



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

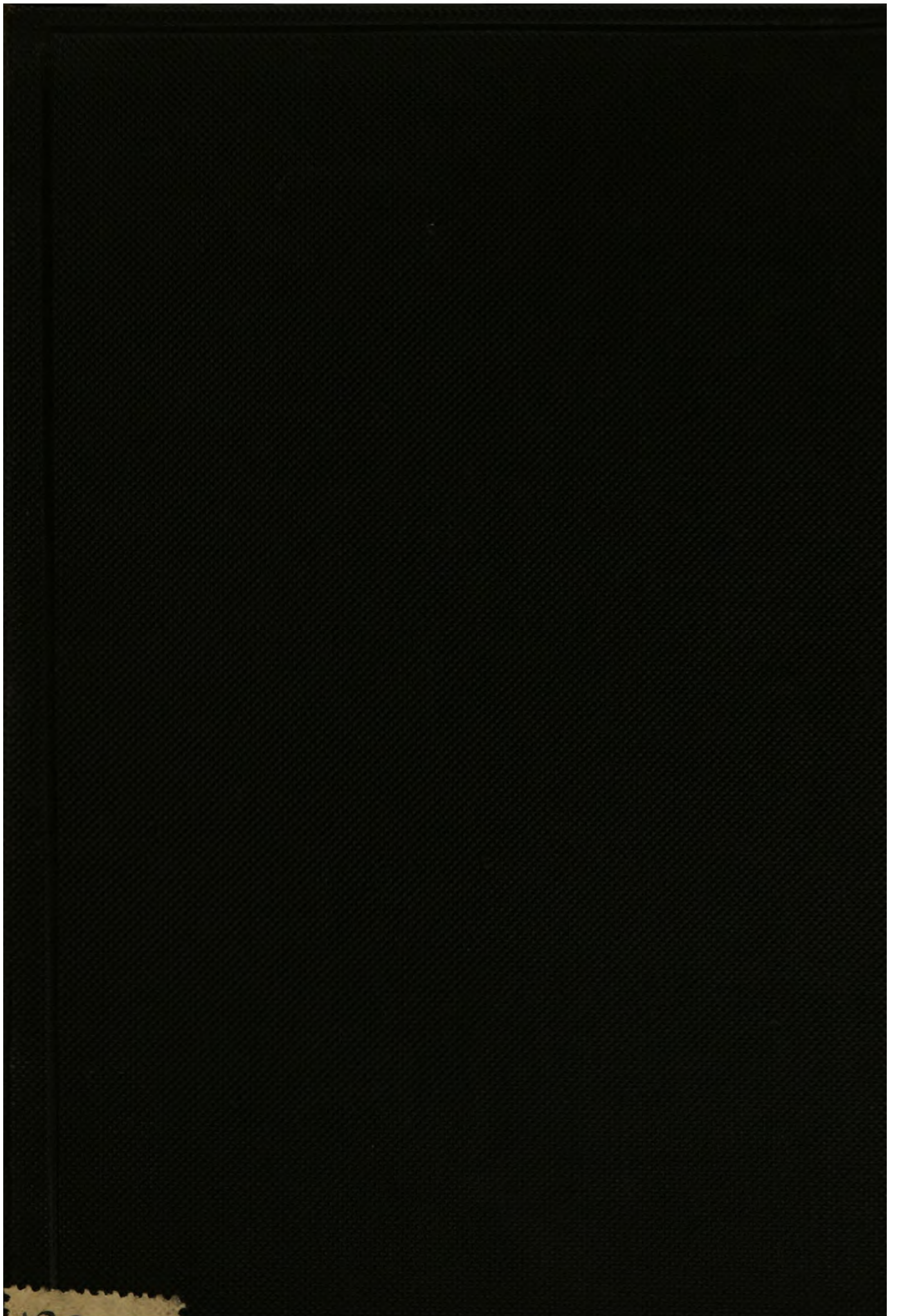
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.







SERMONS

AT

A NEW INSTITUTION

BY

JAMES MAYO, B.D.

LONDON :
THE GENERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY,
280, STRAND.
1886

100 . e . 294



Cambridge :

PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A. AND SONS,
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

TO
THE REVEREND WILLIAM AYERST,

ERRATUM

Page 80, line 6 from bottom,
for it read itself

THE AUTHOR.



TO
THE REVEREND WILLIAM AYERST,
PRINCIPAL OF
AYERST HALL, CAMBRIDGE,
AND LATELY VICAR OF
HUNGARTON, LEICESTERSHIRE, ETC.
THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY HIS GRATEFUL AND SINCERE FRIEND
AND FORMER CHAPLAIN
THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATORY LETTER	ix

SERMON I.

ACADEMICAL AIMS AND WORK.

“That in everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge.”—1 CORINTHIANS I. 5 . . .	1
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---

SERMON II.

THE CLAIMS OF INTELLECTUAL OVER BODILY TRAINING.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”—JOHN I. 1	9
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---

SERMON III.

CHAPEL SERVICE.

“Let the freewill offerings of my mouth please thee, O Lord: and teach me thy judgements.”—PSALM CXIX. 108 . . .	20
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

SERMON IV.

“And when He is come He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgement.”—JOHN XVI. 8 . . .	29
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

	PAGE
SERMON V.	
“Believed on in the world.”—1 TIMOTHY III. 16	37
SERMON VI.	
EPISTLE FOR THE 25TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.	
“Therefore behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.”—JEREMIAH XXIII. 7, 8	44
SERMON VII.	
ADVENT SUNDAY.	
“Owe no man anything, but to love one another.”—ROMANS XIII. 8	50
SERMON VIII.	
SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT. MORNING LESSON.	
“Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope.”—ISAIAH V. 18	59
SERMON IX.	
GENUINE PIETY.	
“I am thine; O save me: for I have sought thy commandments.”—PSALM CXIX. 94	67

SERMON X.

GOSPEL FOR SEPTUAGESIMA.

“So the last shall be first, and the first last.”—MATTHEW
xx. 16 79

SERMON XI.

EPISTLE FOR SEXAGESIMA.

“If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which
concern mine infirmity.”—2 CORINTHIANS XI. 30 94

SERMON XII.

MORNING LESSON FOR QUINQUAGESIMA.

“And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at
the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of
man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the
life of man.”—GENESIS IX. 5 107

SERMON XIII.

AGAINST PROFANE LANGUAGE.

“He that committeth sin is of the devil.”—1 JOHN III. 8. 118

DEDICATORY LETTER.

MY DEAR MR AYERST,

I am glad you have permitted me to dedicate this little volume of sermons, preached in your Chapel, to you. From the first I meditated publishing them. Among a variety of motives I trust that this was not the worst, that if any good thoughts had been produced by my words among your scholars they might be able to follow up those thoughts effectually by reading those very words and pondering over them deliberately. Also I wished you to be able to tell how I, very nearly if not quite the oldest of your staff of teachers, had discharged the trust you committed to me in your unavoidable absence at your Parish; now, I believe, a thing of the past.

Some of the Sermons are such veritable trifles that they perhaps do not deserve to be called *Sermons*, much less to be published. But I have mixed them with the rest, firstly that you may see *all* I said; secondly to show you that I took you at your word sometimes, you having said you wanted *just a few*

words, not to exceed four minutes ; thirdly to prove my agreement with "the shortened form" as regards preaching, if not as regards the Liturgy (a point on which you found me so untractable), and my decided opinion that it is better to be brief when scarcely anything fresh strikes you and to defy the conventional requirement of an exactly twenty minutes' Sermon than conform to that stereotyped rule by the process which the Bishop of Manchester so pointedly described as "vamping up an old Sermon a dozen times." Two Sermons at your Chapel at Easter 1885 and two at Hungarton in November 1884 would belong to a different collection, in the unlikely event of this collection's being so well received as to encourage me to publish another ; and therefore they do not appear here.

To say that I wish the wonderfully rapid increase of men at your Hostel to be still kept up would be a very feeble platitude. It might be more to the point to say that I could wish your Hostel filled not with men in general but the particular sort of man that I have very faultily sketched out, as I think, in my few discourses. Such a private New Institution as yours could not then possibly fail to please men of all opinions in the University. But the day of *Recognition* draws near when you will pass out of the range of criticism as a *private* New Institution and be the twentieth on the list of the Colleges and Public Halls of Cambridge. Though your house

has long cried 'When will, what every spectator declares must be a College, *be* Queen Anne College in reality?' yet since your own indefatigable and self-sacrificing energy (for who with any sense can suppose any private gain or advantage to be consistent with the foundation of a Hall like yours?) has alone given vitality to the Institution, I hope you will stick to "Ayerst Hall" as your imperishable title.

With many thanks for giving me a little employment and encouragement when I came here an obscure and unbefriended stranger,

I remain,

My dear Sir,

Ever your faithful and obliged friend,

JAMES MAYO.

CAMBRIDGE,

June 25, 1886.

SERMON I.

FOR

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY,

PREACHED OCTOBER 12, 1884.

1 CORINTHIANS I. 5.

“That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge.”

FROM their brevity, and the absence of parable, miracle, striking incident, or particular Christian duty selected as the object of specially emphatic exhortation, to-day's Epistle and Gospel are hard to deal with in a discourse. Abstract Christian doctrine there is indeed in them, and matter for pious meditation as there is throughout the Scriptures. But abstract general doctrines not shewn by particular examples are not so well suited to bring before the congregation as to dwell upon in devotional retirement, when silence and solitude aid reflection, and the pleadings of conscience can be heard calling on us to make known our secret feelings to our Father in heaven, and pray Him to teach us His holy ways and sanctify our thoughts so that we may

be fit for the communication to our spirit of the Divine Spirit. And even with all helps to fix our attention on the truths and principles of our holy religion when preached, our natural disinclination to receive the things of the Spirit, and the feebleness, littleness, and proneness to wandering and distraction of human intellects makes the work very difficult. When we are taught by parables, or when a particular point of duty is enforced, some one especial virtue recommended, we may bear away a profitable lesson—be improved in some respect: but let us remember that this is but a small portion of the truth. The elementary teaching of parables must be followed up by spiritual application of them to the state of our own souls: and we must not be content to come behind in any gift. Let us pray that in spiritual wisdom and understanding we may advance to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that He may occupy all our souls: not boast emptily of a miserable smattering of Christian information because we have paid a brief attention to some one, perhaps minor, point of Christian life and faith.

The Sundays after Trinity, from the fourth onwards, mainly follow the order of St Paul's Epistles according to the Authorized Version. The reason for the variation from the order in the Epistle for to-day is given in Wheatley on the Prayer-book. The Ordination Sunday often fell on the eighteenth after

Trinity, and there was at first no other than the Ordination Service appointed for the morning. And when later on there was chosen an Epistle and Gospel for the Sunday passages were selected suitable to an entrance on the work of the Christian ministry, speaking of a minister's mental qualifications; knowledge, especially of the Scriptures, and wisdom, and ready speech wherewith to wield that knowledge.

May I not take it as a favourable sign—at least as a favourable opportunity of recommending myself to your kindly acquaintance and attention, now a stranger, but to become, I hope, for a longer or shorter time connected with you in a warm Christian friendship—that Scriptures which speak of all knowledge and all utterance, a part, we may say, of an Ordination Service, should be read to you, designed as you mostly are for the Ministry, on what is to many the first Sunday of the time of their preparation for Holy Orders and to all the first resident Sunday of a new Academical year?

The design of this University is to impart a scholarly, liberal knowledge of the past history of mankind, and of the laws which ordinarily affect things here below and the celestial phenomena; their mutual proportions as to time, space, and force: to impart a philosophical knowledge of the causes which have led to particular effects in men's mutual transactions, and teach inferences as to the probable

occurrence again of such causes and effects ; also to instruct in pure mathematical sciences. Put it in other words ; to shew what men have done, and why—and secondly, what are the unvarying conditions of measurement.

Our education here ought to be theoretical, *not* practical.

There is a course of religious ministrations accompanying it, that students may be reminded that the object of their acquiring knowledge rightly is to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind. Such knowledge as I have described being gained, a University training is meant to add the facility of readily, gracefully, eloquently, with a fair amount of rhetoric, expressing the sentiments which that knowledge has instilled in one : the “utterance” which the Apostle joins to knowledge.

“Knowledge” seems to me to be used frequently in the Epistles in the limited sense of power to interpret the revealed word of God ; to see the meaning of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament ; to understand that the “testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” St Paul seems to me to give the title of *γνώσις* to this faculty, in contrast with that insight into Divine mysteries which a school of Gnostic philosophers, even then beginning to be prominent, pretended to possess. St Paul did not mean by “knowledge” acquaintance with all subjects which the human mind can

grasp; not all religious knowledge; but the one department of the interpretation of Scripture. And so I consider Academical knowledge does not mean a being taught what is the right course to adopt in practical life, in all the changing scenes of our earthly career: but such a lore in the doings of the past, whether narrated in sacred or profane history, as will help a thoughtful man logically to anticipate, and to set forth calmly to those who are disposed to listen to him, the probabilities of proportionate consequences in the coming age. In this kind of knowledge there still is power superior to mere brute strength; and he who possesses it will have an advantage over those who have only mere fragmentary smatterings of information. Though a *little* education is almost universal, yet advanced and thoroughly cultivated learning is not a cheap drug in the market, but is a valuable and powerful acquisition. St Paul considers it good; for he congratulates the Corinthians on having it.

I hold then the "knowledge" and "utterance" of the Epistle for to-day, and the liberal theoretical culture, which I think it is the province of this University to give, to mean the same thing. And by comparing the Gospel with the Epistle we seem to find one remarkable point about it, viz. this: that to operate with it to good purpose it must be accompanied with a sincere and all-comprehensive love towards God and our fellow creatures. Love

must be the instrument by which to apply knowledge. Our brethren will not let us have a beneficial influence over them with our knowledge and judicious power of expressing ourselves, if we do not find a way to their hearts by unmistakable tokens of goodwill and affection towards them ; an absence of self-seeking and vain glory ; and a genuine desire to promote their happiness.

“Shew your knowledge of the law of God,” said the Scribes to our Lord. “I tell you,” said He, “that no man’s obedience to the commands of God is counted acceptable to Him unless it proceeds from love of God ; not from a mere selfish wish to be on the safe side ; not from a design to stand well with the world by a hypocritical shew of holiness. Do good also to man out of the same pure motive of love : or else obedience to the second table of the Law will be of no avail.”

But love must be exercised together with a regard for the truth ; “holding the truth in love.” Important differences and conscientious convictions must not be sunk in religious controversies just to please our opponents and on any terms have peace with them. Even while enforcing the duty of love our Lord severely exposed the ignorance and error of the Pharisees. For they would have limited salvation to the Jews. They would have had a Messiah in such sense a son of David as to mean an inheritor of David’s temporal kingdom ; and a

possessor of might with which to overcome their temporal enemies and give them a carnal supremacy over all nations. But Christ in declaring Himself David's *Lord* implied that He was come to exercise a kingdom not of this world over Jew and Gentile alike; to use the power of His love, mercy, and compassion to bring all hearts to repentance, so that all men should return to the heavenly Father from Whom they had estranged themselves.

As we advance in years we are thrown into contact with various classes, ranks, and interests strange to us, repugnant to our feelings, disagreeable to deal with; and such as perhaps reasonably to excite in us great prejudice against them. But love must break down such estrangement and prejudice, and prepare the way for us to exercise the wisdom and the power of speech which superior education has given us so as to subserve the happiness and eternal welfare of our brethren, and find opportunities for them to "praise the Lord with us, and magnify His name together." There will be many occasions on which we must honestly and manfully assert our opposition to various practices which we know to be wrong. But on the whole there will be more opportunities of finding and taking advantage of and improving good points in the character of different classes brought into connection with us. Instances of this would take time to state: but a trite and true remark is that differences of opinion as to the out-

ward ceremonies of Divine worship need not prevent our joining with dissenters in many good works which call into action genuine kindness and warm-hearted, we trust truly Christian charity.

But at present you, my brethren, live almost wholly with companions of your own rank and age: and since your interests are not conflicting your friendships may be numerous, and a kindly acquaintance, at least a courteous recognition, universal. Yet still there is doubtless ample scope for toleration, charity, forbearance, and generosity. Let the thought that by bringing these softening influences to bear you can best profit others and yourselves with the knowledge and utterance with which University life, I trust, enriches you be the result of our brief consideration of to-day's Communion Service. Add to it this reflection, that no learning, no facility in speech, nor apt promptitude in action can bring inward satisfaction and peace unless it be a gift accompanied by, sanctified by, "the testimony of Jesus Christ confirmed in you;" that is by a stedfast Christian faith: and unless it be felt as a part of those gifts of the Holy Spirit obtained for us by Christ our Lord, and with more and more of which we desire to be blessed, till we come behind in *no* spiritual grace; "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

SERMON II.

PREACHED OCTOBER 19, 1884.

JOHN I. 1.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

WE know this to be spoken of Christ; for the same person who is mentioned here is afterwards said, though becoming flesh, to have shewn forth the glory of the only-begotten Son of God. But why Christ should take the new title of “the Word” it is not so easy to see. Logos is never personified in the rest of the New Testament. It means what ‘word’ does with us; the thing spoken; or the commandment; or the influence which the teaching of the Gospel has. See Colossians iii. 16. In 1 John i. 1 there is some approach to a personifying of Logos; but I think we may take “the Word of life” there to mean “Him who taught us how to seek for life,” or “the doctrine of Him who has life in Himself and gives life to him to whom He spiritually imparts

Himself." The epithets applied to Jesus in the rest of the New Testament beside "the Christ" or Anointed are "the Lord," betokening His authority; "the Lamb," betokening His sacrifice of Himself for sinners; "the Son of man;" and "the king of the Jews," which assured the doubting that Jesus, though God, had become very man and, though humble in appearance, had been approved by God as a prince and saviour of His people.

