

# THE LIFE OF DUTY A YEARS PLAIN SERMONS V 2

by H.J. Wilmot-Buxton

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*H.J. Wilmot-Buxton's collection of plain sermons on Christian love and duty, emphasizing how believers demonstrate their faith through loving compassion and faithful service to others.*

30 Chapters

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## The Life Of Duty A Years Plain Sermons V 2

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## SERMON XXXVI. THE CONTRAST.

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(First Sunday after Trinity.) S. LUKE xvi.19, 20. "There was a certain rich man, . . . and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus." What was the rich man's sin? We are not told that he had committed any crime. He is not described as an extortioner or unjust. There is no word about his having been an adulterer, or a thief, or an unbeliever, or a Sabbath breaker. Surely there was no sin in his being rich, or wearing costly clothes if he could afford it. Certainly not: it is not money, but the love of money, which is the root of all evil. The sin of Dives is the sin of hundreds to-day. He lived for himself alone, and he lived only for this world. He had sunk all his capital in his gold and silver, and purple and fine linen. He had no treasure laid up in Heaven. So when the moth and rust had done their work, and death had broken through like a thief and stolen all his earthly goods, he had nothing left. This parable is full of sharp contrasts. First, there is the contrast in the life of these two men. The one rich, the other a beggar. The one clothed in purple and fine linen, the other almost naked, and covered with sores. The one fared sumptuously every day, the other lay at the gate starving, and longing for the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. The one had friends and acquaintances who ate of his meat and drank of his cup, the other was "a pauper whom nobody owns," and the dogs were his only earthly comforters. The rich man had great possessions, yet one thing he lacked, and that was the one thing needful. He had the good things of this life, yet he had not chosen the good part which could not be taken away from him. He had gold and silver, purple and fine linen, but he was without God in the world. Lazarus, the beggar, was after all the truly rich man, "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Next, there is a contrast in the death of these two men. One expired in a luxurious bed. No doubt there were learned physicians beside him, and perhaps friends and relatives, though, as a rule, selfish people have few true friends. The other died we know not where, perhaps in the hot dusty road at the rich man's gate. There were no doctors to minister to his wants, no kindly hands to sooth his burning brow, to moisten his parched lips, to close his glazing eyes. But the angels of God were about his bed, and about his path, and in their hands they bore him up, whom no man on earth had loved or cared for. And there is a contrast in the after time for these two men. The rich man was buried, doubtless, with great pomp. Some of us have seen such funerals. What extravagance and display take the place of reverent resignation and quiet grief! Of the beggar's burial place we know nothing. But the sharpest contrast of all is in the world beyond, from which for a moment Jesus draws back the veil. He who had pampered his body and neglected his soul is now in torment; he who never listened to the whisper of his conscience, is forced to hearken to its reproaches now; he who had great possessions is worse off than a beggar -- he had gained the whole world and lost his own soul. And worst of all, he sees Paradise afar off, and Lazarus resting there, where he may never come. That beggar whom he had despised and neglected, to whose wants he had never ministered, is comforted now, and the rich man is tormented. Oh! awful contrast! Dives in his misery of despair looks up, and for a moment sees -- "The Heavenly City,

Built of bright and burnished gold,

Lying in transcendent beauty,

Stored with treasures all untold. There he saw the meadows dewy

Spread with lilies wondrous fair --

Thousand thousand were the colours

Of the waving flowers there. There were forests ever blooming,

Like our orchards here in May;

There were gardens never fading,

Which eternally are gay." Saddest of all fates indeed must it be to gaze on Heaven and to live in Hell. Then Dives remembers his brethren in the world, who are living the old life which he lived in the flesh, spending his money perhaps; and, still selfish after death as before, he asks that the beggar may be sent from his rest and peace to warn them. The answer comes that they, like Dives himself, have Moses and the Prophets to teach them, if they neglect them nothing can avail them. And so the curtain drops over this dreadful scene. Let us, brethren, hearken to some of the lessons which come to us with a solemn sound from the world beyond the grave. In the first place, let us learn that being respectable is not a passport to Heaven. No doubt the rich man of the parable was very respectable. If he had lived in these days, and there are many of his family with us now, he would have worn glossy broadcloth instead of purple, and have held a responsible position in his town and parish. He would have gone to church sometimes, and have been very severe with the outcasts of the gutter and the back slums. And yet we find that all this outward respectability, these salutations in the market place, were no passport to Heaven. The man lived for himself -- he was a lover of himself. He had no love for his brother whom he had seen, ay, every day, lying at his gate; and so he could have no love for God whom he had not seen. The sin of Dives, remember, was not that he was rich, it was that he was utterly selfish and worldly. A poor man may be just as sinful. The man who makes a god of his body and its pleasures, the man who makes a god of his work or his science, or of anything save the Lord God Almighty, the man who lives for himself and does nothing for the good of others, be he rich or poor, is in the same class with Dives in the parable. Next, there comes a thought of comfort from the story of the beggar Lazarus. There was no virtue in his being poor -- but he loved his God, and he bore his sorrows patiently, and verily he had his reward. Jesus tells us that blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; that all who have borne hunger and thirst, and persecution, or loss of friends for His sake, shall hereafter have a great reward. You, my brethren, who are any ways afflicted or distressed, who have to bear sickness or poverty, who have few friends and few prospects in this world, and yet are patient, and trustful, and believing, look beyond the veil, and be sure that there, if not here, you shall have your good things -- such good things as pass man's understanding. Again, we learn that death does not deprive us of memory. One of old said wisely that they who cross the sea change their sky, but not their mind, and that no exile ever yet fled from himself; and even after we have exchanged this world for the unseen world to come, we do not escape ourselves, our thoughts and memories are with us. The rich man was bidden to remember his past life. It must have been a terrible picture as seen in the clear understanding of the spirit world. Once his life had appeared pleasant enough, harmless enough; now Dives saw it in its true colour, and understood the selfishness, the worldliness, the godlessness which had ruined his soul. He saw all the mistakes which he had made, and felt the terrible conviction that it was too late to repair them.

"Four things," says the Eastern sage, "come not back again: the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity." My brothers, what fate can be more awful than that of having to look back upon a wasted life through all eternity? God has committed to you a precious trust in the life you have. Your position, your wealth, or poverty are nothing, whatever your life is it must be consecrated to God. You must live for Him, and by Him, and walk in the way of His commandments, if you are to be with Him through eternity. You can make your own choice: God or mammon, this world, or the world to come are before you, but both you cannot have. If you make your Heaven out of the world's materials, you cannot expect to find it again beyond the grave. Lastly, let us learn that the means of grace which we have are sufficient for our salvation. The brothers of the rich man had Moses and the Prophets, and further help was denied them. We have in God's Church, and Sacraments, in God's Word, and in Prayer, the means of drawing near to our Saviour, and saving our soul alive. We must not ask for some new revelation, some fresh Gospel, some sign or miracle. If we use not the means given us, neither shall we be persuaded though one rose from the dead. It is sometimes the fashion in these days to sneer at the preacher, or to listen with a polite contempt. God grant that those "who come to scoff, may remain to pray."

## SERMON XXXVII. THE WAY OF LIFE.

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(Second Sunday after Trinity.) 1 JOHN iii.14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." The writings of S. John the Evangelist breathe forth love as a flower garden does sweetness. Here lies the secret of S. John's title, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Love begets love, and the disciple was so near to the heart of his Master because he loved much. When the text was written he was a very old man, and Bishop of Ephesus. It was in that fair and famous city that men worshipped the goddess Diana, of the Ephesians, in a temple which was ranked among the seven wonders of the world. In the olden days there had been another temple to the goddess, which was burnt on the night when Alexander the Great was born. Two hundred and twenty years was the new temple in building, and each of its columns was the gift of a prince. All that the art of Greece could give was lavished upon the building. The hand of Praxiteles carved the altar, the magic pencil of Apelles adorned its walls with a picture of Alexander. Ephesus was also famous for its magic arts; and when the people had been turned to Christ by the preaching of S. Paul, they brought their books of conjuring and curious arts and burned them before him. Now the grass grows rank among the broken columns and few stones which mark the ruins of what was Ephesus. It was in such a city, then in its full pride and beauty, that S. John, the aged, spent the last days of his long life. S. Jerome tells us how the old Bishop was almost too feeble to be carried into the church, where now was worshipped the true God; and how his trembling lips could only fashion the same words over and over again: "My little children, love one another." His hearers growing weary of this one text, asked S. John why he was ever repeating it, and the old man answered, "Because it is the teaching of the Lord; and if this alone be observed, it is sufficient." To be as little children, and to love one another, such is the whole duty of man. S. John had lived a long life, and had seen men and cities, and the one lesson which he had learnt above all others is that which he teaches above all others -- love. I think, brothers, we can picture the old white-haired Bishop of Ephesus, borne day after day upon a litter into his church, and ever saying the same tender words, "little children, love one another." What a retrospect there was for S. John to look back along that stretch of years! What memories must have filled the old man's heart of those days when he was a sunny-haired stripling, working with his brothers in the fishing boat, and casting net, and pulling oar over the bright waters of Gennesareth. What memories must have come of that Gracious Presence which one day appeared among the fisher folks, and opened a new world and a new life to S. John and his companions. How every word and act of Him, who spake as never man spake, and went about doing good, must have been engraved on the memory of the beloved disciple! He had doubtless heard words spoken which no other ear had heard; he who was nearest to the heart of Jesus, must have listened to mysteries which the rest could not hear. Day by day as the old Bishop lies in the dim religious light of the minster, he looks back and sees, as in a vision, the story of the vanished years. What sees he? He looks in memory upon a marriage feast, far away in Cana of Galilee. He sees the giver of the feast anxious and troubled. The wine is exhausted. He hears the Master give the answer to the Virgin Mother's request, and His command to the servants. He recalls the astonishment of all present when "the conscious water saw its God, and blushed;" and he learns from that first miracle of the Master a lesson of

love. Many another loving act of mercy comes back to his memory. He seems to see once more the impotent man, lying sadly at the pool of Bethesda. Again he looks on the multitude thronging the mountain by the Lake of Galilee; and in the broken bread which feeds the crowd, S. John sees a lesson of love. Once more he looks upon the trembling, sinful, sorrowful woman, whom the Jewish rulers drag to condemnation. Once more he sees the Master's hand-writing upon the ground, and hears this gentle sentence, "Go, and sin no more." Once more he hears the wondrous lessons of the Light of the World, and the True Vine, and the Good Shepherd, which his own hand had written from the Master's mouth. Once more he seems to stand beside the grave of dead Lazarus, and as he sees the dead alive again, he learns another lesson of love, and whispers, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." After all that lapse of ages, the old man seems to see the sparkle of Mary's tears, and to smell the perfume of her precious gift. Then, too, there comes the memory of Palm Sunday, with its glad procession, its waving branches, its joyful shouts, in which S. John, then young and vigorous, had delighted to take part. Then the beginning of sorrow, the days of wonder, and of terror, and of gloom, begin to darken round the old man's sight. The night comes back to him when the dear Hands of Jesus washed his feet, and when, at that sad and solemn parting feast, he had lain close to the loving Heart of the Master. Once more he sees Judas go forth on his dark errand; once more he sees the gloomy shadows of Gethsemane, and hears the clash of arms as the soldiers enter, Then all the confusion and horror of that dreadful night come back to him. He hears S. Peter's denial, and marks his bitter tears. Presently he seems to stand again beneath the Cross, amid the awful gloom of Calvary, and anon he is leading the Virgin Mother tenderly to his own home. She has been buried long since in that very city of Ephesus, but the old days come back to him. He is running once more, young, and lithe, and active, to the garden sepulchre, and outrunning the older S. Peter. And in all these visions of the past, S. John sees one lesson -- love, the love of Jesus teaching men to love each other. Still the beloved Apostle looks back along the ages, and thinks of that scene on the Mount, when Jesus ascended up, and appeared for the last time to nearly all eyes but his. He was to see the Master again, though in a very different place, and under widely different circumstances. Now his thoughts fly to the lonely, rock-bound isle of Patmos, whither the Roman tyrant had banished him. How often he had watched the sun rise and set in the purple sea; how often in his cavern cell he had pondered over the Master's teaching, and the lesson of love. And one day he saw a light brighter than the sun, and a door was opened in Heaven. S. John seemed to be no longer in lonely Patmos, but amid a great multitude which no man can number, with whom he was treading the shining streets of the Heavenly city. His eyes looked on the gates of pearl, and the sea of glass, he listened to the song of the elders and the angels, and he beheld the things which shall be hereafter. Once more he looked upon the Master's Face, and beheld the King in His beauty. And remembering these things, the old man murmurs to the crowd, "Little children, love one another. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." From death unto life! It is a strange expression! We all know of the passage from life unto death. We have all seen the loosening of the silver cord, and the breaking of the golden bowl. We have all marked the fading cheek, the shrinking limbs, the glazing eye, which mark the passage from life unto death. But that other change from death unto life cannot be seen, it is the invisible work of the Holy Spirit. Yet S. John says, we know that we have passed from death unto life. How? By our fruits. If the love of God is in our hearts, if we have passed from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, if we are risen with Christ, if, in a word, we are truly Christian people,

