.

Did you not hear this week, the heart-wish fulfilled of one, who longed to have the feeling of doing work amongst the poor for Christ, and yet to be doing it as a work of this school—to be able to link himself on to us here? Surely there are many who carry into their life-work this true, strong sense of brotherhood for good, and life united with us here; as he does, our leader, in one of the first direct offshoots that had passed into new life as clearly and undoubtedly part of our life.



And this passing on of the spirit of life is the one only thing we are quite sure of. We are quite sure that honest work, for Christ's sake, never dies, is sealed by God—"Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand." And the life that is passing into secret channels all over the world, as well as with Alington, in East London, will for ever go on, from heart to heart, creating new homes when these old ones perish. This we are sure of, and this only. True, these strong walls may last thousands of years; but they may, perchance, last, like some great fossil form, only as a witness that in this place there was once a strength and power of life. But the life itself—that will pass onwards, whether here or elsewhere; and so we can bear the thought of this which we commemorate to-day becoming a dead thing.

Yet now, at this moment, let us not think so; let us look onward in faith, because we are at this moment, by God's blessing, setting true life, honest work, the realities of both worlds, on such strong foundations that we can hope that even the outward shape shall last as a house of truth. Let us look onwards in faith, because day by day a more steadfast strength is being breathed from heart to heart of loving truth, of loving nothing mean or base; because lives are becoming strong as these walls, and will become beautiful as these windows; because your lives will be taken by the great Heavenly builder as His first-fruits, and set to give forth storied light, and fair pictured brightness in an eternal home. This is our trust. And out of that home, in the life to come, we shall look back with joy and wonder on things we did here, not knowing what we did, but only knowing that we were trying to be true. The highest and the lowest here share equally in this—*true life*. True life in boyhood, passing

into enduring power in manhood. Life in Christ! This is our cause. Everyone can be true who will love Christ. So fashion your lives that this Commemoration may in Heaven find, at last, a counterpart, when our whole brotherhood, all who share with us in any way, is gathered there, and we rejoice in the finishing of the work, the beginning of which we are to-day met to take part in.

## SERMON XXIV.

GRASMERE, THE RUSH-BEARING.

THE SPEECH OF GOD.

GENESIS I. 11.

*“And God said let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth. And it was so.”*

THESE simple words are so simple that they are likely to be passed over as a bare plain fact. But, brethren, the bare facts of Scripture are facts about God, and we never can know what depth of majesty, holiness, and power, may not be hidden in the clear depths of the word of God. Now God has made man in His own image and likeness, and by this means we are able to trace out, and intended to trace out, some of God's counsels, looking at the likeness in our own nature, and then comparing God's dealings with it. We could not for instance have any idea whatever of the meaning of “*God said*,” if we men did not also speak. Let me draw your attention to the speech and words of man, in order

that we may gain some insight into what is meant by the words "God said," "let the earth bring forth grass and herb, and fruit-trees after their kind." When man speaks he puts a thought out, and gives it a body as it were. That is, a part of his own inner life unseen, unknown before, comes out and is known. It does not matter whether the thought is good or bad, high or low, it is something of the man himself come out, and clothed in shape. Every word uttered is a bit of man's life set floating as it were on the sea of time. In this way when we hear a man speak we are really, be the words true or false, brought face to face with the spirit of the man; for speech is the secret, unseen life within coming out to be known and seen in a shape, and words are only mind flying backwards and forwards in air, or letters. But letters are seen, and so are other languages; a picture is a language which tells us of the mind of the man who painted it. In other words, it is the spirit of a man taking the outward shape of a picture, a thought in paint, the coloured likeness of a thought, a bit of mind, a part of the inner man brought out, and given shape, and made seeable. It is a speech to the eye, mind talking to mind by sight. This building in which we are, like every building, is a speech, and is the mind of the builders and dwellers telling their idea of what is right and true. This building is a thought about God put into stone and wood; and whether we know it, or do not know it, does represent this thought. No one ever enters it, or sees it, without receiving a message of some kind from it. Nay more, you cannot pick up a little common thing in the road, which has been shaped by man, without knowing at once that man made it, and very often knowing its use. Why is this? Simply

because the shape is a silent voice telling of mind to the eye. Simply because it is thought, thought which we can see. There is not then one thing made by man on earth which is not man's thought, a memorial for good or evil of the man, nay, the man himself, as far as the thought goes, set before us. This then is language, this the meaning of "man said", it is thought which we can see or hear, it is man sending out a part of himself in a new shape, it is man putting himself in new shapes. And most assuredly this in a far higher way is the case when God speaks. "*God said*" is the living life of the mind of God coming into shape for us to see it.

On that morning of Creation the bare earth lay stretched out before the Spirit of the Living God, bare, bleak, desolate. Rock, and earth, and water; water, and rock, and earth; all hard, and unlovely, barren, waste, and dreary, when God said, "let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth, and it was so." The thought of the mind of God took shape, and became grass, and herb, and tree, every blade of grass, or herb, or tree being a word of God for evermore, God speaking in these shapes to our eyes and our hearts *for evermore*. These flowers, are thoughts of the Living God, they are words of God, the "God said." They are God Himself declaring part of His glory in the great picture-book of the world. A voice that never ceases; for if God for a moment withdrew this saying of His, all would melt away and be gone, as our words melt away, and are heard no more, when our voice stops speaking. God speaks for evermore to man in grass, that clothes the bare hillside with beauty for man's eye and mind, with plenty for the bird, and insect, and beast; in

flowers, that gleam amidst the grass, or grow above it; bright happy shapes, that cheer the weary, gladden the glad; little lamps so full of the light of God, and the pure refreshment of heavenly thought. God speaks to man in trees, that wave on pleasant slopes, or over running streams, and whisper praise to winds that come and go, or glisten in the rain.

All this is the silent language of God to man, as truly a presence of God as on that first glorious morning, when God said first what God still says; and grass, and flower, and tree, became God's word, the shapes in which the mind of God is clothed and seen by man. When we see them we see God as far as God speaks through them. And this is the speech St Paul appeals to, when he challenges the heathen world for folly, and declares, that "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." And, brethren, are not we without excuse if God speaks to us, and we don't care for it? You never look on a herb, or flower, or tree, without looking on God speaking, one mighty chorus of love and praise, a great voice echoing from these your hills, and river banks, and lakes, and becks, ever crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty." Most fitting therefore it is that with understanding hearts we should bring these flowers into the house of God, and thank him for all the pleasant thoughts scattered everywhere in such happy shapes of flower, and herb, and tree; thank Him for His love that makes surprises of colour and tender light, go where you will, in these your hills and dales; for the gladness and the grace, which your great poet, who rests here, spoke of so truly.

I know there is nothing so good on earth that, if the life is gone out of it, it will not as a dead thing, be corrupt; God's own Manna stank and was corrupt in evil hands, but the evil was in the hands not in the Manna. And these old customs, where religious joy comes into common life, are too few now, we can ill spare them; and there is a very holy life in them; a sacred bond of pleasant kindly feeling, peace on earth, good will towards men, that is very precious. It is indeed the first message which this voice of God that speaks in flower, and herb, and tree, tells us; all earth and air are full of it. Just think for a moment what this earth would be without these bright happy thoughts which God has put in flowers and plants. Conceive the desolate wilderness, the howling waste, that would meet our eye. Or imagine, instead of all this glorious light and colour, an utter sameness of dull, dark, colourless vegetation everywhere. Why should not God have made it so? The beauty has nothing to do with the usefulness of plants as food or shelter. Think of such a dark wide earth as this, and then say, is not God's first message, God's greatest message, in the wonderful, overwhelming abundance of flower, and herb, and tree, each beautiful, each full of light, each a happy word of God, is it not a message of gladness, and goodwill, and pleasant genial life? Man cannot say an angry word, or do an unkind act in the presence of these silent witnesses, without contradicting God who speaks in them, and being rebuked by God. They stand for evermore, these flowers, and plants, in the great judgment hall of earth with man, and whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear, God speaks in them, and every cottage door has its message of peace and gentleness from God. Every family is told that God intended life

to be as the flowery earth, not dark and dreary, hard and desolate, but clothed all over with little acts of kindness spreading like the grass; little acts of love bright as the flowers; protecting shelter, as the trees that cover the hills. Common they may be; but earth is beautiful because of them. Little they may be; but all the brightness of earth would be quenched without them. This is their voice in our homes.

But we may go further. There is a grander, greater message even than this. When the Son of God died on the Cross He made the bread, the common bread we eat, be to us His Body. He made the wine, the common wine, (for such it was in Jerusalem) His Blood, to give us life eternal. Here is another Creative Voice in the wheat-field, and the vineyard, or the hop gardens; telling of love divine, of sin washed away by blood, of the Son of God on the Cross. We never eat bread, or drink strong drink, without this holy message being in the bread, and in the cup. And though men make it the cup of devils, they do not a bit the more do away with the message, or prevent its being the voice of God. It *shall* witness against them. Just call to mind that men never take food without bread at least, in some shape or another, being at their table, and that strong drink of some sort or another is very general, and then hear God speaking at that awful hour, just before the Cross, and making bread and the cup we drink, holy, the holiest things of earth for evermore. Brethren, if our hearts were open to these heavenly voices, if we had ears to hear, how softly and gently should we move in this great garden of the Lord, this earth, this Eden, where each herb, each flower, and tree, is God speaking. How reverent and glad would be our journey in a land so thickly sown with holy thoughts;



planted about with the language of God ; blossoming everywhere with His love ; bright with the growth of divine tenderness for us. And when our hearts are tuned aright we do hear it ; and a great gladness and a peace sinks into them from hills that cry " Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," wherever grass can spring, or fern spread fanlike wings, or flower find footing in the cleft rocks, or moss cling to their sides. Cottage and hall alike are spoken to ; bread and wine at home take up in a more wondrous way the great hymn that grass and tree proclaim abroad, in the field, by the wayside ; everywhere we meet it. Earth and air are loud with these thoughts of God waiting on man, wherever he turns. Wherefore, as St Paul says, we are without excuse, if vile word, or vile act, is said or done in their presence ; without excuse, if we live in the great garden of God in the midst of God's words as swine.

But, however we live, one message, their last message, comes to all, when standing by the open grave of those we love, they tell us first, " that the children of men fade away suddenly like the grass, in the morning it is green and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down, dried up and withered," and how, " man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery ; he cometh up, and is cut down as a flower." Even the heathen read this warning in their leaves so beautiful, so frail. But to us the song goes on, and rises in majesty and power, speaking of a life beyond the grave, becoming on the Apostle's lips like the blast of a trumpet, " Thou fool that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die ; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain ; but God giveth it a body

as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed its own body." Here the lesson closes, coming from God, and returning to God. Speaking of gladness and peace in life, of immortality beyond the grave. Grass, flowers, and trees, a precious voice of God, the first joy of the child, the last gift on the grave. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." God speaks in them. Day and night they cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty;" day and night they cry; and pure, and quiet hearts for evermore find peace, and hope, as they listen to the song of this great living book of God. Creation is a language and a lesson; good reason for us to maintain schools in which that lesson may be read aright, and children taught to see God.

## SERMON XXV.

### THE BROTHERHOOD OF LIFE.

ST JOHN I. 40, 41, 42.

*“One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus.”*

IT happens that this Sunday is both the last of our School half-year, and the first of the second half of the Church year. You will have observed how all the Church Services from Advent to Trinity Sunday are taken up in following Christ step by step as God on earth, the Heavenly Revealer of all that a man should believe. This is the main thread, Christian doctrine and belief; but to-day, and from this time forward, Christian practice takes the first place, that life which a true belief should pass into and produce. This week, therefore, has a double claim on us as a time of looking back and looking forward. To you, perhaps, these gravestones of time departed, and of a portion of the journey done, seem

little worth consideration. With so much, as you think, yet to come, the little, as you think, that is gone cannot matter. Believe me, if you ever live to look back on any number of them, you will wonder what a mere yesterday they seem, so close, so short. And remember that they are your first steps ; and the whole of your future life to an absolute certainty depends on what those steps are ; and is better or worse, as what you now do is better or worse. If a man cuts his hand off, or puts out his eye when a child, he is without a hand or eye all his life, however long he lives, and nothing ever gives it him back. And the hand of the practised intellect, by which man grasps the work of life ; and the eye of the loving heart, by which man sees the truth ; these *you* now to an absolute certainty are training and strengthening ; or too often are, as it were, cutting off and throwing away. These times of judgment are important. *You* can afford to disregard them less than I can, for you can change your future more than I can mine.

I would beg you, therefore, to-day, to mark in the text the brotherly influence by which St Andrew at once endeavoured to bring St Peter to Christ, and that St Peter had the same feeling, for he came at his brother's word. Moreover, one-half of the number of the Apostles consisted of brothers. There were three pairs of brothers in the little company of twelve whom our Blessed Lord chose to give His truth to the world. This is very remarkable ; God the Almighty and Allwise, with all things at His disposal, sets about the work of saving mankind by choosing brothers to do the work, and adding to them a small and chosen band of likeminded men, to form a central heart-core of brotherhood from which truth and love

were to go out. I think we see here the human means to which God trusted His work, as the best of means already created on earth, the influence of company, of heart upon heart, of one supporting the other, and all feeling strong, because *together*, all strong, because one influence was felt by and in all. Mark, too, in this little company, this brotherhood, the bond of strength most clearly was, not what each did; for all were gifted with miraculous power, Judas received this and exercised it, so it was not the power of action which our Lord looked to, or which they looked to, in the common bond of strength; neither was it what they said; for their Lord gave all sufficient power in this also, they were not banded together in this brotherly way because of their being able to do this or that, or say this or that, better than other men. I think it is clear it was their character, the secret quiet influence of spirit, and heart, that was the reason of the brotherhood being formed by Christ. And, indeed, is not this true of all real influence? Men stand firm in battle, not because of the personal strength of the army, but because of the feeling that there will be no flinching. The feeling, I say, the invisible felt power of common courage, which is utterly distinct from confidence in victory, expectation of help, or the enthusiasm of a charge. And so it is in life; men and boys resist temptation, and do patient enduring work, not because of this or that brilliant action or example; but because, humanly speaking, the habit of the society they live in is of such a character. And this habit is made up of a countless number of little things; or rather, it is a feeling in the heart of each produced secretly by the belief each has of the real character of those with whom he lives; this acts on the heart, and nerves it to do its own

duty, to love its own standard of truth and beauty, and go on its own way, cheerfully. Not a word need be said; in this heart answers to heart, and feeling is enough. Nay, what little things can work this spirit in men, and touch the heart simply by a heart touch, without any other help, is shown by the fact, that in a less degree these messages and feelings can come to man from the lower creation; and the lonely and defeated king, whose spirit was roused to try one more battle, the seventh battle, because a spider failed six times, and tried a seventh, and succeeded—the lonely and defeated king, roused by this silent and unconscious messenger, is a fit type of the innumerable instances in daily life, where what seem accidents, and are done unconsciously, have proved turning points for the whole future. I have known such things here. Reality is the one point; genuine truth the necessity; pretences are worse than open evil; and people do not deceive each other so much as they imagine. The actual value of the heart service, whether it is sound, or a sham, or evil, does stamp itself gradually on all near, who are ready to receive the stamp, in soundness of life, or a sham in life, or evil, and of necessity increases or diminishes the general stock of each. The bread by which men live, remember, is made up of little grains, and so is the bread of spirit life; everyone contributes grains to the common stock, and does good or evil to others by doing so. This is certain, we act on you, you on us, and on each other; and I can assure you that *the* great trial to us is the dead weight of half-hearted life and work, which is almost immovable. But that means, that the main society life is most affected by the seemingly insignificant members of it.

We shall not be at a loss now to understand the

power and wisdom of Christ's choice of brothers; how the brotherly influence with its strong certainty of unflinching trustworthiness was indeed a lever to move the world. With what a happy frankness St Andrew at once acknowledges the Messiah, with what open brotherly faith he at once brings his brother. We seem to see in a moment the free-hearted generous man, with whom it must have been a pleasure to live, a strength to stand near in trouble. And in the Gospel of to-day our Lord gives us the other side of the truth. In hell the unhappy man thought of his brothers; thought of the influence he had been to them in hours of wealth, and ease, and worldly enjoyment, and in his agony wished to undo the impression. The careless life, and jesting, and amusements, which he had done his best to make them think a fine thing, now came back on him in deep remorse; and he would fain have sent to warn his brethren by a message from the dead; he, who not many days before had been with them, and could then have given them the best warning, the ceaseless influence of a true life.

Now, brethren, for we are brethren, both as Christians, and as members of this school-brotherhood, to-day is a day of judgment in some degree for us, to-day a part of our lives belongs either to records of happy life, or to the sad remembrance which, if not repented of, will be a sorrow even in hell. To-day I would ask you what your influence has been, your true life-influence, during these past months. It is not a record of Scholarships, or prizes, lost or won, that makes up the life of this place. Your lives are not represented by Class lists, or even by work done, or words said; it is not your own loss or gain I would have you weigh at this hour. But I ask you, do you each honestly think at this

moment that your contribution to the stock of life here has been good or evil? That your neighbours, boys and masters, have been lightened, or weighted, in trying to do good by you? Observe, it is quite possible that you may have satisfied every claim, and yet that your real life shall have been a dead weight on others. Or it is possible again that you may yourself have not been harmed much by things which you repent of, and yet may have left much harm in others, who do not repent.

But be this as it may, you are asked to turn your eyes away somewhat from your own loss or gain, and to turn them on to the common life, and common honour, and common character, of this body of workers, and to answer honestly to your hearts, has my real heart feeling been such as to make a feeling of strength and free generous effort in those near me, or not? Have I rejoiced with St Andrew in having found in my work the work of Christ, and gladly gone to bring my brother; or have I made it difficult to feel good, and to do good? Self-deceit is easier about ourselves than it is when we look to the effect of our lives on others. There are many entanglements in our own motives which make it possible to be blind; but it is harder to be blind to the probable influence of our true life on those near us, if we can be brought to see that there must be an influence. At this moment all the vile words and actions, said and done, are crying aloud before God's throne against the sayers and doers, who have brought the curse into this family of God. At this moment the faint-heartedness, the hanging back from life, the dragging weight on the upward pull of good, is most surely working shame and unhappiness in those who have helped to make good heavy. Judge yourselves, brethren. Our departure from



this earth, ought to be, is meant to be, a going home to God, the great holiday of home-life beginning. How shall we welcome it if we have none of the brotherly spirit of St Andrew, who rejoiced to find Christ, and hastened to bring his brothers also? "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar," remember; and he most surely hates his brother, who makes it difficult for his brother to love good.

To those who this time close their life here, and never more can do or undo anything within our society, as well as to those who remain to pass on traditions and feelings by which this school is what it is, to all, masters, and boys, and servants, I would say on this day of judgment to us, "Christ's service is a brotherhood, all take part in it, and the life of this place is the blended life of all, judge yourselves this day whether your own share in it is good, or evil, whether those near you feel, *feel* your heart power as a comfort, a strength, a making hard things in life easy; whether you can be *trusted* in Christ's kingdom. For surely Christ chose His Apostles, brothers, because true brotherhood was the best thing on earth of things already created, because they could be trusted." Brethren, once more I say to you, *judge*.

## SERMON XXVI.

### COMMEMORATION SERMON.

ECCLES. IX. 11.

*“The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.”*

BRETHREN, we all wish for something enduring ; the thought of dying, of our works dying, and passing away, is painful and repulsive. It is not death that is in our hearts at this hour, but an eager sense of lasting, of a work that shall bid defiance to time and decay. Brethren, the blessing of God is the only thing that abides, and makes to abide, on this earth of ours. “I see that all things come to an end, but God’s commandment is exceeding broad.” And God’s blessing works by giving life, and by keeping alive. This day is to us a festival of life. Let us glorify life and rejoice in it, the life of Christ, the living power that makes to live, and upholds in life. Before which, tender and delicate as it always is, all things of force, all things of bulk, and weight, and destroying strength, give way by degrees. *For the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*

Life reigns in all the worlds, however powerful the hindrances to life at times may be. The real work of the world is not done by the swift or the strong, but by the multitudinous, universal push of humble, irrepressible life. The quiet life, the every moment's growth, the everywhere presence, the innumerable movements of little unobserved innumerable living movers ; these are the true agencies. All creation is one vast parable, for ever and ever declaring this truth, to eyes that see and ears that hear. The mighty winds that rend the rocks, and earthquakes that heave and struggle, and volcanoes that burn, have but little to do with the Lord even in the work of this earthcrust on which we stand. But light and sunbeams, and rain and dews, call gently to the hidden life ; and life, shy and tender, peeps forth at the call, and comes out, conquering and irresistible, clothing with grass a thousand hills, making hill and plain alike to live. Silent breathings, as it were, of God go out, and pass to and fro unseen ; and wherever they go, life breathes, and flowers in every field, and all that feeds or gladdens, spring into life. Storms may rage, and earthquakes destroy, and volcanoes rend and scathe, but every rent is clothed by degrees ; every scar touched with the living touch ; every waste place made full of life again ; and ruin is seen no more : *for the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*

The very earth tells us this. Go out, O man, stand beneath God's sky, and count the blades of grass, and leaves that wave in air, and see, and worship Him, Who, far as eye can reach, or foot can tread, or wing can fly, has called forth, and is for ever calling forth these witnesses of life, this conquering weakness of herb and flower, these frail delicate existences which a child can crush, and yet

which sustain the habitable world. Go, see Him write on hill and dale, on fruitful field and forests that clothe the land—how life, quiet, unseen, weak yet resistless life, is all in all, *how the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong*. Go, ponder, how, eternal as He Who works, blessing and life, we neither see nor know in what way, with unsuspected ceaseless presence fill the world, fill it without our being aware that it is filled, fill it as silently, in their coming and going, as light the messenger of God; so that not a moment passes without this great company of God's words that live in all that grows and lives, growing and living unheeded by us, doing what they are sent to do, as a great army, filling this earth with all that is really power, the power of life: *for the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong*.

And is this truth less true in the world of men? That world also has its armies, its philosophies, its powers that shake and destroy, great to hear, and great to see. But the violent passions, the famous outbreaks, the upheavals, what do they do? They shatter the nations, they break in fragments, it may be, half a world; a fear comes on mankind, and many fall down and worship. But there is no life in this; they that sow the wind, still reap the whirlwind, and perish. The crash of falling empires may well appal the boldest. But wait a little, wait, and all is still; and ruined homes, and graves, and barren lands, are all that is left of the glory and the noise. Till perhaps, by degrees, life comes back; that which destroys passes away, but life comes back, perchance, into desolate homes, and hearts more desolate, more empty still; now here, now there, a little tentative shoot as it were, a stir, a movement; a delicate tendril of loving work revives; a patch begins to be cultivated; a little

teaching is possible ; an impulse for good pushes out amongst the ruins ; the old can sit in the evening and think ; the young can learn and play once more ; and so it goes on ; and by degrees a new creation rises, a subtle web of woven life veils and covers the rents, and ruins, and sharpnesses, and sorrows, and crimes, that witness to destroying force—and life is lord of all again. *For the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*

And this parable, this history of life in parable, leads up step by step to Him the King of Life, Christ Jesus, The Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, in Whom all truth centres, to Whom all things that are true return. We know, Lord, with King Solomon, “Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which we have builded.” But we know how out of the heaven of heavens the Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things, came as Redeemer and King to men. And He came solely with His Life. His Life alone was the one only Almighty, which by living, and being sacrificed, recreated a lost world. *For the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* In the midst of conquering armies, imperial pomp, wealth, majesty, kings, and throngs of men, a little infant in a manger is life, “The way, the truth, the life.” Life is there. The triumphant life of God incarnate. We cannot understand it, but we can see that it is so. We can see that in spite of all we think of power, all we either fear, or glory in, of force, whether force of armies, or force of knowledge, Life, conquering, supreme, divine, was on earth as a babe, as a child, as a lonely man. Life, nothing but life. *For the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*

By the sea of Galilee the country people watched the waves break as many a generation had done before, and saw, as evening closed, the distant hills half dark, half light, in the rising moon, as we might look on these familiar fields, and on the shore a figure standing alone, save a few companions with whom He spoke, and they knew they saw Him Whom some deemed their Prophet, Whom we know to be God Incarnate; they knew, and yet they knew it not. As Jesus moved thus through the land with only His own life to uphold Him, how many a heart quickened with a sense of help. Into that foul revelry of power—cruelty, lust, and gloom—which covered the earth, a hope had come, a freshening expectation, thoughts that would not be put away, for Jesus moved through the land. We see here in God Incarnate the same truth which we have seen in God's human world of men, which we have seen in the lower Creation. Life unassisted, life quiet, secret, powerless, unseen, having nothing, and yet doing all things. There is no explaining it. Nothing to be said, but that life *is* life. Whether in the manger, at Nazareth, amongst the people, in city or field, by the way or at the sea, there the plain fact is, the inexplicable, of Life in its divine Life-power. Yea, the Lord of Life, all faint and weary at Calvary, the Lord of Life on the Cross dying as man, the Lord of Life in the grave, buried as man; all these show true life working, the immortal freshness of Life divine. *For the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*

Jesus lived His Life. There is the Gospel. His Life lives on earth in those who love Him. There is redemption working. All other truths by the side of these are nothing. Life is the one truth. Life and

nothing else, the life that is from Christ. What a marvellous truth this is in a place of life, in a company of the living. What is this place but a well of life; these walls surround a fountain of the living water of the living God flowing out from hence into all lands. Out of life depths came the dearest part of this home of life, out of life depths in the days of old; and years passed, and still there was life to keep it alive; and years passed, and a fresh burst of life came out of it, and so it lives to-day. In weariness, and weakness, and hopes that almost died, the life that is from Christ raised it up to its strength: *for the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*

Brethren, you all have a life to live. To-day we glory in life; we are here gathered together within the sculptured stone, itself, as it were, life petrified, that holds the living water, the entrusted life. For life must have a place to dwell in, a worthy place; but let us not forget that the fair outside is not the life itself. You are the reality, your lives and ours; these solid walls are, compared with this, a passing cloud. And not only you, the meanest hanger-on in the streets of this town gives and receives something of good or evil by being brought in contact with this home of life. All share this. I ask your lives, give those, and there must be victory: *for the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* Life alone is conqueror. To-day we glory in life. Nothing great is single, for all true greatness is of life, and life is not single, but life calleth to life everywhere; voices of life, from age to age; out of the years that seem gone the tongues of fire lighten; out of long-forgotten graves the living flame still brightens onward; whoever have thought pure thoughts, or said brave words, or done the

truth, have left a life in the world that blends with ours, a life that passes on and lives, no mere feats of knowledge or power, but life; these we remember and think of to-day, whether we knew them or not. We call to mind the old who have worked, and endured, and pressed their hands on weary brows in the days that are gone; we call to mind the young who have left us not long ago, him last, who, summoned by God so early, so suddenly, went away. The blended lives of all the generations go to make up the lives of all who love God's truth. Every one shares it. Traitors of course there are, from time to time, liars in their own lives; but they pass away. Our hearts are with the brave and the true, with all whose lives uphold God's truth; who have gone out from this place, or are now here. It all belongs to us, each has his part. The faithfulness of the faithful is our crown, whether the faithful spirit be shown in the calm deliberate last effort to save<sup>1</sup>, under the cold strangling rush of the deep river; or in the no less deliberate devotion of the long day's work in poverty-stricken parishes; or the quiet unpretending every day well-doing of any of our brotherhood in America, Australia, or India. All belong to us.

Let us bless too all those unseen influences scattered at random wherever there is true life, those spirit-breathings known to God alone, life-touches of humble simple life, such as are in every society, the common work of all who live truly. In this faith we live and work, the treasure is in human hearts, the seed is sown and springing up, the spirit has found kindred spirits, and this cannot die. *For the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* We fear not as long as there is

<sup>1</sup> Armstrong.



life. Whatever is of Christ, whatever is unselfish, whatever is true and honest in this our work, shall live. Yea, if it please God to keep pure hearts and living lives in this very place, then even these perishable walls shall not perish, the very glass shall remain, the unseen blessing of the Living God shall keep them, to tell to ages yet to come of us, and our hopes, and our beliefs, who built them. There is an immortality even on this earth in a living work. Whenever hearts have taken fire, and the kindling energy of truth been felt, it either keeps its own home strong and inviolate, or it goes forth and makes and finds new homes. Yet we children of time would not willingly see the home of truth, which has been ours, perish. It shall not perish as long as it holds true life, as long as you are true. Ah, how wonderful life on earth would be if this sunk deep into every heart, if the mingled power of lives, the sober certainty of every life here blending into one, could be felt by all equally; if each could trust himself first, then his neighbours, to act in a brave and steady way. The blessing of God works in life and by life, it is silent, it is for everybody, and the life is nothing by itself, only a quiet, daily, ceaseless, little progress, a steadfast belief in a good cause, a working every hour the work of that hour because it is right and good, knowing nothing of what will come of it. So many little actions of innumerable lives meet, and become irresistible, as many rain-drops make the rivers, and fill the earth with gladness. Be patient then in well-doing; they can afford to be patient who know they must win. And we have a sure faith that nothing living, truly living, ever dies. We know in Christ that there is a life here, which is of Christ, and will not die. Fear not. *For the race is not to the swift,*

*nor the battle to the strong.* To-day we rejoice that this is so, for we are thanking God for Life.

Now, to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, who was and is, and is to come, the only wise God, be honour and glory, dominion, and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

## SERMON XXVII.

### SCATTERING THE WORKERS, SUCCESS TO THE WORK.

ACTS VIII. 3, 4.

*“As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.”*

ST STEPHEN had just been killed, and the words you have heard tell us of the first great attack made on believers in Christ. There had been signs of what was coming. The rulers who had crucified the Lord were not likely to leave His Apostles untouched. Twice already had they been imprisoned and brought before the Council; then St Stephen was executed by the sentence of their high Court; and now the pent up rage against the new doctrines broke out. How many homes must the stroke have reached, death and imprisonment, with the fear. For it is no great empire that is touched, but a small circle. Two or three moderate sized towns and their neighbourhood, where most people knew each other,

and many were related. Into a narrow space like this imprisonment and death, and the fear of them, were suddenly let loose. Try and set before your minds the kind of life of those days. Think of the searchings of heart that the Miracles, the Preachings, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, must have caused in every household. As rumours reached now one now another; as one or another heard or saw something positive, and brought the news home, how hearts must have been stricken with all manner of feelings as the sword that Our Lord had sent upon earth pierced between every fibre, so to say, of their life, and forced them to test each other and themselves. And now came the further trial of imprisonment and death. Many a man, as he walked back in an evening up the well-known road, must have looked wistfully at the scenes he loved, and tried not to think of the morrow. Many a wife sitting in her home must have gazed into the fields with tearful eyes, every moment expecting some new blow. Happy those whose minds were made up. Yet what a hurried flight; what longing last looks as they fled; what anguish for the left behind; what prayers for the loved ones in the enemies' hands. No more happy days together; no more familiar work in the dear old places; but flight, scattering, imprisonment, death. Think of such a state of things breaking out amongst us here. What should we do? How hard it would be to leave all and fly, how hard to stay and be imprisoned, scoffed at, insulted, beaten, put to death. Yet men felt then as we do now. Homes were as much homes. Fathers and mothers, women and children, did not love each other less than we do. *Therefore pause for a moment*, and think of those ravaged homes. Brethren, is this the "*therefore*" with which

St Luke ends his narrative? No. "*Therefore*," he says, "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." What a wonderful testimony to singleness of heart in him and in them. He and they had but one idea, the work; and how it would best be done. All the sorrowful tearing asunder of old ties and the personal wrongs are nothing; a complete silence is kept; and, "*therefore* they that were scattered preached the word" is everything. Now, brethren, I wish to put plainly forward that this undivided eye on the work is a very different thing from the view of work and life common amongst ourselves. Personal success, I mean to say, is simply the one standard by which judgment is passed both by the workers and by others. Personal success. Nobody ever dreams of inquiring, Is there a real living cause, and has that prospered? The desolate homes, not the spread of the Word through scattering, is the thought. And no doubt many in those days also took that view, and pitied or scoffed at the hunted men and women, whose flight spread the Word of God. If there is a living cause, it is worthy of any sacrifice. If Christ indeed is King and has a work, then a man is not a fool for dying, if need be, to do it. Now do not suppose I mean that most workers are working for themselves only, or that they have no idea of duty and Christian sacrifice, far from it. Yet look—the single-hearted simplicity of truth which saw in scattered families, ruin, imprisonment, death, only a further extension of the preaching of the Word and renewed success, is that represented in the working ideas of our generation? Is the silence, that eloquent silence, about the ruin, and the pain, our idea of life? Look at that standard, and then see, not whether we reach it, but

whether English work is working towards it, yea, has begun to work towards it. I say nothing of the mere striving to win something for ourselves. That clearly, however common it is, is not what we are searching for. That must bring much disappointment, that must depend on outward things, and cannot succeed in earthly sorrow and overthrow. Yet before we leave this, let each think for a moment what his present strongest wish, his dream, is, and whether it does not stand or fall with prosperity and outward success—if so, it is not Christ's work. Yet I would rather draw attention to a far subtler and more unsuspected evil. I would draw attention to the thinking of the good object *first*, and putting it in our counsel, *second*. To the setting Christian work before the mind as an object, but then in practice considering how am *I* to do it? How will *my* plans work out? instead of how can the work be best done? What does the work require? The first looks at Christ's work through self, the second looks at Christ's work, and at that only. There is only one cause which can bear to be looked at in this independent way, the cause of Christ. And this means, if we are speaking of ourselves, all thought, work, and action, which purifies or raises man's spirit, and strengthens his spirit life; and if we are speaking of others, it means, all thought, work, and action, that tends to make the society, be it school, or village, or town, or household, more truthful, more pure, more unselfish, more kindly, and happy. And the text supplies a good test of this. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." Such life is a seed in itself that bears scattering abroad and takes fresh root. The Apostles and their congregations were scattered. Let us take this. The test of good work

with them, was that the scattering and dispersion was a success. Now turn. The gathering a congregation, the having numbers, the wide circle of influence, the many ready to follow a man's word, these are the general tests both to the worker, and the world who judges him, of his success. And how bitter is the mortification when all this is scattered. *Therefore*, says the man who has worked through self, therefore my life work is ruined, I have failed. Yes, if the work is not seed work, will not bear scattering, he has failed. But the true work, out of the empty homes, and the prisons, can see a fresh sowing. This comes of looking straight at the work, and at nothing but the work. With us here this would mean first of all the public life. Each and everyone having steadily and straight before his eye the earnestness, the honesty, the purity, of the life in this home of Christian education, where Christ in a most special way is setting up His standard. Will this bear scattering? Yes surely it is a seed having life in itself. If there is this singleness of eye on the main work, then the more you are scattered, whatever the cause may be, you are life-seeds sown by Christ, and your life is a success. Next there is the life of each, where each, steadily, and with a straight eye, looks at the work he has to do, the training he has to undergo, as blessed in itself, if well done for Christ's sake; and so it will be done steadily, regardless of winning or losing at the time, steadily, with nothing allowed to come between it and the heart. The heart will be set flat against it, with no temptation stopping the touch; and the touch will take a full impression, and learn well. Will this bear scattering? Yes it will. No power can take away that reward of work, when the free heart has got its work within itself

in enduring strength. Fling such a one where you please, he has his life with him, it cannot be taken away. It is a life-seed ever springing up, however the outer world may alter. Hearts like these at home, or abroad, in time of trial, in time of peace, out of the palace, out of the empty home, and the prison, are ready with their "*Therefore* they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." But, brethren, these things are not chances, or accidents, as too many are pleased to think. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap. There is the most absolute certainty in this. There is not one of you here who does not hold his own happiness in his hand to keep, or—to throw away. Not one who does not. Don't be deceived. Are you working for a cause? Are you, however weakly, trying to get a good cause *first* in your thoughts and actions, and to set your heart straight and clear at it? I cannot but think if the young really knew, or would believe, how entirely Christ our King has made a certainty of life, a certainty that His service begun early, and daily persevered in, is happiness, and cannot fail, that there would be more steady union amongst us. A society like this is just where there ought to be this union of like, and as for the scattering, as a fact we are scattered by various causes everywhere out of this life centre. Brethren, as we scatter over the world in all lands, and all professions, let it be the secret thought of every one, "*Therefore* they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word," preaching by a manly life, and good example, if by nothing else. Then there can be no failure. The single eye and single heart never fail.



## SERMON XXVIII.

### FIERCE IDLERS, WEAK CHARACTERS.

ST MATTHEW XI. 20, 21, 22.

*“Then began He to upbraid the cities whercin most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.”*

WE have seen, brethren, that the sin of these cities and of that generation was simply this, that Life, and a living cause, came into their streets and they did not love it; that a call on their hearts quiet and unpretending came, and they did not and would not hear it. In a word, they crushed true life, and hated true progress. Let us look again to our Lord's words. Just before this judgment and “the woe to thee, Chorazin,” He compares the generation to little children sitting in the market

place, and calling to their fellows, and saying, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." The comparison of Christ for these men was to the idlers in the market place, with no set purpose, too weak either to play, or to mourn, without character, without steadiness. Yet these were the fierce, revolutionary spirits of the day; these were the men so ready with the sword; the turbulent revolters who shed blood so freely. All their noise, and ferocity, and murderous violence, their plots, and their bloody wars, were judged by Christ to be the idler's foolish, purposeless, weak, want of true character. And mark how we see that now; many hundred years ago all of it came to an end. It has left not a trace. What they thought so great, so manly, so to be admired, is but a bloody page in history, one of many, and is gone as if it had never been; whilst the life they despised, the quiet life they judged so mean, the little seed of life they thought so beneath them, is now the living Christian power that upholds the world. Were they not idlers? childish idlers? little idle children? not men in heart? When we see what they did, and what came of it, what they rejected, and what came of it, were not these fierce men who could not love life and a living cause, little children idling in childish folly? little idle children, who mistook their own toys, and their quarrels over them, for manly life. And mark too how our blessed Lord stamps the character on them of having no *life*, of wanting any living vigour. Lo, He says, as it were, you were only asked at first to care for something more than idle quarrels, something with life in it. It was no hard thing. We piped, we sounded a stirring note of joy, of active

living joy, and—joy and the real sport of a dance did not rouse you; you had no life for it. Then we sang songs of mourning; and the reality of the sorrowful heart found you without life to feel it. They were only tests of life, of life with some purpose in it, that were applied, but they cared for nothing true. Neither real joy, nor real sorrow, touched those fierce idlers in the world's great highway. Doubtless those who did listen would have been, nay were, led on to greater things; the joyous sound of the pipe would have deepened into the note of the angelic trumpet sending the Christian warrior over sea and land in Christ's army. And the mournful music nerved the martyr, and breathed undying patience into many a weary heart. But at first it was nothing but a living Call, a few notes of music to speak to the heart life, to touch the common human feeling, to find an echo, if possible, in the gentlest, most simple way, making no demand, asking for nothing but for attention, and for life.

The piping in the market place, the low sweet musical notes of joy or sorrow, the thrilling harmony of life divine, who is there that hears it? Never more than now has the question needed answer. The music of God, who is there that hears it, in this stormy, vainglorious, market place crowded with quarrelsome idlers, which we call the modern world, and boast of its enlightenment? What heart thrills to the touch of life? Life and truth never take the same shape twice. You can learn the old notes by heart, and yet be deaf to the new tune. The old notes may ring in your ears, and the new voice of life be shut out of your hearts, because of them. Life comes with its movement, its thrill, its demand on something positive; dance, or

mourn, which you please ; but do something ; idle no more in aimless quarrels, and useless attacks in the great market place of the world ; violence is always weakness. Hold your tongues ; check your hot hands ; stop your running backwards and forwards in a mob ; listen ; listen, for God's music ; fall into the ranks, and do something orderly ; if joyful, dance ; if sorrowful, mourn ; God has music for both ; follow it ; do something orderly ; something that demands union, and sympathy, and caring for companions, and suiting yourselves to the main prevailing tune, which in a quiet way allows no one to rest, allows no one to move out of the right measure. There is a music of God ; and every foot, and every voice, of those who have the sense and heart to hear it moves and joins in harmoniously. There is no disorder, no idling, as soon as the sounds of life reach the living. Life, loving life, with its works of love, the quiet musical thrill of feeling and holy power, floats in our air, breathes round our homes ; yea even in the busy market place, and common work spots, and amongst the idlers, the note of the piping may be heard. Quiet, low, easily drowned, but never ceasing, the tune of divine life, the harmony of God, gathers into secret harmonious movement all who hear it. Wherever you see men silently helping, silently moving on to bring comfort, silently giving themselves up to bring others to good, striving to give happiness, obedient, and ready to act under others, and with others, there you may know the sweet note of Christ's piping is in the heart ; and the voice, and hand, and foot, are following the tune that allows no discord. There is a gentle mastery in the music that will be obeyed. But it is life. It demands living movement. If joyful, dance ; if sorrowful, mourn ; but the

deadness of idle tumult, idle noise, idle quarrelling, idle destroying—that it will not stand. Unheard and drowned for a time, it bursts forth at last with the blast of the Archangel's trumpet, and the horror of God's sword of judgment. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin."

Brethren, on this Sunday there is once more a pause in our life, a quiet hour or two between the old that is gone, the past half year, and the new that is coming, the holidays and their future. Surely the everlasting tune, the thrill of the music of God, with its silent absorbing melody, is within these walls this day. All the air is heavy with questionings. We breathe as it were a harmony of constraining power. Life calls to us, the hours of the days now gone have a voice; and their whisperings, the whispered tune, will have no denial, will know from us now in what spirit the life of Christ has found us, and has left us. Has there been a great harmony in your lives? That is, one grand, united effort, in which each and all take part to help on the work of life, to set forwards the good cause of life, to bring peace, and happiness, and onward effort, out of all that has been done; in a word to make it easy for every one to do right, to move in tune. Anything done for self must be out of tune; for tune supposes common harmonious movement; and the tune of God admits no rival. You can drown it in noise, you can refuse to dance to it, and run to and fro in senseless selfwill, but, if heard, it allows nothing but common united movement, all with one aim, and one spirit of obedience. Anything done for self must be out of tune. Many notes have been struck, notes of joy, notes of sorrow and steadfast strength. Say, have you danced? Say, have you mourned? One or the other. Or have you merely

idled in your own vain folly with no thought of the great cause, the cause of life, the cause of Christ? Here at all events how true it is that God's music calls on you for nothing that is not a natural and easy thing. It is a dance, active, orderly, allowing no wrong movements, allowing no wandering, no selfwill, no noisy outbursts of our own, but still only a dance, no heavy burden, no severe strain, no heart wearing anguish, nothing as yet but healthy life. By and by, perchance, the full perfection of the graceful activity of body, gained in the dance, the full perfection of the obedient, trained, intelligent mind, which can listen and distinguish God in the market place, may be tried in the fierce onset of the idlers eager to destroy, or in the patient wanderings in the wilderness of the world in the effort to save the lost. Who knows? But not yet; not yet. As yet all that is asked for is life, life set to a tune, life harmonious and sweet. A great song might go up from here, louder and louder as the years roll on; circling over sea and land in ever widening waves of harmonious work, a song that might at last swell, and mingle in the dread harmony of the Archangel's trumpet that wakes the dead, and heralds the second coming of the Lord. Yet remember *now* the tune is very low and pleading, silent almost, a gentle voice of quiet life. It seems a slight thing to put it away; a little foolish selfwill can do it; a little noise can drown it. It is but a simple appeal to the heart; a little thing to love; yet this quiet tune of life decides whether you are on the side of life, or not. Whether you are in tune or out of tune for living united, helpful, ready to welcome good with its gentle growth, and its many shapes. How do your spirits answer to the Spirit of truth here? Do they chafe against it? Are

they in tune, or out of tune? Remember the low sweet sound, that calls men now to dance to the tune of God, becomes to those who will not dance, the everlasting doom, the "woe unto thee, Chorazin." The worst heathen are less condemned than those who will not love truth, who hate the harmony of God, who detest life and its claims. On this last Sunday, brethren, think long and well. Have your hearts beat time to Christ's music, are you in tune?