Some thirty years pass; and St John's Gospel is written to close the book of Holy Scripture: for it is generally agreed that St John wrote his Gospel in his last days, and he long survived the other New Testament writers. He will not call Jesus "the Son of David:" he will not even call Him "the Son of God." Why? Because heresy had taken a new and worse form.

"A worker of such stupendous miracles cannot be man. We will not believe that He bore more than a mere delusive, phantastic form of humanity;" said the first doubters.

When the human nature of Jesus had been, by the terms which I have quoted from St Matthew, insisted on; and by such denunciations as "he that believeth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not born of God" impressed on men's minds; heresy went to the other extreme.

"Christ is human: yea, He was born from Joseph and Mary, like the rest of men: He differs not in

kind but in degree from us : He is the best, the most virtuous of mortals, but only a mortal ;” said the Ebionites.

Indignant at this base aspersion on his beloved Divine master, St John will not express Divine generation by the word *son* ; lest that which is of God should be confounded with that which is of man. This may be the reason why St John speaks so slightly, even contemptuously, of mere animal, bodily life. The succession of human son to human father is no fit emblem for him to employ in speaking of the generation of the only-begotten of the heavenly Father. Away with material likenesses ! The expression of the wisest of beings’ wisest thoughts in wisest and noblest words is the nearest resemblance available for speaking of the coming forth from the Father of the eternal Wisdom of God and power of God, Christ.

For who can precisely define how or when a thought arises in the mind ? Who can say what momentary interval there is in animated conversation between conception of ideas and the wording of them in the audience of those present ? Thus the shining forth of a ray and its reflection, simultaneous as they are but not identical, are used as a figure of the generation of Christ, the “ brightness of the Father’s glory.”

None may dare to say that there was ever a moment in all eternity when Christ existed not.

Yet He is the *Son*; and therefore He is the second and not the first Person of the blessed Trinity. Thus Christ's generation from God in incomprehensible eternity is set forth by St John in the phrase "In the beginning was the Word." "Nor is He," we may well suppose St John to mean, "the last, as some wild visionaries feign, of a chain of *Æons* or spirits thrown forth from the supreme God; each, in proportion as he is later in the chain, less able to soar upwards to the heavenly origin of his family; having no faculty, no occupation, but to send from himself another unsubstantial empty vapouring; all to end with the Christ feigned by the rising sect of Valentinians; a sort of link between, and mixture of, spirit and flesh; and a possible means of passage for certain souls into a vague spirit-world called Pleroma; but certainly not (if the heretics are right) God."

St John uses in his first twelve verses (more or less) something like half the names which the heretics gave to their *Æons*. But what was with them a mere fictitious list meaning nothing at all—(Word, Life, Beginning, Man, Only-begotten, are all, one may see in the Greek, part of the heretical catalogue)—with skill wondrous in an old man of a hundred years, but empowered by Inspiration, St John works up into sentences confuting the fable-mongers, and giving a sublime statement of the Divine nature of the Head of the Church.

That Divine Person was, St John says, according to our translation, "*with* God." "*Unto* God" would be the usual rendering of *πρός*. And considering how little authority there is for rendering *πρός* "*with*," I am inclined to think St John meant as follows: "Whereas those imaginary spirits or *Æons*, whom the heretics feign to have, after a long lingering process, brought to mankind a Redeemer, are all *from* God; destined when once sent from the spirit next in order before them never to mount up any higher, but rather to be borne down lower towards earth; the true Son of God by right of His Divine omnipresence is always brought into contact with God: on whatever errands of mercy He may travel to the various parts of the land of His chosen people, now Judæa, now Galilee, always He is nevertheless in the bosom of the Father: yea, while He was on earth His spirit was always *Godward*, returning from this polluted lower world to the region of purity and happiness. And so He said, 'Now I go my way unto Him that sent me:' 'I came forth from the Father and came into the world, again I leave the world and go unto the Father.' 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father.' When He continued all night in prayer did He not then abstract Himself from earth to heaven? (do *we* not do so if we pray fervently?)."

He continues, "The Word was God; Christ was not an inferior spirit on a par with the angels, created

by the letting go forth of the breath of God; or rather the thirtieth descendant of such an inferior spirit (for the Christ of the heretics is the last of a chain of thirty Æons); nor was He the son of Joseph: He had existed from all eternity: it was His to say, 'Before Abraham was I am:' He was equal to the Father as touching His Godhead: He might say, 'I and My Father are one:' 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.'"

And now what practical instruction is there for us in Christ's taking this title of "the Word?" This obvious lesson: that all that concerns Christ's kingdom is *spiritual*. "The *body* is dead because of sin; the spirit is life" because of Christ's righteousness, that is the sanctification bestowed by His Spirit on those of us who pray to Him for it. If we had no context with which to compare the words of my text; no time honoured and universal tradition to guide us in interpreting it of Christ; if we had it put before us singly and solely as a piece of classical Greek we should still be taught a noble precept by *ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος*. For it would be in the spirit of Greek philosophy to render it, 'Mind is more ancient than matter:' reason, temperance, moderation ought to prevail over passion and bodily appetite: desire for knowledge, calm contemplation of eternal, Divine truth, ought to delight us more than lounging idleness and earth-born, enslaving pleasure. Plato's allegory of the three parts of our nature, soul, spirit,

and body, under the figure of a charioteer (right reason) driving and controlling two steeds (the turbulent promptings of our spirit and our sensual inclinations) is probably well known to most of you. To be more *ancient* is often among Classics put for being more *honourable*. We have then as the sentiment of the noblest and most temperate among the heathens what St John applies as a Christian doctrine. Are we not then doubly bound to conform to it? Must we not be ashamed in our days, so blessed with learning, to do less than obey it? ‘Besides,’ a Plato might go on to say, ‘there is a spirit of wisdom; there is a pure, fiery stream of mental light which pervades creation: *it* “goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven and runneth about unto the end of it again, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof:” it returns to the great First Cause, who gave it being; it does not return to Him void: it rests on Him. Thus $\acute{\omicron}$ $\lambda\acute{\omicron}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ $\eta\nu$ $\pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$. Further, as all souls are kindled into life by, and from, the Divine essence, so whatever has that immortal spark of fire in it, which ennobles it, makes it different from the brute creation, and keeps under the baser parts, makes one in short act according to the will of God (*quantum non noxia corpora tardant Terrenique hebetant artus*) *that* is partaker of the Divine nature, and contains something to be included in our notion of God. That which is intellectual is divine. In saying $\Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ $\eta\nu$ $\acute{\omicron}$ $\lambda\acute{\omicron}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$,

what does that phrase λόγος mean but the *anima mundi* which pervades all matter and controls all that is earthly in man, moving him to prove his Divine origin, though he has fallen all but entirely from God?’

Thus I make bold to interpret the text, *supposing* it not to mean Christ. But it *does* mean Christ: and we are reminded by it that though our Lord humbled Himself so as to take on Him the form of a servant He was the wisdom and power of God; the Divine instrument by Whom God made the worlds. Though the Word became flesh; though He was sent “in the likeness of the flesh of sin,” that is, of the flesh which sin claimed the right to put to death; His flesh was not sinful, sin-cherishing. No; He condemned sin in His flesh. Though He had His brief tabernacle in our mortal nature, He had not His abiding house there: He threw off the subjection to death under which *we* are; and He said to a mortal, “Touch me not, for I am not ascended to my Father.” He would not go with the touch of mere human unsanctified flesh on Him into the presence of the Most Holy. Though He suffered many indignities at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, yet He could by His mere word strike to the ground the soldiers who came to apprehend Him.

There are times when the Divine nature of Christ must be urged on men’s attention, and the

human almost kept out of sight. Such was the time when St John wrote. Some had denied that Jesus was more than a good *man*. Some had perverted the doctrine that He had died for us, in order that He might gain for us grace by which we might mortify the deeds of the body and become spiritual, into an over-rigorous system of fasting and self-mortification which, because it nurtured a proud self-satisfaction, was really carnal. Others had gone to the contrary, and more hateful, extreme. "Since the body is irreclaimably bad and hopelessly corruptible," said they, "what matters how you treat it, how you indulge it? It will be severed from the soul: or it will have to be melted away from man's being by purifying fires: and in any case Christ will redeem the elect in spite of all defilement of their bodies." "Let us not talk of bodily things at all," St John seems to say, "since there are such foul abuses, such lying teaching connected with them." So he speaks not of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. So intent is he on the Divine, not the human nature of Jesus, that he records not the Transfiguration of His body from the form of a man of sorrows to that of a glorious angel. He studiously despises the flesh. "God gives life and sonship to those born *not* of blood nor of the will of the flesh." "That which is born of the flesh *is* *flesh*: that which is born of the Spirit is spirit: there is an opposition between them."

God must be sanctified in our bodies as well as our spirits indeed: and we must give account of the deeds done in the body; and therefore attention must be paid to it, to keep it in the way of God's commandments. Still the spirit is immensely more important and requires more cultivation, more attention. Since the Fall indeed "that has *not* been first and foremost which is spiritual but that which is natural." But the body, originally formed by the Lord God from the dust of the ground, even though at first sinless and very good, would, we may say, have had no value had it not been inspired by the eternally existing breath of life. In the beginning was, more honourable was, the life-giving Word.

So if days arrive in the history of the Christian Church when its members seem to pay too much attention to bodily and worldly things; when they contradict St Paul's statement that "bodily exercise profiteth *not*"; the preacher should forcibly uphold the claims of intellectual employment; of study and reading; of philosophy as against manual labour and physical experiment. I think there is too little of the purely intellectual and thoughtful among us now. On that account I have chosen this text as what I trust may be by God's blessing a salutary reminder on the subject. But when I say I would have the thoughtful and philosophical element more observable among us, I must add that there is no *true* philosophy but to follow the example Christ

has left us as to life on earth. He is the wisdom of God. If we would be wise we must improve in wisdom by cultivating the guilelessness, unselfishness, harmlessness, purity of motive, of a true Christian. We must not be greedy of renown, nor unscrupulous how we attain it. We must not set our affections on sordid worldly riches or other objects usually run after by men of the world. Let us give our hearts to Christ, and devote our lives to His service, seeking for His grace to enable us to do so. By that means we may partake of that Wisdom; we may be included as assenting voices, feeble though they be, in that eternal Word; which, as it was from everlasting, so shall endure in endless glory and honour to everlasting.

SERMON III.

PREACHED OCTOBER 26, 1884.

PSALM CXIX. 108.

*“Let the freewill offerings of my mouth please thee,
O Lord : and teach me thy judgments.”*

HORNE expounds this verse somewhat thus :
“Since my best, or only, sacrifice to thee is my tribute of praise and prayer in which I vow obedience to thee ; that I may be sincere in my vows of obedience grant me zeal and love for the study of thy commandments. Make me first be diligent to know what the law is which I promise to obey.” Another writer draws attention to our duty first to give *ourselves* to God : to sanctify our inmost thoughts and bring our wishes into subservience to the holy requirements of God : to be converted in heart and mind before we offer God the service of our lips and speak forth words of adoration and supplication to Him. But these remarks though good and true seem to me to invert the order of the two parts of

the text, to call the teaching of the judgments the *means*; the pleasing by the freewill offerings the *end*. I will try to shew how the freewill offering of the mouth is a means to acquiring divine wisdom and virtue.

The tendency of our age seems to be to pronounce attention to outward ordinances, joining in many Church-services to be the chief means, and efficacious means too, towards securing favour and reward from God. To 'get people to come to Church' seems to be the great aim of our home missionaries: when that is done nearly all is done, they seem to think. And most Church-going people seem to believe that frequently to join in outward acts which profess to be worship of God is on the whole to discharge their duties towards God. I might suggest that this creed leaves out our duty towards our neighbour: that *work*, not worship, is the design of our life *here*: that the Christian should rather use his religious assemblies as a means of refreshment to the soul than consider them as his only prescribed occupation, after which he has all his time to do as he likes with: that he should view them as a help and preparation for teaching God's ways to the wicked, and converting sinners to Him; for doing all things whether in word or deed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for letting the light of a Christian example shine before those who are hearers of the word only, but not doers of it.

But assuming that attendance at public worship is the most absorbing and the main obligation under which a godly man is, we must of course understand that that worship must be heartfelt, devout and reverent: that its words must not be spoken while the heart is far from God. *Is that the case with our Church-services now?* How immensely important it is for those who are constantly attending College Chapel, constantly *professing* to be pleasing God with the freewill offerings of their mouth, to examine themselves whether their way of going on in this matter is right or wrong. For if it be not right, if the service they render with their lips is not pleasing to God, it not only fails to bring them a blessing; not only imparts no comfort, joy and peace to them; enlightens them with no perception of holy mysteries; dignifies them with no wisdom and knowledge; sanctifies them with no holiness; but it treasures up against them daily a store of wrath and of the indignation of God, and their destruction and perpetual sorrow is ripening for them.

If Church service is such a ruinous failure let us reflect whether the following fact be not the cause of it. Our age is different from every one which has gone before it, through there being now no wholly ignorant class. The knowledge of secular things is, in this part of the world at least, universally diffused. Not a child grows up, from the palace to the lowest hovel, without elementary edu-

cation. And not only are worldly things known: there is no such great gulf between class and class that we do not cast a gaze, and a very familiar one sometimes, on each other's private life. We know each other's ways. We will not allow any personage, however lofty, to screen himself in impenetrable and awe-inspiring mystery. Familiarity is sure to breed contempt in earthly things; as a general rule the more we know each other the less we venerate each other. Among worldly unconverted people this frame of mind is sure to extend to the outward objects connected with religion, those things about it which are to be seen and touched. Hence the growth of independence and democracy has been attended with a falling-off of reverence for the sanctuary. And though long custom, early training, conventional decorum, restrain the middle-aged and old from utterly disregarding the precept "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God," it is not so with the young: but in almost every Church you will find predominant before, if not during Service-time an amount of noise, a recklessness or insolence of demeanour which was almost impossible a generation ago. The notion of respect for holy places is slowly but surely dying out. The inference is that men suppose, because they have raised themselves in the social scale, that they have also changed the relation between themselves and God; that they are nearer to God, and need pay less devout respect

to Him. Or else that they do not believe that the Lord is in His holy Temple or that there is any truth in the words of Christ that He is present with two or three gathered together in His name. In short that there is no living God; for, were there, He would certainly be jealous for the honour of His sanctuary. Or the explanation may be that such despisers feel themselves indeed guilty of deadly sin; but yet find such pleasure in it as to hazard the consequences of persisting in it. Irreverence is indeed a deadly offence, and one which Scripture teaches us draws down the wrath of God more than any other. Because this is so, when irreverence appears to be prevalent the minister must strongly warn his people against it; urging how preposterous it would be to suppose that the lowliness and submission of our demeanour towards God ought ever to be lessened because man deems himself to have developed his capacities and improved his condition, and to be more the lord of the creation than ever. God never alters. The distance between Him and man must remain infinitely great. Though by their careless or defiant, or sometimes seemingly *patronizing* tone in going through the Service, congregations practically say, 'The Lord is *not* a great God,' our hearts assure us that He *is*. We still perceive the work of His hand among us in the judgments with which He sometimes humbles us. In quiet contemplation we sometimes are alarmed, to think

how rapidly, though unobservedly, the course of affairs is bringing the fulfilment of all that God's word declares; how near at the doors the final consummation of this world's term of years must be. Affliction, by shewing us our helplessness, brings down our pride, so that we feel with awe the invisible presence of God. Sometimes when the anthems of the noblest of our musicians are sweetly resounding in our grandest Cathedrals and Chapels we feel the old thrill of ecstasy, raising us from our grovelling, vile thoughts and saying, 'Sinner, this is the accepted time for thee; fall low, imploring mercy at the footstool of Him who is a great king above all gods.' Would that such feelings came to us oftener, yea were our habitual frame of mind! But if such horrible thoughts occur as, 'What is the use of all our public prayer? Is it not all a mockery, a meaningless repetition of empty sounds?' or 'is there any harm in turning it into ridicule?' let us suppress the monstrous ideas at all costs; and replace them by devout thoughts. At least, if we cannot have the "pure heart," we can have the "humble voice"; we can be outwardly reverential. Our singing may be devout. We may discourage wherever we go to Church mere noise and clamour calling itself music. We may perhaps find some judicious way of thwarting the pretentiousness of rude upstarts, who, gathered from the lowest of the people, invade and profane so many of our Parish Churches,

under the title of 'the Choir.' We may protest against light and secular music being played as voluntaries. We may by our behaviour in general shew that, though there is such a thing as a somewhat ostentatious and offensive because exaggerated prostration of the body and bending of the head, and an overdone putting away from one's notice of all visible and audible things in Church, yet we do mean to keep up the reverence due to God's House, and are not afraid to be known to pray and sing to the unseen but ever-present Lord: and feel that if the freewill offering of our mouth pleases Him we care not what man thinks of us. In that case learning in the way of the judgments and counsels of the Almighty follows: pious reverence promotes wisdom and discretion; improvement in all virtues and possession of all strength. But the "pure heart" cannot be attained without the stilling our passions of anger, hatred, and malice before we come to worship: nor without dismissing our work and our schemes and our interests from our minds for a time so as not to be harassed and distracted by them: not pursuing them to the very last moment possible before going to Service, and rushing heated and excited in a wild turmoil to what we should begin after a pause for reflection and for composing ourselves to the holy occupation to which we have come. But above all it is necessary to examine ourselves as to whether we are

intending wicked deeds: whether we are at heart designing a godless, negligent, self-indulgent course of life: or whether we have resolved sincerely to keep the vows we have taken to fight against Christ's enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. If we have corrupt intentions and guilty purposes in our hearts, let us remember that the prayer of such men is of no avail. "If I incline unto wickedness with my heart the Lord will not hear me." Worse than that, the prayer of such is turned into sin; for it is an audacious mockery.