we shall show it by our love for our brethren. If we are selfish in our religion, trying to get all good things for ourselves, and caring nothing for others; if we pray only for ourselves, if we work only for ourselves, if we live only for ourselves, if we see others in want, yet shut up our compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in us? Away with such self-deception, my brothers, if any one of us seems to be religious, and yet stretches out no helping hand to his brother, that man's religion is vain. When we see a fellow man fallen among thieves, and lying by the wayside of life, what do we do? Do we pass by on the other side, without a thought or care, like the Priest? Or do we look on our fallen brother with curiosity, and leave him to his fate, like the Levite? Or do we give him a helping hand, pouring in the wine and oil of kind words, and gentle ministry, binding up the hurts which a cruel world has given him? My brethren, how many Good Samaritans are there among us? Our brothers lie wounded along life's highway in crowds. There are feeble folk who were never strong enough for the hard life battle; there are brave men who have fought, and failed; there are some crushed down by hard times, others who have "fallen on evil days and evil tongues;" some who were wounded by the stoning of harsh judgment and cruel sneers. Some have lost their health, others their money; some their faith, and others their friends. Sirs, we be brethren, shall we run from our neighbour because he is in trouble, as rats run from a falling house? Shall we turn away from a brother because the world speaks hardly of him? Shall we be ashamed of a man because he is unfortunate? Oh! if you would ever rest where S. John rested, on the bosom of Jesus, learn his lessons of love. Look around you and see if there is no Lazarus laid at your gate whom you may feed; no struggling toiler in the back street whom you may help to work; no sick sufferer whose couch you may make more easy; no broken heart which you may comfort. "Dwell in the land, and be doing good." "If time be heavy on your hands,

Are there no beggars at your gate,

Nor any poor about your lands?

Oh! teach the orphan boy to read

Or teach the orphan girl to sew." And you who are busy and cumbered with much serving, may find a thousand ways, in the midst of your active work, of showing your love to your brethren. Be unselfish, be gentle, be courteous, be pitiful. Never say a word which may wound another; never turn away when you can help a neighbour; never ask with the sneer of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

## SERMON XXXVIII. MAN'S LIFE HIS MONUMENT.

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(Third Sunday after Trinity.) 1 S. PETER v.10. "The God of all grace . . . make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Among the many monuments and epitaphs in S. Paul's Cathedral, there is a simple tablet to the memory of him who built it, and on the stone are engraved the words in Latin, "if you seek his monument, look around you!" And as you gaze upon the grandeur and beauty of the vast Cathedral, you feel that indeed the work of the architect is his best monument. He needs no sculptured tomb, no gorgeous trappings, no fulsome epitaph, to keep his memory green. The cunning hand has mouldered away this many a year, and the busy brain is still, as far as this world is concerned, but the work remains, and the builder cannot be forgotten. Now, this world is full of monuments raised by good and bad, some monuments of glory, others of shame. There have been monuments of human pride, like the tower of Babel, and the great city of Nebuchadnezzar, and God who resisteth the proud, has laid them even with the dust. There have been monuments of human wickedness, like Sodom, and like Pompeii, and God, who hateth sin, has buried them beneath the fiery tempest of His wrath. There have been monuments of human obstinacy and impenitence, like the deserted Temple of the Jews, where once God delighted to put His Name, and to receive worship. And again, the world is full of the monuments of the great, the gifted, and the good. We need not go farther than our own chief city, and its Churches. There we see carved in stone and marble the glories of Poet and Painter, King and Priest, Statesman and Warrior. But after all, my brothers, these are not the true monuments of these men. The stately Abbey may one day fall to ruin, the hand of violence may break and scatter those costly tombs, but the memory of those who sleep there cannot die, their lives are their true monuments. Shakespeare's tomb may perish, but Hamlet will live for ever. And men will honour Nelson by the memory of Trafalgar, and Wellington by the thought of Waterloo, though they may not recall one stone upon their sepulchres. My brothers, when we die no one will raise a grand memorial over us; they will not carve our story upon marble tombs. And yet, I tell you, we shall have our monument, we have it now, and we are building it ourselves each day we live. Yes, our life and our works are our monument, and it lasts for eternity. The good life stands like a fair carved memorial of white marble. The evil life stands too, like Lot's wife turned to a pillar of salt, a monument of sin and disobedience. "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;

Its loveliness increases; it will never

Pass into nothingness." And this is specially true of the beauty of holiness. The palace of Caesar, the ivory house of Ahab, the gorgeous home of Pilate, have perished, but the loving tenderness of Ruth, the sweet ministry of Mary, and the holy affection of S. John, stand as monuments before God which shall never perish or decay. Never mind, my brothers, what sort of tomb they give us, never mind what epitaph they write upon it, they cannot know the truth. But let us try so to live near to Christ that our life may be a monument of His love and pardoning grace, and of our poor endeavour to do right. If we want to make our life a good monument, we must ask God to help us in raising it. "Unless the Lord build the house their labour is but lost that build it." Each one of us needs the prayer of S. Peter in my text, "The God of all grace make you perfect, stablish,

strengthen, settle you." Yes, we must be established and settled, that is, we must have a good foundation to build on. We must raise our monument on the foundation of a firm, trusting, humble faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. On that basis we must strive each day to build the life of duty, by just doing what God puts before us with all our might. It matters not what our rank in life may be, whether we are princes or farm labourers, merchants or petty traders, artisans or cabinet ministers, officers in high command, or soldiers of the rank and file, one thing has to be done by all -- our duty, in that state of life where God has placed us. Every piece of earnest work well done adds a something to our monument. No matter whether it be the building of a cathedral or a log hut, whether it be the making of a poem, or the making of a pair of boots, work well done leaves its mark, and builds our monument. My brothers, we must not expect to find the life of duty always easy, or the narrow way strewn with roses. But it is not for us to ask whether a thing is pleasant, it is enough for us to know that it is right. The Duke of Wellington once sent this message to his troops, "Cindad Rodrigo must be taken to-night." And the answer of those troops was not to ask of the danger, or the difficulty of the task, but simply to say, "then we will do it." So when God puts our duty before us, we must not stay to ask if we like the work or no, but simply make answer, "then, by God's grace, we will do it." Come what may, let us do our duty. When the battle of the Alma was being fought, a message was brought to a general that the guards were falling fast before the enemy's fire, and suggesting that they should retire under shelter. And the general answered that it would be better that every man of the brigade of guards should fall, rather than that they should retire from the enemy. Whatever hardship, sorrow, loss or trial it may please God to send us, let nothing turn us back from the path of duty. Remember, by our actions we are raising a monument which will last for ever, when every memorial of brass or marble has crumbled into dust. Every act of brave self-sacrifice adds a something to our monument. Some time ago a ship was wrecked upon the rocks within sight of shore. The captain ordered the crew to save themselves, whilst he kept his place on the deck. When all the men had gone, there crept forth trembling from his hiding-place a boy, a waif and stray of the streets, who had concealed himself on board as a stowaway. The boy begged the captain to save him. Looking across the wild water that lay between him and the shore, the captain muttered, "I can swim as far as that," and then unfastening the life-belt which he wore, he fixed it on the stowaway. Both sailor and child entered the waves, and the stowaway was kept afloat by the life-belt, and safely carried ashore. But the brave man who had saved him never reached land alive. Well says the writer of this true story, "words would be wasted in saying more of the perfect humanity, and noble self-forgetfulness of a man, who gave up his best chance of life without hesitation, 'for one of the least of these little ones' who stood helpless by his side, when man and boy were in the immediate presence of death. That captain unfastening his life-belt, with two miles of white water between himself and the shore, to tie it upon the little boy who had stolen a passage with him, is a figure which tells us with new and noble force, that manhood is stronger than storm, and love mightier than death." And it is not only such sublime acts of self-sacrifice as this which are acceptable to God. To live for others is sometimes as hard as to die for them. The patient nurse, the gentle sister of mercy, the humble priest, unknown outside his own parish, these, and thank God there are many such, have a place and a monument in God's great House of many mansions. It has been said that "the world knows nothing of its greatest men," and some of the best, and purest, and most unselfish souls live unknown, and die neglected, but they have their reward. The world gave them no monument, but God looks on the fair memorial of an unselfish life. Let this thought be ever before us, we are

building, raising our monument, for eternity. The Turks carefully collect every scrap of paper which they find, because the Name of God may be written upon it. We ought to use every scrap of time to good purpose because it belongs to God, and we have to employ it for eternity. I have said that every honest work well done leaves its mark, and builds our monument. Never then be ashamed of your work, my brothers, however humble, if it be done well and rightly. If your calling be lowly, try to raise it and ennoble it by being strictly honest and faithful in following it. Never be ashamed of the source from which you spring, only be ashamed of doing wrong. If you were to visit the old city of Mayence, you would notice that for its coat of arms the city bears a white cartwheel. For many a century it has borne these arms, and their origin is this. Long ago, an Archbishop of Mayence was chosen for his piety and learning, but many remembered him as the wheelwright's son, who had once worked at his father's trade. As the Archbishop passed in stately procession to the Cathedral, some jeered him, and one jester had chalked white cartwheels on all the walls on either side of the procession. When the Archbishop was enthroned in the Cathedral, he saw, hanging above his head, a shield which was to bear his arms. The Archbishop was told that he might choose what blazonry he liked, and he at once ordered a painter to decorate the shield with a white cartwheel, that amid the great and noble people around him, he might never forget whence he sprang. After his death, the people of Mayence adopted his arms as those of the city, in memory of the wise and holy rule of the wheelwright's son. And there are other monuments which are built up in the home circle, and by the fireside. The good wife and mother, be she high or low, who fills the home with the sweet-smelling savour of holiness and love, precious in the Lord's sight as Mary's ointment; who leads her children in the right way, by the gentle ministry of a good example; who is alike cheerful and resigned in bright days and dark, "making a sunshine in a shady place," such an one has a monument fair and stately, on which God's own finger writes, "She hath done what she could."