## SERMON XXIX.

### COMMEMORATION SERMON.

LUKE XVII. 20.

*“And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come; He answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”*

THE Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Nobody is to be able to say, “There it is.” Yet there is never a moment that it is not with us, whether we know it or not. The Kingdom of God is within you. If each one of us has any real share in the Kingdom of God, it is in our own hearts, and our own lives. If you ask me how, and where? I can only answer in my Lord’s words again, “The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” I can only say, no man shall ever be able to cry, “There it is.” You might just as well ask me to shew you life, and to bring under your eyes the hidden immortality within you. Yet it is possible to awaken some feeling of an awful unseen reality, it is possible to have some love for a glory that is round us and may



be ours, though as yet unknown. We are indeed familiar with the idea of not knowing, and not seeing, what yet may be known and may be seen. What are pictures to a blind man? What is light? Yet though the blind cannot see; nevertheless the wonderful perfection of mind in the picture, the divine glory of light in light, is there all the same for those who can see. And you, if you do not see the divine glory of this light, which daily lights us, are so far blind, utterly blind, though it serves you in your daily work. There is not a pebble, not a grain of dust, of all that we use so freely, which we really know anything about. Look round you, there lives not the man upon this earth, or ever shall live, who can tell you any final truth whatever about these walls and their stones, or about anything else which you see and touch. We men move in this great palace of secret power, which we call our world, like insects, able to make our nests there, but not able to interfere, or alter, or really know anything in the wondrous fabric. Yet wherever we turn, all Creation, if we would but listen, tells us the same story of a secret marvellous kingship somewhere. We are able to feel this if we will.

Again, what does the poor plough-boy know of all the wonder and the glory of the great deeds and noble words that make earth better than a sty for swine?—the undying thoughts of mighty minds, that glow and live in verse and prose, age after age for ever, so that we here receive into our hearts words, and let our eyes rest on lines, first born thousands of years ago, and since then passing to and fro on earth amongst earth's greatest and earth's best, like a sacred fire ever ready to burst into new warmth and light whenever it meets with a mind able to catch fire. Yet the plough-boy knows nothing of this. And

how few of you, who might know, reverence this ancient everliving glory of books, and men's thoughts, and men's lives, shut up in these wondrous seeds, these innumerable grains of mind, these scattered spores of animate power, these floating waifs of down borne on the breeze of time, that are so lightly blown hither and thither, and yet are so indestructible, and where they find a resting place, take such firm root, and grow and seed again. It is a secret glory.

How vexed you would be to spend days with some hero in disguise, and not know, till he was gone, that he had been there; not know, till on some triumphant day, very far off, you caught sight again of him you had despised, who might have been your friend if you had had any eyes for greatness. Even so you have no eyes, too many of you, no heart, for the secret glory of words that live, and of books, that are heroes and kings in disguise, yea, heroes and kings, not of armies or of peoples, but of the noble spirits of all time. There is a secret power, an unknown grandeur, a glory despised, spread all around and about you here.

Yet this is but knowledge; and knowledge, as such, is of the earth earthy, and must be grafted on a better stock before it is really precious. The Kingdom of God is not there. There is a better secret than this, which nevertheless you can cast away even whilst you cast away the seeds of knowledge, and feel no reverence for books and great men. For there is within you a life to be trained. There is God's spirit of love of good and hatred of evil, which *is* trained wherever you turn, whatever you do, trained to see glory when right is done, blinded against seeing when wrong is chosen. So that the traitors, for traitors there ever will be, who wilfully set themselves

against the knowledge they ought to strive after, do also at the same time begin to deaden the heart-feeling, the sense of right which should, day by day, be watchfully guarded and quickened into a delicate new sense of perceiving God. Without this, what would knowledge be. If this world was emptied of all living men, the sun and moon would still be as before, the earth and its seasons, the rain and the warmth, the rivers and seas, and all the wonders would be wonderful as ever; but the mere fact of life being nowhere, of the life of living men being away, would make an emptiness unspeakable in this wonderful world, wonders everywhere, things to know everywhere, but how empty without life to understand and see them! But is earth less empty when peopled with men blind, and deaf, and dumb, to higher things? Who, however much they know, have not the heart to feel, and the spirit to love, the holiness and the happiness of God's Kingdom. To whom all the secret glory of goodness and grace would remain evermore secret, who would stand on this glorious living kingdom with all its life, and purity, and loving power, and sympathy, and divine spirit flashing backwards and forwards, like birds on a telegraph wire, which stand on it with senseless feet, and rest there, and touch it, and know nothing of the secret thrill of power which is passing messages from life to life through it. Even so men too often touch, and taste, and see, and live their life of sense, and never know or feel the hidden kingdom thrilling round them through all they touch; or, as they have some perception, and intellect, and skill, more than the birds, they may be baser still, and though told that there is a message sent from far in a secret way, may choose to go and listen at the posts, and hear

the wires vibrate, and the murmur of the air, and the hum of the unthinking wind, and interpret what they hear of the wind as the message, and say, "that is all," and say, "there is nothing more," though heart be speaking to heart, and spirit dealing with spirit, and God making Himself known to His own in all the things they too see and hear, but by a wondrous difference of elements and movements of life unknown and unknowable by the others. "For the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; the Kingdom of God is within you."

Oh, how empty would earth be, if the love and help Christ brought to the sorrowful, the heart-stricken, the poor and needy, was emptied out of it; and all the peace and all the purity of life gone, and sin and knowledge only were left, hard and hateful, tyrants in the heart of man, and tyrants in the dealings of man with man; all hard, no sympathy, no help, no kindness. Yet if you have not the life of Christ within, the life of Christ, in the midst of which you live, will be unknown and unseen by you. The heart only knows the heart, the spirit alone sees spirit, and by so doing makes each common thread of daily life a telegraph of God. The days may stretch along in a dull monotony of seeming useless hours, and common tasks, but if the spirit of God be in the heart, the message comes without fail, and runs along, and is read, and felt, and treasured up within. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Yet hidden as it is, secret, wonderful, most high, you all know something of it. Not one hears me this day who has not within his heart some memory of moments when he felt truth near him and in him, some happy impulses to do brave unselfish actions, some thoughts of special love and honour, known only to himself, for what he has

seen nobly done, or read of; or it may be for some little tender common thing, which was not little to him when kindly done; for a look, or a word, a smile, or a tear, which sunk into the heart, and will stay there, only because of its simple unpretending sweetness. What are these but beginnings of spirit life and spirit sight, beginnings of the feelings which do great things, and understand them; great things, as Christ counts greatness, beginnings of the humble, watchful, reverent love, which can know and feel the hidden things of God; beginnings of the peace which passeth all understanding, and of the purity which sees God. This is what Christ brought us, into this we are baptized, this and the earnest desire to make others see it. We move in a world full of this divine though secret power. Yea, we ourselves witness to it to-day.

I know of course that this building is to some only common stone and common wood, and this day to some only a day of idle folly or blind dull contentment. I know that it is hopeless to think, as long as earth is earth, that any society will be without its slaves, who drudge in a slave's spirit, and see nothing higher; and its felons, who watch their opportunity to steal and waste. So be it. Life is too strong, where there is life, to be ruined by this. God's kingdom and the living message, calm and out of reach, spreads itself unseen by them on every side. There are hearts, who can feel, who can begin to guess at and spell out some of the message in these walls. To whom there is something more than wire and wood in this our Telegraph. To whom the stone speaks, and the carved stone is a psalm. Who see the strength of life upholding it, and the life-blood in its mortar binding it. Who begin

to answer the question to themselves, whence came it? who begin dimly to behold, as in a dream, what it is. They know that not one stone would have stood upon another here, had not the boys of this school been as a body true, and so each stone is to them an honest bit of boy-work, or a true word, or a true deed, built into its course; and each tier as it rises, is as it were the life of a generation, a solid stratum of unpretending character laid down strongly for the next to rest on. Then they look forward, and fondly think, yea, they believe, that hundreds of years shall pass and the great message still be thrilling here, as it shall surely do if the life lasts; and if it does not, if the baseness within gradually suck the strength and the blessing out of these walls, and the blindness and the iniquity which is ever at work, get strong enough to rule supreme in this place, yet even then the Lord of Life shall claim it back again; and though He ruin it, will still let the joy and the hope, and the earnest life, and the peace of work well done, speak from its ruins, and perchance touch hearts more, when they see the shattered greatness of days that are gone, and the heart hopes of the old generations, (for we shall be an old generation to them), still beautiful in their decay, touch human hearts more than it has done in prouder hours; and, as many an old Abbey has done for us, breathe holier thoughts and a more faithful spirit into those that come after us, who may then perchance see in what remains only the hopes and the longings after truth and Christ, the strivings only, and not the shortcomings, not the meanness, not the blindness of the builders. So, brethren, whether it live or whether it die, let us pray for a blessing on these walls and this work.

## SERMON XXX.

### FEARFULNESS UNDER A CURSE.

2 TIMOTHY II. 3.

*“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”*

THESE are the words of St Paul; they express his view of a good man's life and character. The Christian man is a soldier of Christ, and must be brave and enduring. Let me put side by side with them the words in the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Revelation, which St John heard, when “He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write : for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars,

shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death." Strange, the fearful head the list, and are the first condemned in that cursed company. Again, our Blessed Lord says, "Fear not them that kill the body." So we see to be brave, and enduring, and to overcome, to have the true soldier spirit, is Christian, and of Christ ; to be fearful is to be of the company of those who shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Mark this well ; you especially, if there are any such here, who think it manly to do evil, and spiritless to do right. The brave alone enter heaven ; the fearful are cast into hell. Bravery, endurance, and victory, are not accidental, or wonderful, not matters of chance to have or not to have, but sober necessities of common life ; and fearfulness is not a pardonable weakness, but a deadly sin ; and like any other sin must be steadily fought against and overcome. Bravery is Christian, fearfulness is devilish. The common sense of the words, the usual meaning of bravery, and fearfulness, in the first instance does well enough, and as far as it goes is true ; the good soldier of Christ is in the ordinary sense brave, as far as meeting anything bravely which plainly God means to be met. The good soldier of Christ, man or woman, is brave, and the temper of the Christian is bravery.

St Paul was brave ; in the Epistle read to-day we hear him telling us shortly some of his trials and perils. Let us try to see a little, to get a dim guess at what he really did. To preach the Gospel at all, what did it mean in those days, when Christians were counted by tens and twenties, and a few hundred here, and a few hundred there ; and all the power and all the learning,



and all the splendour of the world was heathen? Just imagine yourself at that time, on a sunny morning, in the East, riding down the hill side amongst the vines, and the olives, when the worship of Bacchus, and the temples of Athene, were all that the vine and the olive spoke of to men in general; when the very corn crop, and the broad plain with its harvest stretching far as eye could reach, proclaimed Demeter, or Ceres, or the like; just imagine, I say, riding out from the trees on the hill side, and seeing a great city glittering in the morning light, and step by step drawing nearer to it, and going in to the crowded streets of some ancient Birmingham amongst its busy mobs to preach a new religion. How strange it must have been to look on the faces of the men in the streets, and hear them speak your own language, and speak to them, everything looking the same, yet nothing the same between you. How strange to stand amongst their temples, and their palaces, and calmly face death again and again! Or indeed, for I think it a still harder thing, how deadly to face the heavy, all-surrounding sense of numbers, the multitude of men, the eyes of curiosity, scorn, or hate; to face this, with all the human feelings that a highly educated man like St Paul had within him. St Paul cared as we care for the looks of his fellows, for the soldier's glance of power, the grace of ladies, the temptations of intellect, the charms of literature, the judgment of the learned and wise, the applause of great assemblies. All these were as keenly felt, had as strong a hold, then as now; a sensitive, highly strung man, like St Paul, must have felt them *very keenly*. How well his practised eye must have read the changing countenances, as people crowded round him; how his great heart must have gathered in

its calmness, and its strength, when, as at Lystra, the tide of popularity turned; and he saw, as he must have done, those who loved him violently pushed aside, and the human wolves getting round him with their cruel eyes; and as he gazed, met everywhere the set stare of angry hate; and then was hurried into the street by the well-known houses, which looked so quiet, so full of peace that was not his peace, till they could get stones to kill him; and here one would stoop; and there another; and yet a few moments, and the deadly shower would come, the fierce dull blows that kill. Think of this, brethren, and how he was dragged out of the city as dead; think how often St Paul went into a town to face this kind of thing; and how often he passed out again bleeding and wounded, or fled for his life; what a *brave man he was!*

Or take him in the storm at sea, how calmly he cheers the men and takes the lead amongst them. But the great waves, and the darkness, and the ship labouring heavily, told on him as they would on us. Or when he appealed to Cæsar, after the many perils past, how strangely wonderful, how full of thrilling interest, must have been the ride of the last ten miles into Rome, up the Appian Way. The great imperial city before his eyes the whole time; and that ten miles one long street of splendid tombs, and Roman graves, and monuments; fit emblem. So through the street of the dead he passed along the very road we can go now; and, every step he took, the distant palaces and temples glittered glorious in the early summer sun, and all that glory was in his eyes death, the lion's den; the splendid charnel-house, where Nero brooded and tore his prey; the accursed shrine of devils, and devilish

power, into which he must enter. Yet his eyes and his heart were touched, as ours would be touched, by the outward magnificence and strength; and strange must have been his feelings as every step brought out some new sight of beautiful devilry; and he, alone, with Christ his only friend, passed up a prisoner into that great capital to stand before Nero, to speak to the conquerors of earth, to face the city mob. The little company who came out to meet him brought him great comfort, but no help; they could tell him of spirit power and happy Christian faith, but not of anything to set against that deadly grandeur. So he passed along the road to the imperial den, quietly, happily talking with them, fearless.

When Paul saw the brethren, we are told, he thanked God and took courage. The very words "took courage" when he saw them, show how lonely hearted he must have felt before, as well he might feel; how in his spirit he longed for some human consolation, as he was about to see at last the city of palaces, the stronghold of earthly power, the fairest, grandest sight, that eye could see of man's work, the foulest, and most poisonous, that sin triumphant had ever dwelt in. St Paul coming up the long straight road, mile after mile, drawing nearer to so vast, so pitiless, so splendid, a place, had his human feelings, we may be sure; for—when he saw the brethren, who had come out to meet him, he took courage. Cannot *you* put a little feeling of your own into the history of St Paul, and picture to yourselves his fresh, free, brave, spirit, his daily manly readiness for all things, his tender heart, his great experience, his quick knowledge both of the signs of conviction, of melting, of grace, and also of the changed countenance of hate, and the murderer's eye. How calmly brave St Paul was. Well he knew the

meaning of his own words to his young and faithful friend : " Do thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." A brave man's words they were, and a brave man's heart experience, the freshness of his free spirit, that knew nothing on this wide earth which could make him step back one foot when Christ had work to be done. The brave are of Christ, the doom of hell fire is on the fearful. This is a very striking judgment from the lips of the Prince of Peace, from Him who called the little children in the gentlest way to His side. Yet this is His judgment ; and most assuredly St Paul, by his own life, both in word and deed, preached and demanded bravery, and the strong heart.

I trust you have had some feeling to-day for that brave man, St Paul. I trust you will be able to picture a little to yourselves the sort of life, and the sort of feelings, he every day lived and felt ; to picture the freshness, the freedom of his heart, his fearless acceptance of any shape of trial, danger, or death. And if you thoroughly feel and see that his trials were the same sort of trials that ever are happening, and his bravery the same sort of bravery that bravery now also is, you will understand St Paul, and enter as a friend into his brave life, and desire to be brave like him.

## SERMON XXXI.

### TRUE BRAVERY.

2 TIMOTHY II. 3.

*“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of  
Jesus Christ.”*

THOSE who really believe in Jesus Christ are brave, and St Paul believed in Christ, and St Paul was brave. St Paul was brave, because the spirit of Christ was in him; brave, as not fearing danger; brave, as not fearing the looks, or words, or opinions, of men; brave, as bearing pain and insult. But many men are called brave. Let us look further and see what the bravery of a soldier of Christ is, and whether it is the same as the bravery of other men, or not. What is bravery? Few think seriously and truly over this question. Clearly there is no bravery in using great strength or great skill successfully. To be in full armour, as it were, when others have none may be very successful, but is not being brave. Much that poets have sung of as brave, is only the strong in armour conquering the weak without armour, the man as it were beating the child; where the child,

who was beaten, the weak, who met death unarmed, was perhaps brave, not his conqueror who got the name of it.

Many a hero in ancient and modern times is glorified, and many a conquered man despised; when the so-called hero trusted to his strength of mind, or body, and felt confident of escape, or victory. This is not bravery. To feel sure that for you there is little or no danger, is not heroic. This was not St Paul's bravery, when he was a day and a night in the deep; or, though no sailor, thrice shipwrecked, and ready to face it all over and over again. Where was strength, and where was skill, or experience, as he floated on some plank in the stormy sea during the long hours of that night and day? He has told us nothing more of it than those words: "a night and a day in the deep." What a proof that is of bravery; it did not dwell on his mind enough to speak of. Yet as night closed in, and he lay in the waters, how slowly must the hours of darkness have passed; how he must have wished for day if only to let him see, and, if there was any hope, get the chance of being saved. How wearily the splash of the waves, and the howling of the winds, must have sounded to him all night long, and perchance the stars above, as he looked up from his bed of waters, shone quietly down in serene splendour whilst he was tossed about helpless. And when day dawned, and still no change; and the sun rose and shone over a waste of heaving billows, and still no change: and evening drew on again, and still he was there, there with the brave heart, and the praying spirit, and the trust in God, which made him afterwards not think the danger worth two lines in his letter; that, I say, was to be brave; to face simply, and with no human power, exhaustion, and cold, and hunger, and death; a

very different thing from a strong man going into battle confident because he is strong.

Again, many will dare really dangerous things when numbers look on, and great praise, and shouting thousands cheer them to their work. This was not St Paul's kind of bravery. For the sake of Christ he could take pleasure in infirmities, in weakness, in shame, and go from city to city, though beaten here, stoned there, imprisoned, attacked. Many again really will face bodily danger for various reasons, who are fearful cowards before the opinions, the sneers, the praises of their fellow men. But just see St Paul alone at Athens, quite alone, his companions not yet come, at Athens, the city of learning and literature. St Paul, the learned and intellectual man, walks about the strange magnificent city and begins, as usual, to speak to the people, faces the philosophic, keen-witted Athenians, as calmly as he had faced the ignorant mobs before. It was a striking sight, that earnest man, that man so impetuous by nature, so sensitive, so quick, and full of life, standing on the hill of Areopagus in the midst; and round him, the Stoic with his logic and his hard unreality, and the Epicurean with his selfish, subtle arguments, and the scholars, and the pupils, and the sharp curious crowd on every side—standing there, I say, to tell of Christ crucified, and the resurrection of the dead. 'Twas a brave thing to look round that ring of practised speakers and ready arguers, to look into the hard eyes of the great philosophers of the day on their own ground, in that famous city, surrounded by their own followers. A brave thing for one solitary man, as refined, and learned, and intellectual, as they were, to stand alone in the middle of such a circle and fearlessly meet

their scornful question, "What will this babbling say?" He did not care for the eyes of men, or what would be said of him. He was master of his own spirit, and nothing earthly made him sink his eye. He could look philosopher, or emperor, straight in the face, calmly humble.

Take one more instance of his wonderful self-mastery. Most men, however great-hearted, are somewhat ruffled by tumult, by outrage, by blows, by injustice, and uproar. Not so St Paul. St Paul, on the last visit to Jerusalem, of which we are told in the Acts, shows yet this great proof of perfect courage, that when all Jerusalem was in an uproar, and the Jews dragged him out of the temple to kill him, he alone was calm. The doors of the temple were shut behind him, the furious mob was beating him to death, and only when they saw the chief captain and his guard did they leave off beating Paul: and the violence and pushing of the people was so great that he had to be carried up the stairs by the soldiers; then at last he got leave to speak; and read, please, the speech he made, which is given us in the twenty-second chapter; read his calm, quiet words of power, by the light of these facts, and think of the speaker as standing on the castle steps, just escaped from death, in pain, grievously beaten, a few minutes before being knocked to and fro by the murderous blood-thirsty throng, on whose faces he now looked down, standing on the castle steps; think of what he had just gone through, and of that sea of upturned angry heads, thick as corn at harvest, every face full of hate and threatened death for him. But his words came forth calm, peaceful, clear, conciliatory, just as if he had sat at home and prepared the address in his own room. That was indeed to be brave, yea to be more than brave,



to have perfect self-mastery, to be cool, collected, undisturbed by violence, or pain, or any other cause of fear. St Paul was indeed brave, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Brave as the conquering spirit of the Life of Christ within makes a man. Not hope of escape, not confidence in strength or skill, not the intoxication of numbers, or of praise, not shame of disgrace, not mere insensibility made St Paul live his brave, good life. The man who after his severe scourging at Philippi was singing in prison at midnight, full of happy faith, though not knowing what the morning might bring, that man had within himself a power of life, which neither danger, nor pain, nor solitude, nor contempt could touch. St Paul was truly brave, brave to the heart core, brave in every way, and at all times.

And remember the good soldier of Jesus Christ must fear nothing, must be brave. That army has no place for cowards. Numbers do not hide them, they cannot hide undiscovered in the general mass. In Christ's army Christ requires every one to be brave, whilst He has declared, speaking from heaven, "that the fearful, the unbelievers, and the liars, shall have their place in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." It seems a fatally unexpected sentence at first sight. But the servants of the Almighty King of Life surely ought to have some of the life strength of His Almightyness in them. To-day let us see clearly that true bravery wants no shams, no false strength, but is of the spirit of life within. Hence women and children are very brave when they calmly meet their trials, as they have no hope of escape in their own power. Let us see clearly that true bravery is of the living spirit, and can face the spirit trials of contempt, or loneliness, or

undeserved shame, or false praise, or false popularity, and do without the helps, which make many a man called a hero, who is but a great coward in armour as it were, and seems brave because he feels safe. True bravery is of the spirit; it is the Life of Christ in the heart; and fears nothing within, or without, so long as the good cause is not betrayed; so long as Truth is upheld. It is perfect self-mastery unselfishly following Christ. "Do thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," is St Paul's command, and St Paul was brave.

## SERMON XXXII.

### HALF MEASURES.

ST LUKE XVI. 19, 20.

*“ There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores.”*

IN those old days there were no poor laws; the beggar was either helped by his neighbours, or died. So we find the lame man brought daily to the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, to live on the alms of those who went in, and the blind sitting by the road side near the gate of Jericho for the same reason. The custom continues to the present day; and the knowledge of this throws, I think, much light on our Blessed Lord's narrative. Lazarus was laid at the rich man's gate. He had been cast there, is the expressive Scripture word, cast there, with no friends really to help him, just cast there out of the way by those to whom he was a burden, yet cast there in order to be fed. And there is no doubt

that the selfish care which cast him there reckoned, and rightly reckoned, on the selfish kindness of the rich man to feed him. For how striking is the picture given us in a few words of this rich man, not only of his purple and fine linen, but of his daily jollity and self-satisfaction, for such is the meaning of the Greek. A bad man, whether rich or poor, does not lead a joyous life; evil passions, and hatred, and all their train, prevent it. A man must be self-deceived, a man must be able to cheat himself into the idea that he is not so bad, that he will pass muster, that he has many merits, before he can *enjoy a worldly life*. And this is just what the prayer of the rich man in hell shows us; He thought that he, and his brothers, who had lived like him, had not been warned enough, that God was unjust in not giving him, and them, clearer teaching. This also is just what Lazarus being fed at his gate seems to teach us. He did feed Lazarus, and expected him to be grateful for it. He reckoned it a good deed, and enjoyed his riches, because in an easy-going way he had allowed the crumbs from his table to go to the poor. We may well think that, as he rode in and out of his gate, he looked down with some satisfaction on the poor beggar lying there; and perhaps condescended to ask him how he felt; and gave a servant a careless order to see he had something that day; and passed on, pleased with himself, feeling his riches pleasantly, and chatting with the riders at his side about a rich man's duties. And he knew nothing of the angels silently watching there at the poor man's side; and he knew nothing of his own coming doom. The realities of life were hidden from him. He died, and thought he had not been warned enough. This is the point I wish to draw your attention to; his idea that he had not been

warned enough, which clung to him even beyond the grave; so ignorant was he of the love of God, and of God's dealings with men. Not warned enough—let us examine this. Whatever other warnings he may have had, we only know what we are told in the few verses of his story as told us. He had Moses, and the Prophets; he had many temporal blessings; he had Lazarus laid at his gates. But nothing of this came home to him. His heart was not reached. Even in hell, when the hard facts of judgment had overtaken him, and mistake in that was not possible any more, even then, he is at a loss about his life on earth, and does not see how and why he ought to have lived differently.

Now is not this a most true picture of many lives, a most real and continual feeling, this hazy, uncertain, half-hearted handling of life; this ignorance of any decided plain path; this not knowing how to begin; for there lies the evil. Moses and the prophets, the holy teaching, seems so wide, and to have so many sides, and to be so neglected, or so inapplicable; and society, and the habits of society, goes on in a steady current, and silently and surely sweeps along every one as a matter of course. And each thing by itself is not wrong, the purple is not wrong; the fine linen is not wrong; the horses are not wrong; the carriages are not wrong; that is, simply taken by themselves; and it may be that the rich man never made an actually wrong use, an immoral use, of any part of his riches; and yet the giving himself up to the stream, the being carried along by the whole selfish, unbroken, tenor of selfish use was death and hell. But how do otherwise? How begin? How many go on with the stream for want of answering this question. It is a very real question,

this question how each one for himself is to break loose from the habits of his world, to step out of the crowd, and begin for himself. So many have a vague desire, a half wish, to lead good and holy lives; and, if asked, would say, they hoped they were doing right; and, if pressed, would say, they could not see what else to do. I think this was the case of the rich man here with his pleasant gentlemanly life; and his knowledge of Moses and the prophets. Now is it so hard to know how to begin? I boldly answer; No; Never. There was Lazarus laid at the rich man's gate. Why did he not begin with him? His helplessness cried aloud to any one with a heart. His friendlessness cried aloud to any one with a heart. His wretched, dying, condition pleaded with eloquent silence for real interest, and real human love. There was the beginning at his own gate; put there, not to be hunted out, or discovered, put there; and calling daily with unmistakeable wretchedness for pity and help. He knew the man, he saw him, he allowed him crumbs, he blinded his own heart by giving what he didn't want, and went in and out with an unanswered call; and went in and out with eyes that saw a kind of picture; and, went in and out and despised the seeming trifle; *though angels watched by the dying man's side.* Had he begun with true feeling, and turned his heart on to the call at his gate, there was a beginning, which would have opened up an endless path of loving works. For link by link each man is fastened to someone else; and new interests open the moment any one really cares for a human being in need.

Compare with this careless going in and out, and looking on the dying man without real interest, the good Samaritan riding down the dangerous road, and

his behaviour to the dying man there. How he got off his horse at once, though stopping there might bring the murderers on him too, how he got off his horse, broke off his journey, cared for the man with his own hands, lifted up the heavy, half dead weight on to his own beast, and then walked by his side on that hot, and dangerous road till he got him safe away. Who does not feel at once the difference between this man's heart, and that of the rich man riding carelessly in and out, doing no more for the poor cripple than would just ease his own mind? Who does not feel what a beginning the rich man might have made, had he had but a grain of the heart feeling of the Samaritan? Had he but got off his horse, and done any little act of kindness himself, so as to have got interested, and been led on to more. What a snare half neglected duties are, where enough is done to deaden feeling; where all the annoyance of seeing the beggar is gone through, and none of the blessing of getting near to his heart, and wakening feeling, and all the gracious influences of loving work secured.

Brethren, look to your own lives. This is every one's history. There is no difficulty where to begin. There is always some Lazarus at the gate for each of us, some seeming trifle; yet close, and making urgent demands, *waiting* for you to begin; some neglected duty; some unlearnt lesson; some unloved bit of human life; some despised rule or claim on your time; a Lazarus, who may be, in your eyes, despicable, and full of sores, but there, lying at your heart door, not to be got rid of, waiting for *you*. Whenever you go in and out of your selfish inner life, there it is in your way, *waiting*. Begin with it, boldly get down from your

selfishness, and set to, and you will find the poor, despised beggarly task, or duty, has something sweet in it after all, has life, has feeling, has angels watching round it. Begin, and you will be led on further. The next step will be plain; and when you take that, the next; and so you will be led on, and love the life to which you are led, and learn to know it to be the life of God. That hazy, indistinct idea that the rich man had of life being hazy, and not plain, is the surest sign of one who has not begun to live; of one who has seen Lazarus indeed, but only to observe his sores, and to fling him crumbs, which he does not want himself; of one, who has never faced the human interests and calls at his own door, the thing to be done first, *before* he takes his ride for his own pleasure and pride. Be sure, brethren, every one of you has close to him at the door a messenger from God, a trifle perhaps, an annoyance, a sore perhaps, but for all that, a messenger from God, put at your door, which you must see, and cannot help passing before you go about your own concerns. And your eternal life depends on how you look on this Lazarus of yours, and whether you pass it, and go out or not. God's call must be attended to first, the thing that is closest to be done and cared for; afterwards you may ride your own pleasant ride, not the less pleasant, if it be sweetened by the thoughts of duty done, and all the gracious feelings which the love of Truth can bring.



## SERMON XXXIII.

### THE GREAT REALITY.

ST MATTHEW XXV. 45, 46.

*“Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”*

REALITY, what is real? I mean no subtle discussion, but a plain question. The moment any heart thoroughly admits a great reality, or takes anything, whether truly or falsely, as a great reality, for that man all life is another thing from what it was before. And all the various opinions, delusions, and mistakes in the world, however numerous, matter no more to one who has a reality than the darkness of a forest to a man on a broad road through it. One road is enough. So also one reality settles any number of falsehoods. Such a reality is death. It is a fact that all die. Here, then, we have a

universal truth. Everyone of us in a very few years will have lived our life and been placed in the grave. Everyone of us before many years have passed will have left behind him earth, and all belonging to earth. "We brought nothing into the world, neither can we carry anything out." Now, as there is no escape from this; as this is the most absolute earthly certainty we have; as we are all sure that we shall pass from this world, and look back on it as past, and that this time must come, this is a reality to start from. God tells us "after death the judgment." Our own hearts echo this. We are created to feel the truth of it, to feel it to be a necessary truth, that creatures so fearfully and wonderfully made as we are, acting and re-acting on one another in such ceaseless intricacies of joy and sorrow, pain and mercy, should give account for all this living power. We are not alone, none lives for himself alone, it is not possible that all the good or evil man does to his fellow man should perish as if it had not been; "after death the judgment."

Well, let us suppose that we have died; that the mourners have gone home; that the world is going on as usual without us; that all is over; (remember this is the one great certainty, this time must come). How shall we feel? How meet the realities of a world where all is real and no lie finds place; where what we are, when stripped of everything but what we are, is the only truth for us? If that is the question then, it is the question now. And there can be no doubt about the path, no doubt how to begin with such a fact as this before us, with the certainty that a few years will find us in a world of absolute reality. Nothing can really be of benefit which death destroys. We feel sure that the

realities of God's kingdom will open on us after death, we feel sure that all doubt will be at an end; we feel sure that all falseness and delusion will be at an end; but are we not equally sure that we shall look with a very different eye then upon many earthly things from what we do now? And are we not equally sure what things those are which, by-and-by, when we look back from beyond the grave, will seem worthless and slight? Who will care then, for example, what men think of him? Like false witnesses in a great court, the false glory and the false abuse will equally be valueless. We know that what we are, not what people think us, will be the only matter then. The calm after-death eye will measure things differently from the fleshly eye; but we know the things that the after-death eye will measure so calmly and set aside. What, for instance, will it matter to the great poet that his works and his name ring on earth as a glory to the last day, if God has judged and condemned him and his works? What an agony this earthly glory, if known, would be to him in his awakened shame and doom, this tide of glory flowing accursed to the end of time.

How many doubts would vanish if men began early on the simple plan of trying and testing their doubts and temptations by the great certainty, death, and measuring their lives by the after-death eye. A broad, plain road would show itself amongst the tangle and the wilderness of opinions. But this is very far from being all, we not only have this infallible measure, for infallible it is for a long way, and when we have trodden that long way by its help the difficulties would be over; we not only have this infallible measure of death, but we have an equally infallible instruction what

to do, both from our natural reason and from God. Death is a test, a measure. What are we to test and measure? Can we make no mistake here in beginning? Cannot we do much bad work ignorantly, which, indeed, the after-death eye will detect, but without telling us what to do better now? Nay, we have infallible knowledge how and where to begin, if we will but do it. We think so much of self, that we lose sight of the fact that everything we do concerns others. Every word we speak is of course spoken to some one else, almost every movement we make is in the sight of some one else. Even that which seems out of sight passes into our characters, and soon comes out into sight in its growth, although the seed may be hidden. We perhaps think of self, but any judge, be it man or God, looks on the life acting; and all the acting of the life is towards and with others. How we treat others is life. This is a true definition of man's life—his treatment of others. And this is just what Our Blessed Lord takes in the narrative of which my text forms the last words, as He does in many other places. Human life in effect, He says, is the way one man treats another. The Blessed are bid go into the kingdom of His Father, because He was hungred, and they gave Him meat, He was thirsty, and they gave Him drink, He was a stranger, and they took Him in, naked, and they clothed Him, sick, and they visited Him, in prison, and they came unto Him; and all this had its value because done in a simple every-day way, with no thought of anything but the kindness. "Verily I say unto you, because ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." It is the quiet every-day habit of making life more easy to our fellow creatures that our Blessed Lord judges to

be divine. This is what the calm after-death eye will consider to be real. The service of God has only one primary meaning, the service of God is man making others happy. There is without this no service to God.

I am not concerned to enter to-day into the vast labyrinth of human opinions as to how men are to do this, or even to discuss what God has told us about self-training in order to do this. Many people seem to think that an obstinate belief in what is true relieves them from the necessity of living true lives. Others, again, seem to think that the effort to live a true life relieves them from the necessity of finding out what truth is. These questions will agitate men's minds to the last day. But what I do wish to impress strongly is this great reality, that the making others happy is Christ's religion, and that nothing without this is. I wish to put as plainly as my powers permit that there is an easy beginning here of true life, both in belief and in deed. Each one of you in this place has to put before himself as the one thing that is Christ-like, how can I make this school life happy to my schoolfellows, especially to the weak? How am I doing so? I doubt not your hearts, if now laid bare, would show a thousand dreams, more or less good, of future intentions. I want you to live in the present, to take Christ's simple rule, "Do all you can to make life happy for those near you ;" to take Christ's great reality that religion means making life happy, and that every kind of seeming godliness which does not do this, and does not make this its aim, as far as it does not do so, is false, and will not stand the calm after-death eye measuring it. I repeat that the possession of any great reality in a simple form alters all life. This is a great reality in a simple form, that no man is religious who

does not strive to make others happy. The prevailing passion, if I may use the expression, of daily life should be, where is anyone weak and in trouble, can I help him? The heart ought to leap to the side of the weak, and not to that of the strong. The heart ought to have a dim feeling that everyone in pain or need is as it were Christ on the Cross, and a dread, lest the strong, if the strong inflict the pain, are Pilate and Herod with their soldiers. The great realities of the world to come only recognize the principle of making others happy. And I am inclined to think that anyone who takes this into his heart as his reality will not get entangled if he begins early, or feel any difficulty in finding how to do it. Only try, try here, try now, look on this great school as a place where we are learning to be happy, by earnestly striving to make others happy, following Christ and Christ's commands in so doing. So shall you hear at last the happy words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" and "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Religion is the making others happy. This is a reality in the reach of you all.

## SERMON XXXIV.

### NOBODIES.

ST MATTHEW XIII. 31.

*“The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed,  
which a man took, and sowed in his field.”*

IT will be no unfitting conclusion to what has been already said about life, to consider one of the most universal, and most fatal hindrances to true life, the temptation which suggests that it does not signify what we do, we are too unimportant ; or, that the thing to be done at the moment does not signify, it is too small. The Psalmist had a full sense of this temptation and its power, when he said, “I am small and of no reputation, yet do I not forget Thy commandments.” He knew and felt how subtle and strong this thought “Oh, it does not signify what such as I do, I am a nobody,” can be, and he rightly rejoiced in overcoming it, though he little imagined at the time, that for hundreds and thousands of years the words he spoke should pass on,

and live, and stir the hearts of men, and form one of the trumpet notes of God in the world. He did not know it a bit more than we know what will become of our words. Ah, it is a grand thought, that the humblest man who serves God, his King, heartily and well, may perchance, in some hour of blessing, set his lips to God's great trumpet, and blow the thrilling notes of spirit life that never die ; and, as the Psalmist did, set free the melody divine, to make music in earnest hearts till the last day.

But to go back. The three first parables spoken by our blessed Lord, from the third of which my text is taken, in different ways, each, and all, set aside this ruinous notion of it not signifying what a common sort of person does. In the first, God's kingdom on earth is likened to a crop of corn, that is, to innumerable plants each by itself small; and it does signify a great deal that so large a portion of the crop is said to fail. In the second, it is a field of corn again; and it does signify a great deal that so large a portion of the crop is of bad quality. But the third is intensely encouraging—God's kingdom is a very little seed, one seed, a secret, small, silent, unknown, buried bit of life, and yet it takes root, and grows into a great tree. Remember, this is not a mere wise comparison, but it is God's divine plan of life, and God's prophecy that His living power shall work in this way. It is God's statement that His living spirit, when it has found place in man's heart, may do anything, and always does much, though we never may know it; that a nobody, a common person, who has life from God, may be this power; that a single word out of a whole life, a single action, may take root in this way. It is God's statement that the "Oh, *this* does not signify, and *that* does not signify," has no place whatever in His



living kingdom. Every person signifies, every act signifies, every word signifies, every moment signifies; a life may be seemingly barren, but one hour of it may go out winged into eternity, yet not a chance hour, but an hour of growth, silently prepared. For life consists in the power of gathering in and making use of all things—it fills creation. The seed collects earth, and air, and water, and many ministries of sky and land, into itself to make the plant; and out of all this, by no chance, the plant grows, and bears its fruit; and the fruit is no chance, but the ripening of all these influences, and their natural perfection.

And this is how God's life acts in His heart-fields of man. A life is sown, some poor, unknown, little life seed, a mere grain, but it takes root in hearts, and they in turn grow in holiness and power, and the growth spreads, and becomes national character, and then it bears fruit; and the fruit, the best of this life, becomes a great leader of men; and some trying hour of danger and anguish presses on the nation, and lo! out of its strong life comes the great champion, the fruit of the lives of the nation—no chance, but fruit. In this way we are certain that the humblest lives of good men do bear fruit on earth even. Not to have a worthy leader when the great hour comes, is a proof of there being no life in the nation. Where the life is strong, the leading life must be strong; where the life is pure and high, the hidden inward majesty comes out to sight, as soon as the pressure forces it into prominence. It was well said at the great scientific meeting last month, that the capacity of a nation, or a race, is increased by the good culture of that race and nation, and that we cannot imagine the wonderful musical genius of a Mozart, the

genius which was born with him, rising up in a tribe of savages, who knew no music<sup>1</sup>. *We cannot imagine it. It is convincing* that the life of the great leader, from the moment of birth even, is a product of lives that have gone before, unknown and silent—but God knows them. How many an evening hymn in cottage homes in Germany, how many an humble tune of humble men, blended into that great musical power which has become the property of all the world in their great composers. We do not hear the works of this or that man, we hear the nation's soul, its very life, the spirit of its centuries, the voice of the people's hearts, thrilling and floating on that great tide of sound for ever. They have been allowed to set their lips to God's trumpet, and for evermore that multitudinous life will live as a blast of God's trumpet. Such are leaders. Who shall dare say that what he does does not signify? Verily the little seed becomes a great tree.

What shall we say, then, that the great working heart of England (as we love to think of it, and talk of it) is preparing for the future out of our lives? Have we got rid of the "Oh, it does not signify this once"? It seems to me, the lower people are—the humbler, so that they be but gifted with God's life—the greater is their power. Life ever mounts upward. Just consider the wonderful power of servants. In every well-to-do home they are found; no house is closed against them, particularly are they busy about the children of the house; it is easy to see, if God's life is but in them, how the nation must feel it through them, how every home must feel it. And if they do devil's work how *cursed their lot must be*.

<sup>1</sup> Dr Carpenter's Address to the British Association.

The poor touch us in their vices as much as they do in their epidemics. There must be a seed of life to give the power, a seed of life to grow into the great tree. And the same is true of all who labour; if there is a seed of life in the labour, if there is the love of truth and true work in the labour, the love of Christ and unseen holiness in the labour, the joy in honest faithful life, then are the labourers that great living power, that great tree, which bears the fruit of mighty leaders, which bears the men whose thoughts and deeds do save and leaven, not only their own land, but the world. Such a nation has God's trumpet close at hand, and from time to time, now one, now another, is allowed to breathe his life through it, and wake immortal music of high thought, to save. But if the seed fail, there is no tree; without the small beginning, there is no great fruit. A base people has base leaders, and all perish together. Brethren, value each smallest bit of truth and true work, each moment, value yourselves, you are to be sown, your lives. Get rid for ever of the thought, "Oh, this once does not signify." God's kingdom knows no such word.

## SERMON XXXV.

PREACHED AT THE CONSECRATION OF ST JOHN'S CHURCH,  
NORTH WOOLWICH. *Sept.* 26, 1872.

### THE POWER OF NUMBER.

ST MATTHEW XIII. 3.