But whereas I said that most people attached, as I thought, undue importance to constant Church-going, mistaking it for a discharge of all their duties to God; there may be some who do not attach enough importance to it: who cannot see how hearing and assenting to the same well-known prayers day after day; reading out the same psalms month after month; hearing a short lesson; can be a well-pleasing offering to God. 'Is it not all a dull empty formality?' say they. 'Can it do any good?' Yes, it can: for it is God's command that we utter with our mouth His praise: that we confess our belief in His blessed Son, within the hearing of our brethren: that we with one accord make our prayers, though they be in a set and frequently recurring form of words, to Him; beseeching Him to grant us all blessings both of soul and body, and interceding for all conditions of men.

It is not, I admit, *self-evident* that to comply with positive statutes of God, to perform certain definite prescribed ordinances, should procure a man wisdom and knowledge as well as forgiveness and sanctification. But we find by experience that so it does. Our Lord's words are certainly fulfilled; "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine that it is heavenly." There is that in reverential attendance at such services as ours; blessed as I sincerely believe they are through the absence of that superabundant music and singing which deadens instead of nourishing the souls of our modern Church-goers; and not compulsorily yielded, but freely engaged in, and as heartily acquiesced in as any other University rule under which men coming here voluntarily put themselves, and of course therefore cheerfully comply with; I say there is that in these Services which brings blessing; improvement to the whole man, soul, spirit and body; and advancement in whatever is good and wise.

May then daily the freewill offerings of our mouth please God! and thus by them we may confidently expect that He will give us heavenly wisdom, and "make us glad with His house of prayer."

SERMON IV.

PREACHED NOVEMBER 9, 1884.

JOHN XVI. 8.

“ And when He is come He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment.”

WHAT our Lord promised that the Comforter should do to supply His place in the bereaved disciples' hearts, and to give them more ability to honour and serve their Master and make their brethren become His disciples, is the same as what the Holy Ghost does *now* for each heart that gives itself to God, constrained by the love of His Son towards us; and what we ought to cooperate in doing for the souls of those over whom we have any influence; for God deigns to employ us as workers together with Him in this matter.

But before saying what the Holy Spirit does let us note that He works in a secret and imperceptible way. I do not mean in a way unappreciable by careless and defiant and avowedly godless men; that would be but a truism; but in a way unex-

pected by, against the calculations of, even pious believers, a way to make them confess with solemn admiration that God's ways are not as man's, that the wisdom of the world is foolishness to God. I say this because of the reasons given for the three-fold conviction of the world.

For the sin of which the world is convicted is not violence, lust, things which every man confesses to be crimes; but unbelief, which does not at first strike a worldly but candid-minded man to be a sin; nor does it seem at first to be necessarily a man's fault if an extraordinary statement, on whatever authority resting, does not impress him as true; though afterwards on serious reflection a man confesses that those who witnessed Christ's ministry on earth and those who hear of it now, not doubting the historical evidence, cannot but believe the Saviour to be Divine, cannot but feel prompted to beseech His mercy, intercession and grace, and if they resist the prompting it must be because they wilfully prefer evil to good.

Again, the proof of righteousness, by which we may well suppose Christ's righteousness to be meant, given to the world is Christ's departure: at the time the words were spoken His death was probably meant; it was included at least in the meaning. Now the world would have said Christ's *not* dying, His being delivered from the Cross would rather have been a proof of His acceptance with God; and His

remaining with His disciples would have strengthened and sanctified them rather than His leaving them. But on reflection even a worldly man would admit that it is not the life of the righteous so much as their death which has a softening, purifying influence on the friends whom they leave, the neighbours who have watched their holy and gentle course of life, and even the enemies who have tried their patience and sincerity and found it hold good against all assaults. Yes, it is at their departure that the onlookers say, 'Truly this was a child of God, and his holy, gentle, pure example if imitated would bring us happiness.'

And as to *judgment*; a sceptical hearer might say at first, If the proof of final judgment of the world's being committed to Christ, with the power of sending into everlasting happiness or misery, is dependent on the prince of this world's being evidently condemned already, it is no proof, for his votaries manifestly triumph over the godly and have things all their own way in most cases, and surely will while this world lasts.

But again reflection makes us see that the enemies of Christ, those who despise His law and neglect His service, so far from being happy and triumphant are always secretly, and often, as Judas openly, full of remorse, bitter despair, and fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. Thus the reasoning of the Holy Spirit is not the coarse,

obvious reasoning of those who pride themselves conceitedly on 'common sense:' it is, let us reverently say, in its admirable delicacy and subtlety infinitely wiser and better: even as the Holy Spirit's methods are infinitely wiser and grander than the 'common-sense' ones which occur to men; even as Babel's tower was frustrated not by the blasting thunderbolt but by the confusion of the builders' language.

The Holy Spirit does these three things for a converted soul. Firstly, He reminds it of sin. It is the thought how shameful and ungrateful it is to go on in sin that alters a man's course of life. This is the principal part of conversion, we may say. There is certainly no conversion without a sorrowful sense of our past sins. The Holy Spirit follows up the effect thus produced. He makes sin appear exceeding sinful. He shews more and more of man's ways to be unholy and displeasing to God; and prompts us by love more than by fear to be more and more careful lest we offend our good and gracious Heavenly Father.

Secondly, He reminds the soul of righteousness. He sets forth examples of it in Him who was perfectly righteous, and in many of the sons of men, who though full of imperfections, have been, for their endeavours to walk with God and be perfect, trusting in the merits of the Saviour to make good their grievous defects, accounted righteous. He shews us that the will of God is that we should be sanctified: that there are crosses to the flesh to be endured

in striving for this; but that in so striving is there alone true happiness for us.

Thirdly, when it is written that He reminds men of judgment, we may understand this of the warnings which the Holy Spirit gives to various kinds of men. A warning to the careless sinner that for all his profligacy and disobedience there will be a terrible day of account. To those wavering between godliness and worldliness a warning that the time in which to make the wise choice is short; and that the night soon cometh, in which the work of salvation if it has been left undone can never be done at all.

And to those who have been converted but are tempted by either threats and violence or soft allurements to relapse, He gives a warning that if any man draws back God has no pleasure in him; that he goes back into hopeless perdition; that there is no second conversion for him.

But let us observe *how* the Holy Spirit reminds us of these three things. How He does *not*, viz. by such topics as human wisdom would have suggested, we have already noticed. He supplies us with thoughts bringing us directly to Christ. This is plain in the first two cases, and, as it may not be hard to shew, in the third.

When the Holy Spirit convinces a man of sin, He does it by making that man feel that he is falsifying the record which God has given of His

Son; the record that in Him, that is in coming to God through His mediation, is eternal life.

By nature, or at least after a very little experience, a man feels that he is placed in a very wicked and unhappy world. We may perhaps say that we are instinctively conscious, when we reflect on our destiny, that we have fallen from God and from holiness, and are therefore wretched. But God reveals His blessed and merciful design of redeeming mankind by the death of His Son. He shews that by belief in Jesus Christ, proved by obedience, there is recovery from the Fall. But men will not commonly heed this Gospel message. Then the Holy Spirit comes to convince all who will receive Him that their sin, their most unreasonable and fatal sin, is not believing in the Saviour whom God hath sent; despising the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering.

This seems to be the way we should teach little children in our charge. First tell them how sin and misery came into the world: then how Christ in due time died for the ungodly: and then—we need not say *if* they fall into sinful ways after this, for they are sure to, but *when* they fall—remind them that it is the loving Saviour, the all-holy Son of God that they are grieving and crucifying again: for they are disobeying *His* law of purity and holiness; and it is only by keeping His commandments that either

child or man can prove that he loves or believes in his Saviour.

After the same manner does the Holy Spirit persuade us concerning righteousness. He shews that there is only justification as righteous for those who have kept the whole law of God. Christ alone has kept it: but He has thereby made a perfect and sufficient sacrifice for all the sins and shortcomings of believers: thereby there is righteousness imputed to those who are in Christ, new creatures; from whom old vices and malicious, crafty, treacherous, and cruel schemes have been put away; whose feeling, in thinking of their departed Lord raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God, is

May we go where He is gone,
Rest and reign with Him in heaven.

Lastly, the judgment passed on the prince of this world, of which the Holy Spirit reminds us, is also a memorial of Christ's work, finished as far as His part is concerned: for by dying in the likeness of sinful flesh He condemned sin in the flesh: He deprived Satan of his claim to subject us to the second death: but a work to be continued by us all our lives long, as far as concerns our part in it. The power of Satan over our hearts was destroyed by Christ on the Cross: and the proofs which God gives us of the victory of faith over the allurements and over the troubles and persecutions of the world in the case of many departed saints, are things

which confirm that sentence of defeat and dethronement pronounced against the prince of this world. Sin shall not have dominion over us unless we willingly surrender ourselves to it. May God's grace keep us from deluding ourselves into thinking that Satan's kingdom can stand, take whatever shape it may of worldly vanities and frivolities, of pride of intellect, and of reason declaring itself sufficient without attending to the Gospel Covenant which God has revealed!

May God's Holy Spirit help us to come out from the corrupt fashions and sinful pleasures of this world, that we share not in the sentence of terrible destruction, to be hereafter pronounced on the prince of this world when he and all his own are judged at the last.

SERMON V.

PREACHED NOVEMBER 16, 1884.

1 TIMOTHY III. 16.

“Believed on in the world.”

How like this sounds to the motto of worldly people, ‘Always seek for success, there is nothing so creditable as it!’ But what sort of a success is it that is meant? Why the motto means ‘Always contrive to have credit given you as a respectable member of society; not indeed distinguished for any great merit, but because free from any very glaring defect, any unlucky exposure of bad character, any plain disqualification, able to hold your own and to proclaim by a moderately bold look, if not in words, to the world around that from your strength, your fine appearance, your wealth, or your acknowledged cleverness you have some claim to pass muster with the average sort of man.’ It is curious too to watch how the world, as it assumes supreme authority

for its decrees, so lets boundless responsibility be cast on it collectively for the conduct of its individual members. This is the process : an unprincipled worldling wishes to persecute a scrupulous man who acts from a sense of duty. The former says to the company present, not '*I* have some great fault to find with the latter' but 'That man is *unpopular*, people do not like him, he is *said* to be a disagreeable fellow ; he is *not* believed on in the world, therefore I recommend you to despise and illtreat him.'

Now if we can turn the maxim of the world against itself, and prove that the true Christian is he who is most really and permanently believed on in the world, what an excellent argument we shall have for a holy life as better than a godless one! It cannot be denied that if we are true to our Christian principles we shall find, perhaps all our lives, that the world does not love us because we are not of its own. It has many painful ways of making us feel this: the whispered sneer; the insulting laugh; the singling of us out for slanderous attacks which look speciously true before they are candidly and carefully examined into; the pointed and ostentatious exclusion of us from the courtesies, civilities and honours, a fair share of which is ordinarily to be had in turn by all, each in his own class and station; the calling us singular, eccentric, bigoted or hypocritical; these are some of the ways in which those who are born

after the flesh persecute those who are born after the Spirit.

Nevertheless it is a sound and undeniable argument in our favour that those who have stood out against prevailing wicked fashions and have proved themselves the righteous servants of God have left the most honoured names behind them in the estimation of all men, and can be seen, if we mark out the careers of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, David, and such men, to have had the happiest lives on earth, all things considered: and thus godliness can be proved to have the promise of the life which now is, that of present satisfaction and comfort, as well as of the life to come.

The despised servants of God are those who are after all most believed in and respected. The world tries to keep down their reputation; but somehow they are thought better of than successful and skilful, crafty and showy worldlings. It has been so from the first. Christ's cause seemed very weak at first, and He had very few disciples; and scoffers thought they could triumphantly appeal to the people, 'Have any of the rulers, have any of the wisest and most looked up to and competent believed on Him?'

Again, how few true followers and friends had St Paul! After the terrible difficulties and hardships he encountered that he might preach the Gospel to fresh countries, probably he often found the result of his labours, even in the most promising

places, no better than it was at Athens, where but two or three clave to him. Then think how many thousands were slain by successive persecutions! There seemed sometimes scarcely any Christians likely to be left by the bloodthirsty wretches. Yet Christianity has made its way, and will never be exterminated from the world before the end comes. This is because it has the power of God and Divine truth in it. It is therefore better to be on its side than against it; and truly and sincerely on its side too; for anything short of this will be a miserable failure; punished not only by the wrath of God but by His derision, which will fall on those who have tried to 'trim' between worldliness and piety, tried to seem fashionably religious and respectable and to cheat even their own conscience.

I will quote a few remarks from Paley's *Evidences* bearing on this point. "By the ruling powers among mankind and by each public community the life in Christ may not seem to have been believed to be a good and pleasant one. But by individuals it has. Take a number of people all assembled together, and they may seem to scorn or be ashamed of the Gospel; to disavow all fealty to it. But take men apart separately, and they cannot fail to be convinced by reason, if the truth is put before them; nay by that consciousness of the truth of the Gospel which they (involuntarily) possess they perceive that nothing makes a man so happy as to lead a Christian life....

The influence of our religion is not to be sought for in the topics which almost entirely occupy the attention of mankind, and fill the pages of history: but must be perceived, if at all, in the silent course of private and domestic life. Our religion operates most on those of whom history knows least: upon fathers and mothers in their families; upon men-servants and maid-servants; upon the orderly tradesman; the quiet villager; the manufacturer at his loom; and the husbandman in his fields" (might he not have added upon the solitary student in his chamber?). "Among such its influence collectively may be of inestimable value: yet its effects in the meantime may have been little upon those who figure on the stage of the world."

Yes: the argument which the great writer of the evidences says he falls back upon is, that "the benefit of our religion is felt chiefly in the obscurity of private stations, and escapes the observation of history, which is only a record of the vices, follies and quarrels of those who are struggling for supreme power." Is not our happy lot cast in such private stations? And does not our Lord say of such, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid the persuasive truth and loveliness of the Gospel of peace from the wise and prudent and revealed it unto babes.' "From the first preaching of Christianity to the present day there have been many millions," says Paley, "whose names were never heard of, made

better by it; not only in their conduct, but in their disposition; and happier, not so much in their outward circumstances, as in that which is *inter præcordia*; by that which alone deserves the name of happiness, the tranquillity and consolation of their thoughts... It has been since its commencement the author of happiness and virtue to millions of the human race. Who is there that would not wish anyone dear to him to be a Christian?" Thus wrote Paley a hundred years ago. Are things altered in the interval? Is the argument less cogent now?

If from what we see around us we are tempted to think Christ is beginning *not* to be believed on in the world, that is, if there seems to be no one left whose faith will bear being put to the proof; and if worldly success procured at the expense of all pious scruples and principles, seems truly to achieve the victory, and to be everything, let us not give way. This *seeming* to fail is no more than Christ Himself foretold for the last times. Iniquity, He knew, would abound; the hearts of many grow cold. But His promise that "the gates of hell shall not prevail" against His Church will be made good. He will have a certain number, small as it may grow, to the end. May He give us grace to be of that number; to choose the wise policy; to see that what the idle, thoughtless multitude calls being "believed on in the world" is a poor, base, deceptive sham; a short-lived, despicable trick; a miserable bubble, which bursts

directly the false man's eyes have been closed in death. What awaits the man who has under a mean, worthless disguise *contrived* to be believed in? The blackness of darkness for ever. What awaits the righteous who has never wholly, even in his present poor, persecuted estate, lost credit in the world? This glory: "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Every eye must see Christ at the Last Day. Every enemy must confess his belief in Christ then: even though it be too late to avail him. Why not therefore believe in Him *now*, and confess it to the world, and be acknowledged by the Saviour in His triumph? It has been finely said, "Truth (is) in all the world both hated and believed." Shall we not believe it and love it? God give us grace to strive manfully and patiently on till the time when those born after the flesh shall no more persecute those born after the Spirit; and to prove to ourselves that the way of God is that good, acceptable, and perfect way, which only gives a man hope and peace even in this life.

SERMON VI.

PREACHED NOVEMBER 23, 1884.

JEREMIAH XXIII. 7, 8.

“Therefore behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country and from all countries whither I had driven them ; and they shall dwell in their own land.”

THE prophecy that Judah and Israel should lose sight of that grand event in their national history, the deliverance from Egypt, because the thoughts of a more recent deliverance, that from Babylon, should supersede it, can hardly be said to have been fulfilled literally when the Jews returned led by Ezra. For though these forced themselves into an enthusiastic admiration for the rebuilt Temple, saying, “The glory of this latter house is greater than the

glory of the former," this does not sound like a genuine hearty expression of their inmost feelings. That temple better! Oh no; it could not be compared with Solomon's. There was a sad falling-off there, and so there was in everything belonging to them. In what matter had not the glory departed from these poor beggared but released slaves; liable as they were to be hurried into slavery again if they at all presumed to cross the will of their Persian masters? At least if they ever rejoiced, on their captivity's being ended, in such a way as to warrant our thinking that that joy made them magnify the commonplace and humanly guided journey from Babylon above the Divinely headed march across the great wilderness and the ever memorable passage through the Red Sea, we need not hold that that was the main and most important fulfilment of Jeremiah's words, but that those words have, like many such prophecies, their best fulfilment spiritually and not literally.

Let us view the text as allegorical of what happens to a professing but only nominal Christian, at the time that he becomes a real one.