## SERMON XXXIX. THE BLESSING OF MERCY,

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(Fourth Sunday after Trinity.) S. LUKE vi.36. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." "Mercy" is the one great cry of human nature. We dare not ask for justice, we can only plead for mercy. David, after his great sins, could utter nothing but the mournful cry, the model for all penitent sinners, "Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness." The publican standing afar off, and looking at his faults, and not at his virtues, offers the pattern prayer for all men, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." The blind man by the wayside, the leper filled with loathsome disease, speak in the same strain, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us." And so now from ten thousand altars, from bedsides wet with tears, from stately mansion and humble cottage, there rises one cry to Heaven, "O Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." And we know to our comfort that "to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him." But there is something more to think of beside our need of mercy. We, who want so much mercy from God, must learn to show mercy to our fellow men. We are bidden to be merciful, even as our Father is merciful. We are all ready enough to talk of the mercies and lovingkindnesses of God to us and to all men, but what mercy, what lovingkindness, do we show to our brethren here in the world? And yet an exceeding bitter cry is being heard amongst us. The poor cry to the rich, the starving to the well fed, the sorrowful to the prosperous, the weak to the strong. All along life's highway lie those who have fallen among thieves, who are wounded and stripped, who are friendless and fallen, and they cry not only to God, but to man for mercy. Think, my brothers, you who have this world's good, how often have you answered the cry? Have you ever stayed by the fallen traveller when others passed by; have you ever poured in the wine of help, and the soothing oil of sympathy; have you ever tried to bind up the wounds of one injured by the cruel tongues of this hard world? Or did you pass by with the crowd on the other side, saying how sad a sight it was, but still no affair of yours? O brethren, for whom Christ died, for whose sake He went about with sad eyes, and weary feet, seeking to save the lost, how can we look to Him for mercy if we never show mercy, how can we ask forgiveness unless we forgive? The earthly life of Jesus is, in every respect, the model for our life. He came to seek and to save, to search for the lost sheep, to call home the prodigals, to bind up the broken-hearted, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, to assist the weary and heavy-laden to find rest. As Christ's disciples, we are bidden in a humbler way to go and do likewise. This world is full of sorrow and sickness, doubt and anxiety. All around us there are brethren with broken fortunes, or breaking hearts; there are those whose house is left unto them desolate, and over whose threshold has fallen the shadow of death. There are prodigals who only need a kind word to bring them home, wandering sheep who only want a loving hand to turn them back to the fold. And God bids us do what we can to help these our brethren, saying that inasmuch as we have done it unto the least of them, we have done it unto Him. We are all fellow-pilgrims through this world, and we must help one another. We are all dwelling in a world of sorrow and sin, and we must strengthen each other to bear their troubles. "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Even "the dumb, driven cattle" have their share of suffering, and look at us with beseeching eyes, asking for mercy. And if we refuse mercy to

them, our humbler brethren, or if we refuse it to our fellow men, how dare we look for mercy on the day of Christ's appearing? We are distinctly told that as we do unto others, so shall it be done unto us. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned. Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured unto you again." Let us think, then, of some of the ways in which we can show mercy. First, we must shew mercy and lovingkindness practically, by deeds, not words. To cry over a starving man, and to leave him to starve, is of no use. To sigh over the sins and miseries of our fellow men, without trying to mend them, is mere waste of time. Practical mercy and kindness can be shown in a thousand different ways. Try to make the lives of others happy. We are always seeking our own happiness, let us try rather to make the lives of others brighter, helping our neighbour, and happiness will come to us. We often see people who are neglected and uncared for in life, and when they die men scatter flowers upon their coffin, and write their praises on their tomb. My brethren, let us not keep our flowers for our neighbour's coffin, but send them to him now, to brighten and bless his life. Mary did not reserve her alabaster box of perfume till her Lord was dead, she filled the whole house with sweetness where the living Jesus was. Let us do likewise. If we have an alabaster box of love and tenderness, let us not keep it sealed till our friends are dead. Pour forth the sweetness of loving words and kindly thoughts now, make their lives happy, you cannot "charm the dull, cold ear of death" with your praises. When we die we have done with the troubles of this world, and its flowers, and its pleasant things concern us not. But now that we are alive, and have to bear many hours of suffering and sorrow, kind, loving words, and the touch of gentle hands, and the help of strong arms, cheer and strengthen us like the sight of flowers, or the perfume of Mary's gift. Scatter your choicest blossoms upon men's lives, instead of on their coffins. Blessed are they whose lives are like the violets, making the homes and lives of others sweet and fragrant. "There be fair violet lives that bloom unseen

In dewy shade, unvext by any care;

And they who live them wear the flower-like face

Of simple pureness, which, amid the crowd

Of haggard brows, strikes like a sweet perfume

Upon the jaded sense." This world would be far more like Paradise, and less like the howling wilderness which it is to so many, if men would show love and mercy to their fellow men. Nothing opens the heart to angels' visits, and shuts them against the attacks of Satan, like love. Truly it has been said, "the heart of him who loves, is a Paradise on earth; he hath God in himself, for God is love." We are sent into the world to make each other happy, by showing mercy and kindness. "Some men move through life as a band of music moves down a street, flinging out pleasure on every side through the air, to every one, far and near, who can listen. Some men fill the air with their presence and sweetness, as orchards in October days fill the air with perfume of ripe fruit. Some women cling to their own homes like the honeysuckle over the door, yet, like it, sweeten all the region with the subtle fragrance of their goodness. There are trees of righteousness which are ever dropping precious fruit around them." Blessed are those lives which make others better and happier, purer, and stronger, verily they have their reward. Again, we can show mercy by forgiving

those who injure us. Few things are more talked of, and less practised, than the duty of forgiveness. This world is darkened by the stinging hail of spite, and vindictive bitterness, just because people who have been wronged by others will not be reconciled, will not forgive. If you believe in prayer, you ask God for pardon every day, but is not that something like mockery, if you from your hearts do not forgive another's trespasses? And remember also that forgiveness does not mean merely abstaining from injuring one who has wronged us. We must try to do such an one good if we can. Once, after a great battle, an English officer, accompanied by his orderly, was examining the wounded on the field. He came to one of the enemy who was badly hurt. "Give him a drink of water," said the officer. As he turned aside, the wounded man raised his rifle and fired at the officer, the bullet just missing him. "Give him the water all the same," was the order of the brave man who knew how to forgive. Time would fail me to speak of the many ways in which we may show mercy. Kind judgment of another's motives, patient bearing with another's temper, gentle sympathy with another's weakness, noble self-sacrifice for another's good, all these are signs of the life of mercy. Let me tell you, in ending, that mercy ever brings its sweet reward. Each act of lovingkindness comes back to us with abundant interest. "Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." Once, a farmer, out on the Western Prairies of America, started for a distant town, to receive some money due to him. As he left his house, his only child, a little girl, clung lovingly to him, and reminded him of his promise to bring her home a present. Late on the same night the farmer left the town on his way home. The night was very dark and stormy, and he was yet far from his home, and in the wildest part of the road, when he heard the cry of a child. The farmer thought that it might be the device of some robber, as he was known to carry money with him. He was weary and wet with his journey, and inclined to hasten on, but again the cry reached him. The farmer determined that whatever happened he must search for the child, if child there were. Groping in the darkness, at last he found a little figure, drenched with rain, and shivering with cold. Wrapping his cloak about the child, he rode homewards as fast as possible, but when he reached his house, he found it full of neighbours, standing round his weeping wife. One said to another, "do not tell him, it will drive him mad." Then, the farmer set down his bundle, and his wife with a cry of joy saw that it was their own lost child. The little one had set forth to meet her father, and had missed her way. The man had, without knowing it, saved his own daughter. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

## SERMON XL. THE WORDS OF OUR LIPS.

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(Fifth Sunday after Trinity.) 1 S. PETER iii.10. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." Among the scientific wonders of the day, one of the most remarkable is the telephone, by which we can hear each other's words at a considerable distance. By means of that instrument the sermon of the preacher, the music of the singer, the weighty words of the wise, and the silly babble of the foolish, can be carried over a great space. Have you ever thought, brethren, that if a telephone could be invented sufficiently large to convey the words uttered in one day in one of our great cities, or even in this place, what a babel of strange discordant sounds would come to our ears? What a mixture of wisdom and folly, love and hate, selfishness and self-denial, would be heard! Few of us would be the happier for hearing all the talk of their town or parish for one day. Now, God does hear every word spoken throughout the world. All that men say, good or bad, wise or foolish, is known to that God to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid. And more than this, these words of ours are noted in God's Book of Remembrance, from which we shall one day be judged. When a man is taken into custody on suspicion of having committed some crime, he is always warned that whatever he may say will be used in evidence against him. Such a man is very careful to keep a curb upon his tongue. My brothers, we have all need to remember that for every idle word we must give account, and that what we say every day of our life will be used as evidence against us, since "by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned." I have read of one of old time who, being unable to read, came to a Priest, and asked to be taught a Psalm. Having learnt the verse, "I said I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue," he went away, saying that was enough if it were carried out practically. Six months later he was asked why he had not come to learn another Psalm, and he answered simply that he had not yet been able to master what he had learned already. Most important, then, and most necessary among Christian duties, is control of the tongue, and yet it is much neglected. Many, who would hesitate to do a foolish or wicked thing, do not scruple to say what is both unwise and wrong. There are men living respectable and clean lives who yet love to tell an unclean story. There are those who sing God's praises in Church, and pray earnestly, and with the same tongue swear and use bad language when their temper is ruffled. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. There are some good mothers, perhaps, who would shudder at a bad word, or an immodest story, who yet habitually sin with their tongue. They shoot out their arrows, even bitter words, which wound a sister's reputation, and leave scars which never pass away. Truly says a well-known writer, "Heaven keep us from the destroying power of words. There are words which sever hearts more than sharp swords do; there are words, the points of which sting the heart through the course of a whole life." My brothers, we all, like a deadly serpent, carry a fearful weapon in our tongue, and woe unto our happiness, and that of others, if the poison of asps is under our lips. No one has learnt aright the lessons of Christianity unless he can curb his tongue. We dare not call ourselves followers of Him who went about doing good, and spake as never man spake, if we go about with lies, with cruel speeches, with the sneering sarcasm which maddens, and the unjust judgment which kills. Let us put this matter before ourselves very practically, and think of some words from

which we must restrain our mouth as it were with a bridle. First, let us guard against the unkind word of every class. This world is full of sunshine, and flowers, and singing birds, because God is full of kindness. So, if we would find sunshine in our life, and flowers about our path, we must be kindly affectioned one to another, pitiful, courteous, in our words. The man who goes through life saying cruel things is like a musical instrument out of tune, whose only sounds are discord. It is the kindly tongue which makes "the music of men's lives." Think what an unkind word can do! It can, and has, parted husband and wife, parent and child, for ever. It has driven a man from the Paradise of home, to the cold, outer world of lonely misery. It has blighted a young life as a cruel frost kills the budding may. It has embittered a parent's declining years, and brought down grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Of all miseries, surely one of the greatest must be to stand by the open grave of some friend, and to feel that the poor heart, lying cold and still beneath us, has been wounded by our cruel and unkindly words. O sons and daughters, take heed to your words, lest when you lay father or mother in the grave there comes the sad accusing whisper, "my angry temper, and my thoughtless tongue, saddened my parent's last days on earth." A great English writer said sadly, "What would I give to call my mother back to earth for one day, to ask her pardon upon my knees for all those things by which I gave her gentle spirit pain." Watch and pray against unkind words, they never did, or can do, good. They never softened a hard heart, or convinced an unbeliever, or converted a sinner. You cannot shape lives into beauty by hard words, as you can a stone by hard blows. Say a kindly word whenever you have the opportunity, and you will be like one sowing the seed of a fragrant flower, which will bring sweetness to others, and most surely to yourself. One of the best lessons we can learn is to be silent at the right time. One of the greatest of the old Greek philosophers condemned each of his pupils to five years' silence, that he might learn self-control; and Holy Writ tells us plainly that a man full of words shall not prosper upon the earth. Another which we must guard against is the discontented word. Everywhere around we hear people murmuring, and finding fault. Nearly everyone whom we meet has some complaint. It is almost a miracle to find a man who says, "I am well, very happy, and quite contented." Let the skies be ever so blue, the eyes of the murmurer can discover a rising cloud. Let to-day be ever so bright and prosperous, the discontented foresees trouble to-morrow. The greatest and the best of men appear in his eyes to be full of faults and weaknesses. Everyone has his price, he says, no man serves God for nought. In a word, he can see no good in God's world, no beauty in God's creatures, no blessings in his own life. He can tell you all his misfortunes, but ask him what good things God has done for him, and he cannot remember. My brothers, guard against the discontented tongue. It is a grievous sin against God, and it makes its owner and all around him wretched. Let the praises of God be in your mouth, and the two-edged sword of faith in your hand, and you will make your way through all difficulties, and triumph over all troubles. Count up God's mercies and blessings every day, and you cannot murmur. Sing the Te Deum oftener, and you will have no time for the miserable ditties of the discontented. Imitate the bees, who gather sweetness from the common things of life. Look up to God's bright sky, and not down into the gloomy cavern of your own heart. Pray to be lifted out of self, and filled with thoughts of God's love and mercy, then you will be able to say -- "My heart leaps up when I behold

The rainbow in the sky!