*“Behold, a sower went forth to sow.”*

A GREAT plain with its corn crop is the likeness taken by our Blessed Lord to represent His work and His world. Let us consider a great plain when the harvest is near. Who that has seen such a sight can ever forget it? That sea of grain, wave after wave, far as eye can reach, not a barren sea, but each plant a living power of life food, with many seeds of its own; each line of plants a golden stretch of new blessing for man; each space taken in by the eye a broad band of hope and work ripening; and then as the eye travels on and on, each time able to cover a narrower strip, till the far distance makes miles of this fruitful life thin as a painter's pencil-stroke, still the same glorious productive increase, in its richness and its beauty; and God's bright sky seems to touch it at last, and you know not which is earth with its corn, and which is sky with its light, so do

they seem to mix and blend; fit ending to God's great parable of the corn-field, and the sower, and the seed, and the kingdom of Heaven. Now, if we examine carefully the thoughts which such a sight most calls up and rests on, you will, I think, find them at last to be two, the thought of infinity of number, number infinite, number at your feet, number spreading over a world of eyesight, number everywhere, number united into this vast, happy, almost awful picture; number—and, secondly, plenty; and the plenty is but another name for useful life-growth. Number then, and growth, living growth, lie at the foundation of the thoughts of the great corn-field of God and Christ. Number and life-growth, work and fruit, peace and plenty, happy separate life, happy union, all these and much more are characteristics of Christ's field. And, remember, this is not a mere wise saying of a wise man, who studies the earth and gives us wise sayings which he has found out. No, it is the Creator God declaring His judgment of what He means His earth, and its crop of men to be. It is the Creator God making a great prophecy of the future of His Kingdom of Heaven planted on earth. It is God's history of our world in a small volume, the pages of which are always open, which you never can see a corn-field without reading. A prophecy, I say, yea even now, after two thousand years, a prophecy; for even now what is the idea of numbers amongst us, only a distorted caricature at best of this truth? Yet it has at last come to pass that the idea of numbers is the prominent idea of the world; and also that the idea of wise, and living, and peaceful numbers is dimly breaking through the clouds of ages of war, and ignorance, and crime.

Few consider how new this corn-field prophecy is. In the ancient world, the thought of numbers had no place excepting as numbers of destroyers in armies, or as slaves in slave gangs. Work was base and mean; for a free man to work was base and mean; the slaves did the work. And wages for work, as an honourable agreement between man and man, as an honourable giving and receiving of worthy exchange, were simply unknown. The first great step in the corn-field prophecy of Christ was taken, when His living seed gradually spread, and pushed out slavery, and made the thought of work a noble thought, and brought in wages for work, and put an honour, and an honest pride into good work. And numbers became in some degree honourable and worthy in themselves for their work's sake, not simply as instruments to destroy, or instruments to be used by the strong. Here lies the radical difference between man's idea of numbers and God's, between man's armies and man's slave gangs, and God's corn-field. Man makes force his only object, and utterly disregards the single unit, the individual, the man by himself; quite satisfied, if by the misery and degradation of thousands he can make up a fearful power of force and wealth. Christ's corn-field is utterly different. It begins with a little seed, it goes on with every plant drawing from common earth, and common air, the good, which good work makes it able to draw; then every plant with its own perfect, happy, fruitful life in itself stands in its own place, and with its neighbour plants, grows, and ripens into life-giving food power; and so plant by plant, the good plants outnumbering weeds, the good plants, each and all the result of careful work, plant by plant, I say, that vast innumerable living sea of healthy, glowing,

glorious corn-field grows, and takes possession by sheer sound life and numbers of the broad and endless plain, and stretches, and stretches, till sky and plain meet, and God's great parable is ended in light. This is how God deals with numbers, and Christ founds His corn-field kingdom. The key of it is the excellence, the living work, the fruitful life of each plant, and the spread of life. It is no deluge of useless or dangerous waters, in which no drop has its own life, though at flood time they dash with fearful force on the weak, a triumph of dangerous multitudes, where each part is nothing, but the whole can destroy.

For what is there in mere multitude? Why should a thousand, or a million, drunkards, be better qualified to lead the sober man straight on his road than one may be? They may be very dangerous as destroyers, but not safe as guides, because they are many. Or, why should a thousand, or a million, ignorant persons be better qualified to teach the right and wise thing to the hardworking experienced man than one would be? They may be very fearful as destroyers, but not safer as guides, because they are many. The wise man takes account of this destroying power, but he does not set the thorn and the thistle above the corn, or give them possession of the field, because they are many. Christ's corn-field is sown on the broad principle of the goodness of each plant, and the number of good plants. Not only that the plants are many, but that each plant is good, that each plant is cared for, that each plant grows, that each has space, that each produces life-food, bread; and then that the multitude of growing life powers is infinite, each with the seed of life in itself. Here lies the kernel of the

whole matter. God and Christ care for the life of each man; and everything that belongs to God and Christ cares for the life of each man. The moment you find any power, system, combination, government, society, or form of action, that seeks its end by the mere weight of evil numbers and crime, and cares not for the single parts which are to make the weight, there you have something opposite to God's plan of the world, something entirely out of harmony with the corn-field of Christ. The central truth in the corn-field is the excellence of the single plant, its completeness, its life and growth in itself, its fruit and productiveness, and—the value of numbers, the multitude of good life plants, the great plain of endless time covered with living growth, broadening on to eternity, till it is lost in light and heaven, numbers, numbers infinite, each good.

The value of numbers is the great truth of practical life revealed by Christ. And where shall a stranger find better proof of this than here, to-day, in North Woolwich? Here are numbers. Here, as in crowds everywhere, all that is good or evil in the gathering together of many is to be found. The fierce hard struggle for daily bread, and the no less fierce license of enjoyment that is not joy. Here too the tender feeling of those, who know what it is to want tenderness; the kindly help, which the needy so often bring to the needy; the loving word, or look, which gives hope and strength to the weary-hearted, though given by those who have nothing else to give. Christ's great corn-field is here. Life is calling to life over the wide plain of labour and sorrow and want. Life calling to life, and an answer coming; an answer coming out of that other world so distant, and so near, where Christ is king indeed. An answer from



Bethlehem, and from Calvary. This church, these stones speak it; they speak of the spirit of the Lord which He has sent into the hearts of men. Why should men give their lives to works like these? Lives, which might win honour and money in the market of the world, if it were not, that Christ speaks in them, that the still small voice of Calvary is in these streets. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." The voice of Calvary is here, the voice of Christ's corn-field, the voice that made the barley loaves feed the multitude, the voice, that is even now calling schools, and churches, and living power, out of the earth, as it were, and covering this field of God with fruitful work, the work of the corn-field, which blesses each man, and each family, and makes the great plain one and united, because the inner life of each plant is one; because of the union of common love of good in all, which blesses and betters each, not of an outward chain, which drags along weak and strong together, and cares not for the weak. And say not in your hearts, ye workers, it is yet two months to the harvest, long to wait, and weary to hope for, yea lift up your eyes, the plain is white for the harvest; pray the Lord of the Harvest to increase His Labourers. Brethren, what matters it that one sows and another reaps in God's corn-field? The life that is laid down in the furrows and the ploughing, and the life that sows, and the life that reaps, is all the same life, and the day will come when we shall know and feel it to be so. So then let us work, and not forget that the great corn-field of Christ sanctifies and blesses numbers by giving each plant its own place, its own growth, its own excellence, its own separate happy fruit, whilst it covers the endless plain with the same life.

## SERMON XXXVI.

### PILGRIM THOUGHTS AND MEMORIALS.

ST JOHN VI. 5, 6, 7.

*“When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And thus He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.”*

How many thousands, generation after generation, visit earth's famous spots, and make pilgrimages to see the places hallowed by great deeds! How many hearts dwell fondly on such thoughts! It is natural to do so; and yet everyone who has done so will, I believe, confess that the power of these places, as far as it is a power, comes not so much at the time we see them, but in the after memories, and the being able to put together a more vivid picture in our minds from knowing the ground. It is the association of ideas which moves us,

not what we see ; it is the reality which our minds are able to call up and imagine in consequence of being reminded of what has happened. And it is a most strange thing, the way in which our Blessed Saviour uses this feeling, so that we all, without leaving home, have in our homes perpetual memories of Him, pilgrim thoughts, which come to us, and not we to them. No loaf of bread is set on our tables, which does not as if it were come to us from that hill side, and tell us how to work for Him. How touching it is, this marvellous divine grace by which loaves of bread evermore remind us of Him, evermore remind us of true work for Him, and how to do it. This perpetual pilgrimage of divine things into our own homes, this divine care by which the love of God has made common things His messengers, how wonderful it is. The pilgrims from Him to us. What a holy world we may live in if we listen to His pilgrims ! Who that understands and takes to heart what our Saviour did that day when He fed the multitude with the five barley loaves, can ever again look on earth with the same eyes as before, or fail to see these pilgrims of His Lord ? So evermore we find, wherever we move, the task set, the five thousand gathered together hungering for life ; however various, or fierce, or wrong, their ideas may be, hungering for life ; and we whom Christ has set on the hill with His knowledge, His grace, His power, by us, we are called on to feed them. *It is our business.* Impossible as it seems to meet the want, the wretchedness, the fierce wrong doing, the hard hatred, that only wants to overthrow some power above it, the mistaken zeal, that can choose any robber chief, any leader, who will give them leave to let loose their own passions, nevertheless, it is our business. Nevertheless, it

is but the task St Philip had set ; the world was there in its typical men ; all its good and evil come out to see Christ ; and He declared that His disciples must feed them.

There is no misery, no hunger, no longing for life, which we are allowed to leave alone. Then comes that strange mystery of divine life, by which the empty handed, who are ready to do Christ's work, press into His service some small, common, ready gift given them, and it grows, as they go on, passing through their hands with Christ blessing. Apostles stand empty handed ; a little boy gives a little gift ; Christ blesses it ; Apostles only pass it on, and as they pass it they have enough. Now this is the divine plan ; and no one can help seeing examples of it, who looks with a watchful intelligent eye on what is going on in a living way on earth. But I do not want to dwell on this. I want to call attention to two points ; first, that *the loaves of bread* do the work wanted ; the common loaves, the every-day property of all ; all have the working means which Christ wants and blesses. And secondly, that when they began there was just one loaf to every thousand men ; the supply, one may say, was a thousandfold too little. There are two great truths here, most comforting truths, truths that cheer and nerve every honest heart ; truths that leave no one unblessed ; truths that bring into every home and every life a cause, a mission, a divine call, a happy hope, a sense of something to do, of a place in life, yea an Apostle's work, in God's world. For common bread was taken ; Apostles only passed it through their hands ; common bread, and much too little, was all they had ; but it grew as it was wanted, and the work was done. The little boy gave it first. Out of all those thousands

the life power which was used came from the gift of a little boy, and was the very commonest bread, the poor man's food.

There is nothing splendid in this bread which in Christ's scheme passes through the disciples' hands, and does His work. *There lies the blessing, that it is so common*; that all *have* it. Bread is just the honest, every-day stuff that goes to ordinary life; bread is just the one universal sustenance of rich and poor, most of the poor. Christ takes *bread*, and blesses it for His work. Who can say of himself, and his ability, and his place in the world, that if his life is wholesome, and sound, and given to Christ, it may not do the bread-work and carry on the life, and send even multitudes satisfied away? There is honest, every-day, common, working bread-stuff in all of us, if we don't spoil it. We may be passed through holy hands, and do high work; even if we ourselves do not pass it; we may be bread of life by our work, and our gifts, and our genuine readiness to be given in Christ's service; we may be bread, if we are not Apostles; useful power in the hands of others, even if we are not the hands that seem to give. There is something infinitely cheering in the fact which makes this common loaf of bread our teacher and messenger from Christ, and assures us that we shall *do for what has to be done*, and need have no doubts about the good of it.

Then again, there was only one loaf to a thousand. How true this is! The real workers always feel this. They see the infinite amount of work to be done, and if they waited till they had the means to do it, nothing would be done; but they begin at once in Christ's name; life grows; it is not all wanted at the same moment; the bread of life grows as it is distributed, the single loaf

does to start with, and there is no surer sign of being with Christ than the desire at once to do what we can, and the readiness to begin. Brethren, what a picture of your life as it ought to be this is! The boy's gift to God, may it not be true of you? nay, must it not be if in this place of Christian training, this school of Christ, you are doing what you should do? You can give the boy's gift, the common, honest, every-day life-stuff, the bread. It does not matter whether you know at the moment the value of honest common life or not. Indeed we never know the value. We can but break the bread of our day in faith and hope; we are quite ignorant now, as the boy who gave his loaves was ignorant then, of the power, and everlasting memory, of his action. He knew nothing of the example for ever more, the light of God upon him and his, the passing on from age to age till the last day as a prophet of God's truth. He knew it not; he did not want to know it; it was enough that he could give in a simple, faithful way. Would to God it might be so with us, and that we never looked on a loaf of bread without seeing in our hearts Christ blessing common life, and making the every-day, honest effort enough; without seeing the power that takes one loaf to feed a thousand men, and feeling equal to the thousand-fold work to be faced because of it. Thank God for blessing common things. Yea every loaf of bread is a pilgrim sent into our homes from God's holy Land.

## SERMON XXXVII.

### THE UNIVERSALITY OF GOD'S LIFE.

ST JOHN I. 4.

*"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."*

THE most precious things are universal. Nothing, I imagine, strikes a thoughtful mind more than this; as it is such a contradiction of the mere trade idea, the prevailing idea of the ordinary mind, that precious things are precious in proportion to their being rare. In man's world, and man's narrow works, this last is to a great degree true; in God's world, and God's great creation, the first is true, that precious things are universal. The air we breathe, the first precious need of existence, is open to all, till man alters God's great freedom, it fills the world with freshness, sweeping over land and sea in ceaseless currents of health, uncorrupt, and incorruptible, as long as it is free. The light by which we do the works of life, is still more untameable and full of glory. The sunset, and the sunrise, and the day, gladden the eyes of all. Man must be shut out

from light obstinately, before light can be shut out from him. How universal too is common food, the corn-field, and tree bearing fruit; how universal water in its brightness and its life, whether running free, or stored up in the earth everywhere for use. Nay the very earth itself lies open free to the eye, and no man is shut out from the sight of the beauty of earth. All things that are very precious are universal. It is an axiom, that nothing necessary to man's life is the property of a few. It is an axiom, that anything which is the property of a few only is not necessary to life, or very precious. And if this is true in the natural world, in the world of bodies and bodily wants, how much more will it be true in the world of God's own life, where the living spirit given by Him to man is set to live! The *universality* of God's gift of life is stated over and over again. The great truth, "that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." And this great truth contains at once the lesser truth, that all the necessary and most precious means of life, and helps to life, and ways of living, will be of the most universal, plain, and easy kind.

It follows at once from this, that the most precious teaching will be in itself plain, and easy, and such as the ordinary mind of the unlearned and ignorant can receive; and also that the easiest way of giving necessary and precious teaching will have been chosen by God as His way. Now the easiest way of teaching, when it is possible, is by pictures and direct representation. God has chosen that way, He has taken the Jewish nation and made their lives into a great picture and representation of His truth. What does St Paul say? "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud,



and all passed through the sea. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples." Here then we have God's picture-teaching of His Life working. It would take many days to bring out this well; I have not many minutes, but so easy is it that I trust even in a few minutes to give the clues that may be followed for years; just as a man standing at four cross roads can direct by a word, or a gesture even, the journey of years. So I stand at the entrance to this great road of human life, and by a sign-post direction, as it were, show you the road of life and salvation.

What then is the picture? The first great line engraving set up for us to gaze on is, a great multitude of men, and women, and children, working in the burning sun under the lash, despised, and laughed at, and ill-treated, in the most learned, wisest, most civilised, most powerful, nation of the earth. The first picture is, the sharp contrast, in the sharpest, and most contrasted way, between godly life however corrupt, however short of true godliness, between godly life, I say, in its lowest depth, and the power, and knowledge, and glory, and greatness, of a nation defying God, and ignorant of Him, with that nation at its highest, and most civilised, and most knowledge-proud pinnacle of strength. That is the first picture. A low form of life contrasted with a high form of knowledge and earthly power, and for a time its slave.

Then God by mighty wonders breaks up this state of things, and brings His people to the sea of their Baptism. God acts when man can do nothing. And this is the second picture. The complete cutting off of the life germs, and the life, and the people that embodied life, from the false Egyptian glory. A whole nation hurried almost against their will out of the fulness of the false light of the foremost nation of the world into a desolate wilderness, untrodden by man, empty of man's gathered gains, to be taught how to live. I would there was time to shadow forth however faintly the state of that great tumbled host of confused humanity started on their strange journey, suddenly uprooted, homeless, tired, troubled, with the sea before them, and the army of the enemy hanging on their rear. It is a strange and piteous sight, this picture; but see the weakness made strong, when the sea opened, and those who entered in, a mob of cowardly slaves, nameless almost, came out on the other side, and stood there a great nation, free, to begin a free life, and saw their enemies dead on the shore. All, all, old and young, warrior and child, mother and infant, all baptized, all become in that Baptism God's nation, all having received once and for ever the new national life, never more as long as their name remained, to depart from them, a nation once made, a nation evermore. All that had gone before leading up to this, all that followed after being the sequel to this.

Here then we have the second great picture. The picture of Holy Baptism. The new life birth given to the people, their birth as a nation, their birth into a free life. But mark how truly a birth. Their old world with their old enemies, and the old glories, and the old

shames, dead and left behind, as if it had never been; and the new world into which they were born, how different, how empty of all earthly glory, a wilderness, to be crossed only by the faithful on the way to the good land promised. This then is Holy Baptism; the being taken out of an old world of earthly greatness, and being born free in a new world of spiritual power, and set to live a life there. This picture is clear and strong. All are baptized. The infant carried through the sea in arms was as much free on the other side as the oldest warrior there, who stood sword in hand, and with kindling eye, feeling that he was free. Then this picture passes away, and the third great picture is set up. The picture of the life they lived, and the training for life, a sad picture enough, but yet a most encouraging one; the people in the wilderness taught how to live a true life; and fed by God Himself with bread from heaven and water from the spiritual rock. How plain are the great strong outlines of this picture. The weak, and sinful, and sorely tempted nation, slaves at heart still, though free in body, and—God's sacrament of daily grace; the pillar and the cloud of prayer; the daily leading of all—the manna and the water of life; the daily food of all; no spiritual luxury for a few great leaders, but the people's bread; which the people had to live on; which they had to gather and eat for themselves; God's great gift; which they had to make proper use of, or it bred worms and stank; which gave them life; without which they died; but which enabled no one to enter the promised land who made a bad use of the life given.

What a simple grand picture this third picture is. I will say no more. "These things did indeed happen for our examples." And it is impossible for human language

to draw so clear a contrast between power and true life; between bad national pride and divine national guidance, as is done in this history of God's taking the people out of Egypt, baptizing them into a nation in the sea, giving them the wilderness as a training place for noble life, feeding them with bread of heaven, and being present with the whole nation daily in a simple, grand, universal way.

The Christian Church, and its Sacraments, and its life, are put before us all in a way that all can understand.

The line between Egyptian power and life is drawn with a clearness in these pictures far beyond all mere language power. Think of these pictures which are given us by God.

## SERMON XXXVIII.

### SILENT GROWTH.

ST LUKE II. 52.

*“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.”*

TIMES come to all when the great realities of life and death stand out clear, if it is but for a moment ; and the heart sees and feels what is of value, and lasting, and true. We want such times ; the beginners want them to teach them how to begin ; the older want them to encourage them to go on ; but yet these critical times are as nothing compared to the daily, hourly, momentary appeal that is being made to every one. Whether we know it or not, not a moment passes which does not add or take away something of our power of judging and seeing the things of God. This power of judging and seeing the things of God, is a power of the Spirit, and is given by the Holy Spirit of God to those who open their hearts to God's truth, and live by it. To read

mind requires like mind; to think thoughts requires like thoughts; even in books of human thought the reader must set his mind along the same track as the writer, if the writer is above him, or he will not learn. How much more must this be the case when God is working. Spirit must be taught of Spirit to read Spirit or it cannot get at it. As in looking on a field of green corn, you must stand as the sower sowed, and take his point of view, not your own, or you will know nothing of the order, so it is with life and God's world; there sight makes plain from the sower's point of view what is utter confusion, and an unintelligible intellectual tangle from any other point whatever. Sight does for the man who follows the mind of the sower, more than all intellect to him who does not. This power of seeing, of putting the feeling in accord with higher feeling, of getting the heart to thrill with the thrilling of divine truth, and the mind to think out God's thoughts, is wisdom. It is the harvest gathered from life. God's world is all about us, God's world of created nature, fields and rivers, trees and sky; God's world of men and women, with all their hopes and fears; God's world of right and wrong, with all the strange permitted evil, and all the wonderful bringing out of good; to read God's thought in God's world is wisdom. "And Jesus increased in wisdom." The little valley, and the country town, the lonely life, the quiet basin amongst the hills, the grass beneath, the stars above, the life within the narrowing heights, the life news that streamed over them from outside, gave all the material wanted for wisdom. So "the strong in Spirit" for thirty years, within the little valley, increased in wisdom. He knew what the Prophets of old had said; He knew what angels and holy men had said at His

birth ; He knew He was the promised one, the Messiah, the King ; all these thoughts stirred His heart ; but thirty years of thinking out the thoughts of God amongst the quiet hills of Nazareth was the work of the strong in Spirit, of the Son of God. There is absolute silence in Holy Scripture as to what He felt. We cannot tell or even imagine how He felt. All is silence. Yet we are sure of this, of His growing in wisdom. We are sure that the Son of God spent thirty quiet years thinking over the Bible, reading it, and looking at the world through it, so as to understand God's great thoughts as they worked in the world. We are sure that He looked on the same world, and lived the same kind of life as we do ; day by day seeing the sun, watching the seasons return, observing the lilies of the field, how they grew ; letting His glorious mind dwell on the flowers, which were beneath the notice of the fierce men about him, stopping to see the wayside blossoms, and gathering out of them new truths. To Him the sower that went forth to sow was a presence touching the heart, the mustard seed cast into the ground, a message of heavenly power. Not a sparrow, but His eye knew it as a part of God's alphabet. The women grinding corn, the very leaven in the daily bread, all were to Him thoughts, thought out, and passed on to us, lighted up with the light of the everlasting.

For Him, there were voices everywhere, tree, and bird, and flower, and hill, were God's language. How often must He have stood under the glorious Eastern night, and watched the moon and stars, hanging clear and large in the blue vault. The Gospels bear record, from beginning to end, of the kind of way in which the silent thirty years were passed by Him in reading God's

great thoughts, written in God's language of created things, and pondering on the Bible, God's Word.

You can scarcely read a Chapter in the Gospels without finding many facts, expressions, or teachings, evidently part of the quiet harvest of these thirty years of waiting, taken from the common things, daily seen in Nazareth or Capernaum, with the divine life breathed into them. It is astonishing how the Gospels bear witness to what Our Blessed Lord saw and thought about in those years. How they bear witness to the watchful eye that did not let a sparrow pass unnoticed, and the watchful heart that read the thoughts of God. The Gospels in almost every word quietly reveal this hidden life. So Jesus increased in wisdom, so the Son of God, the Lord of all the worlds, was prepared in his capacity as man to live His life as man. What a lesson of patient waiting this gives. What a wondrous picture of divine, self-contained strength. The waiting on the slopes of Nazareth, drawing out of the quiet days, and quiet years, the fulness of their teaching, and never for a moment hastening His steps, or pushing one minute out of place. The mind feels a sort of breathless awe when it tries to call up the idea of the Lord of Lords sitting a poor man on the hill side, and, day by day, for thirty years, holding within His heart the wondrous knowledge of a divine mission, and all the time treated by the villagers as one of themselves. Day by day His Father's business was on His heart, all the prophecies of the thousands of years, the glory of David, the lost Kingdom to come back again, and more than come back, all this was in His heart on the hill side. All the sense of inward power, the thoughts that pierced the secrets of the world, the reformer's eye, that saw through the



tangle of human life, of its sorrows, and its sins, conscious of the Redeemer's power to heal ; the gathering greatness, the danger, and the sacrifice, day by day, grew more and more distinct, to the solitary unacknowledged King on the hill side ; and yet He waited, and waited, and gathered in new thoughts daily, where others saw nothing, and grew in wisdom, and was strong in spirit, and being strong in spirit did not move before His time.

Brethren, there is a time, in a world ruled by God, to all men. It is not our world, but God's world, and God fashions the life of those who let Him do so.

Brethren, there is a time to all men. You are young. Now to you is the time of thought, of wisdom, of quiet daily training. Use it. Move not before your time, throwing away the present as many do in idle dreams of a future which cannot come unless the present is used. Move not, either in dreams, or in deed, before the time. Use the present hour.

## SERMON XXXIX.

### LIFE ASCENDING INTO HEAVEN.

HEBREWS II. 10.

*“For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”*

HOW strangely quiet, after the fierce outcries at the crucifixion, is the departure of Christ into heaven. What a peace breathes through the solemn kingly words He gave to His Church, before He was taken out of their sight. What a silence of passing into the hidden glory finishes the history of the life of the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, when He returned to God His Father. And then, afterwards, the glory seen by St Stephen, the blinding light of splendour that smote St Paul to the ground, the countenance as the sun shining in his strength, before which the loved Apostle fell as one dead, carry on for us the history which the Psalmist saw of old, when he cried, “Lift up

your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." The sufferings, the quiet, perfect, earthly triumph, the heavenly glory, are all set before us in the life of the Son of Man, and His Ascension into heaven. I think we have here set before us, in the most perfect form, truth living and working, and the end of truth. Whether we mean by truth, the life in a man, and the work of truth in the heart, or whether we mean the life of a great cause, and the spirit of it, making way, and fulfilling itself amongst men. And the great message of this Ascension time is the certain victory of true life, accompanied by the fact, that only in heaven, only after the time of trial on earth is passed, does that victory become a triumph. The imperfection of unfinished growth always belongs to it here. These are two great truths for all who work, truths that belong to the young, though most felt by the old. Truth lives, and prevails, however appearances may be.

At the moment that our Blessed Lord was standing on the Mount of Olives, in the early morning, with a few faithful men round him, and passed up into heaven in their sight, victorious, to begin His everlasting reign—at that moment, the whole world lay in its many thousand years' sleep of sin, and knew Him not; at that moment Jerusalem stood with its great walls, strong and bright as usual, and the sentinel paced to and fro; and Pilate in his palace just woke up perchance, and tossed uneasily as he thought of his guilty power; and Herod was lying still, and cared not for it; and, far off in Rome, the great imperial city, with its soldiers, and its court, and its crimes, was just awaking to sin again; and the Emperor folded his

murderous hands, and, waking or sleeping, thought of blood ; and, here in Britain, in the great forests, and the wild wastes, the native tribes hunted and fought, all unconscious of the early dawn on the far distant Eastern hill, and the Lord of Life beginning His reign. How dreary, how despairing, at that moment the cause of life and truth would have seemed to one of us standing as spectators of that little band. Yet our great empire, modern life, our homes, our presence here in this chapel, our inheritance in the kingdom of heaven on earth, all that we count great, and good, and happy, is that Ascension day in its onward progress. These are facts of the very simplest kind ; facts unobserved, only because they have come to pass gradually, only because the vast gulf between a Tiberius as the throned head of earth, and our throne, has been so slowly covered that we at one end cannot think even of the other ; only because Rome, that splendid charnel house, is too unlike even the worst modern city, for us to be able to picture it. It is a fact, of the very simplest kind, that the whole world has changed, and has become practically a new creation, since that hour of the Ascension, and because of that hour. The conquering spirit of life now reigns. That is the great truth of this day, this Ascension time.

And we need to be reminded of it, because of that other truth, which is part of it, that on this earth there is no triumph of truth, only a victorious working, always unfinished, always to the human eye, at its best, the little company on the hill, with a sleeping hostile world against them. Or it may be in the earlier stage of the struggle for existence, the inward self-searchings, the outward pressure, a struggle for bare life, with the crucifixion coming, even when the first success has made

truth known to the multitudes. For Christ, and those who follow Christ, must still see Herod, and Pilate, in power on earth, even at the moment of the Ascension, when the glory has come, and the heavenly throne is reached; even then, on the earth, the last sight of the earthly eye must still see Tiberius, and Herod, and Pilate, in their power and place. Surely then, as this is the law of God's Spirit world, surely it is a great fact, a truth most precious to us workers for Christ, that Life and Truth do conquer; that, though we see it not in any one generation, they do re-create the earth, and pass on, a silent, victorious, inward, changing power. It is a great fact when the heart grasps this, and feels it: that is to say, learns calmly to look on all the danger, all the impossibilities, as they seem, and for the time *are*, learns to work on regardless of them, learns to let go dreams of outward success, and to see that the great wickednesses, the Herods and Pilates, are not to be cast down, but to remain, as far as we are concerned, and slowly to vanish into forgetfulness in years to come, when the new growth rises. And this fact of life, always over-matched to the outward eye, always going to be victorious in spite of being overmatched, is a great fact for the youngest boy here. It means the absolute certainty of honest work prevailing, coming to a good end. Nay, it is the special fact for beginners. The seed-like character of the life of the Ascension. Its intense vitality wrapped up in a seed. How, at the very moment of victory, Christ ascending in triumph, Lord of all the worlds, is represented by a small company, at dawn of day on a hill top. Go, stand with Him, boys, in the early dawn of your day of life, on the hill of the Ascension, on that great height to which faith

in Christ lifts you. Stand with Him, and look down on the sleeping world, and be not discouraged. You are *not* overmatched. The smallest seed of life in your hearts will live and prevail. What a sanctifying and glorifying of weak beginnings, and seed-life in hearts, is the faith of our Ascended Lord, and the knowledge He has given. How it sanctifies the unseen work, the silent struggles, the unrewarded pain, the quiet unselfish efforts. How it assures us that not one drop of honest sweat is useless, that no single bit of heart work is ever lost, whether it be of self-improvement and training, or of doing good to others. We serve the King of Heaven, Christ Ascended, He knows His own, and their trials.

## SERMON XL.

### THE ARCHITECT'S PLAN.

I COR. X. 1, 2.

*“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”*

THE most marvellous fact in the world is the History of the Book of Exodus, and that divine plan by which the Jews became a living moving parable, and the lives of the Jewish nation a book of doctrine, setting forth the whole spiritual development of the world, the pilgrim life, the Sacraments, the plan, as it were, of all man's religion, to the end. Both our Blessed Lord, and St Paul, expressly interpret the wilderness life of the Jews in this way, and the whole New Testament bears witness to this, in a less prominent manner, always and everywhere. Let us consider this a moment. If in England there existed a wonderful and unique building, a great Cathedral, say, and no one knew who built it, and our

ambassador found, in China, an exact working plan, and working drawings of it, everyone would know that these drawings belonged to the building, and that, if they existed first, the building was built by that plan. Now, look at the Book of Exodus; it is a plan of Christianity found in the far ages of a by-gone world; an architect's plan of all the doctrine, and facts, of the great Christian fabric built up hundreds of years after.

Now let us go a step farther. If we were told to train a boy, so that the history of his life should exactly represent certain doctrines, and a future spiritual history. "How impossible," would be the answer. Yet look at the History of the Jews in Exodus; the life of the whole nation is a plan and representation of Christianity, a plan of a world of life before that world was born. Between three and four thousand years ago, the Jewish nation, separated from us by those thousands of years, drew, in their life, the plan of the great Christian building, of faith and salvation. Between three and four thousand years ago, back across that space of ages, the great prophecy of spiritual life, the great parable of man's temptations, deliverance, Baptism, Holy Communion, trials, wanderings, blessings, punishments, salvation, was painted large in a nation's life, and the most intricate doctrines set out in action, by actors who knew not what they were doing, who were free to live their lives, and did live their lives, and yet to a hair's breadth, whilst living for themselves, painted life for us, in one great acted prophecy. And all this teaching, this prophetic book, was dormant, a sealed and unopened volume, during the whole 1500 years of the national life of the nation that lived out the picture. The actors of the living plan never knew or saw the living building. Is it not true then that this



Christian building-plan in the book of Exodus, which the Jewish nation lived, and which we have in that History, is the greatest marvel of almighty wisdom, which could foresee, and almighty power and contrivance, which could make a nation, and a national life, into a plan of spiritual doctrine, first to be known hundreds of years afterwards? Does not God guide life as He pleases, when we find a whole nation, during forty years, living their own lives, doing good or evil, as they pleased, free and unfettered, yet all the time marking out exactly the intricate doctrines and truths, which God intended the generations, in the thousands of years to come, to learn through them? What more inspired teaching do we want than this? What greater miracle? Is it not a divine voice so speaking that, for ever, those who have ears to hear may know it to be divine, this old-world living doctrine of our new-world faith? Is it not a miracle, so fashioned that the newness and strangeness of it can never wear away; but evermore, as age rolls into age, they do but add fresh wonder to the pages written in human lives, to the teaching, that a nation, in its free national history traced by its own movements, and unconscious will—so fashioned, that the great miracle becomes more miraculous day by day, fresher, more new, more living by lapse of time?

In that book of Exodus we see in the plainest manner the helpless throng of slaves in Egypt, under an evil power, with sensual plenty round them, and the curse of a base life and a bitter. What a picture of sin and its pleasures! Then God by mighty wonders rouses the hearts of His people, and crushes their enemies. What a picture of God's grace breaking up both the sensuality and the stagnation of sin, and

awakening the heart to better things! Then, in great haste, with excitement, discomfort, terror, and joy mixed with pain, they are brought to the sea of their Baptism, and delivered by God Himself, born into a new national life, once and for ever. Before they had been a family, then a throng of slaves, but on the shore of the Red sea passed, they stood a nation, born to national life in the water for the first time, never more to cease from being a nation; they stood a free nation, able to press forward to the promised land. Young and old, women and children. What mother left her infant behind in bondage? what infant, carried through the sea, was not as much one of the new nation as the oldest warrior there?

What a picture of Holy Baptism, and the new life given once for all, the birth that makes us able to live as God's free people! What a number of mental difficulties and brain cobwebs are swept away by this great pictorial sermon of the slaves, born into freedom, and made a nation in passing the sea! Well might St Peter say, remembering the wonders in Egypt and the people brought to their national birth in the sea of their Baptism, well might St Peter say, when the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his company, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" For they too had been brought by the visible power of God, to their new birth in Christ, to life, like the people of old, who, on that day of deliverance, stood on the shore free. There they stood, in the early dawn of that spring morning, a very great multitude on the shore; and, as the day broke, and the sun flashed over the waves, they saw the fierce wind rolling in the angry waters covered with the dead: and they delivered, their long slavery over, no longer slaves, but a

great nation, burning with high hope, and a march to victory begun. Even as the light flashed, so flashed their hearts, so thrilled their souls with light, so gleamed glad eyes, and faces bright with faith and hope, as the great pillar of the cloud changed from its fire, steadfast and silent in its majesty, the visible presence of God. Thousands on thousands, the new born nation stood, and felt themselves indeed the nation of the Lord, on the shore by the sea of their Baptism.

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake saying, ‘I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation, He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my fathers’ God, and I will exalt Him.’ And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances; and Miriam answered them, ‘Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.’”

So with high hearts they stood, those thousands, on the wild sea shore, as the early light came calm and life-like across the waters, there they stood and sang; and the thunder of thousand thousand voices rose and fell, as they sang, with God’s great sea still heaving its vengeance at their feet, God’s great sea their organ, with its rolling wrath, an undertone to the great song. All their songs rushed to their lips in a stern triumph as they stood before the dead, their enemies dead on the shore, singing that song, the song of triumph, the song of

liberty, the song of life, which, throughout all the ages, evermore, rises to heaven with greater volume as the years pass on, the song of hearts, from every land where the name of Christ is heard, the song of the first Baptism.

## SERMON XLI.

ON THE DAY OF INTERCESSION, 1874.

BRETHREN, to-day is set apart by our Church as a Day of Intercession for Missions; in order that we all may be able to give our minds for some short time to the cause of Christ throughout the world.

It is also St Andrew's Day; a day of special significance, when we consider that St Andrew, of all the Apostles, is most marked out in Holy Scripture as bringing others to Christ.

I take this opportunity of telling the school that we have sent £50 to the New Brunswick clergyman who appealed to us for help.

I confess to a feeling of happy exultation, when first the appeal was made. I rejoiced at the thought that a stranger in a far land could make his request to the known liberality of Uppingham. I confess that my heart glowed at hearing that the name of Uppingham had power to cheer the solitary worker in his lonely work, and was a word of hope to him in his wide and dreary parish. It was a natural feeling. But as the days passed on a change came with them; as the days passed

on into weeks, and the weeks came round again, a doubt entered into my heart, whether this liberality of ours was true ; and the question pressed more and more, and would have its answer, whether the character was not altogether undeserved? Did the school indeed give truly in Christ's cause? Taking us individually, was there anything at all which each could claim for himself as his gift; anything that touched our lives, or in any real sense belonged to us? And I thought, would it not be better even to give nothing than to deceive ourselves; better even to give nothing than have credit for a sham, for a lie? To be known far and wide for what was not true? We are too ready to come forward in the spirit of the Pharisee, with his "Lord, I thank thee I am not as other men are," without the Pharisee's excuse, "I give tithes of *all* that I possess." For what do we really give? Just the things that are superfluous, just the trimmings and outer skirts of our possessions. We let fall the crumbs from our tables, and call them gifts; we drop what we don't want, or care for, or feel the loss of, and take credit for doing it. The crumbs indeed may keep Lazarus alive, but they are no good to the giver, they do not belong to his life. Our very gifts are mean and mere nothings; self first, afterwards what we can spare, for God. The whole modern idea of giving wants to be broken up. Men have disjoined giving from life; as if money was any true gift by itself, when given, and it is not given. How should it be when our lives are separated from our giving? There can never be any true giving which does not grow out of the life given first. Money is not a gift by itself at all. Christ *came down* into the world when He willed to save the world. He came down to share the sorrow and trials of those whom

He willed to save, He gave himself, and made His life our life. No one follows Christ who does not do the same. Christ did not stand in heaven above, and scatter blessings down that cost Him nothing (if I may say so reverently), but He came, He came Himself, He lived amongst us, sharing our life with its joys and its sorrows. He gave His life.

Money is not wanted, men are wanted. This is the appeal of the notice I hold in my hand, an appeal for men. If men give themselves, money will soon be found. To give ourselves is the beginning of all religion, and it is the end.

We may teach, and we may learn, but all the teaching and learning is nothing till it comes out in the giving of our life to do good to others, to make them happy. This is the beginning, this the end. Most certainly it is the end. For love is the end, and love delights in doing good to others. As the old preacher<sup>1</sup> said long ago, "Those who love prefer obeying to commanding." Prefer it. Had rather work for others than have work done for themselves. Mark it well, this is the key to all life, and all living work. True love had rather give its life and its life work for others to make them happy, than be served itself. And if this is the end, surely it is the beginning. For once try to set about doing good, once try to do something for another, and you will soon find out the training, the self-denial, there is in the effort. No one can set about work for others, without discovering something about himself. He will discover how hard it is to be patient, how it tasks his strength to work for the unheeding, what endurance is wanted, what mastery of self. To be able

<sup>1</sup> St Chrysostom.

to do good to others, and give our lives, is no matter of a passing wish, no fancy work ; once begin, and the beginning will show what has to be done, how much there is in trying to live for others.

But do not suppose that in bringing this matter of Missions before you, it is anything far off, anything to come by and by. Do not suppose either that there is any special holiness in Mission work. No work as work is specially holy. It is not the work that is holy, but the way in which the work is done. Strange lands do not make holiness ; strange people do not make holiness ; strange things do not make holiness. That is holy to the doer which is done in a holy spirit. That is specially holy work which the doer has a special call to do, and is specially fitted to do. Holiness is not far off in place, or in time, it belongs to all places, and all times, and can be practised as well in strange lands, or in North Woolwich, or in Uppingham School now. Nay, it must be now, for life is an ever-present reality, nothing future ; life is a growth, gradual, continuous, and the future is contained largely in the seed of the present. Life now is higher life by and by. It may well be that now before me there are some few who by earnest training of living powers may be capable of the highest type of work. It may well be that their true life now may become hereafter with some a power of varied strength and practice, able to carry the living life of Christ into North Woolwich, or to face any form of difficulty and trial, if it please God to call them. But holiness does not lie in the place where they work, or in the work itself, but (in the good old words of the Catechism) in the way in which we work "in that state of life to which it shall please God to call us." God trains His workers, when



they are truly His, and sets them their work, work which He has fitted them to do; and to do that well is to be holy. The call of God to us consists of those circumstances in which He places us, those places, and people, and tasks, which He puts us amongst, and in the powers and feelings which grow out of this training. It is no burst of transient enthusiasm that God demands, but the working of a patient life. It is no special work that is holiness, but the true spirit in which our own work is done, that work, which God day by day sets us to do, whatever it may be. Your work here well done for Christ is holiness—your work in the school-room, in the cricket field, as well as in the Chapel. This is your holiness, as true, if it is true, as anything in strange lands, or in North Woolwich. Life is an ever-present reality, and no future thing. Life is now.

Nay, it may well be that the higher efforts of life, as we deem them, would be impossible if it was not for the quiet unseen undergrowth of average good; the daily honest work of many, the daily self-denial. This it is that makes great things possible. Nay, I have sometimes thought that the lives of good men are not unfrequently like the leaves in autumn, which fall unmarked, and yet, by enriching the ground beneath, make it bear its crops in gladness unknown to them, after they are gone. For do not some sow and others reap? Is not this God's law of continuous life? The fruit comes oftentimes when the lives that made the fruit possible are no more seen. To give life in this way is to be a martyr indeed. The sword and the fire do not make martyrdom; the quiet endurance of life-long toil, that is martyrdom. Martyrdom, as men deem it, is public, and calls up all the energy, all the strength, that the human heart is capable of, all the

soldier spirit, that a great cause, and conscious responsibility, and many eyes fixed on you, can inspire. It is public, it is quick. But martyrdom, as God sees it, is the happy face, and everyday look, of him who obeys his Lord's command, "when ye fast, to be as them that feast," so that none may see the self-denial, none may praise the outward work. It is the unseen devotion of a patient life. So the infidel's sneer, "that he never saw a Christian," comes to pass, and is the truest testimony to true life. How should he see one? How should his blinded eyes read the spirit of those who do all things that are self-devoted, and trying, with the bright face of unselfish love, and the common ordinary habits of common life? The silent, slow, unknown work of those who live to do good to others without making any show of it can only be seen by those who do the like. Infidels see not Christians.