Firstly: as the Israelites dwelt in the land of bondage, so we are born into a world of misery and sorrow. As they were rescued by passing through the sea, so by baptismal admission into Christ's Church we receive, nominally at least, a deliverance from sin: a good, a hopeful, and what is valued in

general more, a decent, reputable position among our companions.

But (secondly) the deliverance from Egypt did not permanently profit the souls of the Israelites. They fell away from their allegiance to God; provoking Him by many transgressions in the wilderness, and in the whole course of their history, till they filled up the measure of their iniquity and were led captive, their Temple and city destroyed. So baptism and membership in the Church; attendance on outward ordinances; regularity and moral respectability, profit not at all the merely nominal Christian. If there be no true spiritual second birth in him he goes from one sin to another. He may be saved from committing crimes, by his being in a station in which he is not tempted to them, or in which he finds it pay him better to keep up a show of decency. But the grace of God has not yet been bestowed on him (because he has not prayed for it nor desired it), moving him to admit the Saviour into his heart. He is, though outwardly specious, dead in trespasses and sins: there is no health in him, though he has a name to live. Perhaps he goes from one degree of callousness and slumber of soul to another without fearing (in better moments) that any harm is approaching him, though his danger is awful. Perhaps, however, he is awakened: perhaps like Israel he is visited with sore pains and afflictions in punishment for his obstinate rebellion. He

perceives in what a hard, cold, wretched "north country" of alienation from God he is; how hopelessly he is wandering away from the light of true knowledge, the happiness of purity of heart. Then by God's merciful call, administered through conscience-stirring, reading of the Bible, or the admonition of some faithful pastor, he is aware that the Saviour stands at the door of his heart and knocks. A sense of the Saviour's love and goodness; of his own vileness and thanklessness, rushes in upon him. He is moved to arise and go to his Father and confess his long-continued sin against Him, and implore on any terms to be admitted into His home. Then in his case 'behold the days come that God raises up to David a righteous branch;' a king reigns over him; and because he feels his own vileness, repents, and forsakes his worldly and selfish, his negligent and easy-going ways, and takes up his cross to follow Christ, and trusts in the Saviour's righteousness to cover his iniquities—Christ becomes to him "the Lord his righteousness." It is only when pride and self-sufficiency, stubbornness and prejudice, are expelled, and a man learns that whatever good opinion the world has of him, he is vile in the sight of the omniscient God, that he can hope that the righteousness of the Son of God can be imputed to him. He knows that if he be not in Christ, if he be not His only and thoroughly in prosperity and adversity, whether things go smoothly with him or his name be

reviled and hated among mankind, he has no part in the benefits of the sacrifice which Jesus has made for man's sins: and if he has *not* secured His intercession he must be lost. It is when this conversion has been by the grace of God wrought in him that he sees from what a wretched condition he has been rescued, in what a remote wild he has been banishing himself, how barren of satisfaction, in spite of all his indulgences in pleasures and lusts; how devoid of any true friend to cheer him and of any guide to help him. That he was born in a Christian land and baptized, that he took on him vows to serve Christ, was a blessing to him: but the memory of these things is obscured by the presence in his mind of all the fresh blessings of grace and support and enlightenment for which every day he has to thank God. This is the feeling of each single Christian heart and of the Church of the redeemed collectively. "O sing unto the Lord a *new* song, for He hath done marvellous things;" such are the words that rise to our lips when we think how gracious God is continually shewing Himself to us: pardoning again and again our backslidings: restoring us constantly to His favour: and to the end bearing with our waywardness and pitying our infirmities.

These are the right thoughts to introduce Advent to us. The prospect of Christ's second coming is joyful to those who have sought and found in Him their righteousness now: who seek for pardon, and

grace to sin no more, through His merits and mediation; and confidently trust that in Him God accepts them: and, having this hope in them, purify themselves all their life long as He is pure; that when He again shall appear they may reign with Him.

SERMON VII.

PREACHED NOVEMBER 30, 1884.

ROMANS XIII. 8.

“Owe no man anything but to love one another.”

LET us first enquire what is the nature of the debt of love, which we may take to be always impending over us as it were, always payable by us. Secondly, let us observe how easy a means of preparing for the great day of account the Scripture here mercifully proposes to us. Thirdly, if we are to connect the second part of to-day's Epistle with the first—thus, “love one another, I say, and that because the day of Christ's second coming is at hand,” let us note how immensely important it is for us to do this easy work ; a work, however, which is very much neglected and opposed in these days in which we live.

I. Before we examine the debt which we ought always to admit as due we must contrast it with

some which St Paul bids us pay off promptly so as *not* to acknowledge them due, but to have done with at once ; and for this purpose we must look at the verse just previous to that which contains my text. "Render tribute, custom, and honour to those by whom they are officially demanded," St Paul had just said. 'But we have an odious and bloodthirsty tyrant over us, to whom oppressive taxes and subservient homage surely ought not to be paid without resistance,' the Romans, those of a few years later at least, might have answered. 'No,' St Paul would rejoin, 'I counsel no resistance.' And he shews on what principle he gives such counsel. But he seems to imply that in such a hard case as we have supposed, when the debt was paid all connection with the creditor was ended. 'Down with the sum demanded: ἀπόδοτε, finish it off by a rapid act. Pay him off: be rid of him ; feel he has no claim on you : let him go on his own vile way, and go you on your righteous way : and thus treat all creditors : say, "Take your own and begone ! I am no further answerable to you, as concerns what you care for, worldly business and money-contracts." But here,' we may imagine St Paul to continue, 'the liberty to drop all connection ends. Never struggle to be free from *all* concern in your companions', your fellow-citizens', your fellow-creatures' welfare. Never want to say, Am I my brother's keeper? Have love for them all. Try to benefit them ; to be

friends with them. If they will not let you do so, be tolerant in that case; forbearing, and forgiving towards them. Make allowance for their early contracted prejudices. Never meditate underhand ways of repaying them evil for evil. Do not rejoice in their calamities; though the time will come that the righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.'

What St Paul enjoined on the Roman Christians is applicable to us. We are not to shut ourselves off from communication with the world and say, 'Society is nothing to me nor I to it; let us be independent of each other.' There is no one so isolated as not to be able to find opportunities of promoting the good and happiness of the many and of individuals. This sounds a vague generality, a trite truism. But, to be more particular, we can all, taking account of our present style of social life, do something to shew consideration and regard for the comfort of people with whom we come in contact. We can be more courteous and friendly in our demeanour. We can save people from annoyances. We can be thoughtful for their convenience, and save a great quantity of unnecessary trouble. We can smooth injured victims' ruffled feelings, and comfort them by a favouring word and timely suggestion, without losing any of our dignity. At least there is something we can leave undone. We can spare a few taunts in the presence of easily assailed persons, and

a great deal of unkind criticism and derisive sarcasm in their absence.

II. But this may seem a very poor and inadequate preparation for the tremendous second Advent of our Lord. 'You tell me to be pleasant and agreeable to my neighbours. Is such a trifling thought in keeping with the grandeur and sublimity of the present solemn season?' The Church seems to affirm as much in choosing the Epistle for to-day. There are grand and terrible pictures presented to us in Isaiah. "Enter into the rock and hide thee in the dust for fear of the Lord and for the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of men shall be brought low." The guilty wretches shall "call on the mountains to cover them," the caves to shelter them, "when God ariseth to shake terribly the earth." But what says St Paul? "Pay your debts." A very simple matter: no trepid, agonised excitement wanted. No imposing on oneself horribly severe penance, if peradventure there be a gleam of hope left for the perishing soul. Merely do an obvious act of simple justice. How easy? Who so poor that he cannot by retrenchment pay at least part of his debts? or, failing that, acknowledge them, try to make favourable terms about them, and promise faithfully to give what is due at the earliest possible time? Yet who can tell how many have been deeply conscience-stricken by this one sentence, "Owe no man anything"? and by being made to

feel how wrong it was to go on defrauding a creditor how many have come to perceive what a burden of other sins they were labouring under, and what a relief it would be to come to God and implore His mercy and grace, and entreat the loving Saviour to return to the heart whence worldliness, carelessness or headstrong passion had banished Him? How easy it sounds, 'Do no harm to your neighbour: let him alone: abstain from oppressing him: that is the fulfilment of the Law!' As to that last clause, we must surely remember that St Paul is speaking of the *second* table of the Law. It is not the whole of our duty to God to do no violence nor wrong to any *man*. Yet we know that pure and genuine and patient love to the brotherhood does increase in us love towards God; besides our having St John's testimony that the latter is impossible without the former. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And bear this in mind that to do no harm to neighbours means, as interpreted by the true Christian, not to neglect or omit kind acts which you might find opportunities of doing to weak and miserable brethren. It is not enough not to wound the traveller whom we meet. It is wrong to pass by him, as he lies wounded by another, and not pour balm into his wound; not to console the vexed and irritated by a goodnatured speech. Oh! many see Christ hungry, sick, imprisoned, naked, in His least

brethren, not in a literal, bodily way, but as to the heart and mind, and minister not unto Him.

It is not easy, but very hard, to step out of our way ; to run the risk of looking singular ; to give up our time, and sacrifice our inclinations, resign our pleasures, and perhaps only meet with ingratitude and sneers in taking up the cause of some oppressed and forsaken one, and trying to see justice done them.

“Love is the fulfilling of the Law.” Let that make us ask ourselves whether our disposition has been such that the whole of the commandments concerning our neighbour have been kept by us towards each of our acquaintances ; kept as read spiritually and in a true-hearted manner. We have murdered no man. Have we been spiteful, peevish, and cruel to no inferior or dependant ? We have stolen no tangible goods. Have we never pushed the weak out of their advantageous places, and passed ourselves into their room ; nor ever defrauded some commonly despised persons out of that consideration and civility of which we can shew no just cause why they should be deprived ?

III. If the second part of the Epistle is to be connected with the first, St Paul’s words mean this. “The time is short in which to make up for our defects in brotherly love. Let us use that time diligently. For lo ! the Judge is at hand, Whose strict injunction is ‘these things I command you

that ye love one another'." And then he goes on to warn against riotous excesses and wantonness in pleasure-seeking. Connection or no connection with the previous verses, we know that these things are above all to be avoided by those who would be found faithful to their trust when their Lord returns: and that there is a connection between these things and want of brotherly love may perhaps be inferred from what St Luke says: "Be sober: be not charged with inebriety nor earthly cares and anxieties; for such a man is unprepared when his Lord comes; and *so is he* who is led on from surfeiting to smiting the men-servants and maidens; who is not only selfish but cruel." Excessive indulgence in pleasure may not seem at first sight an infraction of the precept "Owe no man anything but to love one another"; yet when we think of it, it is. For if a man spend over much money and time on his own enjoyments he not only cannot give alms to the needy, even if he care to (which he does not), but he takes more than his share of the dainties and blessings which God has bestowed on mankind for common use; therefore he is not only illiberal but fraudulent. Is he an abandoned libertine? Then, however easy tempered and good natured he may seem to be, however he may lavish his gift on a favoured few, he is wasting his strength and energies which he might be using to the improvement of the temporal and spiritual welfare of his brethren. And, further, intemperance

not only indirectly, but directly, sooner or later, makes a man a hard, grudging, cruel and quarrelsome, instead of a kind and bounteous member of the community.

Let us then strive against self-indulgence because it works ill to our neighbour and prevents the fulfilling of the Law. "And that, knowing the shortness of the time" of our preparation for the Lord's coming. I can now only just refer to what I said as to our days being unfavourable ones for obeying the command which is at first sight so easy, viz. to fulfil the Law by working no ill to one's neighbour. Unfavourable I call them because the masses of the people seem to have banished the law of brotherly love and kindness altogether: because the most numerous class of the public seems to find it a pleasure and almost to regard it as a duty to persecute with every shape of spite, malice, and insult the less numerous superior classes: because even these superior classes do not hold together and make head against the common opponent, but bite and devour one another, and come down to the level of the lowest and the fiercest of the vulgar; because, in short, there is such a deadly prevalence of rancour, ill-nature, and insolence all around, and so little love. Let us have no share in these faults, at least. Let us, however we be tried, not think ourselves free from the debt of love which we owe to Christ, and through Him to those whom He still for a while

allows to be called His brethren. And let us remember that not only is unkindness a mark of our age, but luxury also is. To that we are more prone than to the other because of the circumstances in which we are placed. Let us resist our chief temptation then: for it disables us from obeying the precept, "Love one another"; and so from being ready to appear before Christ at His future Advent.

SERMON VIII.

PREACHED DECEMBER 7, 1884.

ISAIAH V. 18.

“Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope.”

THE expressions “drawn on by bad passions,” “being the slave of evil practices” as if dragged behind their madly careering chariot, “being tied and bound with the chain of sins,” are familiar to us. But what dragging on sins one’s self means; what it is to *be* the harness of the rushing vehicle which is going to perdition, this is not easy to explain. Let us hear Bishop Lowth’s explanation and amended reading of the passage: “Woe unto them who draw out iniquity as a long cable, and sin as the thick traces of a wain.” It is the Hebrew word for “vanity” that apparently wants alteration; and the forthcoming Revised Version of the Old Testament will probably shew that the word rendered “vanity” has crept into the text in the place of a word meaning “too long” or “superfluous;” the word used to

denote an unsightly excrescence or lump on an animal rendering it unfit for sacrifice. See Leviticus xxi. 18; xxii. 23. It is there rendered "superfluous." [The Revised Version has *not* made the alteration.]

Taking this view, the Prophet denounces woe on those who enlarge the blot or stain of crime attaching to them as children of Adam's fallen race by persisting in wilful rebellion against God's law, so much so that the taint covers their whole soul and body; there is no sound part in their moral being; they are utterly and hopelessly corrupt. The proceeding in sin past all God's toleration is sometimes described as filling up the cup of iniquity till it overflows, and with its overflow God's longsuffering ceases: His anger is no longer restrained but destructively overwhelms the wicked one. But here the process is likened to a lengthening out of a long rope by a manufacturer of hemp to such a length that it reaches the limit of the place in which the operation is carried on, and can go no further.

"Sin is added to sin till the whole comes to an enormous length and magnitude. The rope-maker constantly increases and lengthens his rope, twisting in fresh material. An evil inclination, says an ancient Rabbi, is at the beginning like a fine hair-string, but at the finishing like a thick cart-rope. By a long progress in iniquity and a continued accumulation of sin men arrive at length at the highest degree of wickedness, bidding open defiance to God, and scoffing

at His threatened judgments, as is finely expressed in the next verse."—Lowth.

Hence we infer the familiar precept, 'Resist beginnings of bad habits.' I have read some words of Bishop Wilberforce's to this effect: 'Sins and neglect of duties draw us into servitude to them, because the conscience grows callous as to its guilt, and first will not, then *cannot* repent, and make an effectual struggle to be free from its cankering disease. A single sin, e.g. neglecting our daily private communing with God in prayer, is like a grain cast as an obstruction in our heavenward path. We are careless about removing it: careless to recover our welfare by penitence and by giving additional time and pains to the seeking of pardon and favour from the Father Whom we have slighted. We commit the same neglect again. The grain becomes a mole-hill. By and by the mole-hill becomes a hillock: the hillock a mountain.' And this is done by imperceptible degrees; Satan saying to us 'Oh never look at gloomy prospects! Enjoy youth and gaiety while you may: it will be time for the concerns of the soul by and by, when pleasures are not so enticing, engagements not so pressing; when reflection shall have sobered the ardour of overmastering desire.' Alas! such a piously disposed time of life never does come. Ambition, love of money, necessity of competing in the labour market, always keep the middle-aged man's heart engrossed

in this present world. How many smiling and seemingly happy exteriors there are, where the wearers feel that within nevertheless all is hopeless with them. They have let their spiritual life become extinct. They *would* forsake God. They would not prepare their hearts to take pleasure in His counsels, and do His works, and delight in His words: and so His gracious and enlightening and comforting Spirit has forsaken them. He moved their hearts when they were yet tender, open to pure and holy thoughts, apt for noble resolutions, able to be melted by His loving influence. But they stifled the movement with a stubborn refusal; 'No, no, I will be as my gay companions?' He would have fostered into flame the sparks of Divine affection which the appeals of the Divine Saviour aroused, Who had done so much for them; in silent and sweet pleadings with them, 'Wilt thou not bear any light cross for Me, give up no fleshly indulgences to watch with Me?' 'Not now; but later on in life,' is the answer. But what infatuation! For even those who remember their Creator in the days of their *youth* find such persistent obstacles put in the path of their salvation, so much force and ridicule, so much almost irresistible persuasion brought to bear on them to make them give up their godly principles; and the power of the natural corruption of their will, and the prevalence of wickedness abounding more and more as the times grow later is so great, that they can only with the

greatest difficulty hold fast by God, and live so faithfully true to Him as to have good hopes that God will accept them through Christ in spite of their many shortcomings. Nay, they find it very difficult to keep up the contest against utter indifference and spiritual sloth at all: much more to feel the same holy zeal and affection for the Lord which they used to have. How few of us are assured by our conscience that, while we are plodding on at our secular work industriously, we are in heart and mind ever and anon, as on the Lord's Day, ascending thither where Christ is, and in some sense, through the preserving power of daily supplies of Divine grace, continually dwelling with our Lord, becoming more heavenly in our disposition, tastes, and temper, and more fit for heaven, more truly apt to enjoy it were it offered us!

But if a man has not acquired this change of heart in his youth, every year he lives, with cares and interests increasing upon him, makes it harder for him to acquire it.