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die." And next, let us guard against the untruthful word of every kind. There are hundreds of ways in which men sin against the truth, and yet the world does not call them by the terrible name, the most shameful of all names -- a liar. The world is very fond of giving wrong names to certain sins. A man appears in the morning with pale face, and shaking hand, and lack-lustre eye, and the world says he has been spending a festive evening, whereas the truth is he has been drunk. The man who leads an unclean life is pleasantly styled by the world a fast man. God in the Bible calls him by a very different name. Let us learn to call things by their right names. If what we say is not quite true it is a lie, neither more nor less. If we go about with idle tales of our neighbour, tales which have some truth in them, but not all the truth, then we are verily guilty concerning our brother; since the truths which are only half truths "are ever the worst of lies." If in our business we say more than the truth, or less than the truth, we are verily guilty. A lie is no less a lie because it is printed in a prospectus, or written up in a shop window. A tradesman who sells a pair of boots which fall to pieces, or a garment which will not wear, and tells us that they are good and genuine articles, is just as false as Ananias himself. I have heard traders declare that they cannot afford to be honest. This is an utter mistake. Every Christian man is bound by the vows of his Baptism both to speak and act the truth. Well says a preacher of our day, "we have dethroned the Most High in the realm of commerce, and in the place of the Heavenly Majesty have erected unclean and pestiferous idols; we have put into the holy place the foul little gods, named Trickery and Cunning. We have tried to lock God up in the Church, and have shut upon Him the iron gates of the marketplace." My brothers, if you would prosper you must have God with you in your business, guiding your plough, blessing your farm, ruling your trade. You must have God with you behind the counter of your shop, or your office, and if God is to be there you must speak the truth. A Christian man must have nothing to do with an unjust balance, or a false weight. He must refuse to adulterate his wares, for these things are lies. The Chinese are in the habit of adulterating some of their tea for the market, but they are honest enough to call it in their language lie tea. I only wish our traders would do the same when they offer us false articles under the name of genuine wares. The time would fail me to tell one quarter of the ways in which God's law of truth is broken. I may not stay to speak of the false advertisement, of the highly-coloured description, of the quack medicine, which we are solemnly told will cure any kind of disease. I would only say, take the matter home to your own hearts. Whoever you are, make up your mind that as Christians you must speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And may the God of all truth give your strength.

## SERMON XLI. ALIVE UNTO GOD.

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(Sixth Sunday after Trinity.) ROMANS vi.11. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Every baptised person belongs to God. He is His absolute property, marked with the sign of the great King. As the broad arrow is the mark that certain property belongs to the British Government, so the Cross of Holy Baptism is the sign and pledge that we are God's. Think of that, my brothers, you are not free to choose your own way, your own masters; you belong absolutely to Jesus Christ. He made you His property by taking your flesh, by suffering in it, by dying in it, by rising with it in triumph. In Baptism you are made partakers of all these benefits. You are baptised into the Death of Christ that your old sinful nature may die and be buried. You are baptised too in His Resurrection, that you may after Baptism begin a new and higher life, with Jesus as your Ruler and Guide. From this fact come two others; first that we are not free to sin, because if we do wrong, we sin not against ourselves, but against Jesus Christ, "whose we are, and whom we serve." I do not say that sin will not come in our way, will not tempt us. We must, in passing through the world, encounter foul smells, hideous sights, dirty roads. But we can turn away from the foul smell, we can shut our eyes to the bad sight, we can pick our way carefully over the dirty road. So if sin meets us, we must turn aside from it, we must stop our eyes and our ears to the evil sight, or sound, we must try to keep in a clean path. The strength which our Master, Jesus, gives us in the Sacraments will be sufficient for us. And the second fact is that, as baptised people, we are never alone, never forsaken. A great part of our life, and our work, must be solitary, and yet we are not alone, for God is with us. We must do our work alone. No one can tread the path of duty for us, or fight the good fight on our behalf. Like the solitary sower in the fields, we are all sent into this world to sow some seed, to do some work, alone. There may be crowds around us, and yet each of us has his thoughts, and hopes, and feelings, with which others cannot intermingle; no two men think or feel exactly in the same way, each of us is alone. We know that we must fight the battle of life and duty alone, we know that we bear our sorrows and bereavements alone, we know that alone we must die, and be judged, and yet, as Christians, we know that Jesus will never leave us, nor forsake us, that He is with us even unto the end of the world, and that when most solitary we are alone with God. It is this thought that has strengthened the bravest and best of God's people in their hour of trial. It was this which enabled Abraham to leave home and friends, and to seek a land of strangers; he was not alone, for God was with him. It was this which comforted Joseph in the Egyptian prison, and enabled him to feel as many another captive has felt -- "Stone walls do not a prison make,

Nor iron bars a cage;

Minds innocent and quiet take

That for a hermitage." It was this which nerved Daniel to dare the den of lions, and Shadrach and his brethren to brave the fiery furnace; they were not alone, for God was with them. This cheered David when he walked through the valley of the shadow in his deep repentance; this gave courage to S. Peter, and S. Paul, and all the noble army of martyrs, to speak boldly in Christ's Name, and

to meet death with a smiling face. This carried Moses through the desert, and Columbus to the new world, the thought that in their loneliest hour God was with them. Yes, and it was the same thought which supported the dead hero, for whom all England weeps. Day after day passed over Gordon in his lonely exile far away. Day after day he saw the sunrise flash on the white walls and fair palm trees of Khartoum, and the sunset redden the desert sand. Cut off from home, and comrades, and countrymen, far from the sound of English voices, and of English prayers; there is no more lonely figure than that of the martyr of duty. Day by day he strained his eyes to see the rescue which never came, and yet in all this lonely waiting we cannot believe that the heart of Gordon failed, for he could say to his God, "I am not alone, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." Thus, in one sense, every man must stand alone, and yet the Christian man knows that he is a child of God, and that his Father will never forsake him. Every one of us must labour alone in the great workshop of the world. Each of us has his corner where God has placed him to weave in his little bit of the pattern of this world's history, to add his little portion of colour to the picture called Life. For each of us there is the day's work, wherein we can labour, or idle, as we choose, and for each there comes the night when no man can work. And what we have to do we must do alone. The majority of men who live the life of duty do so unnoticed and uncared for. They are like those stars which our eyes never see, but they shine all the same. Such men work and suffer, and wait till their time comes to join "The crowd untold of men,

By the cause they served unknown,

Who moulder in myriad graves of old,

Never a story, never a stone." But such men have the comfort of knowing that they have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain; they have lived unto God in this world, and if solitary, they have been alone with God. Again, we must all suffer alone. However kind and sympathetic our friends may be, they cannot enter into our pains and agonies. They can be sorry for us, but they cannot feel as we feel. When the body is racked by severe pangs of suffering, even the presence of friends is too much for us. We want to be alone, alone with God. And this is specially true of the sorrows of the mind. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." No one, not even our nearest and dearest, can go with us to the Gethsemane, where we suffer, or the Calvary, where we endure our cross. But it is in these hours of bitterest suffering that the Christian feels that he is not forsaken. He remembers that his Master, Jesus, trod the winepress of sorrow alone, and that of the people there was none with Him. He knows that he is permitted to walk the same lonely path as Jesus trod before him. He knows that as he kneels in the darkened room with his solitary sorrow, with his breaking heart, with his sinful soul bowed down in penitence, that Jesus is with him -- he is alone with God. And again, we must all die alone. The moment of death is the most solitary of all our life. The Prince, with his armies, and crowds of friends and courtiers, is, at his death, as much alone as the beggar who drops and dies by the roadside. Loving hands may clasp ours fondly, but we must let them go. Husband, mother, wife, or child may cling to us in close embrace, but they cannot detain us, or go with us, we must die alone. And yet in that most solitary moment the Christian who is dead unto sin, and living unto God, knows that he is not alone. He knows that when he has heard the sound of the last voice on earth, he shall hearken to other voices, never listened to before. When the last farewell is spoken, and the last hand clasped on earth, there will come the meeting with a new and glorious company, and the touch of those dear Hands once wounded for our transgressions. Be sure that God, who is with us in life, is specially with us in the moment of

death; we die alone, but we are alone with God. My brothers, we are tempted sometimes to murmur because our life and its work are dull, monotonous and solitary. Let this thought help us to check the rebellious sigh, the thought that if we are trying to do our duty, God is with us, and He that seeth in secret, shall Himself reward us openly. We may be tempted to cry sometimes in our darkest hours, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me;" but the loving Hand has not gone from us, though we cannot feel its touch. Those dark hours often bring out the light of Christ's great love most clearly. I have seen a famous picture of the Crucifixion, which shows its sad beauty best when the window is darkened. Then there seems to shine a light of hope and splendour behind the Cross, and the face of the Saviour beams with tenderest love. So when the windows of our life are darkened, when bereavement, or ill-health, or disappointment come upon us, let us turn our eyes to the Crucified, and see a new light, a new meaning in our Saviour's sorrow, and our own. Let us learn that the trouble has come to lead us apart from the world and its selfish ways, that we may be alone -- alone with God.

## SERMON XLII. SERVANTS OF SIN.

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(Seventh Sunday after Trinity.) ROMANS vi.20. "The servants of sin." There is no existence in the world so sad as that of a slave; and there is no slavery so hard as that of sin, no taskmaster so bitter as the devil. There was a tyrant in the old times who ordered one of his subjects to make an iron chain of a certain length, in a given time. The man brought the work, and the tyrant bade him make it longer still. And he continued to add link to link, till at length the cruel taskmaster ordered his servants to bind the worker with his own chain, and cast him into the fire. That hardest of tyrants, the devil, treats his slaves in like manner. At first the chain of sin is light, and could easily be cast off. But day by day Satan bids his victims add another link. The servant of sin grows more hardened, more daring, more reckless in his evil way. He adds sin to sin, link to link, and then the end comes, and the tyrant binds him hand and foot with his own chain, and casts him into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Very often the slaves of sin do not know that they are slaves. They talk about their freedom from restraint, they tell us they are their own masters, they would have us believe that the godly, who try to keep the commandments, and walk in the narrow way, are slaves, but they are free! Oh! fools, and slow of heart! As well might a prisoner cover his irons with a cloak, and try to pass as a free man. We can hear the clank of the chains. So is it with the slave of sin. Once I visited a madhouse, and talked with some of the poor patients. Some had one delusion, some another. One thought he was a king, another fancied himself the heir to a fortune. But one thing they all believed, that they were in their right minds. My brothers, the slaves of sin are like these poor mad folk, they do not understand that what they call freedom is slavery, that what they style pleasure is misery, that instead of being the clever, reckless, free people they think themselves, they are only mad people possessed of the devil. First, then, we have seen that the servants of sin do not know that they are slaves. The tyrant, Satan, blinds their eyes before he binds them in the fetters of his prison house, even as the Philistines blinded the strong man of old. Next, the servants of sin bear about the marks of their master I have seen gangs of convicts working on Dartmoor. You could not mistake them for anything else if they were dressed in the best of clothing. The word convict is stamped upon every grey face, as plainly as the Government mark is stamped upon their clothing. The servants of sin have their marks also. Look at the shifty eyes, and downward glance of the knave and the false man; mark the flushed brow and cruel eyes of the angry man; see the weak lips and trembling hand of the drunkard; they bear the marks of their slavery very plainly. So, too, the sensualist who lives for his body, the impure man, the slave of lust, the criminal, haunted by a guilty secret, the selfish worldling, who cares only for this life; these all bear the traces of their sin upon them, these show whose they are, and whom they serve. Again, the servants of sin have their so-called enjoyments, these are the baits with which the tyrant gets them into his power. For a time the way of transgressors is made easy and pleasant. The broad road is shaded, and edged with fair fruits and flowers. The down-hill path is strewn with glittering jewels, the booths of vanity fair are fitted with all manner of delights, and the poor slave goes on, scarce feeling his chains, or knowing of his slavery, till the day of reckoning comes. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." A saint of old once saw a man leading a herd of swine,