And this comes home to you, this daily life of living work, which is holiness here, and holiness in North Woolwich. If what we hear and know of good work there nerves us and animates us to do good work here, then it is blessed to hear and to know. But if we fancy that it is any good to us, unless it makes our work better here, then it is the Pharisee's boast, and we deceive ourselves greatly. We have to do with no future thing, with no special place, with no special work. That is holiness, which, wherever it may be called, or placed, does work lovingly and well. Holiness is no far off thing, no matter of missionaries, or time to come, it is life now, our life here. Holiness is the giving life to what has to be done, it is an everlasting present, a quiet spirit of daily, silent, patient, enduring work.

## SERMON XLII.

### SUCCESS.

EXODUS II. 14, 15.

*“ And he said, ‘ Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?’ And Moses feared, and said, ‘ Surely this thing is known.’ Now when Pharaoh heard this thing he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh.”*

SUCCESS. What magic there is in the word! What strange depths of meaning! A thousand hear it, and not one sees in it the same thing as his fellow, all pursue it, young and old alike, but what is it that they pursue? What dream have each of you in your hearts at this moment, as the word strikes your ear? What steadfast purpose, or fixed resolve, or blind drifting, or phantom hope, what knowledge, what fear, what thoughts, high or mean, are awakened by the word *success*? Ah me, what depths of life and death are held in the narrow compass of that word!

Another year of the years of God in His Church is just beginning; one is just dead. What have we done, what are we going to do? Or rather, behind all our

doings, far back in the depths of our hearts, what thoughts are resting, what hopes? Nay, behind our very thoughts and hopes, shut up in folds out of all sight, not acknowledged even by ourselves, seldom unwrapped, what dim impulses, what shadowy likings and longings, what cravings, so wild that we are ashamed to look them in the face, have formed a lair and an abiding place? Dim as these are, they are very powerful, they are the underground fountain, whence the waters of life or death come out, and flow in thought, and word, and deed, strangely changed oftentimes to the eye, but, for all that, the same.

God's new year, and Christ's coming, call on us to-day to open all our hearts, and live the coming year in faith and preparation, before it comes; to bid it welcome as a friend, whose rooms we have made ready, and whose treatment we have already mapped out with hearty intelligent forethought. The coming year then means to us *our view* of success. Let me put before you *God's view* of success. There was a great prince, who had already succeeded far beyond the wildest dreams of most men, who was great in peace, and great in war, who trod his palace with the firm step of a man to whom that palace was common ground, a natural path, mere soil beneath the feet of his greatness. Had he then succeeded? No, he looked out from amongst the warriors and the princes, the queenly ladies, and the pomp of thrones, and saw God's people, in the hot fierce sun, lashed to their work, whilst he, their brother, stood amongst kings. He saw God's people lost, degraded, enslaved, base within, trampled on without, yet still they were God's people, the promise of the living God was with them; under all their baseness lay the seed of

life ; and he, their brother, in the glory of his greatness, had it not ; and his heart burned within him, and the palace became an emptiness to him, and the glory a hollow sound, and the wisdom and power a lie, and he gathered himself up in his lonely heart. No voice came to him from the people, save cries of misery and sensual fear ; no voice came to him from the princes, save the heart certainty of scorn and contempt ; but Moses heeded it not ; he thought, and the thought goaded him ; he felt, and the feeling gave him no rest ; the fire of God was lighted within him and would not go out ; so he gathered himself up in his lonely heart, and a day came, his Advent day, when he began his year, and took his life in his hand, and cast his crown, and his throne, and his fame, into the chance, and went out from his palace to try and bring liberty to his people. Was it not a glorious deed, a wonderful ideal of success to be won, a gallant effort, grandly conceived, in a grand, unselfish spirit ? Think you of the faith, and the anguish ; of what he left, and what he faced. Think quietly of the forty years of glory and power that he cast away ; think quietly of the dangerous, laborious lot he chose ; and then pass out with Moses over the threshold, for the last time, on his new year's work ; go with him through the gate, out into the city, in the early morning as men were coming to their work ; put yourselves in his heart ; make his hopes, his faith, yours—his hopes to bring the people to the point of daring to rise against their oppressors ; his hopes of leading them in a successful war ; of winning them liberty, or dying in the attempt. Truly it was a wonderful vision of success. He went out a great prince to try a more than princely deed ; and on the morrow he was flying for his life ; flying

alone, nothing done, nothing, save indeed that bitterest of all things, *the failure*, that makes it difficult or impossible for the attempt to be made again. Such was the success God gave him. Such the reward at the time of his marvellous faith and daring. For God *accepted* him, and would not have him throw his great heart into a false scale. The people were not to be brought out by an appeal to their selfish misery, and selfish hatred of the whip and the brick-fields; neither would God allow him, under the guise of religion, and the banner of the great promise, in the name of the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to let loose his soldier spirit, and by his soldier skill, and a successful war, lead out the people, and enthrone human passion and human pride, in the sacred place. The salvation of the world had to be wrought by other tools. Moses had faith in God as the ruler of the world, but not yet as the worker in the world. Moses had faith in God as the blesser and overseer of the work, but not yet as the doer of it. Moses had faith in God for the end, but he looked to man for the means, and would have put himself at the head of an army, in full belief that God alone could give the victory, but in full belief also, that all the strength of the people, and all his own skill as a general, was needed before the victory could be given.

Such is the first great thought of the faithful man; yet it pushes God out of the working world, glorifies the work of man, and makes him worship his own acts, the instruments by which he is to win. God would not let Moses worship his nets, but sent him into the wilderness for forty years, to unlearn, in quiet thought and monotonous work, the training of Egypt, and the belief in great things being done by base-hearted men. Yet,

brethren, the faith of Moses was glorious, and was accepted; defeated at the time, because it was accepted; and the defeat was the training which made him the greatest leader the world has known.

Brethren, I think, every boy, every young man, who nourishes high thoughts, and would fain do something for God, begins, as Moses began, with a conflict between his selfish success in his own world, and his knowledge and feeling of God in God's world, which looks to him at first very much like the slave's life did to Moses; then comes the great determination to cast in our lot with the people of God; then, the crushing overthrow of self-confidence, and the learning to see God not only as ruler over the world, but as worker in the world. We have to learn first, that there is no success or resting place for the heart in victories for self alone, and next, that all our power, all our devotion, has to be stripped of any feeling of personal gain, or of being necessary for God's work, and we have to learn to see God working in ourselves and in others, whenever anything worth doing in His world is done. I do not deny that Moses, by a successful war, might have brought Israel out of Egypt, but I do deny that it would have been God's work or made them God's people.

So it is always. Those who shape their hopes of success, on this Advent day, for God, must be ready to accept His training; and cannot be satisfied with the mere fact of work well done; or feel delight in the palace of their own self-culture. They will strive to give their all to God, and to see Him in all. The difference between God *over* the world, and God *in* the world, is simply infinite to the heart. We have to learn to see this, if we ever mean to live with God.

## SERMON XLIII.

### HINDERERS.

ST MATTHEW XVIII. 7.

*“Woe unto the world because of offences!”*

THIS wonderful passage does not strike at once as some do, yet it is most wonderful. All passages that mark out paths of life are of greater power than those that praise or blame single actions, or lines of action; and this passage marks out a path of life. To the young especially, words which in all circumstances will guide them on a right way are a priceless gift. These words are such a guiding clue. They stand in solitary power, as the one great woe on *the world* uttered by the Lord of Life. Not cruelty, or lust, or persecution, or any other sin, or evil, has been taken as the woe of the world, or denounced as the curse working on earth, as this is. Think of that, the *hindering good*, the *impediment*, the *getting in the way*, that is what Christ takes as the virulent curse, that brings His “*woe unto the world*” upon itself. The world-wide woe is *hindering*. Who would



have thought this? Can it be possible that not enemies, not battles, not persecution, not violence, not hatred, is the great curse that works against good, but *the hinderer*? The stake and the fire, the sword, are they nothing? Was the arena with its pitiless crowd, and the savage cry of "The Christians to the lions," nothing? The Lord of Life did not denounce them as a woe to the world, as He did *hindering*, and *the hinderer*. Now does not this mark out a path, and a very unexpected one? Who would have thought that not to be in the way was such a marvellous perfection, and the being in the way such a fatal curse? The curse of being in the way,—how strange it sounds as the paramount evil in the world! What a great discovery, what a revelation for us to carry into our lives! Yet remember how no less a sentence than utter destruction was passed by the Lord of Life on a less offence of the same kind, a less offence, only *being useless*, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" The mere cumberer of the ground, the do-nothing, who is no hinderer, no active getter in the way, who only does nothing, hears the bitter words, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" How the words smite directly we begin to give them real thought! But few do. It is so contrary to our natural ideas, so hard to bring home to our every-day notions, that even to do nothing is deadly, that to cumber the ground is to be getting ready for the axe; and then comes the great doom, "woe unto the world because of offences," that the being positively in the way, hindering good, is the one thing picked out by Christ as the curse working in the world.

Surely to know this is to know a path, to have a way cleared, to move through life with a wondrous map. A grand lesson for the young. They have life

before them. A grand lesson for a school ; since they more than any other society have power over their own inner life. No other society in the world has the advantage of living over and over again, if I may say so ; each generation, here so short a time ; but each generation largely connected with the last, and those before it ; each again largely infused into the following, so that experience can work over and over again. This happens nowhere else, and gives a power of remoulding and bettering life that is found nowhere else ; it is a living life over again with a power of change. And where is example and fashion more powerful than at school ? Naturally so ; you are beginning ; it is natural to follow, when beginning. And what greater hindrance can there be than the influence which hinders the beginning of life, and checks the generous, onward path, lowers truth, and makes the sneak a hero ? In an army, the one thing that sends it into battle to win, is the certainty that there is no hindering in the ranks ; the security which out of the many thousands each and all feel in their neighbour standing hard and firm, with the same purpose as himself, and no one dragging back. The moment the thought of treason enters, the hinderer's work is thought possible, the army is lost. Now a school is an army, banded together under discipline to do right ; and any hindrance, any hitch, or coldness of spirit, destroys the life. The hinderer can do very fatal work, and therefore it is that here we hold all to be responsible for each, and demand that the whole body in a free manly way shall guard its own liberties, and stop hinderers, and clear themselves from guilty knowledge, nay clear themselves from any backward spirit, such as makes wrong-doing possible. No one deliberately does wrong who knows that he will

be an outcast in his own little world for doing it. But the cold breath of the hinderer paralyses the common life, lowers its vigour, and evil becomes possible. It is my purpose to set before you some of the ways in which the hinderer works in a society, as I have already endeavoured to do of hindrances in the case of the man himself and his own life; we have seen that the undue following our own powers, and fancies, forms the great hindrance to individual life; and the hand, and foot, and eye, with all the favourite self-worship, must be cast away the moment they interfere with the life God has set us to do. But in dealing with the outer world and our neighbours, hindrance, and the hinderer are in different circumstances. The rule of life there may be shortly set down in this. Never because you *dislike* a thing laugh at it, sneer at it, blame it, or vex it. If a thing is wrong, oppose it. But leave what you dislike alone; the world is wide enough for all. And the weak beginnings of good *are always disliked*. He who gives way to his dislikes, will some day stand with the crowd and shout, "Away with him, Crucify him," when some poor victim is being hunted down for bringing out some new truth in what they think an odious way, even though he work in Christ's spirit, even though he work for Christ's sake, yea even though he be in a far-off humble way a likeness of Christ.

## SERMON XLIV.

### PESTILENTIAL AIR.

ST MATTHEW XVIII. 7.

*“ Woe unto the world because of offences ! ”*

To look straight at what ought to be done, and never to allow personal dislike to come between, that is the true rule of life. Of course it is easy to say this, and hard to do it. Yes, but I cannot but think if the heart can once get a clear, strong sight of a truth, and have hold of it once, that the whole after course is on a different plan, however much it may fall short of what it should be. Now this plan of life is what I want to put before you. I want you to catch sight of the great fact, that if each one of you to-day gets hold of the grand lesson never to say or do anything because you dislike a person, or his cause, all your future life will have a new direction. You must bring home to yourselves, that truth and good will come before you in disagreeable ways, and through people you dislike at the time ; and worse, that you will not necessarily know it to be truth ;

you often *will not know it* to be truth, and unless you are prepared to sympathise with what you dislike, if it needs sympathy, because it needs sympathy, and even to welcome what you feel inclined to despise, if it needs welcome, at least to do it no harm, you must from time to time be a hinderer, come under the curse of Christ, "Woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh!"

Many also have entertained angels unawares; and most assuredly those events of my own life, which I now know to have been the turning events, and greatest blessings, were entertained unawares. And, as far as I know, the greatest of all was a matter of half a minute, a simple act of simple obedience, most hateful at the moment, but right; done humanly speaking from nothing but just such a plan of life as I am now trying to make you take. Never hinder because you dislike. The power of this may perhaps be best shown by a comparison. The earth in winter, or early spring, lies bare and cold. Unless we knew what was coming, who could guess the amount of life, the universal press of root, and plant, and flower, and tree, that was sleeping in seeming deadness all unseen? And there it might sleep, and would, if a milder atmosphere, and sunshine, and warmth did not call it out. Just so it is with the human heart. As long as your dislikes are in the way, your sneers at good which is not to your taste, your false idea that manliness means knowing evil, as many think, (but any one can know evil, the thing to know, and do, is the strength of right), so long the inner life cannot come out. How many try and stop anything different from ordinary, and will not let the individual grow, except to a pattern. The world would be like a clipped yew tree if the mean power of common minds had its own way. Let the

inner life out; do not let your dislikes get in the way; space is all that life wants, space, and to be let alone. Woe unto the world because of offences, because of the want of tenderness, and sunlight, in the hearts of companions, because of the coldness, and the frost, in which senseless unkindness makes many a person live, and selfish coarseness pushes everyone it is able to push on one side, and makes a feeling of hardness, and scrambling, a sort of law of life. Woe unto the world because of offences!

It is the air we live in that makes the difference to life; poison the air, and all life suffers, all life becomes stunted, and weakened. And the air *is* poisoned if it is full of dislikes, and suspicions, and criticisms, and sneers, so that the first thought before anything is done is, What will so and so and the rest say, what fault can they find? This is a deadly and unsuspected evil in schools. You are thrown so much together, that you cannot help influencing each other very much. And if the tone is mean and narrow, if offences, hindrances, sneers, and frost, are the order of the day, if likes and dislikes are the law, and all the thousand whims and fancies of inexperience and selfishness, then, remember, much good never comes up at all, much more only half grows, because of—offences: because, that is, of the dull, dead, foolish self-sufficiency and fault-finding; not because of any positive sin necessarily. It is possible to imagine a society in which no outward wrong, no breach of law for a time should ever be committed, and yet the heavy, pestilential selfishness of the place should be a hot-bed of all future evil, a destroyer of all generous, free spirit. It is not possible for man, or boy, to put out his best in a cold, repellent atmosphere. *We* are dependent on *you* very much, whether we like it or not, for the spirit and

temper with which we work. You, if willing, quicken progress, and make all more full of life and interest; and if the contrary, drag it down. And you are dependent on us and each other, in like manner. The best work *cannot be done* in a poisonous atmosphere. Woe unto the world because of offences! I know the difficulty of never acting on dislikes. But I also know that if each of you will henceforth try and make it a law of life not to do so, it will alter the whole manner of living. I know the difficulty. It is nothing else than another name for perfection. All selfishness, all the evil of human nature, goes against the tenderness and sympathy, the sunshine and gladness, of getting out of the way of others, and making their life-work easy and happy.

Nevertheless it is not difficult to set before the heart as a *life-plan* the intention of never being in the way, and of being helpful, when possible. In this spirit, the school is going to join this week in the East London Mission work. Not that we do much, but yet we help, we assist in taking away the desolate feeling of working alone. It is astonishing what this can be, how far it will go. How do the good and gallant acts done in ages past by men, who have long since gone to God, thrill through our hearts, and rouse them, and comfort them even now! How in our own generation, the knowledge that *here* is a man who heartily is working for Christ's sake, and *there* another, who cares for and sympathises with living efforts, makes living efforts possible and strong! The life of one earnest man is like a fortress in a land, which protects, and encourages thousands who never come near it. It is a trumpet blast sounding in the night, caught up again and again, and passed on, a grand, inarticulate power in the heart, telling by its mere sound, though nothing else

be known, of readiness to fight against wrong. So powerful is life if let live. Give it then space. Write in your hearts this great law, never again, so help you God and Christ, knowingly to be in the way.



## SERMON XLV.

### THE BLESSING ON THE DREAMER.

ACTS II. 17.

*“ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”*

LIFE is the love of truth for its own sake. There must be no bribery in true life, for love knows no other gain but love. A slave is bribed to work, or forced ; the gallant free spirit of the soldier son wants nothing more than his Great Father's will. There *can* be no bribery in true love and true life. So then religion must be the love of truth, because of the beauty of truth ; the love of light, because of the glory of light ; the love of Christ, because of truth and light in all their beauty, all their glory, radiating from Him our King and God. There can be no bribery in love, either of fear, or of gain, or it is not love. And it is not possible that the highest religion can exist when a man knows, at the time he is

acting, that what he does at that moment is a great gain or a great loss. There can be no bribery in love.

Many a man is grievously disappointed who thinks to buy love, even though at the time in earnest, and loving; for as soon as a claim is made silently, or openly, love changes to a question of value, and a question of value belongs to service done, wages, and the market. In God's highest kingdom on earth there can be no question of market-price, of debtor or creditor, of work done and wages claimed. All this belongs to the Law, all this exists, all this is the porch and antechamber of the great King; but love of Christ, and love of good for its own sake, is alone the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no bribery in love. And therefore it is that God never repeats Himself in His dealings with men, never lets men see Him at the moment of trial, as they would do, if the same things came over again. "When saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison?" is the question both of those who gave help, and of those who did not. Men never see the great issue, the trial of the living God, at the moment of trial. Neither we, nor Pilate, neither the Jews of old, nor the goers to Church now, know at the time the wondrous loss and gain of what they do when they make their choice. God never repeats Himself in His dealings with men, so that they see it, or it would destroy unselfish love.

And if we are to understand that great prophecy which I have taken as my text, be sure it will come to us in as new, as secret, as unexpected a way, as it did to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, when the religious world of that day was "amazed, and in doubt," and some mocked and sneered, but *no one* knew the divine grace, and the vast sig-

nificance of that hour, when truth came in its new shape. Divine Life is always changing its shape in this way. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." Divine life is always unseen and invisible. This living, breathing, unseen power of God is ever sweeping through the world of man, and implanting life, and drawing out growth, wherever there is room for life and growth; but none know how it will present itself. The new truth in its taking root in the heart is always a secret test, there is no bribery. The seed that is going to become a power is borne by the divine wind hither and thither, till it finds a heart to settle in, but none know, when the seed-power comes, the wondrous loss or gain there is in it. So our prophets will not be their prophets, or our visions their visions, or our dreams their dreams. Where would be the test to us if we knew the divine message to be certainly divine? It will be something different from what has gone before; something suited to our times, and habits of thought, as the prophets and miracles of early days were suited to the men of early days, and their habits. Their messages and messengers were just such as, in the childhood of the world, could be accepted, or rejected, as men were inclined this way or that. They seem plain now, but they were not plain then; at least not plain when compared with the temptations on the other side. Men did not know at the time what the loss or gain was, a bit more than we do now; men therefore at the time were, as we are now, left to think what they pleased of the bare facts of a common, every-day, prosaic, matter-of-fact world, and never had any more knowledge of what was going on spiritually than we have in the spirit

world in which we live. The fool said in his heart There is no God, then, as now. The power is secret, so far as the seeing it truly goes, and always has been. I believe therefore, that the great prophecy of the text is actually being now fulfilled, and that we have greater spirit power at work in these latter days, than the men of old had.

I purpose next Sunday to make some remarks on this. But to-day I wish particularly to draw attention to the fact, that God's kingdom has always been, and always must be, a hidden kingdom on earth, or else with our present natures, it would be impossible to act unselfishly; and so, that the spiritual powers at work will be unknown to us and suited to our habits of thought. Prophecy in the true sense of the word, the forth-speaking of God's truth, and the keen spiritual sense that gathers in God's truth to speak it forth, surely has not departed. The very text hints that the spirit power of the latter days will come in what we may call natural ways. The young men are to see visions, the old men to dream dreams. The strong, untried, clear grasp of far-off results in the younger mind, which sees the end, and does *not* see the space between, is contrasted with the old man's dearly-bought experience, who, whilst still seeing God, and holding fast to convictions, can quietly, in faith, put the end very far off, and make the vision of his strength and younger days, the dream of his old age; a dream of things which he now knows cannot be yet, but which nevertheless he is surer than ever *will be* in the end. The young men see visions, and the old dream dreams. Remember in our hard days that this is the blessing God promises—this the state of mind that is high, and holy, and from Him. How does it sound, the blessing of God upon the dreamer?

## SERMON XLVI.

### THE EYE MAKES FACTS.

ACTS II. 17.

*“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”*

THE authoritative teaching of God was closed by the Revelation to St John, the book of the Revelation. Our Blessed Lord has told us that no new revelation of Him shall ever be again, “till as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be:” sudden, unexpected, known to all at once. It could not be otherwise. Of necessity, we may say, the coming of the Son of God on earth must close the great book of new teaching. For what greater thing could there be to follow? The Kingdom of Heaven was fully set up, when He had given His last spiritual messages. But then the carrying out of the Kingdom of Heaven *began*. That was not finished. Yet because no inspired authority is ever again to proclaim a new Gospel, men close their minds to the fact—that God’s

great promise of the Holy Spirit in the latter days is being fulfilled. But God does not repeat Himself—so our prophets will not be their prophets, nor our visions their visions, nor our dreams their dreams. All will be different, or men would not be tried. We never know at the time the infinite loss or gain of what we do. And just as a thoughtful mind would expect the Revelation of Christ to be the last teaching with inspired power of authority, as we are told it was; so also a thoughtful mind would expect the New Kingdom to have a perpetual current of divine grace, as perfect for carrying out the divine kingdom, as the authority was for founding it. And so we are told there is. As true a divine inspiration passes, unseen as such, before men now; as true a knock at the door of their hearts from God; as living a spirit trying men's spirits; as ever moved in prophet of old.

What are we looking for? Is it power? Is it a wonder to force our minds? We shall not find it. It never has been found. The men of old did not find it. Though they had it, they knew it not; and now, the new spirit-working will be equally unknown to us. But it is here. And God's truth proclaimed in word and deed by those whose hearts God has opened, does its work as perfectly as it did of old, is as fully adapted to its end, is as true an inspiration, as great a trier of the heart, as it ever was. I see clearly, and feel strongly, that this seeming matter-of-fact world of ours is a great invisible kingdom, where life, God's life, is moving in all its glory, most glorious because of its lowly, universal presence, which never interferes with those who want it not. *Matter-of-fact!* It is ourselves that make it so. The air, the sun, the plants, are common matter-of-fact, dulness to the plough-boy, because the plough-boy is

ignorant: the true facts are there, the marvels, which the astronomer, and botanist, and educated man know, but he does not see them. And the mere astronomer, and botanist, and educated man see the bright, hard knowledge of the stars, and the plants, and the earth, and it is all spiritless to them, because they too are ignorant: the true facts are there, the marvels of spirit power, but they do not see them. And higher still, the thoughts of our fellow men, and the facts of the heart, and all the spirit power moving there, cannot be seen by any eye which has not been purged by God to see them. That world, that high and marvellous world of divine truth and love, like the Pillar of the Cloud, makes its facts correspond to the eye that looks on it, and is a light and a joy to one, and an angry darkness to another, just as each is fitted to see it. We make the facts of our spirit world, as far as we are concerned; God's Cloud, in which His spirit moves and works, still divides on earth the two great nations; still turns its impenetrable, dark, unknown, barrier on the one, still beams with glorious light and hope and deliverance for the other. Men see in one another, and in the working world, just so far as God lets them see, just such facts as God gives them, be they darkness, or be they light. Their eye makes the facts different to them. Their love; or their hate, makes them see, actually see, a different spirit power in the same men, in the same circumstances—light or darkness. Are we then training the spirit eye? What kind of facts are we looking for?

The blessing of the latter days is, a spirit of prophecy, a spirit that sees visions, a spirit that dreams dreams; and surely the curse of the latter days is, a hard self-confidence, that calls itself practical, because

it takes the nearest way, like a fool, to work and *profit*, and grasps the readiest tools. To be practical is almost become acting without looking forward. To be practical, is now to have more faith in a penny seized, than in any principles of unfailing truth and thoughtful plans of good, living, because good *lives*. What facts are we looking for? The facts of God's spirit kingdom are as rigid, as solid, for man, when he sees them, as the facts of God's lower kingdom of things created. Prophecy, that spirit of interpreting God's will from scripture and from life, depends on as severe a knowledge of God's will, from a training and experience as true, as facts can make it. But the Pillar of the Cloud is a light only to those who journey anywhere where it leads. And Visions are not fancies, but the keen perception given by God of great truths in their working out, so that the seer can see past all near objects to his promised land. But the Pillar of the Cloud is light to him only who seeks a country. And dreams are not fantastic fumes of minds half dazed, they are the sure conviction of the pilgrim in the wilderness that what he is unworthy to see, or bring to pass, shall yet come, shall yet be a common thing. But the Pillar of the Cloud sheds its comfort in dreams on pilgrims only.

Surely greater knowledge of spirit life, visions of noble deeds, and dreams of noble life made possible, are not unknown to these days. The Pillar of the Cloud is journeying with us, only learn to see it in all true leading. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above." The wise thought, the loving life, the unselfish work, all the spirit power, and grace of God, pass amongst us, trying, testing, judging us. Who is there that can see facts,—the facts of higher truth?



## SERMON XLVII.

### VISIONS AND DREAMS THE TRUEST FACTS.

ACTS II. 17.

*“ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”*

IF it be true, as I believe, that in these latter days, the Spirit of God is poured out on men as He promised, and works by enlightening their hearts to prophesy, or forthspeak His truth, through a power of seeing His truth, and a subtle feeling of scripture interpretation and life experience combined, then there is something solid to start from. If visions mean, the keen strong living sense a young man feels for great principles, in spite of the thick worldliness all round ; and dreams mean, the old man's quiet longing for what he knows his eyes shall never see, though he has striven for it, but yet is sure will come at last, then here again there is something solid to start from. It is a glorious thing to be one of

God's speakers, a *προφήτης*, to stand in the world with the clear eye that God has opened to see His working, and to know His plans, though they be far off, and long in coming, to look forth on the nations, and read the secret causes that make them living or dying, and then, not like the prophet of old to proclaim judgment, but to speak the words of healing to those who will be healed, to scatter life in living earnest truths to those who will have life. Yea, it is good amidst the wars and rumours of wars, the breaking up of hallowed things, and shapes of ancient glory, to trace the life that shall come out of the ruin, and be a comforter to others, and stedfast within, a speaker of the strength of God. Good too it is to have visions, when young, of noble life, to thrill with inward unselfish eagerness to follow Christ's great men, to glow at the hearing of their deeds, to willingly offer the whole youthful fervour of coming hopes to the same cause, and working see the way to do it. Good too to dream when old; and having lost all care for what may now come, not to harden as hopes depart, but to pass in spirit into other worlds, and see God surely bringing life to its perfect end at last.

If this be indeed God's inspiration for these last days, then there is no question more simple, more practical. The question is, who sees the facts of the world as they truly are, and as they are to be. And *our concern* is, that all the solid work and earnest spirit of a heart, that asks only what it is right to do, is the necessary training without which God does not give, or rather, by fashioning which, God does give His spirit to men now. God's spirit is breathed through work. And the reading God's great book of life can only be by living along its pages as it were. This is what

I call on you here to-day to do ; to set to soberly, and make your lives such, that God *can* speak through them ; such, that God *can* send the light of visions through them ; such, that God *can* at last make His dream stronger than earth's realities to them, and give a quiet sense of restful security even to him who perishes in the lost battle. For the lost battle is always becoming the victorious truth of the after time.

Here you all are gathered together from many homes ; yea, from many lands, and to go out again with a still wider sweep from hence. The half-year is now gone. This week we bury it with a joyful burial, as I trust one day a joyful burial shall be our lot, when *all* the work is done, and we go home indeed. Now, even now, the past is gone, is at God's judgment seat, as surely as the finished life can be. But before it is gone from your thoughts, I summon you to God's judgment bar to-day, to look at it once more, to weigh it well, to gaze on its dead face before the cloth is laid over it, to see yourselves as you were, lying there before God, with all over, and thus to judge what is sweet or bitter, beautiful or foul—before the new life begins again. How wonderful is the ground we tread on here, this outward presence of the living desire to have culture and highest powers to wield, this house of God's trade, this counter, where the great Master going on His journey gives His talents to you His servants before He sends you out. Few think that the young man's vision, and the old man's dream, are here in a figure before your eyes in these noble buildings and this three hundred years of school. And shall there be no voice of prophecy, no speech of God, no words and deeds of might here anymore ? Nay but there shall be.

Yet what part have you all taken in this, this God's home of prophecy, of visions, and of dreams? What part have you taken in clearing the stuffed heart, and making it able to receive? *Can* God take your lives, and make the facts of *your* lives open out His great secrets of life? *Can* God make your visions His visions, and your dreams His dreams? There have been who think in their youth, as others have thought before them, that they would fain do something which England should not willingly let die. It is a grand thought! But of the earth earthy. Whilst all can do something which God shall assuredly not let die. On a solid basis of daily earnest work for Christ, there can be raised a life that shall of itself be a prophecy; a speaking forth to man of God's truth, even as Bishop Patteson, whom I well remember a boy as you are, made his life speak. He spoke to all the world, God's English prophet, as long as this world lasts; but each can speak to his world in deeds of light; and if it is light and life indeed, who knows what fire it may not kindle! And work, daily work, done in purity and simple truth will make you see visions; nay, I doubt not, does make some of you see visions of coming greatness, of great principles struggling for life in these mean days of scrambling, and makes your hearts fill with God's vision fire, and set themselves strong and resolute to uphold the cause of the weak in the coming years. Yea, and hereafter, if such be your work, if ye indeed are prophet lives, and speakers forth of God's truth, if God's vision fire be in your hearts, giving you the clear frank eye that sees straight to its mark, then as the time of going home draws near, and the great holiday of God begins to be a reality, close at hand to weary workers,

then, I say, you shall dream dreams, you shall have a quiet trust that in spite of broken hopes, the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. As each brightness fades on earth, a happy confidence shall take its place, a calm security in God's kingdom to come. Then you shall go home. Let this day begin the great new half-year of life. Set before yourselves this day as your vision true deeds to be done, and then, that last going home.

## SERMON XLVIII.

### THE CREED OF LIFE.

PHILIPPIANS II. 5, 6, 7, 8.

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”*

I DO not envy the man who is not moved by noble example and noble deeds. Teaching is good; words of high thought and pure morality do reach the heart, and, when it is not pre-occupied, find admission, and bring forth good fruit. But I will boldly say, if this was all, if words only were tried, and man had nothing but words to feed on, and his own perception of thought and truth to guide him, this would be indeed a lost world. How hollow is the sound of mere grand precept! how unreal

the utterance of thought that is only thought! It is man himself that moves man's heart for good or evil. The hero, be he false or true, that each sets before himself as his hero. The living breathing man, who, by living, makes us live. And God has not given this matchless power to man as he lives, nay, in some degree, to every man who lives, without having taken it Himself, and hallowed it pre-eminently as His own. The one pre-eminent distinction between Christianity and every philosophy and science is this, that every philosophy, every science, is teaching, is wisdom in words, and the men are nothing, the words are everything; but Christianity is belief in a life. Christ and His life are our creed. Not the Gospel only, not the written words only, or most, but the Son of Man, God the Son on earth, living. The written words, only so far as they tell the life. The Redeemer who brings life to a dead world, the living example, whose Life is life to all who are to live. This is Christian truth.

What power then must lie in this inspired character of man divine given us in the Apostle's words, this sketch of divine life on earth, of the hero of heroes, the King of Kings, the great example, which can win and hold all hearts, and fashion to noble life all living men! I would draw your attention to three main statements: first, that He knew His greatness, that, being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. There is no ignorance, no mock humility in true greatness, but a true appreciation of powers, true self-knowledge, leading the owner of powers, small or great, to estimate them fairly, and then to try and use them as Christ did. Next, the Son of God, the Man divine, showed His greatness *by being great*, not by doing deeds, or speaking

words; showed the divine pre-eminence of glorious strength, by emptying Himself of all but His own life, and proving He could do without it all. He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and lastly, all this vast claim of service and love was let go. He entered a lost world, to save it, with claims unspeakable on those He came to save, and bore to have it all despised, bore to have it rewarded with shame and death. O wondrous secrets of life, as life, of life divine in its unaided greatness, of life and living, in itself, and by itself, bare of external power and forceful action, bare of deeds, and bare of words, such as men do and speak, to make themselves great; stripped of all resources, dying on the Cross, and yet—the supreme life, the only true greatness; the only greatness that *is great*, and does not try to make itself great.

Here is the vast mistake that men fall into. Instead of striving to *be great*, by moving in God's world with quiet, patient, humble mastery, always equal to their day, and content with it, they set before themselves a false idea of the need of doing something extraordinary: and to do something extraordinary, requires extraordinary effort; so, they strive, and thrust themselves forward, to heave up something, or to heave something aside, and struggle to make themselves great *by doing*, and so never *are great* by living. Not seeing, that here also, the widow's mite may well be the most precious; and that the high intellects, and laborious brains or hands, which, in their great strength, cast great gifts into the treasury, may, out of their abundance and their pride, be scattering the crumbs, or the plentiful overflow of their active powers, whilst some poor, ignorant, loving, weak



outcast may throw in all that he has, ungrudgingly, and daily do his best, because he loves to do his best, without a thought of anything but the being allowed to do his happy service.

Nay brethren, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. *Be* great, as you all can be, by that inward excellence of enduring life which is content to live its best, and feels that nothing in created worlds ought to crush or overcome the life, and tries daily to learn God's secret of being like Christ in never needing anything but the spirit life within, and never failing to move quietly, and with prevailing innocence, amongst all the temptations that beset the path of man. I would try to-day to leave impressed on your minds the difference between *being great*, as all can be, and trying to do what seems great, which few can do. All, by God's grace, can *be* great. The inward greatness can belong to all; the strong heart which can serve, and in the form of a servant, do mean but useful work uncomplaining; and when the work is done, and the best blood poured out in the daily toil, can afterwards bear the pain of being set aside, and crucified, its hopes killed, its worldly prospects killed, that is greatness. Nothing outward, nothing to show; but in God's world this inward self-sacrifice in its quiet pre-eminence, is all in all.

Man's idea of greatness is the outward thing done. Christ's example of greatness is the inward life that bears; the spirit of perfect life. Whole nations run wild after false greatness. But he who has once seen the secret of life, and once seen in Christ the great example of all that is heroic in man, can never again be misled by glare. Not great deeds, but a great life; not the making a great place, but the being great; that is the

difference. All can follow the example of the great life, and strive to be great by quiet well doing, by bearing all things, by never looking for reward.

This is the mind of Christ Jesus that should be in us.

## SERMON XLIX.

### THE WORK, OR THE WORKER.

PHILIPPIANS II. 5, 6, 7, 8.

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”*

THE wonderful distinction between being great, and the doing what men think great deeds, has been shown. I believe there is no distinction in the world more practical. Nothing is more opposite than the quiet, inward power, calm, and restrained, which is like the mind of Christ, and the tumultuous outburst of violent action, or resistless onward march, which is the mind of man. Now let us see a little how this is so. To be great needs no outward help. Nay more, to *be* great

requires that everything but the spirit life should be emptied out, and taken away, and the life left alone bare, and stripped, and by itself, to prove itself true. Hence it is necessary in this world of training that the life should be tried. And all the difficulties, and friction, and cross purposes, that damage, or at the time seem to destroy the work, do but make perfect the workers. Which is it to be, the work, or the workers? Which is it to be, the thing done, or the living doer? Man answers unhesitatingly, the work, and the thing. God says, the worker, and the life. Here is the point of divergence. The first shall be last, and the last first, when this is the judgment; when the spirit of the worker is judged, and not the work only. Great gifts, and great work, may only be the strong man standing in the market-place, selling his labour in the best market; whilst the loving trusty worker, who has only had to work one hour, may have been God's friend, and able to see God. Self-denial ceases to be self-denial, as soon as it sets a value on self, and makes a claim. The worker's heart is the question in the sight of God. I want you all to see the inherent greatness of life that does not shrink from service, "He took upon Him the form of a servant;" that can work without outward praise, "He humbled Himself;" and can bear to be repaid with the utter overthrow of earthly gains, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." "Let this mind be in you," says the Apostle, "which was also in Christ Jesus." I wish you all to see that this patient, humble, unrewarded well doing, this mind, this view of life, is within reach of all. Great exploits, great feats of strength, great deeds, are only within reach of the strong, but all can go about their

daily life with the mind of Christ Jesus, as an example. To put it in simple words; it is the same as saying, that whether work is great or small, depends on the strength of the worker; but whether the worker is great or small, depends on the loving heart, and the loving eye, which sees and does truth, and cares for nothing else.

The man who walks in this world as God's friend, trusting Him, believing in Him, and therefore feeling that all that has to be done is His, moves in a world of life; and all things are full of life to him. It is a new plan of life to see and feel, that, in God's world, in God's vineyard, God does not care for the work, but for the spirit and condition of the worker. Those who sold their work, though they bore the burden and heat of the day, got no more, and were rated lower, than those who worked in loving trust for but one hour. Work must not be sold, either for honour or profit, by those who are of the mind of Christ. Christ came as a servant, and died on the Cross as an unrewarded servant. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him." It is not the work, but the spirit and condition of the worker, that God looks to, and that man should look to also. For this opens life to all; and makes all life precious.

In your present work for instance, not prizes won, nor places gained, either by yourselves or others, are the true standard; that is the standard of the market-place; but the true standard is the trustful willingness shown, the faith in good coming out of all things; this is the standard in the vineyard of God. God does indeed pay for work done, but He prizes those workers who work in a free spirit, regardless of the immediate reward, and treats as friends those who meet Him with

the free loving faith of a friend. 'Tis not for honour given or withheld, no, nor for profit, that men pour out their lives at their best. It is for the faith felt in the Lord of the vineyard, and for love of Him. Not the work, but the spirit of the worker is the question.

And this opens life to all. All can strive after the free, faithful spirit which can do without honour, and without reward, or at least can try to do so. In God's vineyard the worker is most thought of. And you workers, one and all, can set yourselves in a true manly way, in a loving trustful way, to your life. This makes all difficulties, as it were, vanish, because the difficulty, which makes you lose your wish, may be the very power which makes yourself better. The damage to the work may be the training of the worker. And the slow, the stupid, the defeated, can win life, and life-power, just because of it. Their trials and mortifications are their gain, when they make them simple-hearted and true. The work done may be of little or no value in the market, but the honest worker may be of infinite value in the vineyard of the Lord. There lies the question: are we in the market, or are we in the Lord's vineyard? If we are in the market, our work is all in all; if we are in the Lord's vineyard, our loving willingness, and our faith in good, is all in all. "Let this same mind then be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." For most assuredly we are in the Lord's vineyard if we choose to be.

I want the littlest boy here to see, I want the most desponding to see, that they have as good a life as any-one, that their want of strength, or fortune, bodily, or mental, does not matter; that their want of prizewinning power does not matter; that their want of position, and

their seeming helplessness, does not matter. They are in the vineyard of the Lord ; and all that matters is, the being like Him ; the having His mind ; the honest work without claims done in trust ; the honest free heart that feels sure good will come. Christ Jesus laid aside all His power, to be a servant. He laid aside all His service claims, to be obedient even to death. Death was His reward on earth. He has left us an example of what God wills. He has left us an example of the value of the worker. Men look to the work, God looks to the worker. In the vineyard of the Lord there is no other rule ; if wages enter there they degrade the heart which clings to them. Remember, not the work you do and its market value, its prizes, and its honour, not this, but your own spirit, you the worker, are what is valued in the vineyard of the Lord. Thus it can come to pass that the last shall be first, and the first last. "Let then this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

## SERMON L.

### CHARACTER, NOT THIEVING.

ST MARK I. 16, 17.

*“Now as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after Me.”*

THE life within, that is the question; or rather, perhaps, the treatment of the life given us by God. For I am not here to-day to tell you the first truth of Christ's Gospel, and of His gift of life to man; but rather to try and make you welcome it, see it, give it free play, and bring it to its perfection. A true character is what we aim at. This is perhaps the most familiar word, character—the free fresh life of the Sea of Galilee, the fisherman's hardy enduring spirit, the manly life of the hill side, the simple habits of men who could feel and work. This is the type set before us of character. Christ's life can indeed conquer anywhere, in the dense city, as well as on the sea. But had our



Lord taken city people for His Apostles, we should have missed the great character stamp, in its simple power, and might have thought that city experience, or knowledge, or some other external gain, was the need, or part of the need, and have lost or dimmed, in some degree, the plain grand truth, that character was all in all. The fishermen on the sea had their character, their life, their hardy, simple uprightness, and had nothing more. To gain this true character then, to cherish Christ's life within into a living, powerful, conquering growth, this, and this only, is the end of human life. This is the true aim of a school.

And here let me draw attention to the very special field of school life, which makes it peculiar, a thing of itself, to be found nowhere else, and at no other time; or we shall not understand the practical bearing of this truth. School life is a preparation time, enjoyed by very few. It is a time of forging instruments given to but few. It is a time of practice, and exercise, and self-culture, given to but few. Self-culture which, during the rest of the lives of most men, is almost entirely thrown aside, and may be utter selfishness and temptation, is to the schoolboy his privilege and his duty.

But mark how few have it. The vast majority, the overwhelming majority, have to earn their daily bread very young, and have no such opportunity granted them; whereas a small number are gathered together into schools, have everything found for them, all hindrances removed from their path, all help given them, whilst the gathered treasures of the world that is gone are put before them as their training for life, and they have only to learn to work; and, for the time, these things become the preparation for after life, and

the appointed means for training character. For this, I say, is still the end—the training character. And how well you know that the main daily trial is one of character and life—a trial, whether the inner spirit has the will and strength to do heartily, at the moment, what it ought to be doing, or not. You work at outward knowledge, and the gathering of other men's minds; but if you do it rightly, not the knowledge, but the trained spirit, and the practised instruments of the perfect man are made yours. The inward spirit of holiness and power, that anywhere and everywhere, is able to stand undismayed; and to do Christ's work all over the world, this is your life. You are, as it were, during your school years, being wrought, and fashioned, through your parents' love and care, into instruments of perfect workmanship for your own after life. So far, you have a right to live on the labours of the past, and the stored up gains of fathers or ancestors, and no farther.

When you start in life yourselves, you ought to have no wistful longing for other people's stores. You owe it to God and Christ to stand full of your own inward life, and live it out, making your own way, as God calls you. Happy those, who have to make their own way, if they know it. Happy those, who see and feel that the pure, strong heart, and its life, is a great inheritance, a blessed possession of their own, and do not expect to live on other people, and their labours, be they alive or be they dead. To use another man's riches and do nothing for it, is to be a thief, though the money be legally ours. To be a thief, taking God's money without title, even though man has given it.