I took as an instance of the beginning of a fatal coil of thick rope not to be loosed a single occasion of neglect of private prayer-time. But most probably this is not *one way out of many* of leaving off behaving wisely, and of ceasing to possess firmly good hopes that it will go well with us in the end; but *the one way* which every renegade takes. There is a constant struggle with one's lax and slothful inclinations needed, that we may not decline the daily duty of

prayer such as is not formal but sincere. There is a frequent curbing of the passions and lulling of excitement wanted, to bring us to the naturally irksome but, as the spiritually minded pronounce it, pleasant work of praying. There must be an abstracting of our thoughts from scenes around us; a deafening of our mental ear to tumults of eager wishes; in order that we may remind ourselves that we are in the immediate presence of the great God of all: and it is necessary constantly to invigorate the hands that hang down and the faltering knees, that we may worthily address our petitions to Him in His awful majesty. Neglect of one opportunity of prayer means a debt to strain our spiritual powers harder on the next occasion to make up for lost time. Bodily weakness, fatigue, and disinclination go against our paying this debt: but, cost what trouble it may, the debt must be paid if we would be free from foul pollution of soul, and if we would not be false to the vows we have made to serve our Lord. If *one* omission be so hard to recover from, what must be the consequence of a long continuation of neglect? This, alas! It vitiates a man's soul altogether; so that he loses one after another all the better qualities he had. Then farewell to his joy and peace in believing: farewell to his command over his temper and over his tongue. So surely as he does not abound more and more in an exclusively and unreservedly holy condition of heart and in

progress in saintly life and conversation, what little he has left of zeal for the Lord, perhaps even, alas! of admiration for the grand eloquence of His inspired word, will be taken from him. Unbelief; inability to understand what once he found easy and natural to believe as articles of a Christian's faith, supervenes. Last stage of all; bold defiance and denial of the word of God is resorted to: the mysteries of our holy religion are held lightly and derided.

If anyone has relapsed into this dangerous way it is not too late to retrieve the error. The voice of God bids us try to retrieve it. There will be much gloom and sorrow in doing so at first. It will seem that all is perplexity and despondency: and whichever way we turn we may "behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof." But confidence and trust in God's forgiveness and mercy succeed. Hope is restored: fear is cast out: and one feels that, if the accepted time be seized to avail one's self of the grace and strength which God offers to enable us to serve Him in newness of life, all may be well yet.

It is remarked, in the explanation of the text from which I have quoted somewhat, that one sin draws on another. We well know how faults, done when we are under the authority of parents and schoolmasters, are often attempted to be concealed by falsehoods. And though, when we escape from authority we have not the same kind of motive for

falsehood, we know how one fault does often involve us in another, if we wish desperately to avoid suffering by the first. For instance, we may run into debt extravagantly: in that case we must either be unjust to our creditor, or be tempted to defraud a third party, to have the means of paying him. Thus it is that a long cable of iniquities is eked out.

But to take virtues and vices *by themselves*, and deal with their separate cultivation and avoidance is mere morality. It is not necessarily Christianity: for that teaches us to deal with spiritual life as a whole: to have the love of Christ within us; and find all holy thoughts, purposes, and actions springing from that. Let us be encouraged and warned by Isaiah's words which we have heard this morning to cherish this Advent thought,

“Before the dawning day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone:
The old man all be put away,
The new man all put on.”

SERMON IX.

PREACHED ON THE CONVERSION OF SAINT
PAUL, 1885.

PSALM CXIX. 94.

“I am thine; O save me: for I have sought thy commandments.”

THE few but touching words of this pious ejaculation are to those who ponder them wondrously prolific of divine instruction. Within a very minute compass they contain a summary of our holy creed. For they remind us of our Creator, our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, who works in us to will and to do according to God's good pleasure. They teach us our responsibility to God: His power to protect us if we do His will: they make us humbly conscious of our need of mercy, and our powerlessness to stand against our strong enemies without God's help: finally, they persuade us to live the life of the righteous, that our last end may be like his. For nothing can suit better a godly man's death-bed than an utterance like my text. Blessed will it be

for us, if, when the hour of supreme weakness comes upon us, we can confidently say, 'I *have* sought the Lord's commandments: I have given my best study to learn what they are: I have revered and done my best to obey them; and God will save me.' How blessed this! and not to be obliged to say, 'Had I but served my God with half the zeal with which I have served my pleasures or interests in the godless world, He would not now forsake me in my extremity.'

If we would have the protection and salvation which God gives to His own, we must betimes acknowledge ourselves His without reserve, without hypocrisy, and without self-sufficiency. When we think of the providential care which has defended our lives; the bounteous goodness of the Ruler of the universe, bestowed on His various creatures, and shewn in His works in all nature: and still more perhaps when we think of the pleadings and restraining appeals, the loving warnings to avoid evil things, and the encouragements to do that which is right, which the good Spirit has throughout our lives been working in us by means of our conscience, we all acknowledge that God *is*, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Again, we are ready to agree that God is great and glorious; righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works; when we call to mind His wonders of old time. "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath

triumphed gloriously," is our feeling sometimes. "He is a great King above all gods." His power is irresistible: He is clothed with majesty and honour. It cannot then be a degradation to the proudest spirit to own His supremacy. And as His hand sustains us with food and all things necessary to life; as we are His absolutely dependent creatures, and as He made us for His good pleasure, and to shew forth in our eternal happiness His glory, He has a right to our service. How can we either wish or dare to rebel against Him?

But these are such thoughts as we feel when we are among a great congregation praising God, at least with their lips, their hearts stirred to fervent, if transient, piety by lovely anthems in noble temples. We do not always feel thus. When we are injured and scorned, when wickedness is rampant about us, when we see the ungodly in abundant prosperity, and to do our duty, or even to let it be known that we are mindful of duty, brings down hatred and persecution on us, we think, 'What use, what wisdom is it to call myself the servant of a Lord who allows such monstrous wrong-doing in His household?' Again, when our headstrong will and corrupt inclinations are obstinately opposed to the prohibitions against various pleasures and indulgences which God's law imposes on us, we think, 'Is it freedom, is it tolerable to be bound by such a master? who is the Lord that I should obey *Him*, when He forbids

the course of action which my whole being intensely craves, and which all my companions and the general voice of mankind pronounce delightful and desirable?' Then also many say, 'Lord, I am Thine' just so long as they can *safely* say it; without danger of violating popular custom or opinion. But these think, 'I cannot possibly be the Lord's if the world requires me to be *its*.' But it is at all times and under all circumstances that the Lord calls on us to confess ourselves His: and to do so only occasionally will not engage Him to save us.

Again, He looks to the motive with which we say, "I am Thine." Some have said it ostentatiously, in the hearing of the world, in order to gain a fair reputation for piety. They have "done their alms and said their prayers before men to be seen of them." A few have wished out of sheer cowardice to avoid, by running to the monastery or assuming the clerical garb, the duty of bearing their part manfully in the battle of life, and doing their quota towards maintaining social law and order. Perhaps more have wished to gratify spiritual pride and have wished to be able to say that they were holier than abandoned publicans and sinners. More still have sought by putting on a cloak of outward religion to gain an undeserved ascendancy, influence, and dominion over the ordinary sort, to be put in profitable offices and posts of authority. I speak of the kind of man who likes to be a churchwarden or

synodsman and at the same time a thoroughly unprincipled rogue. Scripture, and, we may perhaps add, experience, shews us that an empty outward show of religion, a pretence of strictness, maintained at but little inconvenience before the public gaze, is mostly counterbalanced by neglect of religious duties in private and in the sight only of our Father who is in heaven. And by adroit management many a flinty-hearted wretch contrives to be master of the arrangements connected with the organ or even with the vestry while at his ease meditating schemes for devouring widows' houses, or doing some harm at least by way of slandering or undermining the position of those with whom he speaks friendly, some virulent mischief in some quarter or other. Though sometimes there may be behind the mask of decorum only the wish to lead a slothful, licentious life as a quiet, systematic sensualist.

Hypocrisy of the old sort has almost or quite died out. A *sanctimonious* villain is an exploded character. There is a strong reaction against assumed saintliness. But while no one says, 'I want you to think me holy though I dislike holiness,' yet not a few say practically, 'I never intend to do more than perform certain formalities of religion: and with those formalities I will have you to comply. If you want to have anything to do with me, if you want a character from me, you must acknowledge my party views to be the only right ones. As a man who has

marketed the fruit of his brain with keen skill, I demand to be held as a party leader, or a master or teacher in Israel: and observe I neither profess nor encourage heart-religion. Conscience is next to nothing with me: fashions; what is safe to pass muster with the congregation; what they *like*; is all I am concerned with. I give it; and require respect, deference, and a high position as my recompense.' Thus such a man tells us that he can only say to God formally, and in the due, prescribed, fashionable monotone, "I am Thine; O save me."

How different is true, genuine piety from this! Such, for instance, as David's. For probably when he wrote this psalm, things were calm and prosperous with him outwardly. But a sense of his vileness before God, a knowledge of the depravity, stubbornness, and ungrateful coldness of his heart and its slowness to devote itself in Spirit and in truth to God, gave him no rest when in the privacy of his chamber he fell on his knees to pray. 'Ah,' thought he, 'all men think well of me: all like me, and vote me a genial and agreeable companion; but how vile a wretch does God know me to be! how mean, paltry, and carnal are my imaginations! how utterly without hope am I unless my Saviour will stretch forth His hand to draw me from the mire of sensuality, guide me out of the dark mist of unbelief!' *That* is the spirit in which to say, "I am Thine; O save me." 'Deliver me,' we should mean by it, 'from the

tempters flitting in the air round me: deliver me, from pride, false security, trifling, idleness, unfaithfulness to my trust. Give me the grace of Thy Spirit to lead me in the right way. And above all own me, O Saviour, as thine, when thou comest in Thy glory: and to that end help me to be content to bear the Cross with Thee and to confess Thee before men in this present life.'

How few people do we find who give us the impression that they are humble and contrite towards God: pure in heart and unfeignedly purposed to keep His commandments: and who, because they feel their need of God's mercy, have a fellow-feeling towards all their brethren, as all partakers of the same poor frail humanity, all children, but alas! erring ones, of the same gracious Father, each of them to be saved from sins, both deadly and more venial, by the intercession of his brother for him, by a kindly bearing towards him, and a gently persuasive example recommending virtue by its evidently happy and cheerful effects! How few there are who welcome to their society and friendship all comers as a rule, and decline only those against whom very scandalous things can be proved; instead of sternly rejecting all comers as a rule and admitting only a very few to their acquaintance, the rest not being grand enough or not able or clever enough for them! Such proud and haughty scorers say in effect, 'I am Christ's to the extent that the onward

progress of civilization and knowledge sanctions. I am His so long as the usages of modern society can be conformed with ; so long as it does not interfere with my present comfort and convenience. But what need have I—so strong, so vigorous, so respected, and accustomed to have my own way—of *mercy*? Why should *I* say Save me? Who can hurt me?’

I put it to you whether that be not the tone of our people generally now? Whether even in church there be any sign of humility before God: whether the voices of our congregations are not mixtures of insolent taunts and patronizing sneers? What else can be expected when the people are encouraged by their subservient clergy in the delusion that *singing* is the only thing necessary in public worship: that the clergy are only ordained to be dictated to by the *choirs*; and that weekly attendance at early Communion (without any preparation for it) is a plenary dispensation permitting sin all the rest of the week; and that the Liturgy was only made as a subject on which the clergy might shew an ingenious variety in their ways of breaking their promise to read it and nothing else?

No: steadfast devotion to God’s service; trembling anxiety not to lose our salvation; desire to increase in the knowledge of the Lord’s law, and in perception of His heavenly wisdom and glorious perfections—not in order that we may gain credit as well-informed theological scholars, but because the

inner, secret life of the soul is rejoiced and nourished by contemplating God's statutes; and because one looks forward to the pleasure of sharing in that contemplation and that increase of learning with saints above, from whom all selfish and sinister motives are for ever banished—this is fearfully rare. Otherwise I need not have eked out trite comments to-day on a rapturous exclamation of a pure spirit; on language which the Holy Ghost has ere now supplied to thousands of simple, loving souls; the natural expression of every devoted heart to God; a sermon in itself; and one on which many unuttered meditations of humble piety and thankfulness to God our Saviour were the best comments. But in the present general decay of piety we must draw on our reserves. We must call forth our innermost sentiments of affection; leave no more to the cognizance of God, and Him only, our deepest and tenderest emotions; lest some means of reviving God's work in our stony hearts be left untried.

Now *why* will not men, though reason and conscience tell them that it is wise and good to do so, act up to this principle, that they are the Lord's? Why will they not confess it wholly and sincerely, and admit that they must seek His commandments? It is not only because they live in days when there seems positively no support nor sympathy from any brethren in doing so; and when no good result whatever seems to be gained by serving the Lord

truly; but because they know of themselves without any teaching or experience, that to be God's servants must always be an offence to the world; because there has always been and always will be, so long as the world lasts, persecution for righteousness' sake, and the godless many have always laughed at the few who pray. And even if this were not so, if there were no let nor hindrance from without to holiness we have such a strong natural distaste to it that we are only with great difficulty led to practise it: and to persevere in it involves a continual battle against the will of the flesh. Godly men, however noble their condition, as David's was, have always had their enemies for their religion's sake; enemies who have tried to shame them out of it, if they cannot forcibly silence them. The offence of the Cross is well understood among Christians. They are always being reproached with the tameness and meekness of their disposition. Yet is there anything unmanly and poor-spirited in the career of men like David and Daniel? Was there any room for a laugh against them in their lives? Is not their character more envied even by an ambitious worldling than that of Alexander, Cambyses, and all bold brutal ruffians who have spurned under foot all opposition to their will?

Is St Paul shewn in a tame, puny plight when he, a prisoner, took command of the ship which carried the Roman centurion and soldiers who were leading him into captivity; when Paul dictated to them

terms how they might save their bodies, and when he dictated to the trembling Philippian jailor how he might save his perishing soul? Instead of the Christian's being weak and timorous he is in the best sense the most combative of men if he lives up to his principles. St Paul was always 'getting into trouble with the authorities,' as men would say of him if he were amongst us now. He was always being brought before magistrates, being expelled from towns because he disturbed the peace; always embroiled in litigation. And rare are those favoured spots where the true Christian now would be allowed to protest against wickedness and to take the course which his conscience prescribed to him, without incurring a most detestable reputation as a meddler, intruder, and generally a public enemy and nuisance.

But be of good cheer, if you are *minded* to serve Christ faithfully as St Paul did, but shrink from the opposition and hatred it will cost. God, who claims us as His, since He is faithful to His promises and able to perform them, will defend those who are but executing His commandments. He most certainly does not leave those who obey Him, though they seem to be dragged into lifelong turmoils and woes. He does not leave them without assurances that in truth all things are working together for their good. If we are bold enough to proclaim to all men by our conduct, 'I keep the law of God, Whose I am and Whom I serve,' His angel will be sent to bid us *fear not*, as he was to St Paul. Christ, Who has in

Himself made known to us the invisible God, has declared to us the same thing. He has bidden His little flock "fear not, for it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom."

But let us remember that it is not only against outwardly violent foes that we need cry out to God "I am Thine ; O save me." There are many allurements which beset us in our quiet, safe seasons of peace and plenty. Pleasure, excitement, and idleness are seducing spirits which flatteringly visit us and say to each, 'Be *mine* ; be not that other hard master's.' Let us meet them with a firm refusal : 'Thou poor and paltry bauble, I will not be thy slave, to be betrayed by thee into ruin. I have promised to be the Lord's. He has promised to give me His Spirit, to make me love the work of seeking His commandments. He calls me to the light task of improving my mind by studying the lore which geniuses, some more, some less enlightened by the ray of divine truth, have been enabled to impart to mankind. By my receiving this learning upon the surface of my soul ; especially by my studying God's own holy word and revelation of His will, I am kept from giving myself to evil spirits, which have no right to me. And as God's truth sinks down into my soul's inmost depths, all its powers are vivified, so that they yearn to serve Christ better and better, to the end that I, continuing His only, may rejoice in His salvation evermore.'

SERMON X.

PREACHED FEBRUARY 1, 1885.

MATTHEW XX. 16.

“So the last shall be first, and the first last.”

By omitting the well-known solemn warning “for many are called but few chosen” from my text I shall possibly fix in your memory that the Revisers in 1881 decided that this clause was unauthorized here, though genuine in chapter xxii. 14. If we take note that the parable in the Gospel for to-day deals only with the saved, contrasting two different sorts of them, while that of the wedding-garment contrasts the prepared saved with the unprepared lost, we shall see that it is a very appropriate observation to make after the latter parable, ‘And thus it comes to pass that, alas! few are saved;’ but not appropriate to say, ‘One redeemed differeth from another redeemed in glory, for alas! few are the redeemed.’ Yet by observing the distinction

between *κλητοί* here, those who being called to work in the vineyard obey the call, and *κεκλημένοι* (ch. xxii. 4) those who, invited to the feast, refuse the invitation, we may attach this significance to the solemn clause in question, if allowed to be here a true reading. 'There are, taken by themselves and not as compared with the lost, *many* who in God's mercy are saved, who are called to receive *some* reward, but *few* who have attained to the highest possible human perfection; few who are selected as the most approved by the Lord, and whom He regards as most eminent and noble in the ranks of the redeemed.'