which followed him willingly. The saint asked whither he was taking them, and he answered, to the slaughter. When the saint marvelled that the swine should go so readily to their death, the man showed him that they followed him for the sake of the sweet food in his hand, and knew not whither they were going. My brothers, the servants of sin follow Satan for the sake of the sweet things which he offers, and know not that they are going to their death, even the living death of a lost soul. Some of you remember the old German legend of doctor Faustus. It is a terrible parable of the fate of all those who become the slave of sin. Faustus is represented as a man of great learning, who used his knowledge for evil instead of good. Being filled with pride, he refused to bow down to God, and made a bargain with Satan that he was to have his own way, and every wish gratified for a certain term of years, and then he was to pay the price -- his own soul. During those years he had all the health and strength of youth, he enjoyed all the pleasures of the body, the world, the flesh, and the devil were his servants. But one thing he lacked, he had not God, and so he had no hope. There were times when he thought of the horrible bargain which he had made. He desired to see Paradise and Hell, and he was shown a glimpse of both. His servants found him in deep sorrow, and asked him what he had seen, and what the sorrows of Hell were like. But he answered that he remembered not, one thing only he recalled, the peace and beauty of that Paradise which he had forfeited for ever. This is the story of every slave of sin. My brothers, there are many who have bargained with Satan, offering the price of their own souls. When the Tempter came to the Saviour in the wilderness, he offered Him the glory and splendour of the world if Jesus would fall down and worship him. It is the same with us. Satan offers us this world instead of the world to come. He offers us our own way, so dear to all of us. He offers us the pleasures of the body, "let us eat and drink." He offers us self-indulgence in all the lusts of the flesh. He offers us all the flash and glitter of the world, but he does not let us see the foulness and rotteness which they cover. To the man of science he comes, as to Faustus in the legend, and tries to induce him to set up his knowledge against the All-wise, and to drive God out of His own fair universe. He does not show him how sad life must be without the knowledge of God: how miserable death must be without a Saviour. He comes to the man of business, and shows him visions of vast wealth. He whispers, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." And that implies false dealing, sharp practice, trickery, knavery. It implies loss of self-respect, loss of honour, the reproaches of an ever-accusing conscience. The tempter comes to the young man or woman, and shows them all the delights of a life of pleasure. They see the sparkle of the wine cup, the glitter of the ball room, the pomp and vanities of this wicked world. But they do not see the other side of the picture. They do not see the grey, cold morning of sorrow which follows the night of dissipation and sin. The young woman looks on the tempting dress, the flash of jewels, the gay company. She does not see the price she must pay. She cannot see herself disgraced and ruined, and cast aside like a broken toy. She can hear the music of the revel, but not the reproaches of a broken-hearted dying mother. The young man sees only the bright side of the picture, Satan keeps the dark side hidden. He fancies himself his own master, free from the restraints of home and parents, walking in his own way, in the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Ah! brother, the way seems very charming now -- it will be hard enough one day. The cup of pleasure seems very sweet now, the dregs thereof will be bitter enough one day: as for the ungodly, they shall drink them and suck them up. The food which the world offers seems as honey and the honeycomb now: the day is coming when it will be as ashes. You will come one day to the husks -- the sick room, the dying bed, -- and you will know that you gained this world and lost the world to come: like the rich man,

you will in this life have had your good things, but you will have paid the price. And those old words will have a terrible meaning for you then, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Yes, the servants of sin must fulfil their contract and receive their wages, and the wages of sin is death. Ah! brethren, be serious; are these things nothing to you? Are there none of you who know that you are the slaves of some besetting sin? Look into your lives, see whose marks are upon you, whose servants you are. Are you still tied and bound with the chain of your sins? If so, turn you to Him who can alone set you free; to Him who drove the strong man armed from his palace; to Him who conquered Satan in the wilderness, in the garden, on the cross; to Him who can make the weakest strong, the most sorely tempted able to triumph; Who can wash the foulest life till it shall be whiter than snow. Brothers, dare we turn away and carry our chain of slavery longer? No, let us make a struggle to be free, and let our prayer be, "O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive, receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of Thy great mercy loose us, for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate."

## SERMON XLIII. KNOWN BY THEIR FRUITS.

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(Eighth Sunday after Trinity.) S. MATT. vii.16. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." The religion of Jesus Christ is one of deeds, not words; a life of action, not of dreaming. Our Lord warns us to beware of any form of religion, in ourselves or others, which does not bring forth good fruit. God does not look for the leaves of profession, or the blossoms of promise, He looks for fruit unto holiness. We may profess to believe in Jesus Christ, we may say the Creed without a mistake, we may read our Bible, and say our prayers, and yet, if our lives are bad, all our religion is vain. If we would know whether we are being led by the Holy Spirit, we must see if we are bringing forth fruits of the Spirit. If we would discover if the works of a clock are right, we look at the hands. So, by our words and deeds we shall show whether our hearts are right with God. A religion of the lips is worth nothing. We may cry, "Lord, Lord," in our place in Church, we may repeat the words which speak of the Will of God, and utter pious wishes when we sing chant or hymn, and all the while we may be far off from the Kingdom of Heaven, because we are not in our lives doing the will of our Father which is in Heaven. If we are selfish, self-willed, proud, lovers of our own selves, our religion is but the sheep's clothing covering the wolfish heart, or the white paint hiding the corruption of the sepulchre. It is easy enough to assume the character and manner of a Christian, but to live the Christian life is not so easy. A man can make a sham diamond in a very short time, but the real gem must lie for ages in the earth before it can sparkle with perfect purity. We have far too many of these quickly made Christians amongst us, who have never brought forth fruits meet for repentance, nor gone through the fire of trial, and sorrow, and self-sacrifice. Do not trust to feelings, or words, in yourselves or others, look at your life; a real and a false diamond are very much alike, and yet there is all the difference in the world in their value. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." My brothers, who is our leader and guide, the Holy Spirit, or our own will? How shall we know? By our fruits. They tell us that whenever the holy saint David, of Wales, stood up to preach, there came a milk-white dove, and sat upon his shoulder. It is a serious question for you and me, for preacher and people, does the White Dove perch on my shoulder as I preach? Does the Holy Ghost descend like a dove on you who hear? Men of business, anxious workers, is the White Dove with you in your factory, your farm, your office? Mothers and fathers, young men and maidens, is there a place in your home where the Holy Spirit may come, and continually dwell? Let us look into our lives very closely, and see whether we are mistaking outward form for true religion, words and professions for holiness, leaves for fruit. What are some of the fruits which God looks for in the life of a Christian? At the head of all, I think, we must place love. Ah! you will say to me, -- I only wish I could love God more. It is so hard to love One whom we cannot see. I worship God, I try to keep His commandments, but I am not sure that I love God. My brother, my sister, let not your heart be troubled. If you really try to do God's Will it is a proof of your love. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. We know that we do know Him if we keep His commandments." You can show your love to God by showing love and kindness to your brethren. By kindly judgments of another's fault; by gentle words of comfort, of pity, or of warning; by tender

hands stretched out to bring back the wandering sheep; by loving acts of charity to the sick and suffering; by care for the poor bruised reeds of this rough world, you can show your love for God, who is the source of all love. If we love God we shall try to lead others to Him. A true Christian cannot be selfish. Think of the example you set to others. Is it a good one, a strong one, a light shining before men so that they can see your good works? At the battle of Tel-el-Keber our troops had no sufficient plans of the ground. The General therefore ordered a young naval officer to lead the Highland Brigade by the light of the stars to their destined post. When the fight began the Highlanders were ready, and among the first to fall was their young leader. The victory was gained, and the General hastened to the tent of his wounded officer. The dying man smiled as he raised his trembling hand to his commander, and looking him in the face said, "General, didn't I lead them straight?" My brothers, we are leading our fellow men by the example of our lives, the question is, are we leading them straight? Another fruit for which God looks in a Christian's life is humility. Every act and word of our Saviour's earthly life teaches us to be humble. Let the haughty, the proud, the self-satisfied man, open his Gospel, and he will find a reproof to his pride on every page. Let him bend his head, and bow his stiff knee before the Almighty God, cradled in a manger, fasting in the desert, homeless, friendless, silent before His foes, stripped, mocked and beaten, dying upon the Cross. Go, my brother, and bow your head at Gethsemane; go, kneel before the Cross of Calvary, and ask God to make you humble. The longer a true Christian lives the more humble-minded he becomes. A young man, just starting in life, holds his head high, and is inclined to look down on others. But as he journeys on through the world, learning by experience, his head grows bent and lowly. So is it with Christ's people. The longer we go to His School, and the more we know of the way of godliness, the humbler we become. Like S. Paul, we count not that we have attained the mark, we only press forward towards it. We begin with shame to take the lowest place, we learn to consider others better than ourselves, and to say to our Lord, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof." As the laden fruit tree bends its branches nearest to the earth, and the fullest ears of corn hang lowest, so the holiest man is ever the humblest. In a certain city abroad every child found begging in the streets is taken to a charitable asylum. Before he is washed, and dressed anew, his portrait is taken as he stands in his beggar's rags. When his education is finished, this picture is given to the child, and he is made to promise that he will keep it all his life, that he may be reminded what he was, and what great things have been done for him. It is good for us to remember, my brothers, what we were: helpless wanderers in this world, clothed in filthy rags of sin; and we must remember, too, what God has done for us. How He has redeemed us from our slavery, making us His own children by adoption, washing us in the Blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin, and giving us the white robe of holiness. Who is there who, thinking upon these things, can be other than humble? Let us examine ourselves, and see whether we are bringing forth that fruit. We preach humility to others, we expect to see it in others' lives, are we humble ourselves? Have we learnt to walk humbly with our God? Another fruit which God expects in the lives of His people is forgetfulness of self. Have you stayed to calculate how much of your time is occupied in thinking and talking of yourselves? In some houses they line the rooms with looking glasses, so that wherever you turn you see a reflection of yourself. My brethren, some of us pass all our lives in such a room; we are for ever contemplating our own selves. We spend our time in looking into a mirror that we may see our beauty, our cleverness, our fine clothing. One glass reflects our pleasures and amusements, another our sorrows and misfortunes. But every inch of space is so filled with self that there is no room for another's joys or sorrows, and, above

all, there is no room for Jesus. Let us strive by God's grace to get away from self, and the eternal thinking and talking of our own concerns. Even Jesus Christ pleased not Himself, and believe me, we are no Christians unless we are trying to forget ourselves, and to deny ourselves. We must be crucified with Christ if we are to reign with Him, and alas for us if we cannot show the marks of the nails where we have been fastened to our cross. My brethren, these are serious thoughts for us all. By our fruits, and by them only, we shall be known. If our lives show no love, no humility, no self-sacrifice, no patience, no meekness, how shall we stand when the great day of ingathering comes? Often the Dresser of the Vineyard has looked upon some of us, seeking fruit, and finding none, and we know not how soon the sentence may go forth, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground."