The pure, strong inward life, the character, the work-

ing enduring spirit of the sea of Galilee, goes into the world to give, not to receive, to give heart blood, and free earnest efforts, in the service of men, our brethren. But we must train this, we must set clearly before ourselves what we have to do ; we ought to understand, as soon as we understand anything, that the life of Christ within ourselves is alone truth for us ; and to make this life strong, the only thing worth doing. And as the Gospel passed through the world bearing all things, and bringing light by its own inward power, so we, in whom Gospel life dwells, should set ourselves to pass through the world, trusting in the inward power of God and in nothing else. We have to strengthen and fashion the inward life into a state of fearless excellence ; and to refer everything to this. And every day brings its contribution ; every act, done or undone, plays its part. Difficulties become tests of willingness and strength ; the character that can face a hard task is learning much besides the task itself. Pain is a teacher ; the character that does not flinch from pain is being moulded for high work. Sorrow teaches ; the patient spirit is learning the peace of God. Danger is a teacher ; he who is fearless because God is with him, is one of those to whom it was said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We must endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ. All hardship, everything that tries life, when overcome, strengthens life ; and God's life has overcome the world, and overcome death, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." The inward spirit of life from God, day by day, tries to meet with joy all that is sent to be met and done, and at least strives to endure, to be patient, knowing well that a time

comes when the prevailing power of life shall turn the trial into blessing. "Peace I leave unto you," said our Blessed Lord and Almighty King, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This is Christ's command to those who receive His life, and live it. A command to be untroubled and fearless. Perchance we may measure our life power by our power of obeying this command. At all events, the Lord of Life says to the living, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;" at all events, the Almighty tells us, that we are masters of the world and its pains, if we cherish His life.

## SERMON LI.

### THE WORLD WITHIN.

#### COLOSSIANS III. 4.

*“When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”*

THERE will be found in you, and all mankind, a ceaseless effort to put what we do, and its effect, and what is thought of it—and what others do, and its effect, and what is thought of it, or seems to be thought of it, in the place of life, and to give it the name of our life, and their life. And books are written, and called the Life of so and so, as if the actions done, however truly recorded, were, in any sense, that inward life, that unseen mysterious growth of thought and feeling, that conflict and sea of good and evil, that wondrous world of hidden immortality or death, that unknown land of all possibilities of glory or shame, which, at this moment, is lying within the narrow compass of every human body here before me, out of reach always, always imperfectly made manifest, and often most concealed from the man him-

self, whose head thoughts may give orders to a dark inscrutable false troop of passions, and judge what they have never learnt.

The moment we think of it we see at once that what we and others call our lives, that is, the outcome that is seen, is as nothing compared with the infinite unceasing goings on in our own inward being, which are not seen. For one action, or one word, that comes out, a thousand castles in the air, a thousand dreams, or projects, a thousand reasonings and decisions, mental struggles, victories, defeats, backward and forward movements, take place within, that are not seen; and these are not the life, they are only part of that spirit, which is working itself out into a more perfect growth and habit of good or evil. Hence it comes to pass, what I am sure is true, that, not unfrequently the estimate formed of a man shall be one thing, and the effect of his life another. That all history, for example, shall glorify the name of some great conqueror, or philosopher; and all the effect of that man's life on his fellow men be evil, and pernicious. Whilst, on the other hand, we may often see how the main stamp of a good man's life is good, even though he made many mistakes, and won no glory. So different is life from actions, and, still more, from the judgment men form on actions.

We mostly note what we do. All we know is the word, or the deed, that has seemed to us so much, and cost so much, before we were able to say it or do it; but we know nothing of the feeling others take away. We know nothing of the smile, that warmed this heart, the gesture, that sent that other away with a life-long remembrance; the look, that shot quick and lasting power into this one; the very silence, that marked the

perfect calmness that bore the worst ; the wistful eyes, the sad worn face, and all the speechless eloquence of Christlike patience ; all these the lives that give them off know nothing of, and do not call their life. Yet Holy Scripture takes note of these. The Levite came and *looked upon* the wounded man, and that look is recorded for ever ; the Lord turned, and *looked on* Peter, and that look brought with it remembrance and new life. And of Christ prophecy notes, that, "as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." And the Gospels note, How, when vehemently accused, "He answered nothing." And it is hanging on the Cross that He draws all men unto Him.

So strangely different is the inward power of life, which we men cannot know in ourselves as to its outward effect, nor can we calculate it from the actions we think about and know. I draw your attention to this, not as a curious fact, but as the most practical truth of all. Look within. Examine your secret aversions, and your secret likings ; take heed what your heart dwells on ; remember that the disappointments, the inward self-denials, the humility, the silent self-restraint, the joy in truth, the bearing all things, have far more to do with your life than all you say and do.

Nay, I will give you but one thing of the life of Christ to imitate, as a proof of what I say. "He answered nothing." That is, to mere personal insult and contemptuous questionings, He answered nothing. Now word offences are common in schools. Let each of you frame for himself a prayer in Christ's name for power to keep silence ; two or three words will do ; and whenever you are provoked, pray it, and be silent. Try that. I am sure, if you do, you will understand and feel the force

of what I have been saying, that, not what you say and do is life, but the secret inward growth. The man who can be silent for Christ's sake, with prayer to Him within, whilst evil tongues, or even teasing tongues, are at work, will understand something of life. Try that one thing, each of you, from this hour; and I will promise you in Christ's name some sight of His life, some knowledge of His working. Look to Him.

As if to put away from our hearts the idea of much work, and to make us value life itself apart from the long day's labour, Christ Himself spent thirty years of quiet preparation in a cottage home, and only three in public. Nor can we tell which was the more important; we can only say with certainty, each was perfect; each the half of the perfect whole; each incomplete without the other. But it is clear from this that the fierce pressure of consuming work is not the ideal set before man in the life of Christ, a bit more than it is in Christ's parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. The silent thirty years are full of the greatness of holy silence; and it is on the Cross that the Redeemer draws all men unto Him. Try then the power of life. In the name of Christ learn silence. Learn to make the life within true, and powerful. Measure yourselves, not by what you do, but by what you are. So shall you be like Christ.



## SERMON LII.

BORTH.

### THE HOUSE OF PRAYER.

ST MATTHEW XXI. 13.

*“And Jesus said unto them, It is written, My House shall be called the House of Prayer.”*

OUR Law did not come to us from Mount Sinai, out of the fire, the blackness, the darkness and the tempest, and the sound of the trumpet exceeding long and loud ; not even, as with the prophet, did the great and strong wind rend the mountain, or the earthquake shake the world ; the still small voice came at once, the still small voice of Christ moving as man amongst men. So still, so quiet, so familiar that we hardly know that it is here, and so it is close to us, and passes amongst us, and gets into our homes, and becomes part of our daily life, and all the time we know it not as God speaking. Let us not however shut our hearts to it. There is this great gain in our not knowing when the still small voice is speaking, and not being startled in any way by the word of God so close to us, that oftentimes it silently

glides into our lives, and becomes part of our common daily habits, part of our very selves, before we have found out that it is God indeed. Perchance this may be the case with the still small voice of the law laid down in my text, "My House shall be called a House of Prayer." Or if not so, let me to-day try and breathe into you a little of the life which may make the life in the words become living to you. "My House shall be called the House of Prayer;" a house where men kneel and worship, a house where men confess sin and give praise, a house where men cast away themselves, and selfish pride, to fall low before God, and speak the very truth to Him. Such a House must be fitted for what has to be done in it. It is a House of God, therefore the building itself should declare, as this does, that it is holy to God.

A holy building, like a holy book, will not have its outside anything, or be to the eye other than its holy use requires. If a man says one thing and means another, those words are false; if a man wears a soldier's uniform and is not a soldier, that dress is false; and if a building set apart for a particular purpose looks like something else, that building is false. A House of Prayer is not the same as a house of preaching, or a dwelling-house. The very stones of which it is built should declare their holy use by holy fitness and beauty worthy, as far as we can make it, the King of Prayer; the beam out of the wall should cry, and be in itself a kind of prayer pointing upward, as it does here. Window, and roof, and turret, all carrying the eye upward and telling of a King of Prayer above in Heaven. Then how much more, if God's House is a House of Prayer, ought all that is within the house to be fitted for prayer.

People do not sit when they pray, if they pray indeed. So in a house of prayer all should be able to kneel, as you can do here, to kneel together as one Congregation, able with one heart, and one voice, to worship God as a company of the living, one company, a united band glad to join, to be with one another, to have heart touch heart as it were, and voice mingle with voice, and to feel the power of one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all. A building arranged for sitting and hearing, where kneeling is impossible, or nearly so, may be a good building, but it is not a house of prayer; neither is a building, where all is split up into little enclosures, a house of common prayer. In a true house of prayer the whole building is made for prayer; there, all kneel all together, as one body in Christ, on their knees; or standing to give praise, they worship God as brethren, brothers all together sending upwards the true heart thought, in the true outward manner of those who pray, in a building which tells to every eye its own great truth, that it is a house of prayer, lifting day and night its silent witness in an evil world, speaking, as we trust this building may do, generation after generation, of God and man meeting. Here it stands to-day fresh out of your hands, between the mountains and the sea, the mountains those earthly thrones of God. *He*, our Lord, has sanctified mountains. "He went up into a mountain to pray," we are told of the King of Prayer. The sea, that eternity which may be seen stretching out with its everlasting infinite moving song; on the sea, He too, the King, moved in power, and the Psalmist tells us how "His way is in the sea, and His paths in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known." There it stands between them

both, witnessing of God also. The Sea, the House of Prayer, and the Mountains; two of God and one of man witnessing together to all who have ears to hear of the King of Prayer.

Surely this Trinity Sunday, with its "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come," is a memorable day to us who open this house of prayer. Who shall see the end? We begin, but the end is not here, nay not on earth, but in Heaven. We begin, and many a hundred years hence, perchance, men will worship here and see the old stones, and the very marks of the chisel shall be to them almost holy, so full of memories of days gone by. How shall some one try and dream of us, and what manner of men we were, who so long ago laid with hands—the very dust of whose bones shall have past away—these walls, now to-day used for the first time! How shall they muse and think of prayer, and God, of birth, and life, and death, and judgment! And the same prayers, day by day, shall have gone up to God from this place without fail; even as we have prayed to-day the prayers of Moses and of David, of Christ, and Apostles, and Saints.

Here it stands between the mountains and the sea, those two mighty preachers of God; the mountains, where His majesty comes down in the glory of sun and cloud marching over them, and storm and rain travelling in their lonely power, earth declaring to earth His earthly message; and the sea, speaking of Heaven, Eternity, and Infinite life to come. Here it stands on its little hill, just lifted out of the flatness of the land, and man's paths, and man's homes; and the trains will rush by with their changeful life, and many an eye be touched with the message of these walls; and the village

will stretch its white arm along the shore, and the child of to-day be carried to his grave full of years ere the to-morrow comes to this House of God. And day by day your hearts will hallow this place by their joys and sorrows, by Baptism and marriage, by tears and gladness, by sin repented and spiritual light, until in God's eye not stones and wood shall be the building here, but the lives of men, the hearts of His people making a living Temple even here below, a Spiritual House, a prayer in stone, tier upon tier of human feelings and divine love. So shall it be, and this day begins it, this Trinity Sunday; so shall it be, and we are present at this new birth of holy power. May it not well be that hereafter, before the throne of God in Heaven, we may stand, and as we stand here in this church by the sea to-day to glorify God, so we may stand before the throne by the sea of glass like unto crystal, in the presence of the lightnings and thunderings and voices, and the seven lamps of fire that burn before the throne, and in the presence of the Holy Trinity; yea, we may stand there by that crystal sea, and still remember at that hour, still remember in hearts that wonder, and are grateful, this our day by the sea here, and God's earthly throne set up amongst us now. Yea, we may remember, and break forth into the song we sung to-day, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Yea, we may remember this day, and our lips again burn with the same words as now. "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." Such a spirit power is here. May God make this house an everlasting house of prayer on earth, in heaven. Amen.

## SERMON LIII.

BORTH.

### LOVE IS NOT FANCY.

ST MATTHEW VI. 24.

*“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.”*

I HAVE spoken of love and hate. I have said that these two make the world to us. But I have left, in a great degree, the meaning to be guessed. I will endeavour to explain, the more so, because the words “love” and “hate” are common words, and all think they know them ; but, as a rule, what all think they know no one examines, and so it is known by none. First of all, love is not fancy, as our old poets rightly called the passion of love, it is not fancy. There is no magic which seizes on the soul in true love. There is no impulse, which, in a strange wild way, overmasters all calculations and reason, in true love. True love is the perfection of reason. True love is the most sober,

the most real, the most enduring of all things beneath the sky; for true love is spirit answering to spirit, thought to thought, feeling to feeling. True love is that power implanted by God in man of first seeing, and then interpreting, and then becoming one, with the mind of God. Hence true love is a real and necessary feeling in the strong, pure heart when it sees, in man, or woman, true qualities of higher life made visible. There is, as it were, common ground in creation and life, which God, the great thinker, and Lord of Life, puts forth in all He has made, and in all He has allowed to exist, common ground for man to meet Him on, and meeting Him to know Him, and knowing Him, to be drawn upwards into Himself, after His Likeness, by the pure attraction of truth, and its perfect fitness.

This sympathy then, this strong reality of mind mingling with mind and the works of mind, is Love. The strongest of all realities. Love must exist between spirits, when the common ground is truly common to both. And the common ground between God the Creator and Redeemer and Sanctifier, and man the created and redeemed and sanctified, in God's created and redeemed world, is good; and those who learn to see good can find it everywhere; for redemption is everywhere; and finding it, must love it. But this searching out of common ground, and learning to read the great unwritten book of creation, redemption, and life, is no sudden fancy, no momentary task, it is the lifelong labour of the best and noblest; lifelong—yea, eternal. Eternity shall not exhaust the boundless infinity of God's goodness, which shall ever stretch beyond man's search, in glorious happy wealth of endless love.

First then, if endless search is the condition of true

love, we must search. And search means work, and work means deliberate action; action which it is in our power to do, or to leave undone. Love then depends on ourselves; we are not run away with by a passion which we cannot control; we make a calm choice of lifelong work; and the control rests with us, to begin, or not to begin. The soberest as well as the strongest power is true Love.

What comes out of this? How does it concern us to have swept away all the bright cobwebs of magic chance, and shown love to be this steadfast work, this fixed intermingling of thought with thought, this grappling of spirit to spirit, by an unalterable sympathy? This comes of it; that man, in God's world, moves in a world all of which is loveable for Christ's sake; and he is answerable, every hour, for what he does love. Nay, more than answerable; his whole existence here is one ceaseless day of judgment, in which he judges himself daily by that which he loves. "I pray thee have me excused," said the men invited to the great supper. They loved something of their own better; "I pray thee have me excused." And so they were—shut out.

Now I would ask you all one question. Search your hearts. Have you ever done one single perfectly unselfish act? I mean, have you because you felt it to be good, done one disagreeable thing, given up one agreeable thing in your lives, without any fear influencing you, or any hope of praise, or gain, present or future, simply because you saw the good, and loved it, and wished to be like Christ? Give your answer to God. It is no mean turning point. If you have, you have caught a glimpse of divine beauty, of possible happiness; you have felt a far off thrill at least of the peace of God



which passeth all understanding. You have begun to love truth, but Christ leads us very gently, and asks but little at first, and takes our human hearts, and uses their human feelings.

You here, for many years, are only asked to make your main work the getting excellence for yourselves, sheltered from outward care. Begin then to love this training power for the sake of your homes, and for Christ. Do something daily of good to others, give up to the weaker, bear your burden of work, or of wounded feeling. So shall you learn by trial the strength and living power of love of good. There is a steady progress in love. When the foot is once set on the lowest rung of the great ladder, then, step by step, the man mounts upward, and every step is on a prostrate desire, which prevented our hearts from seeing God before. Out of the meanness of earth rises the great ladder of life to God, and by living men can mount it. For life alone leads life. There is no other way. By living the life of Christ man learns to see, and to love the thoughts of Christ; pain even, and self-denial, are made loveable by Christ,—loveable, as being the highest form of love for others,—loveable, as being the great purifiers and givers of liberty.

Love makes its own world; the lower mind loves the lower thing, the higher mind the higher; so the world is to us what we feel it to be, but our feelings belong to us, not we to them; we make them by loving. Spirit interprets spirit, and the spirit of Christ in all creation becomes a visible reality to the spirit of him who lives, and by loving mounts the ladder of life, daily getting up into a higher world, where pain and shame become to him companions in whom he can rejoice; rejoicing, with

the Apostle, at being counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's sake. Yea, it is a stedfast thing, a sober thing, to love. It is stronger than pain, it is stronger than ease, it is stronger than fear, and stronger than ambition, stronger than death. Shall we then, with power to mount up above pain, and ease, and fear, and ambition, and death, shall we, winged with such active immortality of strength, lie grovelling at the foot of the great ladder, crawling amongst mean untruths, eating dust like the serpents, with the serpent's heart? God forbid. Begin, begin, to love life—and action, and truth, and liberty; rejoice evermore, for there is a joy of inward victory that *can* be *evermore*. Learn to bear heat and cold, and hunger, and thirst, and hardness, on account of the life that is in you. Learn to enjoy times of ease, and pleasure, and feasting, with a clear self-mastery, on account of the life that is in you; so shall ye be friends of the Bridegroom. For God hath opened the doors into His world. Spirit *can* answer to His spirit; thought to His thought; mind can mingle with His mind; feeling with His feeling; the marriage feast hath begun; and love, true love, is being made perfect in man. Love is being made perfect, the marriage feast is begun for you, for all who with clear, strong, faithful, hearts, walk in this great earthly antechamber of divine life, and hear through the open doors the music of heaven; sometimes a trumpet note full of life, and battle, and victory; sometimes the low sweet music of a happy conscience, and peace of heart. Friends of the Bridegroom, who have through pain won liberty, and through liberty joy; friends of the Bridegroom, you can love indeed. God's great doors open; go in; be friends of the Bridegroom; learn, learn, the power of true love,

the glorious liberty of the sons of God, the joy of the marriage feast, where the heart of man in joy follows on and up, and feels and loves the truth of God for ever.

## SERMON LIV.

BORTH.

### A PROPHET YEAR.

EPHES. II. 12—22.

*“Without God in the world.”*

THIS is the Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of the coming Saviour; the true beginning of the new year, the spiritual year; the first Sunday of a life to come; the testimony every year that we are going to meet a coming Saviour, going to begin the everlasting life. Every year we set our faces onward, and declare that Christ is coming, and we will meet Him gladly. Every year also we lay the past in its grave with solemn, wistful looking back, very reverently. So the past year is on its bier, and we stand round it to-day. And strange and full of awe is the dead face of the time that is no more. To-day we bury it. Strange and full of awe as we look back, the awful stillness now, of what was so strong, so restless, so great in our hearts, as it came, for joy or sorrow, for trial or help, for bitterness or sweetness in the year that is gone. Ay, 'tis silent now, and we look on its

dead face with very different feelings from what we greeted it with on its coming. We lower it into the grave with holy joy, I trust, with thanks and praise, though it met us as an armed adversary, so it seemed. We know it better now with its great deliverances, as well as its stern threatenings, with its free bold liberty as well as its rough onset. God speaks to men, as the years go on, according to their ways of life, to each generation its own speech; and we have been spoken to. Was not this year a prophet as of old, calling with serious prophet-voice to all who have ears to hear? Shall we slay our prophets like the Jews, and not rather count ourselves happy in being thought worthy of God's message? Nay, this prophet year, with its trumpet call, that sent us out of house and home on God's pilgrimage, shall to-day have the honour due to God's messenger, and as a prophet will we lay it in its grave, with faith, and hope, and triumph, as befits a prophet; and then turn into the new world with all the prophet-voice ringing in our hearts, and the prophet-life strong within, to meet the coming Saviour.

Is the great message less true because we saw no shape standing with uplifted arm to point us the way? Is it less true because we heard no voice shaking our world with earthquake power? Let the past year answer with its strange realities. Answer, houses that cast us out. Answer, streets in which we might not stay. Answer, that invisible net which shut us in, so that to sit still was to perish, and yet we might not move, and which parted at the last moment to let us through. Answer, ye hills around us here, and this new land which opened to welcome us in our hour. Tell it out that the Lord hath done it for us; proclaim with

joy that to-day a prophet year is laid in its grave, and that to-day we rise from that grave to meet the coming Saviour, with eyes more open, with ears that can hear, with hands less tied, with feet at liberty. Say we have not slain our prophet, and put his message away from us.

Is it less true that a voice has come into our hearts because God speaks to men now in their own common language of common life? Is God gone out of the world? Is there no wrestling any more of the lonely heart by midnight brooks? No meeting with the Captain of the Lord's Host, as of old, by camps of spiritual foes? No sword drawn in hands seen by the inward eye, with questioning as of yore: "Art thou for *us* or for our adversaries?" Our world, at all events, has been shaken from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot; a breath has passed through it, a searching, sharp, keen breath of life and death, and laid bare the inmost throbbings, withering here, strengthening there, merciless in its death, most merciful in its life, full of wonder.

One short year ago, the sober common-place fact of to-day, that we are here, would have been a madman's dream if told us. Does it lose its marvel because it has come to pass? And the truth of to-morrow may again surpass the dream of to-day. All have felt this, young and old alike have felt it. Not least the young, even though as yet you know it not; the fresher eye of youth can often catch the impress of new truth and strange stirrings of life with a quicker and deeper sense than many. At all events one change will come soon, one change to everyone; we shall, indeed, meet that Saviour whom each Christmas we profess we are going to meet,

and, for good or evil, shall know the Spirit King, and our prophets. Is this the only truth of the spirit world we will see, and that, too, very far off in our thoughts? Every death in God's world is also a birth to higher life, if we will have it so. Through pain we die to old habits, and are born to new; through a kind of grave of the buried past we live again the life of Christ in a better future. Pain is but death beginning; death is but the setting free of life, if we are in God's life-world. So let us look at pain, and change and trial, and the passing away of old things, and listen in spirit for the prophets God sends us to waken us to truth. Yea, now is the time to hear the prophet voice. Let us make sure that we are not living without God in the world.

Perhaps to some, all I have said has seemed but a way of speaking. They have heard no prophet, and seen none in the past year. Well, to them there is no prophet. But there is, for all that, a strange, great, unexplained shaking-up of their world. There is something startling that has come to them uncalled, and they have had to deal with unexpected change.

Now, at the Advent, at the beginning of the expected coming life, is the time to ask ourselves what God has been to us in the past. To those who empty the fabric of events of their spirit power, there *is* only scaffolding, a well-knit framework, and no life-building. It all goes on without God. God has meant it to work with, or without, His life. It is meant to be to some a dry structure of common earth, to others a very living incarnation of the will of God. Do we forget, at this Advent season, that Christ will come? Do we forget that the last days, the last great epoch, has opened, however long the world may last, as we count it long? Wars and

rumours of wars, and false Christs, false authorities in life everywhere, attest the Lord's words. And no false Christ, methinks, so false, no greater sham, than that spirit of blind, dull, earth, which cannot read spirit, but sees in all things right earth, which comes into Christ's material world, and tells us that natural laws and causes govern all events, and are left by God to work without Him, without God in the world; and which comes into Christ's Church and says, "be as your neighbours, give the customary shilling, worship the customary worship, keep the scaffolding up, and make your neighbour your God." This is indeed to be without God in the world. Yet, brethren, we, at all events, shall soon have to go and meet the King of Spirits, the prophet King, and leave our place to others. God grant we see Him not then for the first time. O Lord Christ, open our eyes and hearts at this Christmas-tide, set free our spirits from dull dead customs; let us find in our daily work a fountain of living water; let us find in all pain, and trial, and change, the soldier's freedom, the watchman's hardy love of sentinel duty, the watchman's hope of the coming time. Let us, in Thy strength, see Thee in spirit, and learn to match our spirits according to Thy Will against all earthly powers, that, at Thy great Christmas-day, when Thou, Lord, comest, we may win Thy blessing, which Thou hast promised, saying, "Blessed is that servant whom His Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching."



## SERMON LV.

BORTH.

### THE TELLTALE FACE.

ST MATTHEW VIII. 3.

*“ And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”*

THE Gospel for to-day sets before us our Blessed Lord as the great Healer. Not, remember, because a few people in that day were cured, but as the Healer of the world, of which the healing He then did was a type, the Healer of sin. Leprosy was the type of sin; all sickness came into the world because of sin; for all sickness is death beginning. And we see that many sins produce bodily sickness; in such cases the vile acts do come out in a visible curse on the body that has committed them. God might have made it so always. It might have been that every sin should have set its mark at once on the body. Indeed, all sins persisted in do so, and thousands move about this world carrying their vile

lives stamped in a visible curse on their faces and their bodies.

We are so used to see this that it scarcely strikes us ; but just look in our streets and cities, and say whether the brand of sin and hell is not on too many faces and bodies. Now leprosy was chosen by God to mark amongst the Jews the curse of sin by a visible vileness in the body. Suppose for one moment that now, on this earth, every secret sin in thought, or deed, came out in leprous spots on us ; and our foreheads and faces bore at once the dead white mark of the sin within. What a ghastly revelation there would be ; a revelation, mark, to ourselves : for the very best amongst us would have brought home to him, in a way he never had before, the secret curse of sin in the world. As he felt his own flesh deaden, however much the rush of true life would overmaster it, as he felt his own flesh deaden, and reflect the struggles, which hitherto had gone on silently and unseen in his heart, surely a great horror would come upon him at the feeling ; and when he saw all round the ghastly evidence written in every human form, the presence of sin would be a reality more than he could bear, even though he also saw and felt the glory of the life of Christ in many shining through the sinful veil, cleansing, purifying, healing those who are living Christ's life, even though he knew that the life in them had cast out the power of corruption. Ay, we should know sin if it came suddenly before our eyes in this way.

But once more, might we not know it if we chose, if we had eyes to see, even in *this way* ? Do we not as a fact see, I will not say the great sins of lust, gluttony, drunkenness, in their aggravated form, setting their

deadly mark on face and body ; but do we not see, even in the young, all bad habits marking face and body ? The ill-tempered *look*, the smooth self-indulgent *look*, the conceited *look*, and all others which you observe and talk of, and rightly call such, without considering the deep meaning of your words, what are they, but the handwriting of sin visible, seen by the eye, written on the flesh of the sinner ; and if it is a habit, written there for ever ? and if not a habit, still enough to make the expression wanting in pure, high power. Yes, brethren, sin does mark, and the mark *can* be seen and read, the leprosy is still on face and limb. As the spirit works, so does the body answer to it, and even in this life we see the great truth of corruption of heart making a like body, and on the other hand of this mortal body already putting on some of its immortality, some of the brightness of heavenly life when the life of Christ is fashioning it after the likeness of Christ even now.

And this is truth, brethren, this handwriting of sin, this contrast between the unhealthy life and the healthy life, this slavery to corruption, instead of the liberty of life and health. Will you not then belong to the great Healer, and hear His words of power, “*I will ; be thou clean,*” pass through your whole life, and make it healthy, living, powerful, happy ? “*I will ; be thou clean.*” You may make that your own. The healthy life may be yours. “*I will ; be thou clean.*” This is still the will of Christ. And as that man passed up through the crowds who saw his uncleanness, and drew aside to let him pass, passed up, lonely and pitiable, and came back healthy and happy, so may it be with each and all of us. The unhealthy heart, the leprous habits, can be cured ; the evil stamped on face and limb can be done away, as the

soul within casts off the cherished sin ; health can come into the renewed nature, and all the strength and freedom of health ; and with the strength and freedom of health old temptations fall off, and tempt no more. You will be astonished, if you trust Christ the great Healer, to find what a change will come over you, and how the cleansed and healthy heart does not care any more for the old appetites, but rejoices in casting off such tastes, rejoices in activity and manly truth.

Remember, sin is a disease ; get health, and you will not long for disease. What man would go back again to his sick bed, though when ill it was all in all to him ? What man would go back again to his fever, and its thirst, and its delirium, though when in the fever the longings of fever were irresistible ? And in like manner the diseased and unclean soul longs in its evil state for unhealthy satisfaction, but when once become healthy, takes pleasure in it no more. Now the disease and leprosy of sin we must clear ourselves of by going to Christ, praying to him for health, and doing healthy things. I wish to-day to press upon you that true health and true healthy life is given by Christ, and that to follow Him is to gain health, and the happiness of health in the heart, whilst all self-indulgence and wrongdoing is a corrupting disease, which more and more eats into the life and destroys it. I want you to see that all you do here in an honest way is getting health, and that every bit of false work, of idle work, of uncleanness in thought, or word, or deed, of selfishness in any shape whatever, whether of pride, or meanness, or indulgence, or cowardly shrinking from exertion of mind or body, is a getting ill and becoming diseased, and being subject to the pain and folly of disease.

However much a man out of his senses rejoices in his fancied delusions, he is all the more pitiable to a man in his senses. In like manner the successful self-seeker is pitiable to a man who is healthy in spirit and loves truth. Choose then health and strength, cast away all meanness, and idleness, and self-indulgence, and fear; be strong, and in these coming months do the manly truth of the healthy and the strong, so shall you at the end have some idea of the "I will; be thou clean" of the great Healer and Lord of health; and go on your way of life rejoicing. There is no joy in a leprous unhealthy heart.

## SERMON LVI.

BORTH.

### BACKWATERS.

ST MATTHEW VIII. 3.

*“And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying,  
I will; be thou clean.”*

THERE are two prominent truths in this great saying: “I will; be thou clean.” The one, the great eternal law of God, that His will is set to make health, spiritual health, the unfailing certainty in His world. The other, that He is ready to take the individual man at his worst and make *him* clean, give *him* health. It is no general law, that at some remote future time shall work out health for the generations in a grand development of final results, but a very present healing power to each man in need. He takes the stones of His living temple, and shapes each one carefully, here, to fit into an appointed place in the heavenly structure; He bestows as much care on each stone as on the whole building. Life is fitted in with life, and each life has its true shape, and its own handling. And what a type this poor leper

in the vast multitude gives us of this work of Christ with each man! Great multitudes followed Him down from the mountain; all the mingled mass of good and evil that in the last years of the doomed nation were being sifted and winnowed, just before the chaff was burned and the grain gathered in. There they were at the foot of the mountain, crowded together under the eastern sun, with all the selfishness and disorder of a crowd, yet stilled, we may think, somewhat, by the great calm words they had just heard. But in one thing they all agreed: the leper must not come near them. There was nothing for him with them. And he—he must have dared to risk the anger of all, he must have come forward alone, white with the dead curse that lay upon him, crying, “Unclean, unclean.” And as he came so sad, so ghastly, and so marked, every one shrunk back, and he passed up at last through a living lane of pitying, or scornful eyes which were fixed upon him as he went past up to his Lord, and found health. He reached a higher presence, he came out of a troublous and unsympathising crowd into divine light and healing. He touched the Eternal and all things else were as nothing to him. He came out of the crowd, which neither would, nor could help him, and he found help in Christ. And the crowd is about us too, brethren, shutting out the view of Christ from our eyes, jostling the thoughts of Christ from our hearts, filling us with the pushings and the heat, and the hindrances of a crowd, till our hearts cannot any more keep sight of the higher order. But the higher order is here.

No truth grows more on the mind as experience advances, than the certainty that God's eternal laws slowly and surely make a true end in man or in nation.

Fashion may make sin and spiritual disease honourable. Fashion may rejoice in want of obedience, and in success in the crowd, and elbow its way to power; or, on the other hand, fill the heart with fear of man, and cowardly tricks of self-interest. And it is possible that it may succeed even to bringing on itself that curse of God: "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and let them follow their own imaginations." A generation may be able, like the backwater in a great river, to turn the current right away from its true course, and make it flow backwards for years and years; and the newspapers shall glorify it; and the crowds shall swell it, and help it back; but, for all that, the great eternal river of God's purpose sweeps steadily on, and carries it all, backwater and current equally, to God's appointed end. No man can choose the life of unhealthy self-pleasing against the "I will; be thou clean," and prosper. Succeed, of course he can,—it is *the* curse to succeed; but surely, as he moves, the corruptions seize him more and more, and there is no happiness, and an end comes; as in the grand old saying:—

"Though the mills of God grind slowly,  
Yet they grind exceeding small;  
Though the time be long in coming,  
With exactness grinds He all."

Brethren, Christ is in this crowd, this jostling world of ours, waiting to heal. Lift up your eyes to the higher order, to the eternal certainties which the voice of the crowd too often drowns. "I will; be thou clean," that is the will of God. Be clean from all the silly thoughts of pleasure and sin. How can there be pleasure in a soul diseased, as compared with health? Be clean from the pride which would set us against the gentleness and love



that Christ wishes to see,—be clean from the fear which bids man worship his neighbour, or shrink into mean beliefs from false shame. “I will ; be thou clean :” this is God’s eternal will. Christ is in the crowd of men now as of old ; those who seek Him know Him. There is a still small voice of power plainly heard by all who care to hear it. The great river of God’s eternal purpose, the “I will,” rolls on, and they can see it who have fixed their eyes on the higher order. The true course of the eternal can be seen in spite of fashion, and sin, and the backwater. Have faith in Christ, and that you may have faith, *learn* as you learn anything else, by doing what your great master, Christ, tells you to do. Learn. First come in prayer, pray for the healthy soul, then do the works of health, watching cheerfully the commands of the great healer, and obeying them, in exercising your soul in putting away unwholesome fears and pleasures, in waiting patiently, in working honestly, in never doing less than the best you know, in loving heartily all things that make you master of yourself, and able, in spite of habit, ease, or fear, to go straight on wherever you are called by a right power. This can only be done by disentangling your heart from the crowd, fixing it on Christ, and, through Christ, on the eternal unchanging laws of health, liberty, immortality, sure of the end ; for

“Though the mills of God grind slowly,  
Yet they grind exceeding small ;  
Though the time be long in coming,  
With exactness grinds He all.”

Or rest on the still higher words of Christ : “Fear not ; I am the first and the last : I am He that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

## SERMON LVII.

BORTH.

### THE SICKMAN'S PLEASURES.

ST MATTHEW VIII. 3.

*“And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying,  
I will; be thou clean.”*

THE Great Physician wills that human life should be healthy. A free, masterful, healthy life—that is His will for us.

The Great Physician declares that all sin, and all that seems bright, pleasant, or fascinating in sin, is a disease and a delirium, a thing to be got rid of, as much as a fever is a thing to be got rid of. So much for the *pleasures* of sin.

It is a very different thing to look on holiness as a dreary price to be paid for future happiness, and on sin as a delightful tempting reality to be given up. *Or*, to look on sin as a hateful taint and corruption, and on holiness as a happy return to true life, and a happy love of healthy noble things. And what is healthy life in the

soul? It is the same as healthy life in the body. Healthy life in the body, full of vigour, activity, power, can do and bear anything. It cares not for food, it cares not for work, it cares not for heat, it cares not for cold, it is master of all, can enjoy all, in plenty it can safely feast, in want it can cheerfully fast. This is what Christ would have our souls able to do. He would have them master by their inward life this mortal world, and move in it as master, able to rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep; able to bear all, to dare all, to be still or to be active, to abstain or enjoy, to work or to play, to meet everything as master, and not slave. Remember, fear is as great a tyrant as desire. And they who fear the world are as likely to fall as they who love it. And this makes Christ's great statement that the sinful temptation is a corruption, a disease to be got rid of, so important. It takes away the fear of the power of sin very much, and it takes away its attractiveness, and makes it sink into a mean, unhealthy condition, a feebleness of soul, a pitiful thing, a thing that can be got rid of by health; for it is not strong as life is strong; it makes it a thing that is repulsive as an unnatural sore or canker, and not a splendour, not a reality of beauty to be regretfully given up.

I understand, when I am ill, how the fancies and cravings are not realities which last and belong to life, because I have been well, and know that they are nothing when in health. In like manner, now, I know that many cravings and fears of my younger days vanish, and are no part of healthy life in the soul; and all, however young, may know this even from their own experience, if they look at the lower tastes and fancies of lower people; for their own temptations, as they rise

higher, will be to them as the temptations of others now below them are, which they are now lifted above, and higher. The higher healthier life gets rid of the diseased longings. As a healthy body makes us a match for all bodily hardships, and to rejoice in the sinewy labours of health, so a healthy soul makes all the troubles of the world and flesh our servants, and all the temptations poor and pitiful. "Do thou endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." What then is healthy life? There are two great parts in it, two stages, abstain first, enjoy afterwards. First comes the power of abstaining and self-denial, this is the first trial of the young, as it was of the Israelites in the wilderness.

How few think, as they read of the people rebelling because of the fleshpots in Egypt, rebelling against God, that the same test is being brought to bear every day, and that the opening years of life are always being tried by the fleshpots, by bodily comfort and discomfort, by heat and cold, by weary limbs, and bed. Well it is, that our Church every year at this season reminds us of this first part, and early stage of self-training, for it is the first step and the smallest. No one can meet his day in a free spirit, boldly and truthfully, who is tied down by a thousand little strings of what to eat and what to drink, and wherewithal to be clothed. But beware of thinking much of all this, and making a merit of overcoming it. As soon as the character hardens towards others because it can do hard work, a worse form of evil is beginning.

Self-denial ought to make men gentle, as knowing the cost, and the natural difficulties of beginning. Many a soul has been wrecked by the magnifying of self-denial,

as if a great enemy had been overcome. This making up of a great enemy causes fear and cowardice in beginners, and boastfulness in success. But there is no cause for fear or boasting in getting rid of a pitiful disease, and gaining health. When this first stage of returning health is accomplished; and the heart can quietly take what comes, and is not ill-tempered about dinner, or sleep, or work, or heat, or cold, then the second stage is reached of being able to enjoy rightly. With the great fear of earthly things the great dazzling of them has disappeared also; and the calm undazzled eye can move amongst the infinite riches of God's goodness upon earth rejoicing in all of them, able to use them all, or give them all up, just at any moment, as need may be.

St Paul never said a greater thing of himself than when he said, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." There speaks the master of the world, the perfectly healthy life. Our Blessed Lord never gave a more searching command than when He told us, "to rejoice with them that do rejoice." Holy joy with its perfect sympathy, its perfect freedom, is indeed the highest grace on earth.

The man who is only good so long as he avoids the conditions of the world we live in, is like a convalescent not yet well. Perfect health can take, or not take, just as is right. Take, as easily as not take, for perfect health neither fears a feast, nor loves it gluttonously. So then, brethren, be healthy, learn first to abstain, to bear, to be patient; and afterwards all enjoyment and all daring will come. The perfectly healthy heart can,

with St Paul, *do all things*, and count the doing them little ; and, remember, all temptations are but the rottenness and corruption of the diseased soul, and will vanish with health. They are not forbidden treasures, but poor funguses, pitiful delusions of unhealthy dreams.

## SERMON LVIII.

BORTH.

### THE BIRTHPANGS, AND THE BIRTH.

ST JOHN XI. 25.

*“ Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life.”*

IT is not enough to look at the healthy life only as a matter of self-training, we must also follow it out, and see it living on as part of God's eternal kingdom; we must follow it into its immortality, and take a glance at the wide everlasting, where life reigns. Even for ourselves it is not enough, for if we suppose health to have been established in our own souls, there still remains the grand question, what is to become of all our thoughts and deeds? Do they share this triumph of life? We see them perishing. We see, oftentimes, baffled labour, fruitless struggles, hopes destroyed, the very heart-blood spilt in vain so it seems. To what purpose, it may be asked, is the healthy life, if all the works of life are so blighted? The words of the text answer this question. Besides the truth of a future life there is in them that truth of truths, that now, here on earth, in this daily life

of ours, life is all in all, and death is done away with. We are certain that every true effort in the end conquers, that nothing is cast away that is done from a true heart, that every breaking up of old things is always a new birth of new things, a resurrection, and a life. Every death in a kingdom of life is a new birth to something better. This is the stupendous truth that lies in the words, "I am the resurrection and the life." Death is no more an end of life. Pain is no more an hindrance to life. Death is only sent to destroy the lower and meaner form; and pain to give greater strength and grace through endurance. History tells us this.

If a kingdom is broken up, it is because that kingdom has become too narrow or mean for the great truth once entrusted to it and the new life that is to come, and it is broken up to let loose, and replant the life in fresher, greater power. Out of the fallen Roman empire and its shattering, modern Europe was born. And Christendom, if found wanting, shall be shattered in its turn for another birth. So too if a man finds his hopes destroyed, it is because there is a better birth of life for him coming out of the death of the old; he is going to have a happier, better birth of life, if he belongs to the kingdom of life. Such is death in Christ's kingdom of life. Such is the meaning of pain, such the working of hopes destroyed, because life is Lord, because of the resurrection and the life. Life and happiness are now meant to be born out of the death of lower things, out of the pain which is painful to selfishness, out of the shattering of what is false, untrue, and mean; there is no death in a kingdom of life. Death of the body opens heaven to him who dies in the Lord. Death of hopes, or death of fortune, or death of mean pleasure, opens higher life on earth to



him who lives to Christ. Good always wins in a kingdom of life. A new birth of life always comes by a resurrection out of the travail pangs of the broken hopes, the broken work, the broken purposes, of good men. The healthy life lives on. How many a man in secret has mourned over the trials which no one sees or knows, which need not have happened, he thinks, which have been mere fruitless pain without result, or worse still, destroying the result hoped for, whilst all the time they were the sure way by which the loving, healing hand was making him live; they were the "I will; be thou clean," of the great Physician, and part of the "resurrection and the life." What fools men are in a kingdom of life to fly for comfort to dreams of ease; and for pleasure, to the old old plagues of the world, the flesh, and the devil! Fools also, though in a different way, for the want of faith, which cannot cling with undivided trust to the certainty of life triumphant, of life always coming out of sorrow, pain, or death, of the resurrection of all truth, and all true work, of the life eternal, here on earth as well as hereafter, of the tenderest seed sowed in tears and honestly planted.

We live in a kingdom of life since the Lord of life rose from the dead; we live in a kingdom of life, and I can promise you that you never shall think, or do, even in your most secret hours, a simple bit of truth for Christ's sake, which shall be wasted; that you never shall endure a silent unknown pain for Christ's sake, which shall not bear its fruit; that you never shall face a bitter hour, or see a hope wrecked and broken, which shall not be a blessing in after-times. Amongst you here, some no doubt there are, who in the coming years will pass out of the quiet school training into every form

of ill that man can meet; your bones will rest in many lands at last; or, ere they find a home in English graves, you may have had to stake your lives on your work, and been tried even unto death for the truth's sake. Prepare for this now, and remember the "resurrection and the life;" that there is no death any more to truth; evil dies indeed, but truth lives. This is the great Easter message, which Lent is to fit us to receive; and rightly so, for how can we rejoice in the resurrection and the life unless we are giving life the mastery, cutting it loose from bands of self-indulgence, learning not to be slaves to the flesh and its appetites, and trying at all events to find all our joys in active living power, and the health of soul, that cares for no little hardness or rubs of daily life, which belong to life, as surely as being tired does to exercise, and 'brace up the heart, as surely as exercise does the body.