This is so, because most have let some human infirmity cling to them, have not been able to receive sayings which recommend, though they may not absolutely require, a giving up of all that is most pleasant to humanity, and have not been able to sell all that they have and give to the poor, and so are not as perfect as they might have been. A little pride, a little self-sufficiency, a slightly self-complacent retrospect at the work by which they have achieved for themselves great honour and fame, is a foible apt to attach it to even good men. They have had, we will suppose, great advantages, and have improved them by study and wise activity. They mean perhaps to be humble, and they profess to be modest: but somehow they are rather annoyed if praise and credit are awarded to others, unless it

be accompanied by a proviso reserving their right to the *first* place. This is the spirit which made the labourers who had been hired at the beginning of the day murmur at the master's giving as much to those who had come in at the eleventh hour as to them. It wants the noble, Christ serving mind of a St Paul, to be free from this jealousy. If we candidly mark the circumstances under which he occasionally takes credit and praise to himself, and compare with such assumption the cheerfulness with which he plied a humble manual work in order to gain his bread; if we remember the frank and conciliatory way in which he deferred to the opinions and wishes of teachers vastly inferior to himself in ability, in spiritual gifts, and in plainly proved favour with Christ, we shall see that he was a genuinely humble-minded man, unaffectedly free from the fault of being "wise in his own conceit"; and that, chief apostle of the Gentiles as he was, he could have uttered from his heart the noble words of Moses, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them."

On the other hand Peter, somewhat wanting in this spirit when he, with an approach to vaunting, set off his and his brother apostles' resignation of their all for the sake of following Christ against the reluctance of the rich young man to forfeit his riches, is an instance of a good and faithful follower

of the Lord who is a little too conscious of the service he has done, a little too fond of honour. Perhaps there may be some time honoured pastor who has deserved well of his parish on account of his strenuous exertions for it and his unimpeachable character long sustained; but who yet rather likes to be considered a sort of king of the place; stands rather stiffly on his dignity; and wants a little contact with the outer world and the dispassionate crowd of strangers impartial even to rudeness. Thus Peter doubtless was purified from the dross of vanity by the severe hand of persecution and affliction; by the discipline which visited him in the course of his ministry with imprisonment and stripes and finally imposed on him the martyr's crown. A little buffeting by adversity and unkindness if a man have at heart a good disposition, amenable to God's corrective dispensations, is very wholesome. For by these things God would in mercy draw a too careless man to Himself and gently cure the maladies of his soul. Such adversity is proverbially like "the icy fang"

"And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
This is no flattery; these are counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am."

Yes, most zealous, devoted Apostle; thy reward is great in heaven; but many that are first shall be last. Thou, now so confident, shalt be withstood to the face at Antioch, and shewn to be insincere by

one who shall be the last-called of the Apostles, who shall need to be rescued by a miracle from his cruel, sinful opposition to the Gospel, but in the end shall be confessed to be the very chief among the glorious company of the Apostles.

The words of my text are commonly applied to the relations between the Jews and the Gentiles. The former grudged the latter admission into God's favour. 'Shall nations which have bowed down to idols and been wanton profligates for many centuries now at the eleventh hour of the world's day bring their wretched tears of penitence and cries for mercy, and hurried eagerness to do works pleasing to God amongst His people chosen of old and specially privileged'? We can hardly doubt that pious Jews, even men like Symeon, who had lovingly waited for the consolation of Israel and acknowledged that Christ was appointed to bring the cheering ray of hope and peace with God to the Gentiles, yet chafed at losing the national prerogatives. Was not this the feeling of the Apostles themselves, when they were awaiting the Pentecostal bestowal of the Holy Spirit on them? Just before the Ascension they made one more appeal for the return of Jewish pre-eminence. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel"? Nor was it without grave doubts and reluctance that a devout Gentile, even such as Cornelius, was admitted to brotherhood, without conforming to the severe rites of the ceremonial Law.

But we want to know what the application of the text to the case of our own souls is. I think it is this: If we think of our service to God as a contract according to which eternal life is *due* to us provided we manfully strive against the world and the flesh we shall meet with a rebuff. Even suppose we very early train ourselves to do no ill to our neighbour, to be kind, forbearing, and charitable to him, to keep ourselves pure from excesses and covetousness; suppose we do not neglect the worship of God and find a certain pleasure in communing with Him; still by valuing too much our own works, by not feeling we owe all to the free grace of God, we shall be fostering something too much like pride and exclusiveness in our hearts for us to be as acceptable to God as we might be. Either we shall be always, perhaps unconsciously, thinking of the praise and deference which we have a right to expect from people avowedly more erring Christians than ourselves and bound by a debt of gratitude to us for truthful earnest teaching and diligent example in the right way; or we shall consider only the interests of our own class or party: we shall not have room in our affections for all true fellow workers. We shall say 'I belong to the set which came in at the third hour, and I do not understand, nor want to have anything to do with, the set that came in at the sixth hour. I come from this or that school, or am mixed up with this or that section of Churchmen. I am

one of the refined and genteel class, and, as to the common people, if even they could conform to my habits, I should not like fraternizing with them. There is now a necessary reserve maintained between me and them; and I should not like it to be brought about that there need be no restriction of intercourse. I should not be comfortable at a complete removal of the distinction between party and party, set and set, rank and rank. In time and in eternity I should wish the strangers to be strangers still: I should not grudge them happiness if only they would enjoy it at a distance from me.'

We may here observe that those called at the intermediate hours are not said to have murmured at pay-time. This may suggest to us that our lot is favourable to us, in that it is cast in the mid station of society. It is not so far removed from the power of enjoying a little of the luxuries of the highest cultivation and elegances of art which adorn the dwellings of the very rich, that we need envy them. It is not so far removed in style of living from the inferior clerk's, the trader's, or even the skilful artizan's class, that we are tempted to despise them or are marks for their envious ill-will. We are free from the great temptations which specially beset both the very rich and the very poor. That is a matter for pious thankfulness.

But though a happy mien as to rank is desirable, it is not so at all as to *time* of coming into the Vine-

yard. We cannot begin too early to serve Christ. "We have borne the burden and heat of the day during a life-long service, and as we have had more hardships than others, we ought to be more rewarded"; this sounds a very plausible murmur at first, but there is nothing in it. For look at the disadvantages of the men of the eleventh hour. To come into the Christian vineyard very late is to miss the invigorating, innocent freshness of the morning or childhood of life: to miss the warmth of mature strength when the meridian glow of manly activity, if it does something to tire and exhaust, does more perhaps to fire with noble zeal and diligence. Come late, you come with impaired faculties, to find the last working-hour filled with a benumbing chill which is a drawback to work, rather than with a refreshing cool inviting to exertion. The stiffness, awkwardness, and hesitation, involved in trying generally any handicraft for the first time in old age, is a token of that slowness to shake off old prejudices, that strangeness, and reluctance to accept new and healthful rules, which besets those who become converts late in life; when they would wish very much for that heat of generous enthusiasm, that energetic fervour, of which the others complain as "the burden and heat of the day."

The most beloved by the Lord are, we are taught by Scripture to believe, those who are most sincerely conscious of their need of His mercy: those who love

their Saviour best because they feel He has forgiven them most; those who follow His pure and guileless example in simplicity and singleness of purpose: who do not seek their own glory: who, because they know what the plague of every man's heart, sin, is, are towards all Christian brethren, for they know all must have their particular infirmities and trials, pitiful and courteous, sympathetic and pleasant spoken. They are not malicious and revengeful, because they know that if a fellow-servant owes them a hundred pence, they owe the Supreme Lord ten thousand talents: and that it is as good as it is necessary to forgive from the heart one's brother's trespasses, hoping that the heavenly Father will forgive what one has committed against Him. They are not self-conceited; they neither by word nor by demeanour remind God or man of their long services in the past: for to keep silence on one's own merits is one of the first principles of modesty. They humbly, they frankly own that when they have done all they are unprofitable servants; and that any reward that God gives is given entirely out of His free bounty and mercy. These, because they are transparently honest at heart, and do not pursue the worldling's usual tortuous tracks towards advancement and self, are somewhat despised by the world for simplicity. But they know that it is in wickedness only that they are children; and that of such Jesus said "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven

and earth, that thou hast hid holy mysteries from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." And again they are content to forego honours and dignities; to do humble offices for their neighbour's good, because they are mindful of Jesus' saying, "Let him that will be greatest among you be as the least, and him that would be chief, as he that doth serve." Thus we see the meaning of the words as applied to us "So the last shall be first." God holds as first those who are in truth and simplicity willing to be last.

But ah! where shall we find such? Many worthy persons to whom we freely attribute great merit, as merit goes among us men, plainly by their bearing never forget that they are the great and good so-and-so. They are somewhat haughty and distant. It is mere manner. It is part of their constitution: as essential an ingredient in them as the shape of their features. It is not such a blemish, we firmly believe, as to keep them from gaining heaven: but it *is* a slight defect. For what made coldness, reserve, and hauteur a part of their natural disposition? Why this; that they would not in their early days let their natural sympathy for *all* poor suffering humanity have its free course. They *would* think of their own exploits; they would accept flattery; they would get a habit of comparing themselves with "those Publicans"; of saying "These last have wrought but one hour." Then habit

became a second and a worse nature. And so, great and good workers as they have really been, these first shall be last in the kingdom of heaven, which for once, it appears, in the Gospel of to-day means the Church triumphant, not the Church militant.

I would not have you finally, my brethren, among the last therein but among the first. I would have you not saved as one who has come through fire and only barely escaped with life, but saved as those whose work abideth and who receive a full reward. And one great means thereto is to cherish that large-heartedness, kindness, and affection to all comers which is alone consistent with an honest and a thoroughly cheerful doing to men whatsoever we would they should do unto us : which cannot be counterfeited : which when shewn is felt to be genuine, and which draws forth admiration, even if that admiration be dissembled under a sneer.

From this Gospel's being read on a Sunday on which Genesis i. is read we may well suppose our pious fathers saw in it an allegory of the history of the whole world ; the nations of which received at different times the call to do the work of God, and were welcomed into the vineyard whenever in repentance and faith they came, though there was nothing in their excuse that no man had hired them before. For God at first made man holy, and instructed and encouraged him to do the Divine will : and after man had fallen God again shewed

him a way of recovery from the disease of sin. Then man became an alien and utter stranger to saving truth because he did not choose to retain the knowledge of God. When this world's lifetime is over, *how* shall the last be first and the first last ?

It might be fanciful perhaps to contrast the advantages which the earliest and the latest generations of men have had, and to expect that when the godly of both ages are all gathered together, ready for the wages to be given at the close of the day, a balance will be struck between the virtues of both. Thus: the *first* ages had the advantage of holy simplicity of mind ; of nearness to God ; of unsophisticated child-like innocence ; compared with the scepticism, the cynical, sneering, dissatisfied temper, the proneness to luxury, of the *last* ages. But these on the other hand have clear, distinct testimony to the fact of the sacrifice of the Son of God for them ; and they have convincing evidence of the power of the Gospel to soften the hard heart, comfort the miserable, and make wars to cease : whereas Adam and his sons had a very distant, imperfect, feeble notion of that redemption in which they were required to put their trust. It may be found in the end that the godly of old had grace given them to make up for their want of evidence that the blood of bulls and goats was not really the effectual offering, and that the ceremonies of the Law were but shadows of good things, of healthful, saving ordin-

ances to come. Thus Abraham was vouchsafed a sure and joyful faith moving him to deny himself worldly lusts; a self-denial for which God honoured him, and in which He gave him encouragement by the seal of Circumcision, saying to him, 'I accept thy well proved faith, and continuing it thou shalt be well pleasing to Me.' So the first shall be as good as the last, notwithstanding the helps which we have had in our time from stores of learning to make us wise, and comforts brought in by skilful inventions tending to make life happier and religion easier. Yes, tending: but the result in this matter is different to the expectation. Instead of our becoming holier, the modern style of life is found to make it terribly hard to pray and worship God as we know we ought. Yet if any man resolve by the Lord's help to keep himself unspotted from the world; to bear up against the assaults of persecution, sarcasm, and slander which he has to encounter; and especially against the dead weight of utter indifference which so strongly depresses his efforts to serve the Lord; he shall be as good as the first; as acceptable as holy Enoch or Noah: a high-souled prince, an illustrious saint among the crowds of ignoble, dishonourable rebels; one to be described by the opening of the first Apocalyptic seal (or age of the world) rather than the sixth: (see Revelation vi. 2, 15) a joyous hardy warrior going forth pure from the presence of the Lord God conquering and to conquer;

not a miserable wretch cowering under the rocks and into the caves because he knows the ungodly cannot stand in the approaching judgment.

The time draws on when the last link in the circling chain of ages shall be joined to the first : when "the dead shall live, the living die"; when the general resurrection shall shew the last and the first all equal; none possessed of any merits of their own ; but all who are saved dependent on the righteousness of Christ imputed to those who have shewn their faith in Him by their works. The chief concern for us is this ; shall we be found in the Lord's vineyard at all when the evening comes and the steward is bidden "call the labourers and give them their hire"? Shall we be found to have worked together in unity and concord, without jealousy and bitterness? The great means thereto is to obey the call to work for Christ's cause, and not to lounge all the day idle in the outer world of unrepented sin and wilful rebellion. But then when we have obeyed the call, stedfastness in the race is wanted. It is necessary to be confident in the remembrance that with us it is not one only that wins ; but every one who runs well obtains a prize ; but also to remember that every one who strives for this incorruptible crown must keep under his body, and bring it into subjection : that we must be temperate in all things ; and that a grudging, envying spirit is apt to lead on to worse things than what we may call a beginning

of a censure from the Lord of the vineyard. The sharp words in the parable "Is thine eye evil because I am good"? are quickly broken off; and all ends well. But beware! The mischief may go farther at another provocation. There is such a thing as being cast out of the vineyard altogether, as one too fond of contention, anger, and jealousy: too carnally minded, and given to murmurings and hateful rivalries, to do the work of the Gospel of peace and recommend it to all mankind.

SERMON XI.

PREACHED FEBRUARY 8, 1885.

2 CORINTHIANS XI. 30.

“If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things concerning mine infirmity.”

THERE is no better instance than to-day's of that beautiful blending of several parts of Scripture into one appropriate lesson, which shews the spiritual discernment, the admirable taste, the quiet wisdom and fatherly care of our bishops of old. I rejoice to think that in drawing up the Lessons, and Epistles and Gospels they took heed not just to satisfy the public opinion of the day, but to guide me and every true-hearted son of the Church in my meditations, and to help me when I should give a time every Sabbath to examination of my soul's welfare; when I should ask myself 'Does the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwell in me? Is the life I lead in the flesh one inspired with faith in the Son of God? Are evil habits, which seem to

gain such strength over me, to prevail, or will God hear my prayer "let my soul live and it shall praise Thee, and Thy judgments shall help me"? Will He, seeing me sincere in my desire to conquer the world and the flesh, give me grace to prefer the way of truth to the way of pleasure?

No one praises the compilers of our Liturgy for the agreement I notice between the parts of Scripture selected each Sabbath. Few seem aware of it. Some say that to find such an agreement is to twist words into an unnatural shape; to fancy resemblances which do not really exist. But I think that to see the harmonious connection between Old and New Testament precepts is a good sign; we are in a more encouraging state when we perceive it than when we do not. When I recognize that by the setting side by side of the Third of Genesis with our present Epistle and Gospel, a touching and convincing parable is provided me, which says, 'Ye are fallen: but it is in your power if, the Lord's grace co-operating with you, ye labour hard in the occupation of the soul as well as of the body to recover eternal life,' I am moved to feel 'How can I resist this earnest appeal of heavenly wisdom to me? Having eyes shall I not see? Hearing shall I not understand?'

It is a beginning of good things to reason thus. To *act* on it; to unite the Church Services into one forcible message from God, into a declaration of His

will in some one particular; and stedfastly to purpose to obey that injunction with all one's soul and strength; that is to nourish our spiritual life unto increasing sanctification and glory.

We may observe how on turning from the contemplation of Christ's Divine nature and mighty works, to an examination of ourselves; what we are and what we have to do; there is one Sunday in which all is pure, innocent, and hopeful with man. He is possessor of Paradise. He is a labourer in a vineyard; a runner in a race; which are sure to produce him a joyful reward. There is no recollection of a Curse and a Fall to mar his prospects. Except that in the Septuagesima Collect, mention is made of our deserving punishment, from which punishment, however, it concerns the glory of God's name that His people should be mercifully delivered.

But to-day there is a sad change. The sentence of death and the taint of corruption pass upon every man born into the world. Yet there is a gleam of hope. There is seed sown which may spring up and bring forth eternal life. But this shews that full regeneration and happiness are not to be had without our going through death. For "except a corn of wheat *die* it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." The sowing of the seed, of which we read in the Gospel, reminds us of Christ's being the first-fruits of a mortality sown in corruption but raised in incorruption, because it has

crucified the body of sin ; because it has made in Christ an expiation for sin accepted by God. If we would share the resurrection unto life we must share the painful death unto sin.

But of course primarily we are reminded that the doctrine of salvation through Christ, taught by God to men through prophets, through the law-giver, through His blessed Son, and through Apostles and ministers succeeding them, cannot do men good unless the heart be prepared for it by repentance ; unless it conquer its natural disinclination to holiness ; unless it be constantly striving against those tendencies to relapse into sinful pleasure and carelessness which throughout our lives assail us. This labour and trouble corresponds to the anxious operations and watchfulness which it is implied in the parable that the husbandman has to bestow on his good ground and plants before a good harvest can be produced.

The terrible words of the primeval curse make us reflect what wretched creatures we are. Though one man may surpass another in temporal advantages, yet every one must find that the flesh is heir to some bitter woes. 'Since glorying must be stopped before long by the common enemy death, why indulge in the vanity?' it might be asked. Yet St Paul does not say "I must not glory," but "*if* I must," then let it be for one sort of object rather than another. Must I at all? The answer of the

world is certainly 'Yes. If you do not make a fair show in some department or other; if you do not assume some enviable quality, riches, strength, or cleverness; if you do not din in the ears of each person that all the rest believe in you and that therefore *he* must, you will be despised. You must feign a self-satisfied cheerfulness if you have it not.'