## SERMON XLIV. RENDERING OUR ACCOUNT.

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(Ninth Sunday after Trinity.) S. LUKE xvi.2. "Give an account of thy stewardship." My brothers, we shall all hear that command one day. When our earthly business is finished and done with, when our debts are paid, and our just claims settled, and our account books balanced for the last time, we must render our account to God, the Righteous Judge. But it is not only at the day of Judgment that the Lord so calls upon us. Then He will ask for the final reckoning, -- "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward." Now, whilst we are yet alive on the earth, whilst we are still in the enjoyment of our stewardship, God, at certain times, calls for an account. Whenever the Holy Spirit touches our hearts, and stirs our conscience, and we look into the secret places of our life, and examine ourselves, then we hear the whisper of God, "Give an account of thy stewardship -- how much owest thou unto my Lord?" Then at our dying bed there will be all our past life; our youth, our manhood, our working days, our times of pleasure, these will all be clamouring in our ears -- "Give an account of thy stewardship." The dying bed of a sinner, who has wasted his life, will be haunted by the ghosts and phantoms of the past. Days dead and gone, sins dead and forgotten, yet not forgiven, will be there to trouble the thoughts of the dying man, to murmur, "God requireth that which is past; give an account of thy stewardship." Such a death-bed must be an awful thing, no wonder that some people are said to die hard. It must be indeed a sad ending to a misspent life, to leave it amid the shadowy crowd of our former faults and failures; to the sound of the evil words which we have spoken; to the stern summons of our unquiet conscience -- "Give an account of thy stewardship." May the merciful Jesus save us from such a death as that. And that we may find pardon and peace at the last, let us use the present, and not allow our account to grow, like that of a reckless debtor, till we are overwhelmed by the amount. We are all the stewards of Almighty God. Whatever things we possess are our Master's goods. Let us see how we have used them hitherto. "Give an account of thy stewardship." What are some of the goods which our Master, God, has entrusted to our care? First of all, there is the treasure of time. Our years, our months, and weeks, and days, are all so many precious jewels lent to us, and we must give a strict account of every one of them. Every day of our life has its special work for God; have we always tried to do the day's work with our might? Every day of our life is a teacher in God's great School, and brings its lesson; have we tried to learn the lesson aright? If we must give an account for every idle word, so surely must we for every idle day. And remember that any time spent entirely on selfish pleasure, or amusement, is wasted. Unless we are doing some good, we are certainly doing some harm. There is a motto very commonly engraved upon a sundial, which means that the moments of time are perishing, and are being recorded in God's Book. Yes, they are being put down to our account on one side or the other, just as we have used, or misused, them. Look on two death-beds. A Queen of England is dying, surrounded by her attendants. What are the last words they hear her speak, as she passes over the brink of eternity? "All my possessions for a moment of time!" Now look on another picture. An English Admiral lies wounded unto death. The decks are slippery with blood, and the air dark with smoke; but the sound of many voices is heard, it is the British shout of victory. The dying hero clasps the hand of his friend, and murmurs, "Now I am satisfied; thank God, I have done my duty." Brethren, our ending of this life

must be like one of these. Either we must cry helplessly over wasted days, which cannot return, and beg in vain for time to right some wrong; or we shall die with the comforting thought that, in spite of many faults and failures, we have tried to do our duty. Remember that time once lost cannot be recovered. "Lost wealth may be replaced by industry, lost knowledge by study, lost health by temperance and medicine, but lost time is gone for ever." Again, "give an account of thy stewardship," of the good things which God has given you; your creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; and above all, the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ our Lord. I knew a man once who said that he was not thankful to God for having created him. I think that man was wrong. We ought to thank God for having made us, for if He had not we could never know the joys of Heaven. This world is full of beauty, full of good things, and we must give an account of our stewardship of them. God has sent the sun to warm and cheer us, blue skies and flower-dotted meadows, seed time and harvest, summer and winter, wind and storm fulfilling His Word. Too often we take these gifts as a matter of course, and forget to thank God, who giveth all. God has fed you, and clothed you, and preserved you all these years; have you been thankful? "Give an account of thy stewardship." Then think what we owe God for our redemption, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. For each of us Jesus suffered hunger and thirst, the temptation in the wilderness, the agony in the Garden, the cruel torture of the Cross. Do we think lightly of our sins? They were heavy enough to drive those piercing nails through the Hands and Feet of Jesus. Do we speak lightly of our sins? They were heavy enough to force that bitter cry from Jesus, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" How much do you owe unto our Lord for these benefits? "Give an account of thy stewardship." Then, too, the means of grace -- how are we using them? There are the Sacraments of the Church, do we value them as we ought? Do we understand the privilege and the blessing of having been baptised into Christ's Holy Church, and made partakers of the resurrection of Jesus? Do we appreciate the value of that Holy Sacrament, when we bring our children to be baptised? Then think of that other Sacrament, the blessed legacy of our dying Saviour's love, the Holy Food of us travellers through the wilderness. Why are not all of you who hear me now Communicants? Why should there be two classes among you; one class of Church-goers only, the other of Church-goers who are Communicants? Your Saviour offers you the highest of all blessings in that Sacrament, He offers you Himself. Are you afraid to look upon God? You must look on Him one day. Are you trying to live without the Precious Food of the Altar? Man doth not live by bread alone; he cannot live by bread alone, unless God feeds him there is no life in him. As you turn away from this Altar, and go to that other altar which you have raised to some unworthy idol, does there come no reproach to you, no warning voice -- "What hast thou done? Give an account of thy stewardship." And so with all the means of grace, we must give an account of them. Our Confirmation, that solemn coming of age, when we were bidden to take unto us the whole armour of God; have we remembered that, and all its responsibilities? Our prayers in private, and our public worship in Church, we must answer to God for them. When you are tempted to hurry over your prayers, to say words with no heart, perhaps no meaning in them; or when in Church you are silent and inattentive, instead of throwing all your heart and mind into the act of worship; remember that for all these things God will bring you into judgment, and will say, "Give an account of thy stewardship." Is that your Bible on the shelf, covered with tell-tale dust? Well, God lent you that good thing, and He will ask for an account of your use of it, or your neglect. Then again, God has sent you trials, sorrows, losses, as teachers who warn you of your state. You must render an account for them. You stood by the grave of someone stricken very suddenly by

death. That was a message sent to you by God, reminding you that man's time passeth away like a shadow, and bidding you take heed to your ways. Did you listen to the warning, my brother, and take heed? Some of you have lost your money, others your health; some have seen their cherished plans disappointed, their dearest wishes fail. All these are whispers from God, warnings from the Unseen. Have you understood them? God will ask you one day. Again, God has given you bodies and minds in trust. You must give an account of your use of them. Are you keeping those bodies of yours as temples of the Holy Ghost, in purity, chastity, temperance? Or have you defiled those holy temples with drunkenness and lust? "Give an account of thy stewardship." Man of business, God has given you a quick brain, a keen eye, an aptitude for you [Transcriber's note: your?] calling. How are you using these things? Are you in your business walking honestly, as in the day? Will your accounts bear looking into by God's Eye? "Give an account of thy stewardship." Fathers and mothers, God has given you children, souls precious in His sight. Do you take good care of those souls? You clothe your children, you feed them, you educate them; yes, but do you take care of their souls? Do you educate them for Heaven? Do you give them that best of all teaching -- a good example? What if our children fall through our fault, because we have set no good pattern before them! What if they never get to Heaven because they have never seen us walking in the right way! God grant that these solemn thoughts may sink deeply into our hearts, and bear fruit of amendment, before the day when God shall say to me who preach, and you who hearken -- "Give an account of thy stewardship."

## SERMON XLV. THE TEARS OF CHRIST.

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(Tenth Sunday after Trinity.) S. LUKE xix.41. "He beheld the city, and wept over it." The saddest sight, save one, in the history of the world is that pictured in the text -- the Son of God weeping over the city which God had chosen to put His Name there. Let us, in fancy, to-day look upon the scene on which our Saviour looked, and recall the history of that city which had lost sight of the things concerning her peace. No other city in the world, not even Rome, has such a wonderful story as Jerusalem. Looking back into the past we see the city as the stronghold of the heathen Jebusites, perched on her rocky crest, and holding out when every other fenced city had yielded to the arms of David. The Jebusites were the last old inhabitants of the land to give place to the conqueror; they trusted in the marvellous strength of their position, where "they had made their nest in a rock." They trusted in "the everlasting gates," which had never been forced by an invader; and they declared boastfully that the blind and the lame were strong enough to defend their citadel, and that David should not come in thither. But, as we know, the day came when David attacked the city, and declared that the man who first smote the Jebusites should be chief and captain, and that man was Joab. Still looking back over the past, we see David solemnly consecrating the once heathen city to the God of his Fathers. The Ark, the most sacred treasure which Israel possessed, was brought home with solemn state and loud rejoicing after its long exile. As the procession of Priests and Levites, with the king and his chief captains, wound up the steep ascent, there rose the famous shout which Israel had so often uttered in the wilderness -- "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered. Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the Ark of Thy strength." And as the Ark is borne nearer to the ancient gates, which once defended the heathen Jebusite against all foes, a new cry is raised -- "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." And so the Ark entered into Jerusalem, henceforth the Holy City, of which God said, "The Lord had chosen Zion, He hath desired it for His habitation." Still looking at this Jerusalem of the past, we see the same David fallen from his high estate, sore punished for his sin, weeping for the dying child of His shame, fleeing from the city before the threats of another son whom he had loved "not wisely, but too well." Then we see the buildings of the temple rising high above palace and homestead, and mark the glory, and the wisdom, and the weakness of Solomon. Later we see clouds of sin and sorrow gathering thick over Zion. Idolatrous kings have set up their heathen altars and high places. Of nearly every monarch the same dark sentence is recorded -- he did "that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." The days come when we see the Temple of God closed; no sound of Psalm, no smoke of incense within its walls. Men burn sacrifices to Baal and Ashtaroth, and the Valley of Hinnom echoes with the cries of hapless children offered to Moloch, the hideous idol of the Ammonite. We see the Ark of God cast out of the holy of holies, the name of Jehovah removed from every public document, the altars of God overthrown, and His Priests slain with the sword. Even to-day they point to the mulberry tree of Isaiah, where one of the greatest of the prophets was slain in the Valley of Kedron. Still looking back, we see the hand of the spoiler and the oppressor busy with the city which had forgotten God -- forgotten the things which concerned its peace. The ruined walls, the desecrated temple, the mournful band of exiles, all these seem to pass before us like a