All of us, at all events, are tried to the limits of our powers; we may not have the martyr's strength, if so, God does not give the martyr's trials. But as much as can be borne is the same to one, who can bear little, as to one who is strong, only he loses the delight of strength. The full cup is full, be it big, or be it little. All then have the great question equally at heart, as to whether they will rejoice in life, and have faith in life, and believe that no true hope, no true work ever dies in a kingdom of life. There is no death. A crucifixion of human nature, a burial there is, to be followed by a rising from the grave of lower things. This is the message of Lent, crucify the flesh; this is the message of Easter, "I am the resurrection and the life"—a new birth to the living out of every grave of hope or work.

## SERMON LIX.

BORTH.

### THE REBEL ISLAND.

I ST JOHN V. 4.

*“ Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith.”*

MAN, like any other animal, is born, and dwells on earth, and passes away from earth, as much a creature of the soil, as far as any power of leaving it goes, as the worm. Man has no more power of getting beyond this circle of earth, as far as he himself goes, than the worm. Millions upon millions do live this earth life, are born, and live, and die in the earth kingdom; of the earth, earthy; either ignorant of anything more, or smothering the thought as unwelcome. Man's life, taken by itself, may fitly be compared to an island in the midst of a sea, all round it a sea of death, a bounded horizon of death. Man is no more able, as man, to advance one hair's breadth out of his island, out of the death circle, out of the bounding line, than he is able to get to a star; nay,

we do know about stars, whereas we neither see nor know beyond the grave, as men. This limited rounded kingdom of earth as strictly confines man, as it does any other animal. And if this were all, man would neither see nor know more of the beyond than any other animal. Man, of himself, must be bounded by limits he cannot pass. Whence comes it then that, though shut in himself on every side, another world is ever present with the race of man? Whence ring out these trumpet notes in earth's island kingdom, telling these islanders that whatsoever is born of God overcomes all the island power, is at war with it, looks on it all as flat rebellion to the true king, and that the great unseen king known by faith, known, that is by the inner witness of a life from another world, claims allegiance in this rebel kingdom in spite of its boundaries and its power?

Whence come the warning voices, "watch and pray," from watch towers far away? Whence the grand triumphant song of the army of God? The calm confidence of victory, the standard set up, the fierce sharp cry of judgment to come, the sweet low call of the Shepherd of the fold? These have nothing to do with earth. They all come from afar, they all come from outside the island kingdom, they all speak of rebellion and false power set up in the island of earth life, and of a true king and of true power outside, willing with open arms to receive back again those who will leave the rebel kingdom. Yet bounded as this earth kingdom of man is, bounded by death, there is plenty of witness, without messages from outside, that the kingdom is not true, that there is no peace, no true harmonious power in it, no self-government which would show a rightful sceptre, no union which declares the order of an empire under a

rightful lord. Just look, for instance, at man's works and God's works. Look at a spring morning in the foul alleys of the imperial city where man's power is enthroned, in the head quarters of his might, the palace of his glory and his wealth; and then turn from sun-rays which cannot reach the dens of filth, and fresh air, which cannot breathe within the lairs of crime and sorrow, to the most forgotten nook of the far-off glen in the lonely mountain solitude, and see spring breathing there.

This dread discord, this appalling contrast between whatever man touches, and the creation in which he finds himself, may well convince man of sin. And God's messages tell us that the power of this bounded island kingdom of earth is a rebel power, which must be overcome. The rightful King claims his own.

Let us leave other people out of the question, and never mind whether it is easy, difficult, or impossible, to judge them. Why should we entangle ourselves with this outside question? The sharp, hard fact comes out clear for us, that life, our own life, admits of no compromise. Life for us is laid down to be an earnest effort from beginning to end for victory. Now is that your dream, your ideal of life? When you picture yourselves grown up, and make yourselves in imagination all you most fancy, are these fancies fashioned after this pattern? Nothing tells more the real inner thought than these dreams. But this *is* life. A standard *is* set up, the Son of God came down into this island kingdom of earth to call all who love truth to His side, to demand from all a hearty, loving, earnest power. And mark, let us have no Pilate questions, "What is truth?" Truth is to you what at the moment you believe to be right. The Holy

Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, wants your spirit, not your philosophy. If you do each moment what at that moment you think true, and do it with all your heart, the Spirit of Truth will love you and be with you, and come and dwell within you. God does not concern Himself with the shortcomings of man's foolish brain, but with that grand spirit of life that is in his heart, and with that dread devilry that can be in his heart.

“Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.” The Son of God came upon earth to put a life from God in man. We are born of God in Baptism, and the whole purpose of this birth is to overcome the world. Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and no man, no baptized soldier of Christ, has anything to do with this birthright, this new life, unless he overcomes the world. It is the same as if he had never been born unless the life overcomes the world. And let us have no question of what is the world. The world to you is what at any moment you believe to be wrong, or less right; though it may be called by any holy name you please. One man for instance requires in his life to be softened, because his habits and heart are of a hard rigid temper; another requires to be hardened, because his habits and heart are of a soft indulgent temper. The world to the self-willed man will be, all the hard habits and want of gentleness of his self-will, though people call it self-denial and saintly fortitude; the world to the softer character will be, the yielding, gentle, ease-loving life, full of fears of giving offence, and desire to stand well with all men, though people may call it charity and good temper. The one wants to learn that his so-called self-denial is to him self-will, and a little luxury no crime; the other, that hardness is a necessity, and to be

well spoken of by all men a sin. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." So spake our King to his people of old. The same kind of act is to one an act of grace and self-control, to another an act of self-will and self-indulgence. What tempts *us* is our world, not what tempts other people; what we believe to be right is our truth, not what other people believe. And one truth leads to another in true life; link by link, the true heart is drawn on, till the soul rests in God's right hand. But we cannot begin at all unless we recognize that there is a warfare, a standard set up by Christ, the incarnate Son of God, who came down into these rebel confines to claim His kingdom back again. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." By this light we live, by this law of victory we stand or fall, traitors or true men, rebels, or loyal champions of our king, when the last day comes.

And now, brethren, a last day has come, a judgment day, a day of judgment, such as never has come to this School before, and never, methinks, will come again. Through three hundred years of school life, summer and winter brought in turn year by year their last days, and each last day much like the one before, a judgment on a common working life, to begin again in the same way, in the same place, ere long. But nevermore shall we worship together in this little church after this hour is passed; nevermore, after this week, will our footsteps as a School be by the chime of waves on the sea shore, or our paths on the hill side, in glen or mountain. We pass out of this camp of refuge with a great deliverance. A year is barely gone since, day by day, a danger, from which there seemed no escape, kept closing round the

School more and more, until a week came, and a first day of the week dawned, by the end of which, if no rescue had been, the present School would have ceased to exist; it would have broken up never to reassemble the same. We seemed shut in on all sides by an invisible circle of death. Had we parted then, our place would have known some of us no more. There would have been emptiness in our old homes, and stranger feet would have trod on the old paths, and stranger faces would have looked out of the old School House when again it opened for a new beginning; and a new school would have taken your places also. It was the last week. Then we came here and found at once safety, ay, much more than safety. A great deliverance brought joy and life to us, and has gone with a power of life through many hearts and many lands, as the story was told. A great deliverance, that has made us, for good or evil, a portion of school history. Yea, let it be for good.

And now our judgment day has come. This eventful year is closed, yet its records are not closed. They shall thrill through many a generation of school life; and you, who have been actors in it, will remember; and what you know not now, nay, none of us know, shall unfold of good to come. This is our last day, our judgment day. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." Whatsoever is born of God will rejoice therefore in all trials and hardships that train for victory. This year of deliverance, of trial and deliverance mingled, is a year of joy. Joy to the hearts which have welcomed Christ's call; joy to the spirits which have been roused, as by a trumpet, at the command of Christ to march; joy to those who, day by day, have



seen new life moving ; joy to the disciplined bands who have been a law to themselves ; joy to the cheery manliness that has thrown off little troubles ; joy to the happy life which has opened wide its arms to take the joy of sea and mountain. Praise and gratitude be now to the Lord of Hosts, Who delivered us ; praise and gratitude to Christ our King, Who has trodden before in weary ways ; praise and gratitude to the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, Who has given us the sense of Truth within. On this last day, let us lift up our hearts and give thanks. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." Let this last day also be a day of birth, of birth to truer life with our risen Lord.

## SERMON LX.

### TREASON OR LIFE.

NUMBERS XXIV. 3, 4.

*“Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said. He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.”*

THESE words are the wonderful description that Balaam gives of himself. There are two characters in Holy Scripture which stand out beyond all others as preeminently human, preeminently, as one may say, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, sharers with us of common feelings, and common temptations, and common conditions of ordinary life, Jacob, and Balaam. They represent, the one for good, the other for evil, the man of mixed motives; the man who begins life with strong and powerful impulses for good, mixed up with a sordid and selfish strain of interest; the man who intends to be prosperous by being good. Both begin alike in that, and for a season it is not possible to discover

whether the love of good, or the love of gain is the deepest and strongest motive. But as life passes on the searching test comes, which demands the undivided heart; and Jacob, the outcast, in his dreary flight is tried whether he will still cling to God and the promise, though it bring him nothing now. And he does do so; and year by year his sufferings make him more true; till at last he who began life with mean tricks, and tried to win God's earthly promises by guile, ended life as Israel, the prince with God, the man without guile, purified and purged of interested motives.

Balaam, on the other hand, beginning life with wonderful enthusiasm, and a keen feeling for good, and a keen insight into divine truth, when his gifts made him famous, sold his success. And the favour of an earthly king, and a high place at court, bought him; and he betrayed truth in order to be a great man and rich. Balaam then is the type of all men who succeed by being good, and then sell their success to the evil, by just a little, a very little, turning out of the path of truth.

I shall endeavour to show this as we go on; first however let me try and put before you the lifelike truth of his circumstances and temptations, so that we may see their life, and know Balak, and Balaam, and the Israelites, as they then were, and not as the light of after history makes them to us. The Israelites had come out of Egypt and had wandered long in the wilderness; the recollection of the miracles in Egypt was becoming a bit of history; the promise of the land to be theirs was not fulfilled. And thus a great multitude of wanderers living in tents, a wandering encampment, was the only representative of the Living God on earth. All the

mighty kingdoms of the world were heathen; and how mighty they were we still see with awe and wonder. The spirit of the Living God, and His worship, was confined to a people without a country, without a king, without cities, without temples, a nameless horde of slaves, that had broken out of Egypt; whilst on the other side was a vastness of power, a gigantic massiveness of walls, of fortresses, of temples, and cities, such as earth has never seen since. The mere remains of which still strike travellers with breathless impressions of greatness; a few fragments of which still move the heart with a sense of overwhelming majesty.

The power of a modern Kingdom is a matter of figures, and statistics, and book knowledge; but in the ancient world, it was all gathered up in a great city, and came on the eye at once. Man walked in through a wall a hundred feet high, and forty broad, and wandered then, crawling like an ant, amongst gigantic columns, in a wilderness of splendid avenues of stone, from the midst of which colossal statues, each as high as this chapel Bell Tower, looked down at the poor human worm at their feet, from a height of calm immovable grandeur, with stony eyes, and stony faces of Kingly empire, such as well befitted the masters of a prostrate world. Never to this hour, since earth has been earth, has outward power been so grandly heavy on the soul of man; never has faith in the unseen been brought in more direct conflict with man's self-worship, and man's pride. All the world was grand heathenism, strong, intellectual, magnificent, save only the wandering outcasts in the wilderness who called themselves God's people. All the great world lay at the feet of a few men, kings, on whose lips hung life and death, honour or

ruin. Every stone, they say, of an Egyptian temple cost a human life, a lost life, a slain life; and such a king was Balak. "I thought to promote thee to great honour," were no vain words from such a king! "Though Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold," was no impossible temptation in Balaam's eyes. And Balaam, the wise, the prophet, the seer of truth, stood between these two powers, with all that earth could offer, so it seemed, on the one hand, and a wandering life and a dangerous future, so it seemed, on the other; and he sold the success, he had gained by truth, to evil, and betrayed his cause.

Brethren, in our day too there is a great gathering up of power on one side, and a great earnestness of unseen life, a kind of wandering wilderness encampment of life, on the other. The day of pyramids and colossal statues is gone by; wood and stone do not weigh on us; but the day of mind forces has come; the day of stupendous claims of knowledge-power, and force, and brain-empire is come, and with it such grinding conditions of existence as press us down heavily, and put a fearful test on our belief in the unseen, a fearful trying probe into the heart; whether it will take life, and living truth, with all its seeming weakness or, the Balak power of silver and gold, and armies, and cannon, and intellect, as its God.

Yes, brethren, and God has tested this school, you and us. God did send us out in a strange dreamlike way into an encampment as sojourners and strangers, that we might see what stuff our life was made of, whether it would stand a shaking; that we might see what our motives in work really were, Jacob's endeavour to serve God even in his meanest hours, or Balaam

selling his success, when his eyes were open, and he saw the Almighty.

For men do see the Almighty ; ay, boys do see the Almighty, when the strong clear vision of right at any cost comes before their eyes. Now God has brought us back, not for nothing, not to be as we were before, not simply to have dreamed a dream for a year, and to come back to the old every day routine of habits, and mechanical usages, done, without self-searching, from use. Nay, brethren, the life has been tested, and is being tested, yours and ours ; we cannot be as we have been without deadly sin. Surely we too have seen the vision of the Almighty, with eyes open. The life that stood the scattering, that worked well in the wooden shed, and felt the great freedom of shore, and sea, and mountain, and was nerved, and braced, and purified, by living, as it were, in tents, is now called on to do the far greater thing of faithfully serving the unseen in the old home, of keeping the keen sense of life, that we were intended to feel in strange circumstances, untainted, and fresh, in the quiet unexciting channels of ordinary custom and use. We have received of the prophet sight ; we are surrounded by temptations as of old. A Hand leads us, a Spirit is with us ; Life demands our allegiance. Be then true to the unseen life.

## SERMON LXI.

### THE TRAITOR'S SLIDE.

NUMBERS XXIV. 3, 4.

*“Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said. He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.”*

WE see Balaam, at the time that the Bible narrative opens, with a brilliant reputation already established. That reputation must have been gained in earlier days by devotion to truth, and enthusiasm for truth, sufficient to overcome the first great temptation to turn the stones into bread by a base use of power. He had faced the great trial of the hardness of the world to the first earnest efforts in early life, in whatever form the temptation came to him; and he had overcome it. Opposition, and need, and a soul hungering for fame and fortune, had not prevailed against his better self. No man who studies the laws of life and their working can doubt this. It is an absolute certainty. The spiritual growth

of the man, who saw the vision of the Almighty, must have gone through this stage of growth, as surely as his body had passed from boyhood to manhood. He had then by this time established a brilliant reputation by love of truth and goodness. And now the hour was coming which was to try how far his love of truth was mere generous impulse, and a keen perception of the conquering power of truth in the end, and a wish to conquer and win; or a real love of good, come weal, come woe, for its own sake.

Nay, the hour had already come, and—gone. All through the East for years had the mighty rumour passed of the great Egyptian King humbled by power divine, of the great Egyptian nation forced to open its unwilling hand, and let the slaves go out of their grasp, of the mighty army that had perished in the sea. All through the East had the rumour past, and the nations had heard it; and the hearts of the oppressors and the powerful had been filled with fear and hate; and an unknown dread was everywhere in the high places of evil, a bitter unrest of coming judgment. And Balaam must have heard of it. The man, whose eyes were open, who saw the vision of the Almighty, he knew that the Lord had triumphed gloriously; he knew that God's people were on their way; he knew that a greater prophet than himself, and a more certain presence of God was to be found. We know from his own words that he had heard of it. He knew; and he stood aloof; jealous perchance, that there was a greater light; or unwilling to leave his home, his ease, his honour, and join the wanderers. At all events he stood aloof. He did not go to the camp of Israel to welcome the triumph of the cause of God; he stood, and waited outside the pale,



and did not join God's people and stay with them, or go forth, after gaining light from them, as a missionary and leader amongst those who honoured him. Who knows how much of history might have been read differently, how many saved, how wide might have been the salvation, and spread of truth, had *he* been true, and taken his true place as the pioneer of the people of God? But he stood aloof; and Balak's messenger found him seemingly unbiassed, and untried, but really with his mind already made up against the people of God, and the cause of God represented by them and their greatness. Though he was doubtful enough what else he should do, and quite undecided how to act, excepting that he knew full well that he could not act against God's express command.

Now observe here the real state of the case, as contrasted with the state of indecision and self-deceit, which he had put himself in. He had made himself famous by zeal for good, and was now tried whether he loved good for its own sake, or only for the sake of what it brought him; he was asked to sell his success, to sell the power which good had brought him; and it seemed, even to himself probably, that his path was open, and that he had done nothing to close it. *But the very doing nothing had closed it.* Hearty love of truth acts early, and is glad of the far off rumour of victorious life, and hastens to take part in it. To do nothing, to take no side, for the man "whose eyes are open," is to be already lost.

Well; Balak's messengers come. The tempters are there. They had judged his character rightly. And the famous man they come to cannot keep doing nothing; he is to have a choice forced upon him; he is

to be made to face his own heart, and to bring out clearly to himself what he really means, and whose side he is going to take. Having lost the upward spring, and fallen away from active love of good, and got himself into a false position of renown in God's service, whilst preparing to be a deserter, and indeed already a deserter, from not having welcomed God's people, he is now to be unmasked, and yet given a chance again. He is now to be convicted, as far as the wrong heart can be convicted, and given a chance again of standing in the ranks of the army of God.

But how characteristic is his progress in treason, the downward slide of the traitor. The tempters come, and ask him to curse the people of God; and instead of an honest man's scorn, and a great man's firmness, he tells them to stay the night and "*he will inquire.*" Unhappy man—who, with all his clear vision and open eyes, had a heart that hankered after riches and honour, and sold the truth. But the temptation was great; on the one side was the power, and wealth, and splendour of the mighty king, and his wrath if provoked; on the other the encampment in the wilderness with all its hardships and uncertainty. So Balaam spent the night anxiously, too wise to think he could do anything against God, satisfying his blinded conscience by making up his mind to commit no action against God, and yet unable to bring himself to take God's part heartily, unconscious that God was convicting him, and making him face facts, and stripping off his self-deceit of doing nothing being right, when the living power of a mighty rush of life was on foot.

Balaam probably thought that when he knew plainly what to do he would do it. He would have done it long

before at the first trumpet of God's army sounding had he had the soldier's heart, without knowing it. But God did give him that knowledge. "Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people for they are blessed." God did give him, as He always gives men, a solemn warning before their first great downward step. The undeadened conscience always cries aloud in man's heart whilst the first break off from truth is being meditated. And too often it is received, as Balaam received it, with the sullen confession of a mind made up, "The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." "*The Lord refuseth.*" "*I am ready if I could do it, but I do not mean to disobey a positive command.*" So he showed where his heart was. They go back and encourage Balak with the news that the great prophet is on his side, and only wants a little pressing. Had he been true, what might not he even then have done by words of truth and power to Balak? What misery might he not have saved? Or, had he been even fairly honest, he would have taken care to have got away safe; to have taken God's warning, and thrown in his lot with the blessed ones. But it was not to be. "The Lord refuseth." That was the temper in which he met the first merciful warning, the first effort to recall him to truth, to give him another chance, to waken life within him. Alas, how often this is so, how often we see persons in the great rush of life when God's people are waking from slavery round them, first doing nothing, deserters by doing nothing, then forced by circumstances to give an answer. No, they will not take a side, but all the time they have taken the side of evil; they deceive themselves by not moving, when not to move is death. So closes the first epoch in temptation and

treason, with the heart of Balaam declared on the side of God's enemies, with a solemn warning from God that they are His enemies, and a sullen answer from Balaam to these enemies betraying that he is with them.

O how often it is so. It is the history of all treason, when the traitor to God has won his power by being first a servant of God. O if the Balaams would be the pioneers of good! O if when warned they would show that evil power had no sympathy from them, and even then repent and wake to life! But, be sure, this history of Balaam is the history of all who knowing good will not take the side of good, and think by disobeying no command to betray God without hurting themselves.

## SERMON LXII.

### THE DOWNWARD COURSE.

NUMBERS XXIV. 3, 4.

*“Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said. He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.”*

WE have seen how Balaam was marked out as a man fitted above all others to advance the cause of God. For Balaam, living as he did in the heathen world, and famous amongst worldly men, and in no way an object of suspicion to them, was the man, had he been true, to have been the great forerunner of God's people, to have cleared their way, to have been a herald of coming light and truth throughout all the East. But he stood aloof, and chose to do nothing. Strong in the determination, as such men always are, never to break a direct command of God, and utterly blind to the fact that he was a traitor by doing nothing, and had thrown away his glorious mission, his post of honour, and ruined God's cause over many lands by refusing to take a side; and

so, as we have seen, he waited for the tempters, pointed out to Balak by his waiting.

His upward course was ended; and now, for good, or evil, he was to be allowed to have his own way, but to be forced into action. For good, if any of his old fire remained, and he could repent, and stand out once more an honest man, if not a great man, as he might have been; for evil, if he still went on in his betrayal of good, whilst determined to keep the letter of God's command. He might have been a champion, a bright star of life, a spirit of hope to all the weary hearted and heavy laden, but that was over; he had thrown away his crown, and was now to be put on his trial as a deserter, and made to see what he was about; and he has given his first sullen answer, "The Lord refuseth to let me go with you." His upward course was ended. But he had received a positive order from God *not* to go to Balak, a positive bit of guidance, that the people were blessed. And he had had much time given him to think in quiet over these great truths. Very much quiet time of thought. The forbearance and longsuffering of God would, if possible, recall him; but at least would make him pause, and think, and choose, and force him to make plain to himself what he really was doing. So Balaam stayed in sullen submission to God's express command, and waited; with plenty of knowledge of what was right, but determined to do nothing to help right.

Now then a different trial begins. He has made up his mind, God is going to let him have his own way, and throws on him the responsibility of doing what he chooses. Many a man, who is loud enough in his discontent and criticisms when under command, is staggered when left to act for himself. And, mark,

this is God's way always. God wants our hearts, not our work ; so when man, or boy, will go on in spite of warning, they are let go on, till pulled up sharply by running their heads against some of God's great judgments, to see if by buying a bitter experience of evil they can yet repent, and return from their heart to a love of good, and humbler ways. This was the stage Balaam was now entering on. His heart was with Moab ; God was going to let him try his own path, and warn him as he went.

Hitherto he had been on his own ground, and evil had come to him ; now—he was going to take that awful downward step of going over to the tempter, and being an honoured, flattered victim, in his house. Yet observe, he still deceived himself in thinking himself obedient to God, and neutral, because he would only say what God told him, though in the sight of all the world he had left his home to be, if possible, the helper of Moab's King. This it was that moved God's anger, this mean treason, which paid outward respect to commands, and knew what was right, but had not the manly heart to go to Moses, or the loving zeal to clear Israel's way ; no, nor the common honesty to say a true honest word of warning to the king, and stop him in his fighting against God ; and now, pretending to be obedient, pretending to be neutral, he was going to degrade God's prophet power by taking it to the enemies' camp and the heathen palace in the sight of all men. And so the angel of the Lord stood in the way to withstand him. Told before at first not to go, when he made up his mind to go, the danger of going was to be brought home to him. Warning upon warning was to be given to bring him back to truth if possible ; though as he had

chosen to go, the boldly rebuking the great King, which was what he would have to do, would be a far harder task than the siding with Moses at first.

And nothing, I am convinced, is more common, nay, universal, than the manner in which these warnings are given. Men are warned by a thousand little obstacles which seem chance, such as the ass turning out of the way; or by some striking coincidence, which is to us as the ass actually speaking was to Balaam. I mean something of the lower, or inanimate creation, is made so exactly to chime in with our thoughts and actions, that in very truth it may be said to speak. Put all thoughts of omens, and superstitions, out of your mind. All these turn on the idea that the special bird, or special animal, or special noise, or special sight, has a virtue of its own, a kind of power in it. There is no such virtue, no such power, in any creature, or thing, or noise, or sight, in this world. But no man can study life without being sure that what happened to Balaam is happening every day; the little hindrance, the greater strange event, *fit* in with our lives from time to time for good or evil. The dumb ass, the familiar daily common helper, in some unusual way speaks, and out of the means by which we move, and work, out of the everyday routine, and unexpected quarters, comes the voice which warns, or cheers us; sometimes a series of things, any one of which by itself is nothing, follows, one by one, in so subtle a connection with our thoughts and needs, as to convince any one that they are voices sent by God, the dumb ass speaking.

I care not whether people know it or not, this is the case. Nay, I care not whether they scorn the very idea, there is not a man on this earth who is not from time to



time moved to thoughtfulness, checked or encouraged, by seemingly casual events, and flashes of sudden impulse, shot into them; those who are wise note these, and can at times find the voice very clear indeed; those who are heedless, or scornful, nevertheless in a blind way, without knowing it, do shape their course very often by them; indeed they can't help it, for it is not only the dumb instrument speaking, but the drawn sword of the unseen angel, in the shape of some irresistible calamity, or force, that makes the path hard, and compels the deserters from God's truth to turn aside, and consider what they are doing, and going to do, and count the cost. There is nothing in human life so common as this. God allows the man, who will have it so, to go his own way, and then, by a thousand little warnings and checks, which he alone feels, makes his way hard, and forces him to reflect. Every day the dumb ass is made to speak, and rebuke the madness of the prophet.

So ends the second act in Balaam's downfall. He refused to take the trouble to move from his comforts and his fame at the bidding of life, and joyful freedom; at the fame of Moses, and the glory of God; now he does so, at the call of God's enemies, attracted by the splendour of the king, and at last to perish with them; but as yet warned and instructed, if he can yet be saved, and take an honest true course. Believe me, brethren, there is nothing in life more common than this. How often do I see in school the wilful step taken, which must be let alone, and allowed, till it has run its course, and come to a head; and some decided evil makes a check possible. Beware how you ever suppose that when active good calls you, and living moving power, you can stand apart without betraying life.

## SERMON LXIII.

### THE END OF THE TRAITOR'S SLIDE.

NUMBERS XXIV. 3, 4.

*“Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said. He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.”*

THERE are two bits of personal character in the history of Balaam, which come out apart from his greater acts of treason; first, his pride in his knowledge; “Balaam the son of Beor hath spoken, the man whose eyes were open.” How characteristic this is of one who by degrees had let his vanity and self-will over-master the love of truth, which first made him great, and gave him his sight! And, secondly, his passionate vindictive temper; “I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee.” These little touches of nature make us know the man better as he goes on his self-willed way, checked at every step, and threatened, and warned, but when he once had made up his mind to try,

allowed to go: and told to go, for now he must either undo his sin, by a complete change of heart, and a noble stand for good in Balak's court; or, he must reap the fruit of his choice, and perish with them. As he rode that long and memorable journey, time was given him. And whilst he waited for Balak's coming to that city in Arnon which is in the utmost coasts, time was given him. And before each new altar, and each new attempt, time was given him. In the quiet evenings, and early mornings as he went, and as he waited, how his heart within him must have had strange thoughts, and strange misgivings! He was made to pause, and take time, again and again. So he came to Balak. And both he and the king thoroughly understood that it was not to be thought of that he should do or say anything flatly against God. Just as much as now, it would be useless to expect a man of education and position to steal, or commit forgery, in betraying his cause in public life. This is thoroughly true to life; the wickedness of men of education and spiritual power is always of the Balaam type. They keep rigidly to the outward show, whited sepulchres, a dead truth inside, honoured outside by a hard wall of observances.

So Balaam meets the king; and the temptations he has made for himself begin. He is no longer on his own ground, but goes readily to the heights of Baal, and offers half heathen half true sacrifice to the true God on idolatrous high places, with a half heathenish belief in binding God by doing so.

Both he and the king agree in thinking that blessing and cursing are mere acts of favouritism and caprice. And so we see men ever doing, pinning their faith on this or that observance, standing on heights of know-

ledge, and state power, and trying to make terms with God, whilst separating off from His true life and wishing to curse His people. Or it goes on in the heart, this strange contest ; where, as it were, the prophet of God and the heathen king, fragments of Scripture and worldly interests, half consecrated, half infidel wisdom, imitated from true religion, and corrupted, endeavour, side by side, to get rid of the great living truth that is disturbing their world. So Balaam and Balak, traitor prophet and heathen king, stand on heights of Baal evermore, heights of self-chosen worship, and strive to destroy the cause of God in the world, by means of half truths borrowed from His word.

Not less characteristic also is the manner in which the two shift their ground, and take now this point of view, now that, striving to curse, bit by bit, what as a whole is blessed. So men suggest evil motives, and try to curse good by saying that part of it is done for appearances, or that it is cunning, or that it is setting up for being better than other ; or insinuating that after all, if all was known, it would be found a sham. Or, still more like Balaam, they look out for a single blot in the character, and try to find the utmost corner of it wrong, and to get a handle by looking at a bit of it, and to fasten their misrepresentations and calumnies on a partial half-view ; and fix a curse on it in this way. The whole may not be easy to blacken ; but every cause, and every man, has parts, which, taken by themselves, can be criticised and abused, either as being really weaknesses, or still more often as being the imperfect work, which the men and circumstances in which the worker is placed compel him to do. And this is what the man of power, who wishes evil, fastens on.

And in this beating about in order to curse we see Balaam once more taking his side against God, thoroughly taking his side, though he is obliged to repeat God's words. All his personal influence, all his personal credit, is on the side of the king, only his unwilling lip-work is with God. And he shifts from place to place to see if by any chance he can fix his curse on God's people; and afterwards he stays, and gives the tempter's counsel to send temptation into the camp of Israel; and at last he dies in the battle. The sword of Israel smote him in the flight.

He came into Moab quietly and in outward honour; he ended in the tumult and despair of the great overthrow, most likely without a moment then to think, overwhelmed with despair and agony as the conqueror's sword came near, and he saw the avenger's arm uplifted.

Such is the history God has given us in this wonderful type, of a man who wins reputation by love of truth at first, who knows God, who sees the vision of the Almighty; but when successful by having known good, sells his success to evil. Brethren, 'tis a common thing to do. Whenever any strong truth comes, as it does do, straight into the heart; and the heart grasps it strongly, *that* is the vision of the Almighty to us. The man who has once got a clear sight of any great truth of God, and of God working by it in the world, has had his vision of the Almighty. You may not have the splendid powers of Balaam, but the thing is the same, and the temptations are in proportion; a throne perhaps to one, a house and home to another, to a third popularity, and so on. Bribes of various kinds.

And what I want you to mark is this: the Balaam temptation, the temptations of the man who rises by

good, is never to do an act which breaks God's law, never to do actual evil, but to carry his good, his knowledge of good, his insight into good, and his reputation for good, to the head-quarters of those who want to stop good. This is the traitor's slide. The prophet is not wanted to be a heathen himself, quite the contrary. He is wanted to carry his outward goodness and his religious reputation, over to the side of obstruction. And the steps in downfall are always those of Balaam. First stopping still when the great rush of progress and life, the setting free the people of the Lord, begins, stopping still, and not going to join it. Next, when the tempters to the other side come, not sending them away at once. Next waiting, when warned that it is sin, and giving an answer which shows his heart is with them. And so, step by step, going on till he shows himself a great man in the head-quarters of the opposite party ; never having done a single act of positive law-breaking; for it is the show of good that Balak wants on his side ; but all the time having sold the truth. Brethren, every true Christian sees from time to time the vision of the Almighty, and the temptation always comes to win some worldly advantage by not being earnest in the side of life. No wrong need be done, no law broken, truth is betrayed by seeming to be true whilst doing nothing for truth. The traitor's slide of Balaam is the deadliest enmity to truth.

## SERMON LXIV.

### IMMORTALITY DROPS NOTHING.

ACTS III. 15.

*“Ye killed the Prince of Life, Whom God hath raised from the dead.”*

“YE have killed the Prince of Life.” I have taken this text, because it is not possible for human words to put more strongly the one great fact about life, true life, namely, that it has nothing to do with our common ideas of life and death. That is the starting point in any practical knowledge of life. We must get rid altogether of the thought, if we can, that our being born into this world, and again passing out of this bodily world, which we call life and death, is in any way what God means when He speaks to us of life and death. I cannot explain this further, but the fact is not hard to see. Even the heathen saw it. When they threw away their so-called lives in obedience to higher thoughts of duty and honour; even their blind feelings bore witness to a higher life than that which they threw away, to

something better, something more precious, than the life they laid down. It does not signify whether their ideas were right or wrong, the reasons, I mean, which made them act thus, the witness of their hearts to something better and higher is plain and decisive.

“Ye have killed the Prince of Life.” Here we have God’s word that the killing, which we call death, and an end of life, could happen to the Prince of Life without in any way overcoming the empire of life. What then is life, if our mere human existence is not meant by the word? First I think we must grasp the thought, that life, when God speaks of life, means, *being which can never end*. We talk of past life and present life, and future life, and separate them in our minds, and think of them as separate, and in fact we make each have its beginning, and end, but that which ends is dead. Periods of time may end, but life goes on. The being, and the character of the being, goes on. There may be a youth, a childhood, of immortality and life, but, countless ages hence, life that is life shall be growing, and still bearing traces of the seed from which it grew, traces of its youth, traces of its childhood, for it is all one.

Shall the God of life so stamp His living stamp on things created that millions of years, perchance, afterwards the fern leaf in the coal shall proclaim that the coal had a forest growth, and drew in precious gifts of air and heat? Or shall it be, that millions of years, perchance, afterwards the print of the rain drop on the sand become stone, shall give its own history from the hands of the God of life? And shall life itself be the mean span, the cut thread, the rounded pin’s head, the separate link, we make it, when we think of it as past,



and present, and future, and broken short off, when we leave this earth? There is no such break. The Prince of Life could be killed, as we speak of killing; but He could not for one moment cease to be, or be other than He was before. No more can we, if we live, if Christ is our life, if our life is hid with Christ in God. We living beings here most surely bear within our lives all we have ever been; and no less surely in the world to come shall we still bear all we have ever been within ourselves, and be the character which the unbroken life has made us. Life, most assuredly, is that reality within, which each feels to be himself; and which under all circumstances remains himself; whether that self be better or worse because of circumstances; whether that self be master, or slave, in the rough earth training, it is still the same life.

God indeed warns us, that if we make our true life a slave on earth, a terrible doom will come on us in another world. God indeed warns us, that there is no true life excepting to the redeemed and baptized in Christ; but this does not lessen the fact, that the inward reality which each man feels to be himself is his life, though the heathen has his feeling of inward self which is not life. In other words, because we know nothing of the working of God in the lives which do not belong to us, we can very well know what is life when God has told us what is life, in the life about which He has told us. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever," says our Blessed Lord. "To be spiritually minded is life," says St Paul. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." And in the parable, the talents are given or taken away, but the man remains

the same, and receives, or loses, according to the reality within which made him act one way or another.

We must then think of life as our real self, inseparable, which cannot be altered, and become another; which cannot be brought to an end, and become another. Past, present, and future, for ever and for ever, is one life, whatever world it goes through, one and the same life, always containing within itself all that is past, and always containing within itself all that is possible for it in the future. We see this on earth; there is not one of you here, who is not day by day fixing, and, up to a certain point, irredeemably fixing, what he *can be* when he grows up. Ten years hence you who are alive will stand in the world with the exact powers and feelings which day by day you are growing here. And just as I represent the good and evil I have done, and met, so will you represent the good and evil you have done, and met. This precious seed-time of your life holds like a seed all your future. And our life on earth in like manner holds our life hereafter; for the life does not change with the changing worlds; but the spirit within in its immortality of love of good, passes on with no break, for ever, whatever world it may be in, growing indeed, and in that sense changing by growth, but ever growing from what it is, and in that sense unchangeable.

This unchangeable, endless life we are now living, we shall be living a thousand years hence; we shall be living for ever. How are you starting then? Can you prolong your present loves, your present hopes, with ever growing power, unbroken, for ever and for ever, and be happy, and be with Christ? Is the kingdom of heaven within you? Is it begun, or beginning? If it be,

then this great fact will stand out clear, that we are learning to live, learning to purify our being; and that everything outside, our books and knowledge, our cricket and games, our homes and the outer world, our money, our temptations, our fears, our paths, our beds, and all our ways, are all in various shapes instruments to use, or instruments, by which God shapes us and tries us; whilst the life passes on unbroken, whatever it may meet, with no change but the change of growth. There is not a thought, there is not a word, there is not a thing done or undone by any one of us, which does not leave its mark. It is a fearful thought, this mixture of impurity, meanness, vile words, false work, corrupting influence, filthiness, and downward drag, which the evil in a school mixes up, as in a reservoir, to poison eternity. It is fearfully glorious too to think how the life in Christ begun now, however weak, is an eternal growth, that the kingdom of heaven is begun within; and that through all eternity in ever happier growth, surrounded by truth, our life shall be prolonged always, advancing to greater holier power. Search your hearts, and see whether this beginning is in them, and heaven begun; and eternity here.

## SERMON LXV.

### IMMORTALITY DROPS NOTHING.

ST MATTHEW X. 26.

*“ There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known.”*

IT is part of the immortality of life that this completeness should be, which allows nothing to be broken off, drop, or perish ; but sets the stamp of the everlasting on everything belonging to itself, so that when we speak of immortality, and life immortal, we do in fact necessarily speak of all that belongs to life, however secret or small we may think it, as remaining, and lasting, and being with us for ever ; and as coming to light, and being known, whenever we ourselves are known. The moment we see that life has no separate past, present, and future, but is one unbroken reality of being, which remains the same in itself whatever worlds it may be placed in, that moment it becomes clear that all the secrets of the past are with us in the present, and, whenever we come into a world of truth, must be

brought to light, and made plain, or we ourselves should give a false impression and move falsely in that world ; but there can be no falseness in a world of truth. The past is only waiting for the spirit touch to be felt and known completely ; it only requires a greater power of life within to become sensible, and as it were visible.

There are many things which show us that this is so. It is clear that our life does hold in itself all the past as surely as a tree, ring by ring within, holds its past growth, and declares it. And the life which is in us, having living power in itself, does in fact have a present living feeling of its past ; and it is present to it because it is in the life, part of it, and an actual present reality. *This is memory.* Memory is nothing else but the immortality of an ever present life revealing its inner secrets. Memory is a perpetual witness, that all the life that has been lived is still present within ; still in being, and, the moment the right touch comes, it shows itself to be there. It is a witness of God to unbroken life within us ; a witness to an everlasting present, to a past that at any, and every moment, keeps declaring that it is present, still within, forming part of life, and capable at any moment of flashing into present power ; and when the spirit rush is strong, as any moment might make it strong, becoming a power so great as to overbear, though it be, in man's talk, past, all that is present, as men speak of present.

What is remorse but a present past so vivid as to utterly quench, and overbear all that at the moment is coming and touching the life from the world outside ? Thus the so-called past is a more powerful and real present than the so-called present. In other words, the life within is always present with varied intensity, and

makes its own present world, whatever the outside circumstances may be. Memory is a sort of glimpse of this truth, a witness to an everlasting present of life lived, of a past that at any moment can be shown to be within, forming part of life; of an existing reality, which only wants more light, or more life, to become plain to all creation; for it is here, ready, waiting till the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. Memory, as we have it, is like opening and shutting a door into life's treasury. The door opens, and we see, and live again the seeming past; the door shuts, and we only have caught sight of a small portion of what is there. But it is all there, waiting, ready; it is all there able to be produced at any time; no recording angel is wanted to put it down; no pen to write the awful realities; God's great book is the life itself; the book of life, that immortality of being, which keeps inviolate all its own history, self-written, or rather self-existent. Our human memory is a far-off, feeble hint how the life of man in its everlastingness and sacred power drops nothing, loses nothing, breaks off nothing, but ever is a living scroll of recording truth, a book of life, a living photograph, which by its own life makes and keeps the picture. And there it is, ready, waiting till the last trumpet wakes the dead, and sending a rush of quickening power through all that lives, makes all living stand before God's judgment throne, with all their life one great present, transparent, clear, made plain, as the divine light and life shoots through it, and each life in the full blaze of living truth stands clear in the sight of God, and His judgment; when all mankind at the last day see, and are seen to be what they are, their own lives being witnesses in the full light of life.

Brethren, this is no curious question of words. It is

the most practical, the most pressing fact we can deal with. If life is this everlasting present, how are you learning to live? If life is this immortality of forgotten experience, what is the experience which you are gathering in, never to be lost sight of, never to die? If life is this living book, which needs no recording angel to take it down, but of itself, in letters of life, lives its own history, and keeps it ready to be seen: what is this living history. which you are living into the everlasting picture? What is this, which never can be got rid of, which we are doing here? Are we learning to live? Your boyhood will be to you as real a part of yourself sixty years hence, as it is now. I feel this truth. So does every man as he grows old. Your boyhood will be to you and me as real a part of yourself a thousand years hence, as it is now.

Man's eye can see the inner first life of the yew tree a thousand years old. Think of that. And shall not spirit life be plain to spirit in a spiritual world? If the life of a tree is such a history, what is the life of man? And life means the doing, or not doing, at our very best everything that right authority of circumstances orders. Life does not mean winning this, or working that. Life does not mean being the scholar, or the soldier, the merchant, or the anything else; it means the being earnest in everything that it is right to do, the first, as far as our powers go, in all that it is becoming a brave man to do, or a good man to suffer. I ask you once more then, Have you been living? Have you even set before yourselves life as your object? Has the thought been in your heart to make each moment a moment of life, a moment of speaking gentle words, of pure words, of manly words, or of gentle, pure, and manly silence? Have you thought of making your moments full of

living work, of mastering the lesson because of life, for the life's sake, for the sake of that living gift of God's time, the wealth He has put in your hands? Have you been living? Have you thought of what you daily add to the great photograph of life within?

Many of you are going out from us this time by that strange type of life and death, one of the many of which earth-life is full. You go; you die to this place. You live again in a wider sphere. But what is this seeming death, this going, this being no more here? You do not shake loose *from yourselves* when you leave. The great picture within goes with you, is indeed yourself; you are for good or evil what you have made yourselves here. You are an imprint of the life spent here, that and nothing more. Your memory bears witness to this undying truth. You go. But here also you do not shake yourselves loose from what you call past. For many and many a day, in a divine sense, for ever, you are present here still, in the golden thread of light, that patient well-doing makes to gleam and glow in the lives of others; or alas! in that dark, concealed hell-fire, that smoulders underneath, lit up by foul words and deeds, and every now and then bursting out in shame and detected guilt. These walls will thrill and throb with life of yours as long as they stand. It is a great mystery, this immortality of life even on earth; this everlasting presence of life, though men care not for it. But be sure no recording angel is needed to keep the record of life. We live. We are our own book; the life print of our own existence; and a day will come, when God will make each living picture full of its life; memory will be no more; the whole will be present, and known, as now, though unknown, it is here. So live that each moment may be glorious gain.