The Bible says, "Delight thou in the Lord:" be not always downcast. The Apostle says, "We not only bear tribulation, we glory in it." Glory in tribulation, in proofs of weakness in general! Is not that an extravagant figure of speech? Can it be seriously meant? That it is seriously meant, and that there is comfort to be derived from the sorry plight in which the human race finds itself and from the account which we have heard in Genesis to-day, is what I will try briefly to shew.

Without saying that the result of the Fall has been man's *increased* happiness; without saying that out of evil *more* good has come to man than he would otherwise have enjoyed—for to go into such a question would perhaps be impertinent curiosity—every one admits that there are cases in which death is better than life. The profane and unbelieving ones of the world say that acute bodily suffering and worldly afflictions, such as utter and irretrievable loss of good fame, would find a happy release in death. They would say, 'You cannot make me

admit that there can be anything worse after death than such poor wretches are suffering.' Many such have shewn that they felt so and therefore have rushed to suicide. The true Christian says, 'Death is a joyful event to some, but only to those who being grievously persecuted have held fast their trust in Christ and fought the good fight of faith.' A saint who has been long troubled by tormenting enemies for righteousness' sake, though at times he likes the prospect of living on, to see the success of his labour in the Lord and to save his dear friends and children in the faith from bereavement and defencelessness, sets against this his desire to be with the Lord speedily. No happiness can be so great to him as this; death therefore is preferable to life. Also against the natural horror of the grave which must sometimes assert itself he, inspired by sure undismayed faith, sets the certainty of possessing immediately after dissolution, before as well as after the resurrection, that glory, felicity, and immortality which may be considered as the garment, as well as the mansion, of the blessed.

This then is a reason for glorying in what is the most palpable mark of the infirmities which have come upon us owing to the Fall, namely in death. Amongst other proofs is sickness, in so far as it leads to death; and in truth every little ephemeral ailing that we have is an attack of our great enemy on us, which though repelled for the time is a token that

he will again attack us and at last overcome us. So, since death has been proved a cause of triumph to the godly, sickness is also a gain. In respect of the pain which sickness often inflicts, it is a cause for glorying, when we find how strong the support, how sweet the consolation is which Christ imparts to his servants thus afflicted.

Persecution too, the being slighted and vilified by the world, brings with it rejoicing, if we are conscious that—since every faithful disciple represents his Lord and since if the disciple be rejected and reviled the Lord is being so treated—our suffering is a proof of our maintaining the Lord's cause, which He will make to triumph before long.

Misfortunes and bereavements also have encouragement in them; inasmuch as they shew us that the Lord deals with us as sons, since it is those whom He *loveth* that He chasteneth, using for them that means of purifying them and making them fit for glory which He does not use for the stubborn and rebellious, but leaves them to grow more and more hard-hearted and to fill up the measure of their iniquity.

There is also to be considered the pain which we have from the working of a law in our members contrary to the law of God. We must reckon in the shame and vexation which we feel when we see that in spite of our resolves to curb an angry temper and virulent tongue, and to shew blasphemers and de-

spisers that we reverence and obey our Lord, we have, to avoid being thought singular, joined in with a godless public; we have given vent to the spite which would rankle in our hearts; we have displayed injurious behaviour and uttered railing accusations and irritating taunts. The infirmity by which we let the flesh subdue the Spirit is a very grievous one. It is only those who persevere unflinchingly in their endeavours to rise after each fall, to be restored to God's favour after every wayward wandering according to their own devices and desires, who can, on regarding their life as a whole, like St Paul thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord for the triumph which they obtain by redeeming grace.

We need scarcely be told that little peculiarities of manner amounting to breaches of courtesy; a certain roughness of tone which must hurt more or less the feelings of some with whom we hold intercourse; such things are not things to be proud of, just because they are overlooked for the sake of sterling worth, goodwill towards man, honesty, and staunchness to principles concealed beneath the unprepossessing surface. *Such* a glorying in the things concerning our infirmities is absurd. Yet some people seem to think that harshness, inaccessibility, and bluntness of speech rather become them. Because flatterers and their own deceptive hearts have told them that their defects are a part of their worthy character, and a good part too, they glory, or at least

calmly acquiesce in infirmities which they cherish; whereas the only true glory with which these things can be connected is the praise of striving by self-restraint to be rid of them, and of practising an open and generous acknowledgment and reparation of faults against our brethren.

The various weak points and miseries which make up our infirmity, and the cure which the Lord by His gracious help gives His own chosen ones for each of them, would each make a theme for a discourse full of pity for many mournful incidents, and of admiring love for the power which makes the believer's weakness strong. I have merely noticed some obvious topics with what you may think a cold formality; but I do not mean to say that it is as easy to triumph over our many ills as it is to give a list of them. I would leave this impression in your minds: I think everyone who reads the third chapter of Genesis must feel that a fearful, inevitable doom has come on this present life of ours. Everyone who gives himself time to reflect, even without reading the Bible, on the present position and future state of his soul will feel that there is much unhappiness for it to endure, much danger to dread. Is not the path of our life sometimes all thorns and thistles? all mortification, annoyance and cankering care? Does not the outlook sometimes bring the gloomy desponding apprehension that we shall only go on from bad to worse? Let us gather from the Scripture of to-day that the cause

of all this misery is the actual sin and the sinful disposition which has had dominion over us since Adam and Eve's disobedience.

Our wisdom is to make the best we can out of our present wretched condition: to see what hope it contains, and increase that hope into full and joyful assurance of recovery. If we do not grapple with the ills of this life but evade them, supposing that by ambition or frivolity or licentiousness we can forget that we were born to sorrow; if we devolve on people weaker or poorer than ourselves all the toil and trouble which must be undergone that we may have at least an average share of such prosperity as is possible here below, we ignore God's deed. He has cursed the ground for our sake: we say it shall not bring forth thorns and thistles. We say we will be merry and gay always: He has said "Every man shall bear his own burden." Recovery from the fall is terribly hard, with all the spiritual ministrations we have, all our faith that Christ has died as our ransom and is ever ready to give His enabling and sanctifying Spirit to those who are determined to follow Him in sincerity and purity of heart and innocence. But it is better to make painful and unceasing attempts to rise and stand, than stay grovelling in sensual torpor, and sink deeper in the mire of moral pollution, though we may be meanwhile told we are passing very respectable and successful lives.

It is lamentable to find society talking now and then of the best way to live a happy life; some praising up sanitary reforms, some this and that kind of diet; all deliberately leaving out the only possible way of procuring a measure of real genuine cheerfulness and contentment, the "having a good hope because of God's words" in which He promises reconciliation to Himself for those who shew their faith in His blessed Son: nay, discouraging and putting down those who stand in the old paths and proclaim that, as ever so now, the heart must be weaned from the devices and fashions of the natural man, the unsanctified conversation of the world eschewed, and all be new and pure in Christ Jesus. There are very few who do not seem to think that to call upon God with a humble and fervent heart; to honour at all times and places in all company His holy Name and His word; to have also such opinions about our duty to our neighbour as, for example, to be true and just in all our dealings—so we used to be taught in our childhood—is to be ridiculously behind the times. To supplant competitors by any trick; to care only for being found out in crime; to grasp at riches or power by *any* means, and browbeat anyone who asks how the much worshipped success was attained; such are the maxims of most men. To labour, duly authorised by the Lord, for the good of men's souls; to want no worldly honours, gains or distinctions; not to

usurp another man's province but confine one's self with the lines which God has appointed one for work; to go through hardships and degradations such as St Paul tells us he had experienced; this provokes a smile of contempt from the world; or else it "suffers such a one as a fool," and that not for long either "seeing it itself is wise." We hear now and then of people's taking on themselves the conduct of a foreign or home mission. But if we noticed *how* such renowned so-called workers for Christ are praised, we should, I suspect, often find that the praise was awarded for their splendid disregard to the necessity of being duly ordained to the work and to the wrong involved in intruding unasked into another minister's field of labour, or for some bold irregularity about their procedure, which in truth is a cause for blame, not for praise.

In what work then may we glory? We may rejoice in any deeds in our past lives which prove us to have been genuine self-sacrificing servants of Christ. The scorn and ill-treatment with which we have met are considered as marks of our dishonour by the many: we consider them our glory. They are undesirable in themselves, we freely admit. They are undeniable proofs of our weakness and *present* lack of success, and of our unpopularity; and if by prudence and tact we can rightly avoid them, we are not such base hypocrites as to court persecution that we may extract a little pity from

the softer-hearted, and enjoy what some call 'the luxury of having a grievance.' All the injuries, however, which spiteful people do us for Christian duty's sake; all the difficulty we find in persevering in our upward path; our trouble in subduing our inclination to idleness; our oft-repeated penitence for the backslidings with which conscience reproaches us; are tokens that we have chosen the better part, that we have resolved to suffer with the Lord's inheritance rather than enjoy the short-lived pleasures of sin. And these are "things concerning our infirmity" of which we glory, not noisily and needlessly in the public hearing, nor before men, unless we are challenged to say we are not ashamed of Christ; but in our inmost communing with God. We glory in them with such humility that our language within ourselves is this, "Lord God, who seest that I put not my trust in anything that I do, be my guide and comfort through this vale of tears, this sin-stricken world; that, redeemed by the blood of Thy Son, I may be brought back to Thy heavenly Paradise."

SERMON XII.

PREACHED FEBRUARY 15, 1885.

GENESIS IX. 5.

*“And surely your blood of your lives will I require ;
at the hand of every beast will I require it, and
at the hand of man ; at the hand of every man’s
brother will I require the life of man.”*

WHEN God left man in possession of the earth anew after the flood, and was as it were the nobleman who went into a far country for a long time, He established a covenant between Himself and all that had the breath of life. This covenant was to shew on what terms blessing and preservation might continue to be enjoyed by all, and redemption be hoped for by man as signified in the Rainbow. For the Rainbow was a token that not only should no flood drown the earth again, but that when the Father beheld the face of His Son, the Saviour of mankind, He would save the souls of those who had faith in Jesus from sinking in the deep waterflood of despair and death.

The terms of the Covenant were firstly that the sacrifice of the bloodshedding of Christ should be ever honoured by life-blood's not being devoured like ordinary meat; and secondly that there should be no slaying, no cruelty, among the earthly family, but men should through all generations band themselves together to enforce repressive laws to that effect.

The living family is left with this charge, 'There shall be no violence among you.' It was necessary from the example of Cain that this should be enjoined. And so all nations have established laws preventing murder. They have surely been God's ministers requiring account of bloodshed. For a long time we hear of no murders in the Scriptural history of mankind after this solemn warning.

We may see a threefold division in this principal injunction declared in my text: firstly the law between man and beast; or, to put it in other words, the rights to be mutually respected by common possessors of *life*: secondly the law between man and man, whether either or both be civilized or uncivilized; the rights which common *humanity* involves: thirdly the law between Christian and Christian; or what brother has a right to expect from brother in the Lord. Let us also examine how these restrictive and compulsory forces are consistent with the principles set forth in this Quinquagesima Sunday's Epistle and in the Sermon on the Mount; "resist

not evil," "charity suffereth long, endureth all things, beareth all things."

I. "At the hand of every beast will I require it." Though some savage tribes of animals have made havoc of man and are still a terror to him when matched with him singly, they have paid dearly for their ferocity. They have been hunted down; entrapped with all the arts which human ingenuity could suggest; killed without mercy, and almost exterminated; so that only in remote jungles and mid-African deserts do a few survivors of their species yet lurk. Their lot is a type of what practically does befall those implacably fierce and lawless men whose hand is against every man, and against whom society instinctively combines, feeling that its only security is to treat those who will not consent to use their strength moderately as outlawed felons, to be driven away from the company of peaceable people by all that craft, or united strength, or the sarcastic force of public opinion can do. But man also is under responsibilities towards the beasts. He is allowed to shed the blood of such as he requires for his food. Nor is the mere keeping up of life the limit within which the supply of food may thus be produced, but a generous margin for plenty and festivity is justifiable. But to kill an excess of eatable animals in order to indulge sport; and to make the *alleged* rapine of other animals an excuse for hounding them to death; these are things which

many a man's conscience must pronounce wrong. Certain animals were allowed to be killed for food, perhaps as a recompense for the care which Noah had taken of the animals in the ark and for the inconvenience which their presence had caused him ; or because there was after the flood no herbage ready for food. The lives of men certainly were shorter from the time animal food was allowed. We need not speculate whether this was in consequence of the change ; nor on the other hand whether, the human constitution being impaired after the flood, life would have been still more abridged than it was without animal food. But this much is plain : needless slaughter and cruelty towards the brutes ought to be repressed by law or at least discouraged very strongly by each of us. It is wrong and cruel to single out particular classes of inoffensive animals to be given over to the teeth of the stronger and more spirited classes ; and so it is to deprive horses of their Sabbath repose. For offences of this kind God will certainly call men to account.

II. Between man and man this is felt by all to be a necessary maxim : 'live and let live.' To leave any man alone who has not touched you ; to "strive not with a man without a cause if he have done thee no harm ;" to shew a stranger toleration if not courtesy ; is what everyone knows to be right, however much some seem to need to be reminded

of it. Nor are we to abstain from drawing blood by bodily assault only, but to forbear to wear out the mortal fabric by the stings and by the shafts of a cruel, unkind tongue, or by subjecting an inoffensive person to insults which as surely, if more slowly, wound and kill as guns and knives. For after all there is a relic of the divine image in man. There is something noble in him, from his possessing reason and a share, however tiny, of that lordship over the creation which God has given him as his birthright. And this makes it a shame to humble him by sudden stroke or lingering torture to the dust of death before he has lived out his days. Besides, that customary cry of shame against murder, that it hurries a man unprepared to his last account, is a just one.

It is natural to man to rejoice in society. Beside the help which he gives and receives from his fellow creature, there is a satisfaction in conversing with beings of the same order as one's self. There is no cause to grudge one's neighbour a partnership in the possession of all the good things this world affords; for there is ample room and abundance for all, if anything like a fair distribution of wealth be agreed upon, and tyranny do not go to lengths to which it never has gone. Though life in common has many molestations and disturbances, yet an utterly solitary life is more intolerable. It therefore violates the very first rules of humanity for barbarous

nations to repel strangers from their shores and illtreat them because they have come to make friendly advances. It is best to withdraw in disgust from barbarians who have rudely repulsed the offers of civilization, and not to force our company on them. If they do not follow up rudeness with anything worse, let them be. If they do, a peremptory and stern employment of force is necessary. The missionary must not be kept from going where the chiefs of his Church at home have authorised him to preach the gospel of Christ by a mere scare. In general it is right not to enforce his claim to preach, if the heathen refuse it, by compulsion, or to retaliate bloodship which they have inflicted on missionaries; for this is contrary to Christ's injunctions not to resist evil, but meekly submit to injuries, *while* you are engaged in the work of establishing His religion. Do not make men disciples by force. But those who feel they have a call to the work are not to have their testimony silenced by a show of violence at first: the first refusal to hear their preaching need not be taken as final and decisive; more attempts may be made. But when Christ's religion *is* established then there ought to be no such question as "*dare* any of you go to law if in any way injured?" The higher the station of a spiritual chief is, the more earnest he ought to be that the executioner of justice bear not the sword in vain. If Christian citizens did not cooperate in the

enforcing of law, a Christian community would be the vilest of all in which to live; because every false Christian would take advantage of the much misinterpreted commands "if a man will rob thee of thy coat let him have thy cloke also," "if he make thee go a mile go with him twain," to inflict on his weaker neighbour whatever cruel applications of the brutal maxim, 'might is right,' his spite and ill-natured caprice might dictate.

III. Much more is expected of Christian brethren than mere courtesy and inoffensiveness. Not only to befriend the poor by relieving their bodily wants is our duty, but to promote by every possible way the good of the brethren's souls. Not only to compassionate the sick and afflicted when they apply to us, but to search out neglected sufferers, to bring them sustenance and consolation, and to provide, if possible, homes to which they may come and be cured speedily and kindly. All about us are nominally Christian brethren; yet instead of a universal proof of love there is not that general fellow-feeling such as may be called bare humanity. There is a ferocious, murdering spirit abroad, which does not hesitate to compass the death of great numbers of people at once if only some marked man, not perhaps very much hated after all, but a keen political opponent, may be included in the slaughter. Sometimes, however, the motive is to express the hatred of the lowest class against the superior ones,

because in former times there have been oppressors among the rich ; or some malignant villain wishes to vent his spleen against all men and all things. Talk of decrease of crime ! There surely never was a time when bitter hatred sat more scowlingly in the eyes of all we meet, or rang out more hideously in the harsh voices of the populace.

In a Christian country the enquiry that is made of bloodshed is slow and deliberate, not sharp and prompt as in dealing with brutes or wild men. For as it is a greater shame for Christians to do violence and murder upon each other than for the ignorant and untamed, so innocence with us is taken for granted till guilt can be by a long and tortuous process established. And there are many subterfuges, such as feigned madness, and the plea that it was not premeditated, by which a culprit can escape penalty for his act. But God Who knoweth the hearts of men is not thereby deceived, and will doubtless punish more sorely in the end villains who have evaded or defied justice than those who, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, have received terrible and immediate punishment in this life.

Can we do anything to improve a condition of affairs in which hatred and crime, perceptible through all their flimsy disguises, reign ; and which gives constant testimony that Shakespeare was right in his appeal " Hates any man the thing he would not *kill* ?" Prevention is better than cure. That long-

suffering, forgiving, excusing, self-sacrificing temper, which St Paul describes as a more excellent way of teaching and ministering as a pastor in the Church than gifts of tongues and power of prophesying, will if shewn by us do much towards abolishing those grudges and heart-burnings, which, finding vent in crimes, make it needful constantly to apply the Divine law contained in my text, "Surely your blood of your lives will I require:" "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Thus by our common consent and help shall right and equity be maintained in the earth.