dream. Then for a time come brighter scenes, as Israel returns from its exile, and with joyful Psalms sings, "Let them rejoice whom the Lord hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them out of all lands." Such was the Jerusalem of the past, over which the Son of God gazed and wept. What was the Jerusalem of the present, on which He looked; what of the future? It was a doomed city, because in spite of all its chances, its warnings, its opportunities, it repented not. Its Rulers and Chief Priests refused to hear the Word of God spoken by the Messiah. What the common people listened to gladly, what the fishermen of Galilee, and the sick and sorrowing rejoiced to hear, Jerusalem rejected. And so Jerusalem was doomed. Over gorgeous temple, stately palace, and quiet home alike was written Ichabod -- thy glory is departed. Already the axe was laid to the root of the tree; already the sentence had gone forth, "cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?" Already the hand of the destroyer was upon the city; the Roman eagle glittered amid the halls of Zion, and the once glorious sceptre had departed from Judah. Over such a city Jesus wept. And what of the future? The end came soon. Quickly the Jews filled up the measure, of their sins. Little thought they, as they watched with jibe and insult the agonies of God's Son, that those streets of theirs should run red with the blood of their best and bravest. That famine, and pestilence, and treachery, and civil war should all attack them within, whilst the Roman hosts surrounded them without. Little they thought that the temple where Jesus had been presented, where He had talked with the doctors, where He had taught such wondrous lessons, should be burned by the hand of the enemy; that its altars should drip with Jewish blood; the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, and the golden candlestick grace a victor's triumph in the streets of Rome. Little thought those cruel men, who crucified the Lord of Life, that within a while the Romans should crucify their brethren outside the walls of Jerusalem, till there was no wood left to make a cross. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this day, the things which belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes!" Brothers, those tears of Jesus should be very precious and very terrible to us. Precious, because they teach us the sympathy, the tenderness of Christ; terrible, because they show us the awfulness of sin. What must sin be like if it made God weep! Are there no cities, no towns, among us over which Jesus might shed tears? Think of the crimes of our great busy centres of wealth and commerce; think of the fraud and falsehood which too often disgrace our trade; think of the selfish, cruel struggle for wealth, in which the weak are trampled down and ruined; think of the shameful scenes which night after night make our streets hideous, and then ask whether or not Jesus weeps. And more than this, let us bring the matter home to ourselves. Each one of us is, so to speak, a city, a temple of the living God. We have been consecrated to Him in Baptism, as was Jerusalem by the coming of the Ark. God has promised that He will dwell in us. Are we trying to keep our lives pure and holy, remembering that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost? Is God dwelling in the holy of holies of our heart, or have we cast Him out, like Israel of old, to make room for some unworthy idol? A man's god is that which he loves, admires, and trusts to most. It may be money, it may be pleasure, or fame, or beauty: these are all idols. Brethren, who is your God? Who dwells in the secret place, the holy of holies of your heart? God's people Israel were commanded to keep the sacred fire always burning upon the altar of sacrifice. It was never to go out. It was to be fed daily with wood, and with sacrifices of a sweet-smelling savour. It is supposed that this sacred fire was kept burning for a period of eight hundred years, till the reign of the wicked king Manasseh. From his days, when the fire was suffered to go out, the nation fell lower and lower into absolute ruin. When we were baptised, the sacred fire of the Holy Spirit came down upon the altar of our hearts. Are we keeping

that holy flame alight? Are we feeding it with offerings of self-sacrifice and love; offerings of a sweet-smelling savour to God? If we have allowed the sacred fire to die out of our hearts God is no longer there. Our life is like the desecrated temple of the Jews, silent, abandoned by all, except by foul things which dwell in desolate places. Oh! that our eyes were open to see our true state; to see the things concerning our peace, before the fatal day when they shall be hid for ever from our eyes! An ancient legend tells us that the Centurion who pierced our Lord's side at the crucifixion was a soldier named Longinus, and that he was blind. When the Blood poured from the wounded side of Jesus it was sprinkled on the blind eyes of the Centurion, and he received his sight and testified, "Of a truth this was the Son of God." May that same Precious, Redeeming Blood open our eyes to see our sin, and to know Jesus as our Saviour. Then we shall ask Him to come into the temple of our heart, as He went into the Jewish temple of old, and to cast out all those evil demons of lust, and selfishness, and pride, and envy which defile the shrine of our body. We shall ask Him to cleanse and purify the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit. We shall ask Him to break down the idols which we have set up in His Holy Place, and to overthrow the altars reared to self. We shall pray that the sacred fire may once more be kindled, and the sacrifice and oblation of our love once more offered, since "the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise." Brethren, if we have caused Jesus to weep over our lives, to weep over our wasted chances and neglected opportunities; if He has mourned over the city of our life, wherein we have crucified Him afresh, let us turn to Him now. Those tears tell us of His love, His mercy, His great pitifulness. Let our prayer be now -- "O be favourable and gracious unto Zion; build Thou the walls of Jerusalem. Lord, hear our prayer, and let our cry come unto Thee."

## SERMON XLVI. THE GRACE OF GOD.

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(Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.) 1 COR. xv.10. "By the Grace of God I am what I am." In the Epistle and Gospel of the day we read the words of two Pharisees, who offer a very striking contrast. The one is S. Paul, the great Apostle, who humbly declares that he is not fit to be called an Apostle, because he had persecuted the Church of Christ. The other is the nameless Pharisee of the parable, who trusted in himself, and despised others. In the case of S. Paul we see the marks of a true conversion, of a real repentance. He had been proud; as haughty and vain of his religion as the Pharisee of the parable; but he had seen his sin and repented of it, wherefore he abhorred himself. He had been brought exceeding low, and then it was that he was accepted to be God's Apostle. When he looked back upon his past life, the picture filled him with shame, and humility. He recalled the day when they stoned S. Stephen, and he was consenting to his death. He remembered how he had seized innocent men and women, and dragged them to prison, merely because they confessed Christ crucified. He knew that many a happy family had been broken up; many a child torn from its mother's arms; many a husband sent to chains and martyrdom, because of the faith of Christ. And remembering these things, S. Paul forgets the glorious work which he had since done for Jesus, and declares himself the least of all Apostles, unworthy of the name. He does not, like that other Pharisee, boast of his good deeds, but only declares humbly that it is by the Grace of God that he is what he is. Here, then, we have a test to try whether our repentance is real or not. When we look back upon our past sins and failures, does the memory make us sad -- make us humble? If we do not hate our old sins our repentance is not true. And again, if the recollection of our faults does not make us humble, we have not really repented. Directly we find ourselves trusting in our own righteousness, and despising others; boasting of what we were, and what we are; walking through the world with our head lifted up, and talking with a stiff neck, let us be sure that we are in great danger. Let us get to our Lord right humbly, crying with the Publican "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." Learn, too, from S. Paul's words, that if we are trying to lead holy, gentle, pure lives, it is by God's grace that we are what we are. Not by our own sword and our own right hand have we gotten the victory. It is God's grace and help which alone help us to lead a holy life. Let us think, then, how that grace may be obtained. God's grace comes to us through certain channels ordained by God Himself, and these are, speaking generally, the Sacraments and Ordinances of the Church, Prayer, and the study of the Bible. Let me speak of one special means of grace to-day -- Confirmation. It may be that there are some here who are not confirmed, and are not willing to offer themselves for that holy rite. The hindrances which keep people from Confirmation differ with different people. There is one class of persons which will not be confirmed because it does not care about God, or desire to lead a holy life. A young man or woman of this class says, I mean to have my own way; I am not going to be tied and bound by promises and vows; I shall do what I like, whether it be right or wrong. Such persons are, I hope and believe, uncommon. Then there is a second class of people, which is indifferent about Confirmation, because it does not fully understand the blessings belonging to it. These people have probably never been taught true Church doctrine, and so they tell us that Confirmation may be a very good thing, but they can do very well without it. They tell us that they know such an one

who has never been confirmed, and who is a very good man. They assure us that they do not "hold with Confirmation; they do not see the use of it." Precisely, they "do not hold" with it, because they know nothing about it. Then there are others who form a third class, who have grown up, grown old, perhaps, without being confirmed, who tell us that they are too old now; that they have lived all these years without Confirmation, and are all right, and that therefore they see no reason why they should come forward. Now, I will say a few words to each of these classes of people. First, let me speak to those who refuse to be bound by any vow or promise, because they do not care to lead a godly life. They imagine that if they are not confirmed they are free to do as they like. But it is not so. They are bound by the vows and promises of their Baptism, and they cannot throw them aside. To such persons I say, you are God's children, signed with the Cross, pledged to lead a holy life. If you make up your mind to have your own way, to do what you like, even though it be wrong, then you commit a deadly sin. You are doing just what Satan did, rebelling against God, and the wages of such sin is death. Understand distinctly that, as baptised people, you belong to God; if you sin, you sin against Jesus Christ; if you repent truly, God will pardon you for Christ's sake; if you go on sinning, you will be lost. If you say, I will not be confirmed, because then I shall be free to do as I like, you will be committing deadly sin, and saying what is not true also. Next, I speak to those who are indifferent about Confirmation, because they do not believe, or probably understand, the benefits belonging to it. Let me speak very earnestly to them. I take it for granted that you want to please God; that you want to lead good lives; to be saved, to go to Heaven. You have been baptised, you bring your children to be baptised. Well, Confirmation and Baptism are very closely connected. Baptism gives us life; Confirmation strengthens us to live that life. Baptism is only the beginning of life. You know we have two kinds of life: that of the soul, and that of the body. When we are born our bodies are alive, but our souls are dead in trespasses and sins; we are spiritually dead. Now life is the gift of God the Holy Ghost; in the Creed we speak of the Holy Spirit as "The Lord, and Giver of life." In Baptism, God the Holy Spirit comes to us, we are born again of water and the Holy Ghost, we become new creatures. We are no longer children of sin, but children of God, and heirs of eternal life. Thus we begin our spiritual existence, and commence to walk in the narrow way. But not all who are baptised go on leading a holy life. It does not follow that because we are born again we shall be saved. We have been made God's children, but we may become prodigals, and leave our Father's House. We have been made heirs of everlasting salvation, but we may forfeit our inheritance. What we need is strength to keep on the right way, to persevere to the end, to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Now think specially about Confirmation. All of you will admit that we are very weak creatures. No one here will dare to say that he is strong enough by himself to keep on the right way. No one here will deny the truth of those words, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." Well, if we are naturally weak, we need special strength and help, just as a new-born babe requires care, food, warmth, to keep it alive. We want strength to keep our souls, our spiritual nature, alive. Confirmation is one very important means by which this strength, this grace of God, is given to us. In Confirmation, God the Holy Ghost, who gave us life, makes us strong to live such a life here that we may abide with God, and continually dwell with Him hereafter. Surely there is no one amongst us unwise enough to say -- I do not need this strength, I am strong enough by myself. But there are some here, perhaps, who will tell me that they do need strength, that they do want the help of the Holy Spirit, and that they can obtain that strength without being confirmed. They will tell me that they do not hold with rites and ceremonies,

and that God can give us His grace without them. Yes, God can, but God will not. God will give us help in His own way, not in our way. He has ordained certain channels, as I have already told you, by which His grace comes to us, and by them only. There are some who say -- "I do not see the need of Sacraments." Then why did God ordain Baptism, and order His disciples to baptise all nations? Why did Jesus, on the night of His betrayal, ordain the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and command His disciples -- "Do this, in remembrance of Me?" Others, again, will say -- I do not see the use of Confirmation, it is only a ceremony. Why then has the Church, from the earliest ages, from the days of S. Paul and the other Apostles, used Confirmation? If it be only a ceremony, what does the Bible mean by saying that when the Apostles laid their hands upon certain persons they received the Holy Ghost? And remember that what the Apostles did, the Bishops, as their descendants, have done ever since. But some men will say -- why cannot God give me grace and strength without these forms? And I answer, simply because it is not God's pleasure; we are not to teach Him, but to obey Him. If you read your Bible you will find that God constantly used earthly means to provide spiritual blessings. When the people were threatened with the destroying angel in Egypt, they were bidden to sprinkle the blood of the Paschal Lamb on their door-posts. This was a rite, or ceremony, but if neglected, death followed. The Israelites, who were bitten by fiery serpents, were commanded to look on the brazen serpent, made and lifted up by Moses. That was a ceremony, but to disregard it meant death. When Naaman wished to be healed of his leprosy, he was bidden to wash in Jordan seven times. That was a ceremony, but it was the only means of his cure. There must be a channel, a communication, between God and man through which His grace comes. Suppose you were to come to a deep well, but had no pitcher or other vessel to let down into it, of what use would the water be to you? You forgot that "the well is deep, and you have nothing to draw with." You have seen the telegraph instruments in the post office. Well, there is plenty of electricity there to send your message for hundreds of miles, but if there is no wire the force of the electricity is in vain. But perhaps some men will say to me -- I know certain sects who do not believe in Confirmation. My brethren, how does that concern you? I know certain people who never wash themselves, who never pray; but what have they to do with us? I am speaking to believers, to Church people, not to outsiders. I am speaking to those who are baptised into the Church of Christ, and for whom it was promised that they should be brought to the Bishop, to be confirmed by him. I think, then, that you must see that it is right to be confirmed, because the Church has ordered Confirmation, and used it from the beginning; and next, that it is good for us to be confirmed, because we are too weak of ourselves to lead holy lives. Now let me say a word, in ending, to those who have grown up, grown old, perhaps, without Confirmation. What is their excuse? They say -- I have neglected Confirmation so long, it is not worth while now. I have gone on so far without it, and I am all right. My brothers, how do you know that you are all right? You cannot see into your own heart, God can, and does. You may think you are alive, and behold, you are dead. You cannot be all right whilst you are disobeying God. Remember Samson. He knew not that the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him. What if the Holy Ghost has left you, and you know it not? What if the Holy Spirit no longer dwells in you, what must the end of such a life be? Eternal death. Do you tell me that you have delayed so long that it is too late now? I answer, it is not too late to mend. Suppose a man to have neglected prayer for years, is that any reason why he should not begin to pray now? If any of you have neglected a plain duty, and shrunk from receiving the precious gifts of the Holy Spirit, make up for the past now; do not offer excuses, but never rest till you can say with truth, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