## SERMON LXVI.

### SEEDS OF LIFE.

ACTS XXVIII. 14, 15.

*“So we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum and The three taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.”*

I WISH to draw your attention to-day to the sowing of life; or rather to the appearance of the seeds of life, and what strikes the eye in life-seeds, how they look, so that you may have some glimpse of the working of life, and be able to trust to life, and to have faith in your own life, which God has given you, and Christ has made His own. I call the workings of truth and life, seeds of life, because of their insignificant appearance, their smallness, their utter want of anything to attract notice, unless a man knows them to be seeds. The great powers that move the world are seed powers, small life germs, sent abroad to sink into hearts and grow; and it is of infinite importance to know the kind of things that are seeds; to watch for them; to strive to be a seed.

The words of my text describe very simply St Paul's entry into Rome by the Appian way, a prisoner, nearly two thousand years ago. How much has risen and fallen in those two thousand years! How many empires have been born, ay, and how many have died! The old heathen world with its open glorification of sin and idolatry has utterly passed away, Jupiter Capitolinus is gone. Millions upon millions of men and women have come into the light of our sun, and passed away again also; but this fact of St Paul's entry into Rome does not pass away. *We* know that he was a life seed, carrying life. We know that *that* life has wrought these great changes; *that* life is our inheritance, and lives in us, and never will die. This we know *now*. The clever foolishness of the most foolish knowledge-worshipper of modern times acknowledges St Paul to have been a great power. But how was it then, at the time? How looked the seed, which is now so mighty a growth?

Imagine a city in the world's eyes ten times more important than London, infinitely more magnificent, such was Rome. Up from the southern parts ran the Appian way, a great, broad, paved road, much of which still remains; slowly along that road one spring day a prisoner on his trial for life was brought. As he passed over the ridge of the Alban hills, he first caught sight of the city in the middle of the great plain, about 14 or 15 miles in front of him; and down the hill side at last, amongst the palaces, and villas, and trees, he came on the straight ten miles or so at the end of which is Rome. An avenue of magnificent tombs, if I may call it so, led him the whole way from the hills to the city; whilst far and wide spread the great plain which slaves alone cultivated. Earth has never seen a more striking sight

than was seen that spring day, when the bright southern sun lit up the circle of hills, and passed over the plain, and rested on that gorgeous city crowned by the Temple of the Capitol. Range above range of marble palaces, or temples, glittered up the sides of the seven hills, and met the eye, the mighty shrines of the race who boasted to be the incarnation of the war god, the sucklings of the wolf; and as they came down the hill the pilgrim band would show St Paul the wolfish lair; the most splendid building in the world, lying straight before him, Nero's palace, where Nero kept his blood-stained feasts. Slowly they came on, mile after mile, the road thronged with soldiers, citizens, senators, slaves, kings it might be, all the pomp of the queenly city, with Nero's palace ever before them, and the towers of the Capitol and Jupiter glittering on high; and in they passed amongst the gigantic buildings, the prisoner and his friends, *with all this power against them*, every man *a heathen*; all the foul perfection of heathen crime, and heathen splendour, massed in opposition.

I have often thought St Paul's last ten miles into Rome the most fearful contrast this world ever saw, the most splendid triumph of life matched against force, and impossible mountains of evil. There is something terribly real in that single man going into that gorgeous pit of hell, which was Rome, in the sunny spring day, down the flowery slopes of the Alban hills, and along the great street, and matching his spirit calmly, and quietly, against the crushing magnificence of temples, palaces, fortress, legions, and empire. Truly this was a seed of life, an immortal germ, living now, and ever growing, though Rome has perished, and many an imperial city since. But *then, it was only one poor prisoner.*

Now a few words for ourselves. Men must have some personal interest, some hopes, something able to raise them, which cannot be crushed. Life, and the belief in life, and in seeds of life, gives this personal interest. Christ gives life to every one of us. Now what is the meaning of this?

It simply means, that when you see any one, like St Paul, distinctly labouring for others and the good of life, you see a seed of life, and can never calculate the greatness it may be.

It means, that all the force power of earth, its wealth, its armies, its dignities, are not things of life, and are not therefore growing powers which last by growth.

It means, that the Spirit of doing good, which is the Spirit of Truth, which is the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, is in the world of men, and is known to be there, the moment a man appears, who is not working for money, or praise, or power, or popularity, or party, but for the giving opportunities and knowledge of good to men.

It means, that each and everyone of you can be a seed power, can be a life able to sow itself, as part of the life of God on earth.

It means, that Christianity is not a mere doctrine, or a law, or a set of rules, but a divine life, which has to become incarnate in the world more and more. The life of Christianity is the life of Christians.

It means, that you can be part of this life, that every man, however humble, may be in a sense a new birth of living truth on earth in Christ, a fresh incarnation of life, an advance on the practice of God's life *here*; for Christ's spirit life lives by being born on earth in men, and spreading on the earth in new truth of practice.

This then is a very vivid personal interest. Do you belong to the seed power, the life power? You can do so. Make your lives seeds of life. Set before yourselves quietly as the object of living, the destroying in yourself all desire for outward show, and all value put on it, and have as your one aim the being kind, and helping good everywhere.

## SERMON LXVII.

### SAMUEL AT SCHOOL.

I SAMUEL III. 20.

*“And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.”*

THERE is one point in the history of Samuel that especially makes him an example here, and gives his history an interest beyond all others. I refer to his having been taken away from his home to be trained, far from his own family, and have his character formed in new scenes, with the responsibility of acting for himself amongst strangers. In plain words, it is the history of a boy sent to school, and put into great advantages, and great temptations, and coming out a pure and grand character from the trial. Little is said; but there is something very touching in the picture that little puts before us.—The gentle old man Eli, whose somewhat self-indulgent character wanted firmness to carry out the good he believed in; who, wishing for ease, let the sins go on which made his days uneasy, and closed them

in sorrow and blood—the insolent young princes, his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, using the power of God's priesthood to gratify their own vile passions—their retainers, rude and violent, ready to do any evil they were ordered, and of course taking advantage of this to make themselves powerful.

Such was the life in the great city into which the little boy from his quiet country home was cast; not without many a prayer from his mother, who had dedicated him to God. It was a life of temptation. He came to be educated in a special way for God's service. And he found God's service going on outwardly. The magnificence of the worship was there, the sacrifices, the throngs of people, the offerings; a service was there in which the earnest hearted, like his own mother, still took part, which Eli believed in and respected, though he loved his own ease more; and which must have had much of outward ceremony and honour from Eli's influence, as is the case in times of self-indulgence before the corruption brings ruin. But all this fair outside covered in Eli's sons and their followers the violence, pride, and lust, that always come when the power which religion brings has become irreligious. And we may be sure that the little boy so strangely put in the midst of it found a very bad set amongst the younger, and those who more naturally were his companions, and must have seen and heard much that would tempt an unsteady heart, and attract the least inclination in him to vile practices. We may be quite sure, also, that when he would not take part in sin, the little lonely boy must have had to bear very much from the others; and though Eli was kind to him, much of his life was out of Eli's reach; and very lonely he must have felt in such a

place; and very strange and harsh the contrast was between his holy service in the Tabernacle, and the foul wrongs belonging to the Tabernacle service, as it then went on. All we know is, he spent those years of boyhood, innocent, and pure, and living for God. He was not fascinated by the bold, bad men about him into thinking wickedness manly. And as, in his boyish courage, day by day, he did his work quietly and well, Hophni and Phinehas must have often met *him*, and he *them*. Their power did not dazzle him, their personal advantages and animal bravery did not bear down his judgment, and whether they tempted, or whether they sneered, whether they were kind, or, as is far more likely, hated him as an unwelcome rebuke to their license, it was all the same: the little boy, alone in the court, far from home, kept himself above the tempters, and their fear, or their love, and passed on in the unconscious greatness of a pure life. *He* a young, fair, thoughtful face, followed by secret blessings as he trod the courts; *they* bold, and proud, and dissolute, princes in Israel, with the avenging devil at their side waiting for his prey, waiting for the hour, when, amidst the curses of the lost battle, and the dishonour of their race, he would strike them down, and close their earthly account in blood, with the Ark of God taken, and the traitor's conscience embittering the traitor's doom.

What a true picture this is in its broad general features of higher education always. It only wants to be translated out of Hebrew into English life. There is the head-quarters, which professes to be the highest place of God's worship and intelligent culture, and which *is* in many respects so, still retaining always so much of old goodness as to have great outward claims.



There, too, is that spirit of self, of earthly show, of rough power, of impurity and lust, that whether it comes most from rulers or ruled, whether checked or encouraged, pulls down so fearfully the high purpose of the school of life, and makes what should be the courts of God's temple, unhallowed ambuscades of temptation and foul attractiveness, or of fear and unfeeling pushing aside the weak. There, too, is the earnest truth of some, the pure unflinching courage of those who are to be God's prophets. For think not that God's prophets have ceased. It is our high privilege in these last days not to want a visible miracle to teach us, or a voice from heaven in our ears. The *ὁ μῦθος δηλοῖ* of simpler times, the printing the moral at the bottom of the page, as it were, by a special message, is needed no more in the perfect order of the kingdom of heaven, and the Holy Spirit ever working on earth. God raises up His prophets still, the out-speakers of His truth, the lights of His Light, the lives of His Life, the translators of His glory into earthly use; and if the prophet voice has ceased, it is replaced by the prophet life, and prophet spirit, of the dauntless soul breathing God's spirit. The Holy Spirit of Truth is not silent. Evermore through this lost, and yet beloved world, clear light of God in holy men prophesies, speaks forth of Him; clear speech of holy life prophesies, speaks forth of Him; and men do know in time that there hath been a prophet among them. I call on you to be such prophets—I call on you to tread these ancient courts of God's truth and learning with firm, calm feet of purity and brave resolve. Be brave; be true; help the weak; trample under foot foul thoughts, foul language, foul deeds; let not the devil at your side walk with you, waiting for his day of doom to

come. Nay, let all Israel know that out of these walls the prophet spirit is speaking, and the prophet life going, let them know that there are prophets of the Lord established, fearless lives and true. What might we not make of this Temple-circle of ours, if, like Samuel, we came here intent only on making our lives declare God, and served God here in holy truth till He took us, and accepted us, and made our lives prophecy.

## SERMON LXVIII.

### ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB.

ST JOHN I. 47.

*“ Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.”*

THERE is something very wonderful in three men having been chosen nearly four thousand years ago to represent God's men for ever. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the great fathers of the perfect world ; the fathers of God's men, as a distinct race from man as man in his own self, going his own way. Three, mark, not one. There is something still more strange at first sight in Jacob or Israel being that one of the three, who gives his name to the great people ; who fills the largest space in the Bible ; who is still identified with his race most ; whose name is on the lips of men more than any other. Three stand forth for ever, grand typical figures, and of those three Jacob is most wrought into the heart of the world, and lives most, if the expression may be used, in the daily working of the world of men.

I propose to take the life of Jacob, and endeavour to draw out some of its hidden power. But no true idea can be got of Jacob if he is separated from the two other great typical men, whom God chose and trained, so that all they were, and all they did, became a living picture to all generations of the divine life working on earth. These men, remember, who stand out evermore from amongst the countless millions of the human race, do so simply in virtue of their hearts, of their true hearts. There is no great act whatever of earthly glory told of any one of them; and yet they live for ever in the annals of mankind. Three lives are put before us in their living power; and they pass on from heart to heart by virtue of their heart power. Neither the sword and its triumphs, nor the head and its triumphs, have anything to do with them. No victories mark their path. No schools of thought date from their subtle brains. No burning words of poetry or prose come sweeping down the generations with prevailing power. There is nothing—nothing but simple lives simply told, three lives, each typical of one of the three great patterns on which human life is worked. Three lives—each one in a true sense containing all the after lives of the same type, and being their father. Abraham the father of the faithful, Isaac the father of quiet home life and obedience, Jacob the father of all the toiling, striving men, who have to make their own way; the men who through many mistakes, and much suffering, purge out their meaner views and mixed motives, and come out at last into the full light of God, princes of God, no more Jacob, but Israel.

There is a colossal grandeur in Abraham, a vast simplicity of quiet greatness, that marks the man of

inward strength, whose life is cast in times of danger and sacrifice; and who rises equal to the worst that can come; who can dare all, and bear all, with a gentle self-severity of unbending straightforwardness. Who leaves his home, and all he knew and loved, as a matter of course at the right call in opening life, and endured to face lifelong exile, a strange land, and unknown conditions, as a beginning in his early days. Then, when all went well, and prosperous years had filled his heart full of prosperity, and might have softened his will, and eaten into his stedfast purpose, then, the call comes once more, and in his old straightforward way Abraham sets out to offer up his son with his own hand, and send into the grave all that seemed happy for himself. Three days he trod that awful path of sacrifice, his son by his side, with his boyish talk, glad perhaps at the journey, the new country, the pleasant pastures, and the evening halt by fountain or stream, and every word that dropped from joyous lips of love went to the father's heart; and in the third morning dawn the glorious mountain rose before their eyes, the mount of God; and step by step, quiet and gentle as ever, in the calmness of a faith that knew no doubt, Abraham led his son up the steep hill, "where God," he said, "would provide the sacrifice." Strange contrast, that solemn hill top, and the quiet beauty of the bright day shed over miles of silent lands of glory outspread before them, and the father and his son standing there, alone, to meet, with willing uncomplaining hearts, the most dread hour that ever came to mortal man.

But Abraham had his life cast in too gigantic a mould, is too great to find such ready entrance into common hearts as Jacob does; or to have his life inter-

twined with common lives so closely as Jacob's is. The father of the faithful is the father of heroes; and all the hero kings of high or low degree, prince or peasant, draw their race from him.

Then Isaac, save in that one fearful time, passed in security a wealthy uneventful life; no shocks of fortune or varied incidents broke in on his smooth days, which were only ruffled by the home troubles of his wild selfish son; which, bitter as they were to him, cover but a small space of human feeling. So Isaac, the father of men of quiet days and wealthy homes, though a greatly needed type, is somewhat apart from the common lot.

But we find in Jacob that which reaches all mankind. He touches the great tragic heart of our common humanity; and the dwellers in earth's vale of tears, they know Jacob. To all who feel, to all who set themselves to try and work out with blind earnestness the will of God, the life of Jacob, with its faults and its punishments, stands forth like a lighthouse on their way. To all the weary, struggling men of chequered character, and mixed motives, in whom natural guile, or other mean self-interest, pulls down the high resolve, and turns it in action into very questionable shapes, which bring much rebuke, and try their own consciences sorely, to all such, Jacob's mistakes and Jacob's days of trial, and Jacob's victory, come home, as a voice from heaven, giving comfort and knowledge. Then the long struggle for means to live, for a bare maintenance, before he could marry, and the long slavery afterwards, and all its fears, and all its pain, before he got home again safe; then the eventful close of his life; Joseph sold; and Israel coming down to Egypt at last to find the lost one on a throne; all his tears and all his joys, most of all,

his faults and their punishment, combine to make Jacob in his passage into the man without guile—Israel the Prince with God, so named by God Himself—the central figure of the early world, even when misunderstood. To-day let us remember only this, that he, who began life in deceit and guile, ended it as the guileless Prince with God. The noblest title ever borne by man.

## SERMON LXIX.

### JACOB AND HIS HOME.

ST JOHN I. 47.

*“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.”*

AS we need some idea of Abraham, and Isaac, and their histories, before we know Jacob, their grandson, and son, so we need some idea of Jacob's home before we know him. How foolish it would be for a foreigner, to take any one of you and begin to pass sentence on your character without knowing anything of your country, your homes, your parents, your circumstances. Yet that is what we foreigners are always doing with the Bible men. Foreigners as we are in time, four thousand years between us and them, foreigners in country and habits still more, we set to and judge them, as if we sat in their hearts. Had not God kept the East unchanged and untouched in all its main life, little enough we should have really known of God's men in old time. But God has kept the East, like an old book with the writing still there, though somewhat less fresh from age.



The unchanging East is God's great living manuscript by which we still read His ways of old. Jacob's home was by the well Lahairoi in a highland pasture land of hill and valley, south of Hebron, with his father Isaac. The principal encampment of Isaac was there ; though doubtless they moved with their flocks and herds, as Abraham had done, and as Jacob did afterwards. Not far from them were the warlike cities of Canaan. That encampment of Isaac's was a little world owning no other law than its master's will. There was temptation, and power, and dazzling corruption, in the cities near, such manliness as war and hunting wild beasts glorifies ; and the skill of commerce and knowledge and the arts ; that visible grandeur, which during all the first ages of man's training was on the side of idolatry ; that vast magnificence of wall, and temple, and tower, which was part of the trial to the dwellers in tents, the shepherds, who had the promise of the Living God with them, but no other greatness to trust to. Yet that promise was nothing less than a sentence of death on those proud cities and their idolatry ; they were to be cast out before the children of the promise ; they were to perish ; the doom was on them ; man, and woman, and child, they were doomed.

So sharp was the contrast put before Esau and Jacob by the promise ; a very sword set up between the children of the land and the children of the promise. The promise of the Living God stood evermore, like the pillar of the cloud afterwards at the sea, between the two, between the pride of Canaan's cities and the dwellers in the tents. The true son of Abraham could never forget. He who forgot, cast himself out of the camp of God into the darkness and doom of the lost

nations. *And Esau did do so.* He was dazzled by the dark splendour of heathen power; and even his father Isaac, like many a quiet man, admired the first beginnings of wildness; for Esau, we read, was his favourite. The first beginnings of wildness, like the gambols of a young beast of prey, are often very graceful; and there is a fascination in the fierce movement as long as it is playful, which hides for a time the deadly selfishness of sin. So in the quiet tents, by the pleasant fountain, in the indulgent home, the twins spent their boyhood. But the great promise, the sword of the word of the Lord, smote sharply day by day in all they thought, and all they said, and all they did, dividing marrow and heart. Was it to be the glory of Abraham, the blessing on the promised seed? Or was it to be a hunter's fame, the revelry of the Canaanite, the passionate self-indulgence, the pride of power, and—the doom? Which was true? Which would they have? This was what the twins had to decide. The two rich young men in their own world, so quiet a world, as long as the promise reigned in it, so severely tempted a world, the moment the poisonous brightness of the doomed race came in.

At first little differences between the twin brothers would unconsciously begin to work; and Esau's more attractive wildness (it would be called spirited) would bring him favour, and make his twin brother feel thrown somewhat into the shade. Then by degrees the differences would shape themselves into more positive principles, and Esau in his self-will would more and more be throwing off the quiet duties of his home; and Jacob would more and more feel that his twin brother, as a twin, had but little birthright claim, and was casting off

that little ; and the line between righteous indignation at his twin brother's neglect of the promise, and the self-interest, which whispered that it might perhaps become his own, was easily crossed.

But observe as a key to Jacob's character, all Jacob's faults are human and mistaken efforts to win God's promise ; and all Esau's virtues are human disregard for the promise, and nothing more than buoyant animal self-will. So, day by day, the gulf between the twins widened, as the one cared less for the promise, and took part more with the doomed race, and the other cared more for the promise, and learnt to despise more the flashy characters of their powerful neighbours.

We may picture Jacob returning in the evening with the flocks, looking down from the hill side on the tents of his father, full of mingled feeling, *untrained*, brought up in a wealthy and indulgent home, with but one twin brother, and the promise of Abraham lying like a sword between those two, probing the life. How his heart would swell within him, as he thought of Abraham and the promise, and, as he looked up and saw the glory of the Eastern night, then would he remember how *they* were to be—*even they*—as the stars of heaven for multitude, and every star of the starry sky would send a prophet light into his soul ; and was that a thing to scorn ? Was that starry sky of promise to be dragged down into the dirt, and the bold lusts of sensual Canaan set above it ? Was Esau to triumph, and the promise to be defiled ? Then envy and self-interest easily crept in under the guise of zeal for God, and he thought it was zeal, and his heart burned within him, as he strode down the hill towards the quiet trees round the fountain, where he had so often dreamed of the glory of his race,

of happy victory, and of peace; and perchance as he drew nearer, in the light of the fires, the tents stood out black in outline, and figures might be seen passing across the light; and unusual movement told him that Esau had come in from his hunting party, and that there was no peace for him that night, but vile jests, vain-glorious exploits, and noisy, overbearing assumption of manliness, though all the while he felt within himself a quiet, indomitable strength, a fixity of purpose, a depth of heart, and heart power, to which the wild bursts of Esau were but the flicker of a candle; and he would bitterly think that all the drudging and contempt of his home was his, and all the enjoyment and show Esau's. And by degrees he set himself to watch how he might turn his brother out, instead of how he might reclaim him; and began, we may believe, to argue that twins as they were, the profane holder had no real claim to the birthright, and so, like the spoilt child that he was, he could not wait for God, but set himself to do God's work instead of God, as many do; and the poisonous thought got intertwined with his life; and a day came when he put it in practice, and bought his brother's birthright, when he should have bought his love by kindly help.

So closes the first trial scene of Jacob's life in his doing a great wrong, and putting the living power of his life under Esau's heel, whilst he meant to serve God. "Is this religion?" Esau might say, "better far my faithful hunter friends, an honest love, and honest hate!" How many earnest men, like Jacob, lower God's cause by impatient self-seeking. Yet remember all Jacob's faults were a human grasping at the promise and the love of God, and all Esau's virtues a contempt for both.

So through much suffering Jacob became a prince with God, cleansed and purified ; and through much, which he called enjoyment, and much show, Esau became the everlasting warning of the lost birthright, of the man who threw away glorious gains like a fool, and found no place for repentance though he sought it bitterly, and with tears.

## SERMON LXX.

### THE GAIN OF OVERTHROW.

ST JOHN I. 47.

*“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”*

THE first epoch of Jacob's life ended in the evil thread of his character coming out, and his taking advantage of his brother's need. He did not dare tell his father seemingly; he felt the thing would not bear dispassionate judgment; and if his father did know it he disregarded it. When once deliberate evil is done the next step is only part of it, though it may seem greater, it follows as a matter of course. And so, some years afterwards, Jacob wins the blessing from his father by a lie. And he put himself into Esau's power by this evil. What a wretched life he must have led in that little tent-world with all his hatred of sin and idolatry, and all the conscience-stricken fears, which his own meanness had brought on him, and all the triumphant sneers he had exposed himself to from a far worse man, who however sinned in a popular way. How many like Jacob full of

real zeal but untrained, and full also of self-will, *begin* by taking God's work into their own hands, and do impatient, and wrong-hearted actions of their own, which worldly men scorn, whilst they wish to be on God's side; and get entangled in danger and sorrow by the evil they have done in a good cause. So Jacob gave Esau a handle against himself; and he had to fly though in many ways he had done his best, and been a good son, and clung to God's promise, and believed in it intensely, and run great risks for it, and kept himself pure, whilst Esau, the sensual, disobedient, selfish, shallow, self-seeker, had triumphed.

This is so true. Good with mixed motives and flaws in working, but still good, *fails*, for it cannot be cured without failure. And misunderstanding, and reproach, and utter defeat, is its portion; whilst the weaker, shallow man of the world triumphs. So Jacob flies from home before Esau. This begins that long cleansing process by which the evil was purged out, and he was made a prince with God—Israel. His father had married from the same family he was going to. But wealth, and honour, had gone to seek the bride and bring her home; whilst he had to go out alone, an outcast from his home, though sent by his father, and blessed by him. How desolate, how full of dreariness and doubt that journey must have been. Shepherd though he was, and accustomed to the hills, he had never left his home before, never known what it was to want, never known what it was to be alone, really alone, in the world.

That last morning, as he left his home—ah! surely for ever in his memory that hour would stand by itself in solitary singleness of power. How all his being would be gathered up into one point of pain; and as he looked

back from the well-known hill, how his heart would strain as in a dream, with a weary emptiness of longing that knew no end. It was a brave thing to do, and a strong, to go forth thus when his mother bid him, even though danger was waiting for him at home. Then he set his face forward, and marched on with the burden of his life upon him. What searchings of heart were his, as he passed hour after hour, and each step took him from all he knew, and all he loved. The burden of his life was upon him. Behind lay his lost home; his father and mother wandering with aimless steps in the well-known tents, hungering for the sight of him, wistful at his empty place, in their old age left to Esau. At all events he had loved *them well*; but his sin had cast him out from them. As the day wore on, he would pass the last landmarks, and have to plunge into the great waste, the vast howling wilderness, with its mysterious silence, where no man dwelt. Truly the burden of his life was on him. All shattered and broken-hearted for what he had left behind, he had to face alone, and in misery, the dread wilderness, and his future. Underneath lay the promise of God, and his faith in it, yea, the fact that in a way he was there an outcast because of his faith in it; but uppermost was the terrible reality of his doom, the weakness of his sin, the not knowing in that great tangle what in him was really God's, and what evil, bringing perhaps hopeless downfall. Truly the burden of his life was on him, and a sword in his heart cleaving it. Had he not forfeited all his hold on God by his own fault? Did not his present case prove it? He had meant good, but is tossed and baffled by the outward present misery of having done evil—*meant so well, done so wrong*; was it not all useless, all over? Had he not failed and lost



all hold on God's favour? The mixed motive makes a man very downhearted in difficulty; the mistakes his conscience brings home to him make him a coward. It is one thing to go to the stake heart-whole, quite sure you are right; another, when only half-sure, deserted, alone, in failure and reproach, which you fear to be too true, afraid all the time that you are wrong. This was what Jacob had to do; what earnest men always have to do; for however earnest they may be, they have to answer at first with more or less faltering that dread question which God was now putting to Jacob though he knew it not,—that dread question, whether the enthusiasm and zeal had not after all been more for the gain of the promise than for God,—that dread question, whether the heart is ready for the sake of God, and God's truth, to go on, though going on may mean the absolute destruction of all the *gain* of the promise, the absolute overthrow of the man himself, his human hopes, his fortunes, his good name, in order that God's cause may grow, and in the hands of other men live and flourish as it were out of *his* grave.

This question on that sad day, this question, whether he was at bottom sincere or insincere, true or false, in his aims, Jacob answered to himself; unknowingly perhaps, yet it is most certain that he had answered it before night fell on the great wilderness and its lonely tenant; and he lay down amongst the rocks to sleep, calm, and at rest; for his heart was full of God; and he dreamed of God; the untuned heart does not dream of God. He lay down, that lonely man, beaten, and baffled in life's early onset, with his head on a rock, but above him shone the stars of the promise, and he slept; and God came to him in his sleep with the strong assurance that

he had *not failed*. God was with him, and he knew it now ; *now* that all the deceitful glitter of worldly wealth was gone, *he knew it now* ; though scarcely able to believe it quite. It was too good, too happy for him to grasp without more experience, more leaning on the strength of the Almighty in hours of trial.

And he rose in the morning to begin the second great epoch of his life ; to begin the untwisting from amidst his heart fibres of that thread of deceit and guile, which had so marred his start. During twenty years of suffering and oppression, cheated, trampled on, in danger and want, and hardship, and mock-kindness, he had to learn the bitter lesson, how base deceit was, how cruel ; and to tear it from his own heart by feeling it from another. But now he rose in the morning sure that his path was right ; sure that God was with him ; sure that his own heart was sound ; and he stepped forward as a brave man should, with an inward peace such as he had never known before. He stepped forward to be throughout all ages a star of hope to the young, who full of high thoughts, and zeal, and earnestness, yet stumble fearfully on the threshold of life, and lie sore wounded in their own hearts, misunderstood, half despairing, because their good intentions have broken down, and the evil they wished to correct has triumphed. But God is only searching them, as He searched Jacob, to make them see the difference between being religious for the sake of gain and being religious for the sake of truth. An hour comes to all earnest men when that dread question has to be answered. The very torment proves the earnestness. For Esau has no misgivings in his mean life. Then in that hour Jacob, I say, is a star of hope, amidst all his loneliness and overthrow, with the

sufferings yet to come, and that twenty years of sifting, starting in the morning with the blessing of God, one solitary figure in that wilderness of the world, which in after ages should know him as conqueror and king, as the man without guile, Israel, the Prince with God.

## SERMON LXXI.

### THE GLORY OF DEFEAT.

ACTS VII. 59.

*“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God.”*

YESTERDAY was St Stephen's day, the day of the first martyr set apart by our Church. The first day of the good cause bringing utter defeat and death. No cause is worth anything which is not worth a defeat. How few think, as they speak of the noble army of martyrs, that they are taking the side of the defeated, the unsuccessful. Ay but you will say, “they were conquerors, their cause has conquered, and we honour them as conquerors who did great deeds, and have made a lasting memorial of greatness on earth, and won an eternal name.” True, but whilst they lived—what of that? How did life look to *them*? How did *they* look to their generations? What did the people about them think of them? *We* think little enough of Caiaphas, and Pontius Pilate, less still of the mere mob, the flingers of the stones; they are to us mere wicked men,

we put them out of our thoughts, as some of the numberless wicked men whom no one cares for. But in their own day people cared for them; at the time they had power to kill they were the great men, who set the tone of society, with the world following them to execute their commands and fling the stones. Whilst Stephen, for instance, was a poor, despised partizan of opinions, which were not only hateful, but contemptible.

Now I take it a nobleman in those days was pretty much what a nobleman is now, only more powerful; and stones hurt, and killed, much as they do now; and it was not more pleasant walking down the street of a town with everyone sneering at you, then—than it is now; or being hustled outside the town into a neighbouring field to be murdered, then—than now. And a helpless man in the midst of enemies neither looked, nor felt, very different from what he does now; and those who look on see the helplessness, and the weakness, and hear the abuse, and the ill-natured things said, and see all the want of success, and the triumph of the other party. Well, *that is martyrdom*. When the martyr is in his grave, it matters little to him that we call him Saint. He is in his grave, as far as this world is concerned, defeated, unsuccessful, a failure, buried out of the way; whilst his enemies lived on, and told their own story, and were mighty. The martyr is the man, who in a good cause faced defeat, and *was defeated*; knew nothing, or little, whilst alive, of the real success which came when he was in his grave. As far as regarded this life there was not success, but in the world's eyes failure. As far as regards this life, then, who has made up his mind to set failure and defeat before himself as a very possible goal? Never mind the future, we sha'n't care

what people say of us when we are buried. But whilst we are alive what they say and do is powerful. Do not let the future of others blind you to the fact of what their present was, when it was present, and the fact, that of the future which we dwell on they knew nothing. In like manner *we* know *our* present, and of the future *we* know nothing.

The present then concerns us; and I repeat my question, Who amongst you has set his heart to face defeat and ruin, and to sympathise with the defeated? No one who does not make defeat at home in his heart has any real stuff in him. I want you all, at once, early, whilst you still can frame your ideas of how to live, to put as your main idea of how to live—defeat, if necessary, at any moment. Now defeat means the accepting the shame, or the pain, or the risk, or the obscure life, or the silent unrewarded task, or the dishonour, or the poverty, or any other defeat, that truth and a good cause may bring.

Money questions, and questions of reputation, are in peaceful and refined times the same tests, that the sword and the fire are in stormier and rougher times. And it does not signify what the form of the fear is; every fear has a kind of defeat in it. There are many, who without knowing it, have been ready to accept defeat, who have given up some present popularity, or faced some present hatred, or borne cheerfully some overthrow or trouble, for the sake of their beliefs. Well, the moment you are ready for the sake of your beliefs to do this, you have begun to look higher than success, yea to look to the highest—to defeat hanging on the Cross of Christ; to see, however dimly, the immortality of truth, which by defeat and death is proved immortal. But I want you steadily

to put before yourselves, as a sort of guiding star, the great axiom, that defeat must be accepted as a necessary part of divine life on earth; it is but the old saying, The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church. Translated into common English, it means, that the unsuccessful, and the defeated, in a good cause make the cause live and win; that no cause is worth anything, that is not worth a defeat; that no man has any stuff in him, who does not take defeat as a household dweller in his heart; that all our lower nature has to be defeated, and in Scriptural language crucified, before the true life can come. *This is* what I now want to enforce, that the power comes by suffering. For there are many defeats in life, as it goes on, and if wrought on a true pattern out of every defeat comes the new power.

It must be so. How can there be a sense of the mysterious depths of life if we remain on the surface only? How can faith in the divine spirit in life be felt if there is never need of faith, from never meeting anything to try the heart? Nay, brethren, those who have gone down into the sea of life, and have made their business in its great waters, they feel the same difference from their former selves, that a seaman feels between his good ship and a harbour boat. They who go into those vast scenes where God's way is in the deep, and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known, they find out, however severe the tossing of life may be, however overwhelming its perilous power, they find out what faith means; they find out the working of God, and the wonders of the Lord; and baffled, and caught in blinding tempests, or whirled by the wrath of men, defeated, that is, at the time by powers they cannot master, in whose grip they are as a lifeboat in

the storm, unsinkable indeed, for that is the immortal nature of good, but a plaything and a sport to fierce evils, for that is of the deadly present temptation, they learn by experience how God is with them, they learn how experience of danger brings the seeing eye to measure its power, the strong hand to cope with it, the stronger heart, which can still see God, and trust in Him, though lonely, betrayed, cast off, defeated, with everything else gone excepting the heart trust. Not that this comes all at once; it is the patient harvest of years; but the beginning of it is, the fearless acceptance of defeat, if necessary, in little things, the not worshipping success, the having a cause, and then not caring what the men, who are to us our powers at the present, may say, or think, or act, against it. The having a cause. The cause of Christ, and love of our neighbours, and good true work, and the progress of life, of happier life.

Everyone has it. First in yourselves, you all have to weigh hour by hour, and day by day, what is for, and what is against, true life. First in yourselves you have to face the question, what is the true and honest thing to do, and what is not? Then, how often in our little world comes the sharp test, shall I do right and be laughed at, or wrong and be popular? *or*, shall I laugh with the mean power, or go to the side of the weak and helpless? We glorify the defeated afterwards, and poems sing,

“How can men die better than facing fearful odds?”

and poems sing,

“How he said, ‘Fight on! fight on!’  
 Tho’ his vessel was all but a wreck;  
 And himself, he was wounded again in the side, and the head,  
 And he said, ‘Fight on! fight on!’”



And we repeat it with fervent pride, all unconscious that every day, not our words, but our acts, show whether we are meanly triumphing with the strong, or taking the side of the defeated; all unconscious that we are glorifying in our words the men who perished for their cause, and saw with dying eyes the sun shine on a victory that slew them.

Brethren, we have a cause, all of us, each of us; a public cause, the truth of this school; a private cause, the truth in ourselves; remember, no cause is worth anything which is not worth a defeat. Out of defeat comes the true life, the seeing eye of faith, the strong heart of experience, the wise discernment, which can distinguish between false glory and true. Defeat is but the common English for the cross. "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me." This translated means, learn at once to accept defeat as the necessary path to life. "Behold," says St Paul, "I die daily." Every day he faced in his heart utter overthrow. Defeat, frankly accepted, knits the soul, as it were, and makes it wise and strong. Remember, no cause is worth anything which is not worth a defeat; and no man has any true stuff in him whose heart does not at once go out to meet the defeated and the weak with sympathy and help.

## SERMON LXXII.

### SLAVES CANNOT REIGN.

EXODUS XV. 1.

*“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.”*

AH, that spring morning; when the sun rose over the stormy sea, the sea and its dead; and Moses and the children of Israel stood on the shore, and sang praises to the Lord. That bright morning in spring, when the morning light shone down on the thousand waves of that sea of wrath, each with the burden of its dead, and gleamed on the waters far as eye could reach. That bright spring morning of a great deliverance, when the horse and his rider, all the hard, unfeeling, trampling, tyranny, all the terrible, fierce, cruelty of the night before had become as the sea weed, a mere floating tangle, heaving up and down, lifeless and helpless, before their eyes. What a dream it must have felt! That great

reality of sudden deliverance. So vivid in its reality, so dream-like in its suddenness and power. Their hearts could not hold it, and yet beat high with all its mystery and its hope. There they stood on the shore, delivered, that great army of slaves, redeemed, and sang praises to the Lord; Moses and the children of Israel, baptized into a great nation, new born to liberty, a wondrous birth into a new world, with the promise in the midst of them, the promise of empire, and the Redeemer King, and with God in the midst of them, the pillar and the cloud of His presence. Ah, it seems as if such a day came but once in this earth history of mankind.

But in God's great spirit world on earth, over and over again, God's realities of redeeming grace, God's deliverance of the slave, are daily wrought. So they stood on the shore, and tasted their liberty, and praised God. And surely they felt as men have felt since. They felt in that hour of hope, and salvation, that all things were cheap and worthless compared with the freedom they had got, and the experience of certain help from God; and that all things were possible after what they saw. As their great war song rose, upborne by hundreds of thousands, with a sound as of many waters, mounting upwards, filling all space, till earth and heaven seemed joined, that great united burst of power must have seized, and swept away, even the most cowardly into an heroic dream, strong at the moment, without shadow of turning; even the meanest into a new world of unselfish hope, and resolutions to forget ease, and throw off the greediness, the self-indulgence, the grumbling, the fault-finding, in one word, *the slave*, and be frank and open, liberal and willing, as a free man should be. Even Moses, with all his experience, must have had some hope

at that hour of leading a gallant people in a grand way ; some hope of a life, which though matched against danger, and hardship, and difficulty, should be cheered by sympathy, and faithfulness, and true-hearted support ; which might be one long struggle indeed, but a struggle with heathen enemies, secure from treachery, and ingratitude, and mutiny within, secure from the damning taint of that slavery, where the slave has the slavery in himself, and is a slave with the chains in his heart, and his own lusts as the slave-driver's whip.

For this is slavery, brethren, the want of power to taste liberty, to enjoy the fresh breezes of life, the sharp, salt, bracing of God's sea shore, where there is space, and movement, and warrior strength, though the flesh-pots be empty, and an untrodden wilderness in front. This is slavery, the hanging back, the hatred of work, the hatred of risk, the grumbling spirit, the wish to do nothing, and yet be first, in fact, the very life the people did lead in their passage through the wilderness. But all was swallowed up then in that glorious hour of gratitude, and praise, when thousand thousand voices sung unto the Lord, who had triumphed gloriously.

Alas, for the forty years that followed ! How little like that beginning ! What a falling off from high hopes, and good resolutions, when all things seemed done for them, and nothing that seemed difficult was near ! There was the mistake, the supposing that the promised land could be theirs without their being fit to have it ; and that slaves, with the slave heart, could sit on the conqueror's throne. There was the mistake, the supposing that God, because He had done for them what they could not do, by breaking the yoke off their necks, would spare them one grain's weight of what they could

do, to break the yoke off their hearts. He divided the Red sea, and baptized them into a newborn nation ; He gave them bread from heaven, and water from the living Rock, life and the powers of living He gave them ; His sword swept round them so that none should meddle with this ; but—the slave habits had to be unlearned ; the slave heart had to be cleansed ; the slave limbs to be quickened into active, enduring hardihood ; and heat and cold, and hunger and thirst, and marching, and counter-marching, and danger, and watching, were given them ; and not one hour of pain, not one weary step, not one lash of judgment, was let off, till the slave heart was gone.

And, brethren, do not you make their mistake ? You have had your day of enlistment in the Conqueror's army ; your hearts have beat high and strong, and the battle seemed given to your hands. But we have to come back to our common wilderness life again, to days of ordinary work, with the old temptations trying to gain entrance once more. But do not think the deep, true feeling of the great day useless, because it does not last in the same way. It is intended to pass into better work, to become fixed in you as an habitual power, not of excited high-wrought enthusiasm, but of stedfast enduring strength, even at the dullest moments, when the spirit flags most.

Remember, the slave heart has to be got rid of ; that is the true meaning of Confirmation, of the strengthening which is to send us into life's battle as men. The slave heart has to be got rid of ; that is the true meaning of the Bread from heaven, and the Blood of Christ, powers of life to make us go on our way able to meet our day and its burdens. The slave heart has to be got rid of ;

with its impurity, its meanness, and all the sins the people sinned against Moses, and against God. Take them as a warning. There is no truer picture of man's life than that wonderful history. I thought as you knelt to-day, what a regiment in God's army you might be, if you were but all faithful, all trying to help each other to do truer work, working truly yourselves. Remember, the slave's heart has to be got rid of, and the slave's sneaking selfishness; and whilst you, like them, have a noble career opened before you not one hair's breadth of work, or trial, will be spared you that is needed to get rid of the slave within. Yet be not disheartened, those that have fallen shall be raised up again; those that shall hereafter fall need not be dismayed; the slave's heart has to be got rid of; and, so that you are getting rid of it, no overthrow need cause despair, and many a severe shock is in very truth part of the wilderness teaching. None need be downcast at finding the slave's heart within himself, if only he is ready in all ways to get rid of it, and will accept the soldier training, which all who follow Christ must have.

One thing is certain, no slave in heart can inherit the Kingdom. We *have* a promised land, but slaves do not enter it. I call on you to be free indeed, to join with one another to let nothing mean, nothing that defileth, nothing unclean, remain in the Temple of God. "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are." Nay, brethren, let me rather end with the song of victory, "I will sing unto the Lord who hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea," and with the

voice that St John heard, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Brethren, the slave's heart must be got rid of, but the victory is sure.

## SERMON LXXIII.

### BORTH THANKSGIVING.

PSALM CVII. 43.

*“Whoso is wise will ponder these things; and they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.”*

THESE great walls, brethren, would be dreary enough if empty, and silent, with the life departed from out of them. The holy building left desolate, the holier and greater it is in itself, speaks all the more sadly of the hearts that created it, and the death of the hopes and the prayers that made it, and lived in it. It is hard at this moment of thanksgiving to bring back that other moment, when eyes looked up at these statues, the silent memorials of a grateful heart; and thoughts of the life they embodied arose within, thoughts of the spirit power, that is in every true gift of these gifts here offered, arose, accompanied by the stern questioning, “Is it all over? Shall these eyes never more see them again? Is an end indeed come? And though future years may fill the walls with a fresh tide of life, are we and ours swept out



of them to return no more?" On that last Sunday, as I took my last look, I can truly say that the only thought, which made me think I should return, was the thought of the spirit life that has been lavished in this House of God, the heart-blood that its courses have been laid in, the faith and truth that have given and received life from this holy voice in stone, which we call our Chapel. But for that I had believed the end had come, and others must have had the same questionings in their hearts. We went out, unknowing where, unknowing what might be before us. We went out, but not empty. We had a treasure to guard, a trust to keep, an heritage that might not be cast away, as long as there was any hope of saving it. We had the honour, and discipline, and law, and order of this school, its living freight of character, and truth, in charge; and we might not leave it; we might not desert it; as long as there was any hope of saving that life.