We cannot change other people's dispositions, or not at present; that may be admitted. But we can order our own habits so much as to come up to the passive or negative part of that most excellent gift, charity. For no one need vaunt, nor put on a bragging, intimidating appearance. No one need be puffed up, that is, be evidently so proud of his learning or skill that he be too grand to talk to, much less associate with, people of middling capacity. Nor need a man behave himself unseemly, that is, be a noisy brawler, an arrogant and contemptuous disturber of the peace. We may avoid giving the irritation which is caused by a man's claiming more than is his due, and by his expecting tacitly or openly indulgences to which he has no right. Two prohibitions follow which are much harder. Charity must not seek its own. Who can help being vexed at

exclusion from a moderate share of honour and pleasure? But yet we often have to give it up, in order to keep the commandments of Jesus. It is a slight pang, but the Lord makes it up some other way, and more than makes it up. Again charity must not have paroxysms of anger. This is very hard when people are so offensive and ungrateful as they are, and in every way such bitter agents of the devil. But we can school ourselves to it with the help of God's Holy Spirit; which indeed we lack for the other self-management I have named, as also for two further demands on charity. Do not reckon up the evil done you, either with a view to revenging it yourself or appealing to God to punish it: forget it. And do not rejoice that iniquity is at work in other neighbourhoods and making victims of others beside you. Be not glad that thieves are quarrelling amongst each other, and persecutors feeling some of the smarts which they are so fond of inflicting. Be sorry when a fruitful land is made barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. Observe when God's judgments fall on the ungodly: ponder them, but keep silence even from good words. The time for the righteous to rejoice when he seeth the vengeance is not come yet.

I said we could each take care that, as far as we are concerned, there be no hatred in the world leading to the shedding of blood requiring the executioner to ply his work. But there are two things

(and I conclude with them) to be noted in the practising of that mild, inoffensive course of life described in the Epistle. It will certainly bring others to copy it sooner or later: and thus love, joy and peace will be sweetly prevalent, to the banishment of bloodthirsty strife. And secondly, if it proceed from pure motives; if a man be not contentious, because he feels that it is a blessed thing to be a peace maker and to be truly magnanimous, and that it is a good and joyful thing for men to have their unity undisturbed on the whole, while a liberal scope is allowed for differences of opinion on very many points, this is sure to lead on to still better things; to love of God and holiness; to adding one virtue to another. It is as St Paul says to the Thessalonians: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love towards one another and all men, that He may establish your hearts blameless towards God and our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."

SERMON XIII.

PREACHED MARCH 1, 1885.

1 JOHN III. 8.

“He that committeth sin is of the devil.”

THE object of these words is to bring the vileness of sin to a climax. Even if we were not sure what the object was we should hardly dare to hint that, so hideous are the forms which sin takes now, that we should be tempted, were it not something like profane trifling, to say that the meaning is “The worst thing that could be said of the devil is that he is related to the most detestable ruffians who now disgrace humanity.” But away with such thoughts. Let there be no sophistical putting of the converse. It is sin, not the author of sin, that is being here characterised. And the worst that can be said of sin is said in my text. Before it St John had said that sin was not merely an erring, an unwise choice; but a setting up of ourselves in

opposition to the law of God, a bold setting aside of His statutes. The same ascent in the scale of villainy is seen in 2 Thessalonians ii. 3, 8. "The man of sin shall be revealed...aye that lawless one shall be revealed." *'Ανομία* is a later stage than *ἀμαρτία*. Then St John calls the sinner one who has not known nor seen the Saviour; one in whose heart the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has not shined; one who has never cared for Jesus; never thought of returning His love. Lastly a sinner is one who sympathises with, has made himself the adopted son of, that great and irreconcilable enemy of God who, to shew his hatred of God and man, brought in sin into the world: he is one who chooses from first to last to oppose the work of Christ, to hate everything He loves, love everything He hates; and to tempt or force every man, as far as in him lies, to be with him rebellious against God.

Some said there were two supreme powers, the God of good and the god of evil. St John may possibly have had such in his mind and have meant: 'You say that all things in the world are evil and made by an evil god; that human bodies are part of his handiwork; that therefore every action you can perform is, through a necessity for which you are not responsible, bad. But *I* say that evil is *in you*; it dwells in your souls; you conceive it and bring it forth; and this is because you choose to make your-

selves adopted sons of the devil, not to be adopted by the God of all goodness as His children by unity with Christ.'

As all kinds of sins are not so severely condemned as that mentioned in my text, some being called pardonable (Matthew xii. 31), some sins "not unto death;" let us see from other places where sinners are called children of the devil what is probably meant by St John. We must, however, remember that though there are lighter offences, yet God is jealous of His honour and will not allow the least of His commandments to be wantonly set at nought and the transgression of it to be thought a thing requiring no repentance. No; unless we repent of little sins we shall perish together with the perpetrators of great ones and be with them accounted children of the devil.

The place most like our text is John viii. 44, and accordingly it is mentioned in the marginal references. It is remarkable that the terrible rebuke "Ye are of your father the devil" is addressed to Jews who had shortly before been called believers. We must suppose them to have been believers of only such part of the truth as agreed with their prejudices and exclusiveness. Such a saying as "Salvation is of the Jews" would be accepted by them, but not the tidings that neither Jerusalem nor any one place should be favoured by God as possessing the most correct rites and ceremonies,

and buildings constructed after the best pattern; for the really important part of worship was the purity of heart and sincerity and fervour of spirit of the worshippers: and buildings, furniture, apparel, and processions and prescribed order of service were of no moment comparatively; it being understood, however, that all things must be done decently. Abraham's sons must have sincerity, the pious, obedient spirit of Abraham. They must love and reverence the word of God, whatever strange and hard sayings it brought them. But so far from loving and welcoming the truth when it did not flatter them, and so far from freeing themselves by it from old fetters of ignorant prejudice; these partial believers so much hated our Lord for testifying to *all* the truth that they in the very spirit of him who ever cherishes lies and murders sought to kill Jesus.

Is party feeling among Christians of diverse sects and denominations different in kind even if in degree? Is one who is zealous for holy and catholic doctrine and truth not hated when he tries to press it on the attention of those who are, as he believes, vexing and poisoning the brethren with schism, with headstrong insubordination, and with supplies to men's souls of what the carnal nature *likes* and the spiritual does *not* like, that is, anything but exhortations to earnest prayer evincing by its artless, natural, plain-spoken utterance, genuine penitence

and contrition? Do not Romanists, for example, in Ireland hate those who testify to them the doctrines of our pure and reformed part of the universal Church? This is what the pastor also finds in dealing with some of his people; who, seeking his counsel in some affliction by which they are not really humbled nor softened, expect peace to be preached to them, and are offended if their dangerous and sinful state be faithfully pointed out. The teacher too is expected to flatter his pupil: not to disclose to him the unpleasing truth that he is in a state really of profound ignorance, and must entirely alter his method of learning, which has probably been the fallacious one of trusting to other people's analyses or abstracts which he has partially learnt by heart or copied down many times instead of exercising his own mind.

In all these cases there is a dislike to truth; and the more this is indulged the more the man is perceptibly drawn over and permanently kept in the ranks of Satan's adherents. And this is generally their career: from acknowledging at first that there is a great deal that is wrong in the fashions of the world, for which they affect to be sorry and at which they direct an easy laugh of not very keenly felt pity, calling it 'the weakness of poor humanity,' they come to *defend* those practices of the world which are clear proof that it lies in wickedness and is at enmity against God; and they hate and malign

those who protest against the evil things. Thus they come to calling what is confessedly good evil, and what is confessedly evil good.

This leads us to the mention of another passage which resembles my text, inasmuch as it treats of an unpardonable and, it may be inferred from the context's being about the opposition of Satan to God, a peculiarly diabolical offence. We find in Luke xi. 15 (next Sunday's Gospel) the offence to be ascribing the work of God to the evil one; saying that there can be not only concord but collusion between Christ and Belial. And is it not the same kind of thing to attribute base, unworthy motives and hypocrisy to true servants of God? To call those who are working for the general good, or at least for the good temporal and eternal of those few with whom their occupation makes them acquainted, bad men, troublers of the peace, undesirable companions? To slander them and bring them into ill repute with the common people? This is to choose darkness rather than light. It is to insult in His ministers Christ, and in the spirit of those who said "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub," to say that the Spirit of the Lord works by His saints effects not different from those produced by the spirit who works in the children of disobedience, or if different yet not more desirable nor laudable.

Next, to betray Christ is seen to be one of the sins which bring on the perpetrator the charge of

“being of the devil.” For those phrases used of Judas mean as much: “the son of perdition;” “let Satan stand at his right hand.” Whether Judas’ example would be followed in these days, if the opportunity offered itself, one would hesitate to predict; but we know benefactors to be sometimes betrayed, all sense of honour, much more of gratitude, seeming to be lost; and our Lord foretold that times would come when under stress of persecution the brother should deliver up the brother to death.

Next, pride is known to be a sin especially devilish. The angels who kept not their first estate are believed to have fallen because in their proud assumption that they only were entitled to be favoured creatures of God they envied man his creation and schemed to ruin him and if possible disappoint God. Men who think too much of themselves to be duly subordinate to rules, to respect any authority, or take heed to any counsel, are counted in Scripture, like Judas, sons of perdition; and the “man of sin” prophesied as ushering in the day of judgment seems to be a title reserved not for any one person but for a whole population possessed by a spirit of opposition and self-exaltation against God and all that is deserving of reverence, actuated by such lawlessness and self-sufficiency that it would dethrone God in His own temple and set up its uncontrollable and corrupt will as the sole law. If

we were to enquire what forms of this presumptuous sin are prevalent now, I think we should find that wilfulness in religious disputes was one; and that men's pride went so far as to dictate to God how He should be worshipped despite what He has Himself declared as His will on the subject, and to tell Him that men know the truth better than He does. Our conscience, our reason, and our training from earliest childhood tell us that it is not good to act as if we were superior to law in religious matters or in social life. Let us therefore resist all beginnings of falling away with "the apostasy;" for we are deserters and apostates if, in spite of our inward conviction what the truth is, we begin to say that it is not the truth which sets us free, but to be disorderly and libertines. True wisdom is to recognise that happiness comes from subjecting ourselves humbly and cheerfully to the laws of God, as He has revealed them in the Scriptures, and from not confounding those rules of subordination and mutual dependence which, when in a friendly and amiable spirit respected, cause happiness and prosperity to abound in communities of men small and great.

Another sin of the class we are considering is that violent and irreconcilable hatred which leads to murder, or at least to the *wish* to kill. Just after my text St John's words are "Not like Cain, who was of that wicked one." And oh! what terrible, hope-destroying words must these be for one who

has done the great deed to hear, "Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him!"

It is also especially like Satan to tempt guileless men to sin. In the Gospel of last Sunday we find "the devil" and "the tempter" are synonymous terms. Elymas too who prompted "the deputy" to reject Paul's preaching is called "Thou son of the devil!"

We have now mentioned several of the most deadly sins. If these be peculiarly works of the devil, yet we are not to suppose a great many others do not belong to the same class. St John says that every injustice, every wrong we can do our neighbour is sin. True, some can be easily repaired: a few kind words might set all right, and the effects need not be deadly; but yet remember every injustice is a sin, and he that committeth sin is of the devil; and sins which seem only to affect ourselves, such as licentiousness, extravagant luxury, and sloth, do, though it be indirectly, affect our brethren. Beside the bad example they give, they are sure to force us to devolve on others our own proper share of work; to make us morose, unfair, unpleasant and unreliable to deal with.

To many this text may seem somewhat shocking and distasteful. With those who feel shocked at the name of God's great enemy's being so prominently brought before their notice, I agree that unnecessarily to bring it forward is impious and profane; unwise

at least, even when expounding solemnly the Scriptures. But I urge this consideration: that the present tone of society forces this subject on the preacher; and that never could he better take his opportunity than in Lent, when so many of the Gospels bring before us for our horror and detestation, but our searching of ourselves lest we be inclined to them, the works of the devil. We hear of his assailing Christ with three temptations; his tormenting with an unclean spirit those who, it is to be feared, had by incontinent habits and impure thoughts invited him to assert such sway over them; his entering into those who by their surly, misanthropical rudeness and repulsiveness to all would-be friends and instructors, had encouraged him to keep them obstinately dumb and deaf, utterly useless and baneful members of their families.

To those who are, like the Jews, offended at the insinuation that they are children of the devil and are surprised at their state's being described in such severe terms; for they never meant and never thought themselves capable of going so far as *that*; I say that their indignation, if it be genuine, is a good sign. Those Jews, we may suppose, were sincerely shocked and unfeignedly enraged at there being imputed to them connection with Satan. But I am not so sure that many people now would instinctively resent the charge as a great insult. This must be remembered, that Scripture does describe our natural

heart as being terribly like the temper of Satan. It is called deceitful and desperately wicked ; is not that like him ? The ungodly, the natural, unconverted man is froward from his very birth ; “ as soon as they are born they go astray and speak lies.” Even godly men, professedly devoted to Christ, who, like Peter, have given up much of the world’s gains in order to be faithful to their Master, are taught sometimes how offensive to God much that is in them is ; they are brought to abhor their jealousies and quarrels, their self-seeking, their wish to alter true doctrine that it may seem like what they have maintained as their party views, or fancied as their favourite scheme. Thus Peter, opposing Christ’s purpose of subjecting Himself to be maltreated and killed, received the rebuke, “ Get thee behind me, Satan.”

A third kind of objectors might be those who feel or pretend some little indignation at the preacher’s seeming to echo the language of the street, the mart, the river, the playground, and almost every other place where men or youths are gathered for purposes not subject to the slight restrictions of conventional decorum, and even of some public meetings and debates where such decorum is supposed to rule but does not. For in that language (I am assuming now that the objectors are accustomed to join in it) the name of the evil one is terribly common, as also it is in books and newspapers ; while on the stage you

can scarcely expect two sentences together to be uttered without an oath. 'Oaths!' the rejoinder is generally made, 'I am sure I heard nothing of the sort; the language was most proper.' 'There were a few allusions, however, I think, to Satan: what else do certain terms (which we all know very well) mean?' 'Can you possibly be so absurd as to call those playful epithets and very mild expletives swearing?' I can only say that I consider the playful epithets as loathsome as the furious roar of undisguised execration, and the oblique blasphemy as hateful as the flat. Away with it all instantly and for ever! But what is the positive fact of the matter? The least quickening of the pulse of social life through fear, loss, danger, or vexation, brings on a foul appeal to Satan. Even when there is no excitement; in cold blood, men force themselves to commit this sin, because they think that their wit will otherwise be considered insipid and pointless. We used to be taught that this habit was extremely wicked; that it was as offensive to God as we are assured by all proper feeling and natural respect that it would be, if, when we were talking to some great earthly potentate, we were constantly obtruding the mention of some great adversary of his whom he was known to look upon with unalterable abhorrence and loathing.

I say, therefore, if you delight in hearing the name of the devil mixed incessantly in ordinary conversation, and yet think it objectionable for the

minister to bring forward that name from the Scripture, with the view of solemnly warning you against the works of the devil, is there not abominable hypocrisy in this?

Lent is full of reminders that the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil, and that we must with pains and toil and with wisdom sought of God be cooperating with Christ in that destruction. Yet I would not deny that my great object this morning is not so much to give such reminder as to call attention to the contrast between the profession and the practice of the great mass of nominal Christians as to believing the Scriptures and claiming to be good men. Most people read the text thus, "He that praiseth sin is a very bad man, for it must be admitted that the devil is the origin of sin." Scarcely anyone you meet with denies the truth of the Scriptures, or fails to pay a tribute *in words* to the worth of Christian virtue. Now those very Scriptures which men believe say that that sin which men reprobate is so hateful as it is *because* it proceeds from the devil; and yet men are referring perpetually to the author of that sin, in their conversation, as a familiar ordinary acquaintance, without the least dread or scruple. In the same breath they seem to say 'Avaunt, Satan!' and 'Much greeting to thee, Satan!'

Therefore the one emphatic comment I wish to make on my text, or paraphrase of it, is this. 'He

that committeth the sin of presumptuous levity concerning the use of the name of God's great enemy is one whom that enemy cordially adopts as his own true child and his very zealous agent.' My brethren, let us do all we can to discourage the abominably profane talk which is in vogue.

It may be asked, 'Is there any express prohibition in Scripture about speaking of Satan in common talk?' I answer that I rely more on the general tone and spirit which pervades the Bible, and that is certainly strongly opposed to the language in question, than on any one text. Yet here is one which bears directly on the subject, Exodus xxiii. 13, "Be circumspect; and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." If it was wrong to name *imaginary* heathen gods and their mythical abominations, how much more wrong to name him perpetually who is "the god of this world," the prince of darkness, and the author of all abominations in act and in thought! And the reason for not talking of the heathen gods was that the people would by commonly speaking of them come to swear by them (Joshua xxiii. 7). This implies that a common mention of Satan means swearing by him solemnly as our God!

Finally let us notice that almost immediately after the mention of the unpardonable sin (Matthew xii. 32), which we can hardly fail to suppose was

attributing Christ's work to His collusion with Satan, we read, in verses 35 and 36, words which we may paraphrase thus, filling up an ellipsis: "Let your heart be true and sincere, let it not bring forth rancour and blasphemy: it is dangerous to talk of Satan, to whom the revilers have just appealed, at all. Evil hearts bring forth evil things; careless words are among such evil treasures; but I say unto you, for every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account in the day of judgment."