Do not think I have forgotten the ruin that would have come on houses, and homes, had we broken to pieces then, and had to begin afresh elsewhere, with the past of this school wiped out. I have not forgotten it. But it was for the sake of the life that the boys of this school have received, embody, and pass on to their successors, that we did not break in pieces. And moreover, bad as that ruin would have been, it would not have been hopeless; our own fortunes might have risen again; but the school once scattered, the life of its years of growth brought to an end, *that* could not be recalled. A new school might have come in time, but it would have been new. *This* school life would have perished with the school which was the life. So we went out, carrying with us the hope of saving that life, and with

the resolve not to desert our posts as long as that hope remained.

And we went out with a great deliverance, a deliverance so perfect, that it now seems as a dream; a deliverance so perfect, that we cannot realise how close the doom was; only one week. In only one week, had not the deliverance been, all would have been over here; and silence, and emptiness, and stories of the past, all that would have remained of this school. Shall we, because the deliverance was so perfect that many never knew the danger, shall we think lightly of the deliverance? Because God spared us, first, the utter overthrow that came so close that we could count its hours; and next, spared us the wasting and slow decay of an imperfect escape, and half measures, shall we think lightly of the deliverance? On that last Sunday the Lesson for the day was the Lesson we have heard this day also; how Jacob awaked out of his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." And how he said, "If I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God." Yes, like Jacob, we hold our thanksgiving to-day for a great deliverance; and year by year, I trust, as long as this school lives, the memory of its life preserved shall be commemorated as it is on this day—that strange flight, the home we found, the strange return.—And every year shall deepen the feeling of a great deliverance, and make us say with Jacob, "The Lord is in this place, the Lord shall be our God." We are too close to it as yet; as time passes on, what has happened will be better seen.

And is not a society in its living life bound together by bonds of life and truth? Is it not the holder of the

promise, even as Jacob was? He went forth with the promise in faith; and we now feel that as long as he and his were true to that promise they could not perish. Who does not feel that when the Red sea opened to let Israel through it was part of a great past, and a certainty that a great future lay before them, and that the promise was theirs, slaves though they had been? The great deliverance proved it. And, brethren, may not we hold fast to higher hopes of living life, *because* our life has been delivered by so high a deliverance? When God takes a people, and separates them, and gives them special judgments, and chastises them with special chastisements, and brings them low, through oppression, or any plague, or trouble, in a special way, and then delivers them by a special deliverance, so that all the world see it, and are astonished, and speak of it; surely all this is as a prophecy of life to come, and a confirmation of life that is. "Whoso is wise will ponder these things."

Remember, a great deliverance is also a great judgment reversed; a great warning, as well as a great prophecy; a great fear, as well as a great thanksgiving. Wherever the destroying angel has set his foot, and yet holds his hand and spares, is evermore holy ground; even as the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, which David bought to build God's temple on. We too live evermore, if we are wise, under the shadow of our great overthrow, under the light of our great deliverance. We too shall consecrate, if we are wise, a great consecration of self to God, putting away from the midst of us all evil leaven, girding ourselves for truer life, and each quietly upholding the other to make the life that has been so wonderfully saved worth the saving, and passing

on the deep feeling of life redeemed so strangely, from year to year, as long as these walls last. The story of it will live whatever you do. It is yours to make it live, not as an old and curious story, but as a birth-time of new honour, and new truth, ever fresh in the living roll-call of the sons of promise. Nor let us forget to-day the kindly people with whom we found a home; by whose welcome, and whose goodness we brought that eventful year to a happy end. If it was an honour to you that they bore witness to the school, that nothing mean had been done by you, their own witness was their greatest honour, proof that they valued true life, proof that true life was at home with them, and possible. Every true son of Uppingham, as long as these walls last, will feel his heart glow at the history of that year; and a great company, fear and wonder, gratitude and praise, will throng his memory; a volume of life past, and life to come, of judgment, prophecy, and promise, will be bound up for the child of promise in the name of Borth.

## SERMON LXXIV.

### CHAPEL COMMEMORATION.

ST JOHN X. 10.

*"I am come that they might have life."*

WHEN death has come, as we look on the face of the dead, with what a strange power memories of the past sweep over us! When the nevermore has sounded, and nothing can be undone, how tenderly do we think of hours we would now live again for their sake if we could; how sadly we ponder the good that we might have done, and did not! With what a fierce reality the past presses on us, and the heart strains, and the brain strives to grasp the great emptiness, that yet is so full of meaning, to get at the mysterious presence of that past which is not, but yet is; to know the secret of the bleeding wound of memory, with its strange shooting, and thrills of life in death. I cannot speak it, but they who have felt it will know, they will know that blank, wistful, stretching out into eternity for that which is not—the past life—with that certain feeling that it is

somewhere ; they will know that voiceless testimony of man's innermost nature to the truth of our Lord's words, "that there is nothing hid that shall not be known," the great truth that the past is not dead, but will come again, though the body is dead that held it. They will know how the heart groans with a cry within, "Oh that I had thought of it before!" "Oh that I had prized it when it was mine!"

And a great ruin in like manner fills us with an unutterable longing that the walls would speak, and the broken arches tell their story, and the past live again before us, as it lived in the presence of those silent witnesses, when the hoary stone and broken arch were young, fresh from the workman's hands, and the hearts of their makers. We feel it all the more because we know their birth. We know what a rush of life was needed to uplift the great thought into buttress, and arch, and tower, and make it a living shape ; we know what a tide of life has swayed backwards and forwards within it since, with the same walls ever looking down the same, till they became a very ghostly presence themselves from this awful calm of witness. We know too, how year by year the corruption must have eaten into the life, and the canker of evil deeds have worked unseen, before the building was dead, and ruin took hold of it, and left it the sport of the thoughtless, the awe of the thoughtful. We can trace in spirit the first secret, strong, upward push of good, which either on the spot, or elsewhere, struggled, and grew, and made itself felt, and became a power, and clothed itself with the signs of power, noble buildings, and pride of place. And then we know how all along the great hopes, and pure thoughts, were bitterly blasted from the very first,

by inward meanness, by cold blind self-seeking, by all the history so familiar to us in the children of promise.

Every noble ruin is the old old story over again in smaller type, of Abraham's faith, and Moses' lead dragged down by the slave hearts, yet fulfilling their work, till Solomon's temple rose the glory of earth, how unworthy of heaven! the glory of earth, as being earth's noblest witness in stone; unworthy of heaven, as being already filled with a turbulent undercurrent of selfishness, pride, and apostasy. So through all generations the hearts of the true builders cannot but mourn as outward glory is false to the inward truth, and the truth that builds is undermined sorrowfully by the success of the building, till, life having passed into show, and show into falseness, and falseness into death, the life dies, and ruin comes, and the dead body only is left, and that left perishing.

A dead building, a ruin, is indeed a sight of awe, it is so human, so entirely of ourselves, man's life in a shape made by man for man's life to be in, steeped and saturated with all the good and evil of its generations; full of blessing, or full of leprosy, as the hearts that have made it have been, and not dying, till the spirit that gave it existence has died; only a ruin, when the Lord has come, and found His house of prayer turned into a den of thieves. A dead building is indeed a sight of awe. Cannot we now, meeting to-day in this our heart temple to commemorate its life, and the freshness of its life, spare ourselves and the after world the vain regrets over the lost life, and breathe some immortality, some of the spirit of Christ our King into this home of His? Think not that there is anything in these walls, strong as they are, to save them from the common doom. I have sat

and mused amidst mightier walls than these all dead and ruined. Think not that there is anything in these walls, strong as they are, to save them, anything but *your life*. *Your life*, I say, brethren, the boys, not the masters. Moses himself could not make the slave or the rebel other than they proved themselves. Joshua did not save them from defeat. David failed to establish the kingdom. Christ Himself only found a chosen few and left the Temple to the conqueror's flames when the work was done, and the life gone elsewhere. Our Temple cannot live by any other law than theirs did. The nation makes it live, or it dies. You are the nation here. In you lies the promise and the life, and—the death. We to-day are rejoicing in our Jerusalem; pray God, Christ be not turning away from it. Most assuredly He is taking count of what is being done in His household here. In you lies the promise, and the life, and the death. What we commemorate depends on you.

Nay more. It is not the chosen few, whose hearts beat high for truth, that make a building live. *Their* truth lives, *their* life will be a seed; but it may pass out like a seed and root itself elsewhere, and leave the old place lifeless. It is the good or evil of the mass, the lowest level of public opinion, the lowest level of public morals, that decides. The lowest, not the highest, turn the scale. And if the lowest *are* low, they turn life out of the place, and it dies. You then, the multitude, not the leaders, I speak to. In your hands lies this commemoration. Where is your enthusiasm, your honest truth, the fire in your hearts? Or must I ask it? What is the downward drag, what infection of corruption, what serpent trail of poisonous thoughts, what leprosy of sin, what secret cancer eats into the life? What are



the fancy names that make light of devil's work? These are the signs and forerunners of death. Or, more deadly still, the sleek, contented goodness that is satisfied; does *that* put its cold, dead hand on the generous heart of the school?

Thou shalt not kill, is God's commandment now as of old; and by how much worse is the killing the living soul of truth than the killing the body. Ye, who are guilty of killing true life whether in yourselves, or others, have no part in this school, and this commemoration. Ye go out from us, or have gone, but ye are not of us. As surely as the workman's hands first put stone on stone in these walls, do your hands though unseen, pull them down, yea, though the end be long in coming.

Yet few, or none, intend to destroy. Few *set* themselves against the life. Let us then to-day be earnest for life, and rejoice in it. Let us rejoice in our work for God. Let the whole air within this holy place breathe those triumphant Psalms with silent music of our hearts, even as it sounded to our voices. We have a work, and a life to live. The banner of Christ our King is here; shame on him who deserts his post; shame on all traitors to truth. This Chapel is witness; well may our hearts glow with living fire lighted here. Massive as honesty, lofty as faith, pure and beautiful as truth and prayer: truth, and prayer, and faith, and honesty, have lived here, have gone out from us, have done the deeds of life. Some of the immortality is in these walls; and our hearts may go on stretching with them into the hundreds of years to come, when far off centuries, we trust, shall still worship here. No ruin shall come whilst hearts are true to Christ. Let us

rejoice to-day in our life, in the life that has been reaped from us already into God's Kingdom; not forgetting him, who one short month ago was one of us, but was called away so suddenly; not forgetting those who on land or sea are doing faithful work to-day out of this school, perchance, at this moment on the battle field. As we wish them to uphold our honour, so let us uphold our own. Live then. Live with high hopes, with united ranks, with resolute self-denial; help one another to live; nothing is too high for a great school. Nothing is impossible to such a seed plot of life; only one word should be where Christ is, one word only in His camp, Victory.

## SERMON LXXV.

### THE DEADLY KISS.

EXODUS XX. 13.

*“Thou shalt not kill.”*

How many would answer with the young man in the Gospel, who was told to keep the commandments, “all these have I kept,” and would not think that they were breaking them every day, as is indeed often the fact. This very commandment “thou shalt not kill,” is broken by numbers, ay, numbers of you, every day. No one who thinks can help being struck with the fact how lightly men shed blood in early times; Joseph’s brethren, for instance, the patriarchs whom God chose as the founders of the true world, as the heads of the tribes of His people, are quite ready to murder their brother. Are we to judge them as if they lived now? That is the question. What is it that decides the judgment, and makes a crime different at different times? Or, in other words, if Joseph’s brethren were now alive what crime would they commit instead of murder? It is quite clear that eleven wealthy young men would not

dream of any violence even, much less of murder, because they disliked their brother. Not only the law, but all those habits of thought and education which are far stronger than law, would prevent such an idea from ever crossing their mind.

Here we have something to think of. A man with his hands tied cannot commit the crimes of a man whose hands are loose ; and he is not a better man for that, if he does the evil he can do. But a man's hands *are* tied if all the habits of his society hold him tight, and bind him round, so that he cannot move in some directions ; and a man is in fact within prison walls which shut him out from evil, if all his surroundings, companionships, occupations, and fashions, prevent certain forms of evil from coming near him. It is not he, but his prison, that is barred against crime. Hence it comes to pass, that, up to the last day of his life, Judas may be in men's eyes a saint, because of his surroundings ; whilst, day by day, he has been learning to betray the Highest ; and some wretched shedder of blood, like the robber on the Cross, may have done crimes, and yet may have had a heart open to good. Hence it comes to pass, that one man may never do a visible wrong, and yet be a murderer, while the poor outcast, who is better than his surroundings, though criminal in the sight of men, may enter into the kingdom of heaven.

As soon as we think of sin, and its nature, we are forced back out of appearances to inner realities. We have the dread question put before us, what sins education, society, fashion, and habit, allow us to commit ? If we commit them, they are *our crimes* ; whatever we may call them, or however blind we may be to the law we break. I beg you to take this truth, and think of it. It

*is* a truth, your hands are tied, you cannot commit the sins of rougher times. If you commit the sins you can commit, they are your crimes; and they may have a greater death in them, more of killing, than shedding of blood in rough days. As the Kiss of Judas was more deadly than the Roman sword.

It *is* the soft, mean trick, the kiss of falsehood, that kills most. "Thou shalt not kill." Where are the false lips that kiss in order to do evil? That is, the smooth pretences of being all right, the fair outside, which does one thing, and means another; which lives with a good company, and takes part with good work in appearance; which says the same sort of thing as they do, hanging back all the time with stealthy insinuations, and withdrawals, just doing as little as possible, and hinting, that this or that which has to be done is needless, or vexatious, or unpractical, or the thousand excuses which kiss to death. Remember, you *can* only do the wrong which is within your reach; and if you do the wrong within your reach, however little it is seen, however nameless it may be, it is *your crime*; no crime like the kiss of Judas. Our Blessed Lord tells us, "Fear not them which kill the body," that is a slight injury in His eyes, compared with the injury to the true life. And it follows that murder is a slight crime, compared with the crime of killing, or trying to kill, the true life. So not only are rough crimes the sins of rough times, but rough crimes are in essence far less deadly, less criminal, than the smooth crimes, and the deadly kiss, that hinders the life of truth. "Thou shalt not kill."

Now killing the bodily life is the end of a successful attack, and killing the spiritual life is the end of a successful attack. *An attack* is the beginning. All attack-

ing other peoples' work, or lives, is strictly forbidden by this command. How many a story is told, hearsay scandal, without a thought that the trump of Sinai and the judgment of God is pealing, "thou shalt not kill" against the lawbreaker, who lightly stabs his neighbour's life with gossip! Again, in any society, there are efforts being made for good. "Thou shalt not kill." How many a tongue, regardless of the trump of God, throws cold water on them, prophesies failure, insinuates interested motives, in different ways nips, and chills, and checks! Now it does not matter whether the efforts are wise or unwise, genuine or of mixed character, the man, who is in earnest for good, does not kill them by his opinions; he waits, and lets them die, if they have no true life; he waits, and lets them live, if they have; helping as far as he feels able to do it, not claiming omniscience, but ready to believe that there is much good which is not in his own way. A man who only helps what he likes, what merit has he? Do not even the publicans the same? Doing what we like is not a virtue. No man who does not school himself to forbear, no man who does not school himself to leave alone much, to say, "God speed," to much that is not entirely in his own line, is truly following Christ. No man who passes his time in speaking words that hinder, and chill, and poison and kill, has any part in life. "Thou shalt not kill."

Remember, you can only do the wrong which is within your reach; and if you do that wrong it is *your crime*. Beware how you make *yourself*, your likes and dislikes, a standard to judge by, and then set about hindering others, and criticising them. The saddest thing in English life is the loose, careless, but withal bitter way in which the newspapers and ordinary pub-

lications scatter judgments, condemn, praise, strangle, without a thought of the great commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

One thing more ; beware how in your own hearts you thoughtlessly kill the good impulse, the generous warmth, the unselfish liberality of youth and true life. "Thou shalt not kill," either in thyself, or in others, the feelings of living work. Be not deceived by names ; look deeper ; the wrong which you can commit is *your* crime. What is your world ? The wrong, which you can do against higher life in that world, is your crime ; the greatest crime this earth has ever known was a kiss. Not rough vice, or brute force, but refined, gentle, soft appearances are the chief crimes of a refined and educated society. The appearances of good which stop short, the lukewarm support which secretly hangs back, these are the crimes of peaceful days and ease. When the power of a mighty enthusiasm is seen, such as from time to time has come like the fire of God on a chosen band of men, when all for the moment breathe united strength.—Ah, turn from such a picture to our company here, and feel the breath of disobedience, idleness, selfishness, the chill cold frost of half-heartedness, the self-satisfied, dead touch that meets living truth ; can we doubt the killing power that is passing from heart to heart, and life to life, yea, even from lounging gestures, and looks that are mean and dull ? These things kill—but the command is, "Thou shalt not kill." Rouse yourselves to union, and living work for Christ's sake. Keep the commandment, "kill not." Remember, you can only do the wrong which is within your reach, and if you do that wrong, though you call it little, it is *your* crime.

## SERMON LXXVI.

### THE PLAN OF LIFE.

ST MATTHEW X. 38.

*“He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.”*

THESE words of our blessed Lord are generally understood to mean that we must be ready and willing to suffer for His sake. They do undoubtedly mean this, but this appears to be very far indeed from their real meaning. Our blessed Lord is clearly here speaking of a plan of life, not of occasional trials. His words are some of those high words, which lay down for ever and ever the divine purpose of life, as different from our natural inclination. They are some of those high words, which mark strongly all of life, from beginning to end, and its character, as God wills it to be, not merely a demand for heroic action now and then, in some few persons, at some few trying times. They belong to that class of teaching which defines the direction in which we are to travel, whether we do it well or ill. They are a rule of daily life for all; and no one who does not start in life on this plan, has made any real start at all.



They are God's great judgment on human nature and its powers; and whosoever runs counter to this judgment meets everywhere all things working against him, sooner or later to be felt to be against him.

Taken then as a rule of daily life, as a law of God's working in man, and the life of man, what do these words of taking up our cross, and following Christ mean? Let us put away all idea of suffering; suffering may, and will come, but it forms no part of the ordinary daily life of the ordinary man. For one day that a man suffers in the common sense of suffering, mankind generally live a hundred without suffering. Suffering then, pain, habitual pain, physical or mental, is not the ordinary lot of man's ordinary life, and does not therefore satisfy the great law of ordinary life, that a man must take up his cross, and follow Christ.

Again, we are *to take up* our cross. This is not a command to torment ourselves. It is a command to active work, willing work; not what somebody else puts on us, but what we of our own free will do; an every day plan of our own, of work and action, of taking up, and moving onwards. This quite excludes the idea of death and pain. Now this is just *the* point I want you to see, namely, that your own view and plan of life must be of this kind. Your hopes must hope for this, your hearts must be set on it; whether you do it well or ill, this must be what you intend doing, and are trying to do, if you are in anyway learning to live. Once more then, what is this all powerful rule, the law of God for common life, that every man, who is a man indeed, must take up his cross and follow Christ?

The first meaning is plain in the words themselves. The first meaning, that we are willingly to accept as our

idea of life, activity, and free, willing, exertion. This lies in the taking up. Taking up, can only be a willing active choice of activity as a thing to be aimed at. We are not to wait till something comes. We are not to sit quiet till we are pushed. We are not to work, as savages do, in order to get an idle time by work. God says once for all here, that in His world of life man is to choose activity—taking up—as his choice in life, and not to make idleness his hope, and only work in the hopes of future ease or gain. This at once marks heavenly life; this demand for living activity as a good in itself. Poor human nature puts very different hopes and fears before itself; hopes of ease, and pleasure in ease, and fears of toil. But it is not mere activity that is demanded, though that is much; it is a willing activity in carrying a cross. Now the being nailed to the cross does mean in God's teaching a painful death to the lower ease-loving nature of fleshly man; and the carrying the cross, must mean therefore the always having in our minds as our choice in life this hardy, brave intention of learning not to shrink from anything Christ may ask of us. For he who carries his cross after his Lord cannot help having in his mind always the possible end, that in Christ's good time he may be made worthy to do and suffer greatly.

This then is part of the daily law, the setting the heart in a hardy brave way to face a hardy brave life, with present labour; for the cross is a burden; and to have its hopes, hopes of activity, and daring, hopes of patience, hopes of endurance, hopes of true power to bear in silence, and to fear nothing. Christ does not want us to try extremes, to be nailed to the cross before we carry it. No. But we must choose willingly a

hardy, active, unshrinking life as our choice and our hope. We must intend, and hope to be brave and patient ; that is clear ; and if we carry our cross, though not nailed to it, we must use strength of mind and body, and make the use of strength, and the bearing hardship, and overcoming by patient life, our work in the present, our day dream for the future.

Again, the cross was disgraceful, a slave's punishment. He who carries his cross must despise public opinion, and the praise of the great, and the powers of the world round him, and be content to be thought mean-spirited, be content to bear the slave's reproach for not resisting, and the personal insults of not resisting in word or deed. And all this must be done in following Christ, Who went about doing good to those who hated Him. Here is the motive. We are not to bear hardships to make ourselves rich, or famous, but to make others better and happier men ; always moving on ; following Christ always ; not stopping still ; every day putting before ourselves as our plan of life manly, active work for good, regardless of public opinion. This then is the meaning of the command ; it is a law of God's life, a rule of common everyday habit. It means first a ready spirit, which welcomes a certain hardness, and freshness, and activity, as the law of life, and does not sneak away to its own pet world out of the daily trials. It means a contempt for popularity, and the opinion, and praise of the public. It means the taking Christ as our pattern, and making the doing good to others our dream of true life, our hope in the future, our effort in the present. All this is very different from a far off idea of glorious suffering which may not come, and has but little practical influence. And glorious suffering,

besides, may be glorious to those who hear of it, but is suffering to those who suffer it, and at the time is simple pain ; excepting so far as the true heart has been trained to follow Christ, and bear the shame which truth must bear.

Now here you are all met together to-day to make a start, a start in life, a start in learning to live. It would be a strange power which at this moment should lay bare the secret hopes of the many hearts, which at this moment are hoping and thinking about their own lives. It is a strange, sad vision, which older, and experienced eyes dimly see and know in this ceaseless current of life, that comes here on the errand of learning to live, and goes backward and forward with no true purpose in life, no beginning even of true life. It is a strange power, which each of you have, of reading your own heart, and its present hopes. What are they?—I do not ask whether you are doing them well or ill, I simply ask what you are trying to do ; what path of life is in your thoughts ; what is your hope and your dream ? Your answers, alas, would be many ; but only one is true ; only one answer belongs to living life ; all the rest an animal might give could it speak. There is only one true answer. That one answer is, I am trying to make doing good to others my aim in life ; and I am trying to welcome activity, patience, endurance, work, and hardship, with pleasure, and of free choice. I am trying not to care for the shame when I am in the right. There is no other life but this. Christ demands perfect inward power ; and this means perfect disregard for our own pet dreams of idleness, amusement, or honour. He who takes part with God's life, God's life shall take part with him.

## SERMON LXXVII.

### HALF-HEARTEDNESS.

2 KINGS X. 18, 19.

*“And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal: whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live.”*

I WISH at this great landmark of your life, this great period of the school life, when more than one-third of the whole school have just consecrated themselves in Christ's army, and more than two-thirds, and that the highest two, are banded together as a regiment in that army, to say a few words on half-heartedness. If there are any deliberate traitors or deserters in your ranks, which I do not believe, I would not waste time on them; but when all the spirit of youth, all the untried energy of the young ought to be glowing and bright, and full of generous fire, then the cold, seeming-wise mockery of

prudence, which is half-heartedness, which is meanness disguised, can be a deadly snare. The young are particularly exposed to this sham experience; anyone can sneer at what is above him. True prudence counts all the cost, weighs the risk, faces in spirit absolute overthrow, and then acts—with a seeming reckless courage. Half-heartedness intends to be safe, safe at any cost, and so puts on a show of wisdom, prophesies ruin to the earnest, and success to the selfish, and destroys truth by a cold indifference which is really fear, cowardly fear, in the garb of superior practical sense.

Now Baal worship was a very practical thing, when Jehu said, "any man who shall be wanting he shall not live." And I want you to consider that no cause is worth anything if it is not worth the risk of utter defeat, be it small or great, overthrow in little things, or in great things death. It is no argument against a good cause to speak of danger. To the half-hearted it is. I want you not to be half-hearted. In old days God sent the sword by His own command on the doers of wrong. When the Israelites were guilty of idolatry and indecency, Moses said to the Levites, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." In like manner, Jehu, though by no means a good man, yet did execute a judgment of God when he slew the worshippers of Baal. And St Paul says, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." This sword of destruction is no half-hearted matter, whether man executes judgment, or God destroys. That is a truth to be noted.

How very pitiless to our human thoughts are the great judgments that come on men or nations. Whenever men have fallen out of what may be called the family life of God, the sweet home feeling of willing goodness, of sonship, and love, and faith, and have dropped into the prison life of God's world, and lawless self-seeking, be they high or low, it is not long before some of these stony, inflexible executions, these merciless calamities, these swords of God, meet them; and whether men heed or don't heed, the end is the same; a calm, unbending vengeance slowly passes over them, and smites. This then is the first truth, the thoroughness of God's judgments, the sharpness of the sword.

Now let us turn to what men think and do, and how it works in practice. In practice very few clearly and forcibly see the right and do it. In other works, this sharp division between right and wrong in principle is not recognised. The motto is, there is a great deal to be said on both sides. No doubt. Once shut the eyes to the beginning, and there will be plenty to say in a bad cause. Any trained speaker can make the cause appear the better cause with ease, if he may choose his facts; sometimes every argument is on the side of evil, and nothing but the simple statement, "it is wrong," on the side of good. Here it is that half-heartedness comes in. In Jehu's time the kingdom of Israel was very powerful, and the court, and nobility, and the mass of the people, had been drawn by the splendour and power of the nations near them, and by intermarriages with them, into Baal worship. There was a great deal to be said on both sides. That is; as soon as an Israelite forgot that he owed the promised land to God, his wealth, his home, his honourable life, the attractiveness of

heathen luxury and unrestrained habits became very great ; and it was neighbourly, and good fellowship, not to be so strict ; it might win them over too if they relaxed a little and were less bigoted. Thus traitors argue, and the traitor's slide begins. And the court, if *they* forgot, we can easily imagine how the wealth and splendour of Sidon and Tyre struck a bad man like Ahab, and made him eager to marry the Sidonian princess, and ally himself with the richest city in the world. And Syria with its military power, the giant fortresses, and all the pomp of war, would furnish strong evidence against the Lord of Hosts, and tend to shake the faith in the unseen power which led them out of Egypt long ago. It is not the first time, nor the last, in earth's history, that there has been belief in ships, and artillery, and disbelief in the unseen, and the spirit, and the victory of truth. And the faith once shaken, then how narrow, and straight-laced, and sectarian, would all the daily commands of the Jewish religion seem ! How irksome, and burdensome, the scruples which cut them off from other nations and made them do something singular every hour, and interrupted them in everything they did ! If they were not proud of being singular, how galling it must have been ! So court, and nobility, and people, preferred Sidon to Jerusalem, and Baal worship was fashionable. Yet there must have been many who in their hearts would have liked to have served God, and were sorry that the worship of God was not fashionable, and that their party did not support it.

Let us take such a man at the time when Jehu overthrew Jehoram, and usurped the throne. How eagerly he and others would be on the watch for the religious policy of the new king. What hopes, and



what fears, there would be throughout Israel, of this great general, and determined man, who had just slain two kings, setting up the national worship again! And no doubt many a man bestirred himself; for it was well known that a prophet of the Lord had anointed Jehu, and been the cause of his conspiracy and success; surely then he would once more give honour to the old worship. But yet Baal was powerful in Israel. Was it politic in a man who owed his throne to his popularity to offend so many? So there would be much balancing, and the half-hearted man would be saying, "I don't quite agree with this," and, "there's a great deal to be said for that;" all the time getting back bit by bit to the old paths; glad, though still afraid; secretly glad, to have the chance of finding what he believed true going to be fashionable and prosperous also. When, all at once, rang through Israel the sharp, soldier command beginning, "Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much." And the half-hearted man, who wished to serve God, had to put on a festive face and start from home to take part in the great festival of Baal, and to travel with the unprincipled, and the sensual, who triumphed that the reign of lust and intemperance was not over yet.

So they came together, and crowded the house of Baal in seeming joy; and in the midst of their joy a cry of death rose. The great doors opened, and the pitiless sword slowly made bloody way through the revellers; and curses, and groans, and ghastly faces, and hoarse cries, and sobs of death, and the avenger coming, was the end of that feast. Think then how the poor half-hearted wretch, who would never have been there but for his cowardice, must have felt, as that grim

slaughter began ; and he—he had just the few minutes to live that remained before many yet to die made room for death to reach him. What a type this is of the half-hearted ; the doom, which often in this world, always at the last, must come, of perishing in a cause which he does not believe in.

Yea, but is not the life worse, which goes on day after day meanly watching for the winning side ; in a perpetual insecurity of base guesses at success ? A cause is worth nothing which is not worth defeat. And—on the other hand—once get over the first wrong start, and bad indeed must the case be which cannot muster a strong array of splendid arguments for self-deceit. But think of the feast of Baal, when tempted to be half-hearted. Get the honest courage, which is not ashamed to face everything rather than act doubtfully and untruly. Put away every desire, but the one desire to learn, by working and by prayer, to do true work for God. If we are doing God's work, all of our lives is a going up to the Temple of the Lord ; if any other work, it is a journeying to Jehu's feast in the temple of Baal.

Brethren, if *they* were God's people, much more are *you* ; you are being tested always. The cry of a King is among you. Your King adjures you to take His side, and play your part like men. Would it not make your hearts glow with joy and pride to hear some day, that wherever brave men strove for truth in stedfast ranks around their king, in the earnest battle of life, by sea, by land, our feet, and those of our companions, had been foremost. And when the sea gives up its dead, and the grave opens its doors, and the great festival of God, to which we all are journeying, is proclaimed, why should you not by God's grace hear this ? When the

last trumpet sounds with no uncertain sound, why should it not find a true echo of truest ring in you, if scorning present pleasure, half-heartedness, and Baal's message, you will at once see here, yes, here even, in this place, amongst us, the standard of Christ your King, set up, and hear in your hearts His trumpet sounding evermore, evermore? Shall we not show the world, shall we not make even cowards see, what a home of truth, of honour, of upright manly power, a school in which Christ rules can be?

## SERMON LXXVIII.

FACTS ARE WHAT THE SEERS OF  
FACTS ARE.

EXODUS XIV. 19, 20.

*“And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these.”*

WE have here put as in a great picture the difference between living with God as your friend, and with God as your enemy, which is always in a greater or less degree being felt by every living being. The Psalmist speaks of God, “as lifting up the light of His countenance on him;” and again, “as hiding it from him,” and, “the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” So this pillar of the cloud was a light and protection to Israel, a terror to the Egyptians. You will say to yourselves, perhaps, of course we know that when God blesses a

man he is blessed, and when *not* he is not blessed. Yes, brethren, but that is not the message of this history. How did it all come to pass? Let me remind you that the Israelites and the Egyptians looked on the same pillar of the cloud. There were not *two* presences but one only, the same pillar of the cloud was seen by both. The *fact* if I may say so, was one fact, the same to both. Yet the Israelite would have truly said as his fact, that he saw a light and a joy; the Egyptian would truly have said as his fact, that he saw a terror, a darkness, and a trouble. And in modern times they would have written books about it, and each would have proved to the satisfaction of all who wished to have it proved, that the facts of the world were of this opposite character. Each would have related what he saw, and what he felt on seeing, and—each would have been correct so far.

The facts of the world *are* of this opposite character—that is the first point I wish you to see to-day. The moment a Living God deals with man's spirit through what man sees, and hears, and feels, and observes, that moment it is certain that the Living Wisdom and Goodness will deal out impressions of love, or wrath, according to the needs of the receiver; or, in other words, the Pillar of the Cloud, the mysterious facts of life with God in the midst of them, will be to us, just as they were to Israel and Egypt, bringers of good, or bringers of evil, according as we are good, or evil.

And again, the man himself only sees what he is able to see. I mean, to take a comparison; a thief sees in the magistrate, a hateful giver of punishment, and *sees* nothing else, and "every evil doer hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, because his deeds are evil."

But the honest man sees in the magistrate his protector, and a blessing to society. And both are right. The higher we go the more true this is. Every higher level in noble life requires a higher nature and a higher love to see it, until mounting upwards through all circles of seeing and loving good, the Son of God Himself, the Redeemer, the King, is seen, and loved. But before we can see good even in our fellow men we must have an inward love of good to make us able to see. We ourselves move in a world which we make light or make darkness, according as we pass into light, ever pressing forwards to light, or, turn our backs to light, and cast the shadow of ourselves on all we see, and move for ever in the moving darkness which our own selfishness makes. The very light itself becomes our darkness, if we turn away from it; and we see darkness instead of light. So the Pillar of the Cloud, the mysterious facts of life with God in the midst of them, moves for ever in the world of men; and the facts of God's world *are* different to the good and the evil, because the eye of the seer is different; and cannot see what the heart has unfitted it for seeing. The higher reality is not seen at all by the unprepared eye of evil; and what is seen is the troubling aspect, the hard severity that abhors and punishes wrong, which is hated and abhorred by the doer of wrong.

These two main truths stand out clear and strong. We are sure that in a world ruled by the Living God, the living power and grace of God will make man feel what he is best fitted to feel in his passage through life; we are sure also, that the eye must be trained to see; and if we cannot read the thoughts of our fellow men without being trained and taught, how much less shall

we be able to read the thoughts of God! If a book is unpleasant to us, till our hearts and heads have mastered it enough to taste its delights; if a companion is not pleasant to us, till we know him; and a friend cannot be a friend if he is so far above us, and so much more noble-hearted, that we are afraid of him and see nothing but severity, until our own hearts give up their secret love of evil; how much rather will our eyes be unable to see God without preparation! Hence it is that God in His mercy always comes to our hearts in the Pillar of the Cloud, surrounded with cloud and mystery, lest the unprepared eye should see Him, and it should be death. For it *is* death to see holiness unprepared, and—to hate it. In mercy God hides Himself. “Surely Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, Thou God of Israel, the Saviour,” says the prophet. This is the reason of the uncertainty and dimness of sight, which men feel in the first beginnings of religion. Uncertainty and cloud round about God, but—remember, a very certain, plain, unmistakeable, path on earth for our feet, no doubt whatever as to whether we are in the camp of Israel, or Egypt; no doubt whatever as to whether we seek truth, and are trying to be true, or whether we prefer power, and show, and are set against truth.

Once more then I put before you the strange, emphatic warning, that to *you*, your facts and your world are what you make them. Your hearts determine what you see and feel, whether the Pillar of the Cloud, the power of God here, the facts of your world, are to you a joy, or a trouble. We have to learn, to be trained, to be taught, to see God. You cannot love God without learning to see Him aright. And how may we know it? We may know it just as they did. The poorest Israelite,

the most ignorant, felt the comfort of God's presence that night, though their need was sore, and the danger great; but the comfort was there of being on the right path, of obeying true commands, of escaping from base life, of escaping into liberty. And all the warriors of Egypt, despite their power, their' pride, and seeming safety, felt what it was to have the troubled heart of a wrong cause, the troubled heart of their own self-will, the troubled heart of disobedient, lawless refusal of right; and the wrath of God upon them. So it is with you. You do not understand your own lives and their full meaning. The Cloudy Pillar does not give up its secrets yet; it is a cloud, when you try to penetrate the mysteries of life; but plain, and clear, before you lies your path, and the light is on it, though you may not understand the cloud from whence it comes; the light is on it. And I ask you all, whether you do not make your own facts, whether you do not feel happy and peaceful so long as you set your hearts to do what you ought, and what you *know* you ought to do, and troubled and unhappy, when you go your own way against this knowledge? *That* is the Pillar of the Cloud to you—light and joy in well doing, darkness and trouble in wrong doing. Now you are starting on your journey of this Term. The Pillar of the Cloud goes with you. O may you find it a blessing!



## SERMON LXXIX.

BORTH.

GOD DOES NOT MAKE TWO THINGS  
WHERE ONE IS ENOUGH.

EXODUS, XIV. 19, 20.

*“And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these.”*

NO wise man makes two things when one is enough. No wise man carries a child till he is grown up, and lost the use of his limbs by being carried. The child is carried whilst it is being taught to walk, and no longer. Let us then state first that no wise man makes two things when one is enough; and secondly that to do so in the case of living beings destroys the proper use of the *one*; and so far as men disuse their natural powers, by getting something else to do the work of their own powers, they become grown-up babies. It is a simple

thing to state that no wise man makes, or uses, two things, when one is enough; it is a mere truism; but like all truisms it is an axiom which has sweeping consequences. If a wise man does not make, or use, two things, when one is enough, how much more will not God do so! We are sure that in a world made and ruled by the Living God the living power and grace of God will make man feel what he is best fitted to feel in his passage through life. In a world, I say, *made* by the Living God. But God does not *make* two things where one is enough; and why should not the world *made* by God, and man put by God into the world He has made, be enough, the one for the other, in all the training of life? This vast and glorious created world with all its marvellous secrets, and mysteries of power, and goodness, has been made by God as His home to train man in. Beware how you ask for a second thing, before you come to the end of this one. God does not make, or use, two things, when one is enough. God does not intend men to be grown-up babies, to be supplied with new luxuries to enfeeble the powers they have already, and destroy strength instead of training it.

This whole world is one great exercise ground for the practice of strength; a book in which God's wisdom is found; a place where fire and hail, snow and vapour, wind and storm, fulfil His word; a language in which the mind of God is made manifest; a miraculous living network, so contrived, that nothing is done by man without setting in motion God's ministering activities; nothing happens to man, which is not part of the created language, the secret joy of life, or the spiritual lash, that brings the soul to a sense of unseen judgment, and a judge.

In the childhood of the world men had to be taught as children, by sight. They did not understand how to read the will of God round about them. But it would be as absurd for us now, when the fulness of time has come, to ask for the sights of early days, as for a grown man to ask for a spelling-book. God has revealed to us His Kingdom in Christ, Christ has taught us to read God's world, and all that happens in it, and put His Redemption into it, and explained it all; and there is nothing now in this human orbit of life that may not be to us divine; God dwelling in us and we in Him, and we therefore at home in His world. Even as there is nothing which does not bring a message of judgment to the evil, *because* it is His world. And His world is against them that do evil.

God does not make two things where one is enough; and the knowledge of this makes this created world at once His ministration everywhere. Sun and moon, and air, and earth, sea, and forest, and field, and plant, and the actions of men, all we see, and all we hear, from beginning to end, being His power for shaping man, His language which He has now taught us to read; we want no more spelling-books as in the days of the early world. He looks out of the Cloud and the Pillar of guiding power in life, as really and as truly, as ever He did on Israel, or on Egypt of old, turning a face of grace, or of anger, out of the world about us, and what we do, that lightens, or troubles, our hearts within. As real, and as true, an inspiration, I say, as ever came in days of old. Not the same, the spelling-book of the world will not come back. Once is enough. God will not do two things where one is enough. The perfect kingdom has come with all its grace, and all its finished order,

man will not see sign-posts set up, or the big print, as it were, of the child's book, the early miracles, any more. He has been taught to read the life of God in the world; and God will not do two things when one is enough.

The early wonders were wonders of teaching, inspiration to go out with power of authority into the whole world, and bring to mankind a message of interpreting power; now we have come to the wonders of life itself, and have been taught how to read life, He in us, and we in Him. The wonders of teaching will not come back to those who have been taught. God does not do two things when one is enough. We move in a spiritual world taught how to read; and if we read, we know. The light of the Pillar of the Cloud is on every heart here, which in the great life journey is walking by God's commands. The darkness, and the trouble, is on every heart here, which draws back from true work, or goes against it.

Now it is the inspired life that *is* inspired, Christ dwelling in us, and we in Him, not the miraculous wind, or the sea cloven asunder. We are to look neither to wind, nor fire, nor earthquake, nor sea, to break their customs to tell us of God; but every created thing by its ordained, created power, in its common working, *by* its customary use, touches man's life, and is touched by it, and gives the hidden inspiration of its nature to man; all are made by God the great book full of triumph, full of wrath, full of music, full of despair, according as each spiritual reader turns the pages and reads.

You all are beginning. Experience proves even to you that there is a light in doing truth, a light in the heart, and that there is a darkness, and a trouble, in doing evil, a trouble in the heart. Sure I am, no man

has ever set himself stedfastly to work truth who has not found the Spirit of God inspiring his path, casting light on his way, checking here, guiding there, giving sorrow, giving failure, giving pain, but always, and in all things, present to enlighten, comfort and make strong. This is no claim of being in the right at any moment, in any special action, a bit more than the Israelites could claim amidst all their sins and shortcomings to be infallibly right. *But it is the claim of the Israelites*, that the Pillar of the Cloud, whatever our sins or shortcomings may be, is in the camp; that the light is on the path, and the inspiration poured out on the life. I fearlessly assert that every one of you now before me, if you set your hearts to do God's will, will find, as you move on, the whole of life interpreted; will see the inspiration of God in the world; and by degrees understand how the inspired life, whatever mistakes you may make, *is* inspired and within you, a guiding power, never more present than when you are being taught by suffering which your own shortcomings have brought.

This does not make you infallible, far from it; but it does put a power into life, and, it may be, make it shine with a truthfulness and light by which the lives of many find gracious help, even as you are helped by the inspired lives of men who live God's life. *The* proof of proofs that I myself have found of the life, and the inspiration, is just the very fact that makes our judgment less hard, less positive. I mean, the being able to see afterwards how what seemed useless suffering, torture inflicted by senseless or malicious hands, wasted toil, hidden wounds, were all the purifying, or strengthening powers by which the heart was made able to do its work. I know no such light, no such pole-star, as the light of God shot back over

years of pain and showing them all to have been the great guiding hand, bringing health, ploughing the ground, sowing the seed, making a harvest possible. Man's failures must prove God's grace. We must look now for God's inspiration in life; the time of the authoritative inspired teaching is past. We have been taught to read, we have the inspired help, and instead of the scattered miracles of creation interrupted, in order to make the childhood of the world attend, we have now the everlasting wonder of all creation doing God's work perfectly; the marvel, that in the Kingdom of the King no more change is needed; but that the great prophecy is come to pass; His Spirit has been poured out on all flesh, and the whole world is full of hidden power; whilst we ever walk with the Almighty presence round about us, not one Pillar of a Cloud, but every portion of creation capable at any moment of reflecting His message. God does not do two things, when one is enough. He has created our world, He has furnished it with all things needful, He has put His Life in it, He has taught us to read Life. The childhood of the world comes back no more. Be ye therefore men, and know God by the inspired life. Be men in Christ, and in very deed and truth temples of the Holy Ghost.

END OF VOL. I.











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