## SERMON XLVII. DEAF EARS AND STAMMERING TONGUES.

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(Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.) S. MARK vii.37. "He hath done all things well. He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." Such was the verdict of the people who saw one of our Lord's miracles. How far more strongly may we say the same, having seen the work of Christ in the life of the Church at large, and in each of our individual souls! We cannot look on the world of nature without echoing the words of the text. No thoughtful man can mark the spring-time coming to the woods and hedgerows, and waking the sleeping plants as with the wand of an enchanter, or see the orchards white into the harvest of fruit, or look into the gold mine of the ripe corn, or gaze at the slumbering earth in winter, wrapped in its white sleeping dress of snow, without acknowledging the truth that God hath done all things well in the creation of the world. No Christian man can look at the earthly life of Jesus, without feeling that He hath done all things well in the redemption of the world. Whether we look on Jesus as the lowly Child, setting an example of obedience, increasing in favour with God and man; or as the humble worker, showing the dignity of labour in the workshop of Joseph the carpenter; or as the Friend of Sinners, teaching the fallen woman at the well; or as the sympathising Brother of Humanity, weeping for Lazarus, and drying the tears of the widow; or as the Teacher, speaking as never man spake; or as the Meek Sufferer, bowed down in Gethsemane, silent before the jibing crowd, praying for those who nailed Him to the Cross, we must accept the perfect life, the perfect pattern, and declare -- "He hath done all things well." But turning from this subject in its wider sense, let us look specially at the miracle of to-day's Gospel. A man is brought to Jesus, deaf, and having an impediment in his speech. It is a well-known fact that those who cannot hear sounds are usually unable to utter them correctly. Now let us regard this miracle from a spiritual point of view. There are among us many who are spiritually deaf, and cannot speak aright. And it is because they are deaf to the voice of God, that they speak amiss. God utters His voice in many different tones, but their ears have waxed heavy and they cannot hear. God speaks to us by the Voice of Nature. This world has a myriad of voices for those who have ears to hear. There is the voice of praise and thanksgiving going up from singing bird, and rustling forest, and rushing waterfall. Every flower is an altar of pure incense, offering its sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. "Earth, with ten thousand voices, praises God;" and yet some of us hear nothing of these things because we are spiritually deaf. Again, God speaks to us by the Voice of Conscience -- a still, small voice, speaking from the innermost sanctuary of our soul. And some of us hear it not. They have stopped their ears like the deaf adder, and so they go on wilfully sinning -- deaf to the Voice of God. I have read how a notorious prisoner, who had been convicted of many serious crimes, was found to have the whole story of our Lord's crucifixion marked upon his breast. How utterly deaf to the voice of conscience that man must have been! Although he bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, yet he was the slave of the worst sins. My brothers, we all bear the sign of the Cross, given to us in our Baptism, and if our ears have become deaf to the Voice of God, that cross is a witness against us. Sometimes we hear of a man being arrested who has on him a certain letter, which marks him as a deserter from the army. Are there any among us who feel that God has set that fatal mark on them: the sign that they, once soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ, have deserted their Leader, gone back, and

followed no longer after Him? Then again, God speaks to us by the Voice of His Church. There is no asylum in the world where you will find so many deaf people as at a service in Church. Their ears are open to listen to the praises of their friends, or the eager talk of the market, and the place of business; but the warnings of God, the message of Christ's pardoning love, the threat of punishment, or the absolving word, fall unheeded upon deaf ears. How often from that altar has the loving message been uttered -- "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden," "Take, eat; this is My Body, which was given for you," and the deaf ears heard not, nor understood? How often has the wickedness of sin been proclaimed in this place, and the deaf ears heard only of another's faults, without heeding the warning cry -- "Thou art the man?" And these people go through life unconscious of their danger, just as a deaf man would walk along a railway and never hear the sound of the advancing train. Notice, too, that those who are spiritually deaf have also an impediment in their speech. This is shown in many different ways. When I find persons who will not speak out boldly for the honour of Jesus Christ, who will not confess Him before the world, I know they have an impediment in their speech. When I find persons in Church silent throughout the Service, making no responses, singing no Psalm, or Chant, or Hymn, I know they have an impediment in their speech: they will not put their tongue to its right use, which is to praise God with the best member that we have. If I find a man saying what is false, hesitating to give a plain, straightforward answer, I know that he has an impediment in his speech, his stammering tongue cannot utter the truth. If I hear a man wild with passion, using bad language, I know that he has an impediment, he cannot shape good words with his tongue. And so with those who tell impure stories, or retail cruel gossip about their neighbour's character, they are all alike afflicted people, deaf to the Voice of God, and with an impediment in their speech. And now let us look at the means of cure. They are precisely the same as those mentioned in to-day's Gospel. They brought the afflicted man to Jesus. That is the first step. If we would find pardon and healing we must be brought to Jesus. The Holy Spirit leads the sinner back in many different ways. It was the reading of one text of Scripture which turned Augustine from his evil life. It was the single word Eternity printed in the tract which a man had torn scoffingly in two, and which lay in a scrap of paper on his arm, that led him to repent. Sometimes it is a word in a sermon, or a verse in a hymn; sometimes it is the question of a little child, or the sight of a dead face in a coffin; but whatever it is which brings us back to Jesus, that must be the first step to finding pardon and healing. And next, Jesus was besought to heal the afflicted man. My brethren, our plain duty, as Christians, is to intercede for our fellow men. We are often far too selfish in our petitions. Whilst we humbly remember our own sins, and pray for pardon, let us beseech the Lord also for others. And then Jesus took the man aside from the multitude. The Lord could have healed him with a word in the midst of that crowd; but He took him aside. Why? Surely to teach us a lesson, that if we want to be healed of our sins, we must go aside out of the crowd of our everyday words, and thoughts, and companions. We must seek some quiet time, and place, where we can get away from the world, and be alone with God. So much of the religion of the day is thin and shallow, because people do not think about it enough; they have never gone aside out of the world. The multitude of worldly cares and pleasures, work, money getting, politics, jostle them on all sides, so that they cannot come near to Jesus and be healed. Have you never felt this when you have knelt down to pray? You have not been able to tell your secrets to God, any more than you would tell them to a friend, in the midst of a multitude. You want to go aside out of the crowd, where you can speak quietly. When you have knelt down, although it may have been in your own room alone, yet there is a crowd with you -- a

multitude of disturbing thoughts. To-day's work, and to-morrow's pleasure, the money to be paid, or the money that is owing to you, the cares of eating, and drinking, and clothing, the recollection of a trouble, real or fancied, the remembrance of some sharp word that made us smart and tingle, all these things make a crowd, and keep us back from Jesus. I do not say that we can get away from the throng of thoughts entirely, but I do say that we should try every day of our lives to go aside out of the crowd, and find a quiet time, when we can think, and talk to God. And next, Jesus put His fingers into the deaf man's ears. If we would find pardon and peace, Jesus must touch us. It will not help us to believe only in a Saviour who died, we must acknowledge One who is alive for evermore. It will not avail us to think of a Jesus who has gone away into Heaven, we must look to Christ ever abiding here in His Church. When we draw near to Him in the sacred service of that Church, Jesus puts His Hands upon us. When we have truly repented of our sins, and the words of absolution are spoken, we have the pardoning Hand of Jesus laid upon us. When we kneel at the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus touches our every part. Our sinful bodies are made clean by His Body. He lays His Hands upon ear, and eye, and tongue, and heart. He opens our eyes to see the wondrous things of His law; He unseals our ears to listen to the Voices of God; He touches our lips with a live coal from off the Altar, and our mouth shall show forth His praise. He strengthens our tottering feet to walk in the narrow way, and dismisses us with His Blessing, "depart in peace, thy faith hath saved thee." Never look for Jesus afar off, or speak of Him as though He were lost. Jesus is here, standing in our midst to-day. He is ready now, as of old, to cure all manner of diseases. My brother, what aileth thee? Is it well with thee; is it well with the husband; is it well with the child? Prove to-day the truth of those words, "He hath done all things well. He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

## SERMON XLVIII. THE GOOD SAMARITAN

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(Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.) S. LUKE x.30. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves." The scene of the parable is a wild, lonely road between Jerusalem and Jericho. It is a road with an evil name for murder and robbery, and is called the red, or bloody way. The mishap of the traveller was common enough in our Lord's day, and is common enough now. But I would take the scene of this parable in a wider sense; I would ask you to look at it as the wayside of life. The road through this world is a dangerous way, leading through the wilderness, stained by many crimes, haunted by many robbers. Travelling along this highway of life, I see crowds of persons, of all sorts and conditions of men. And I see moreover that all of them bear scars upon them, as though they had been wounded, and many I see are lying by the wayside in sore distress. All have at some time or other fallen among thieves. There is a famous picture by the great French painter which illustrates this. It represents a number of different people journeying through the valley of this world. The way is rough and gloomy, and all bear signs of having known weariness and sorrow. The king is there in his royal robes, and wearing his crown; but his brow is furrowed with care, and he seems to ask, like our own King Henry -- "Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade

To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,

Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy

To kings, that fear their subject's treachery?" The poet is there crowned with laurel, but his eyes are sad, as though he felt how poor a thing is fame; how valueless the garland which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. He looks with a yearning glance, as though searching for something not yet found. Even like the great poet Dante, who, when asked in exile by the monks, "My brother, what are you seeking?" answered, "I am seeking peace." The soldier is there, his sword hacked, and his armour marked by many a blow. But he seems "weary with the march of life," and looks sadly upon the glittering stars and crosses which adorn him, remembering how soon they will only serve to decorate his coffin. There, too, is the minister of state, who directed the fortunes of empires. "Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive." But his head is bowed with trouble, and he seems to look wistfully to the time when "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Among the crowd there are women; the widow with veiled head, and tearful eyes; the mother clasping her dead child; the poor slave, cowering beneath the lash of the taskmaster, and stretching out her chained hands for pity. There, too, are many sick folk. Blind men sit in darkness by the wayside; cripples drag their maimed bodies wearily along; beggars grovel in their sores and raggedness. And all these different people seem to turn their faces longingly to one place, where a bright light breaks over the dark valley, and where there stands One with outstretched arms, and loving smile. It is Jesus, the Good Samaritan, who is ready to help these travellers on the road of life; it is the Good Physician, who has medicine to heal their sickness; and who says to every suffering heart, king and beggar, desolate widow, weary warrior, childless mother, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give

you rest." My brothers, this life is a pilgrimage through the vale of tears, a journey along the robber-haunted road. Everywhere we see the traveller of the parable who has fallen among thieves. Some have fallen among Satan and his followers, thieves and murderers of souls. I see young men who have thus fallen. My brothers, where is the white robe of your Baptism, the shining armour of your Confirmation? Is that troubled face of yours the same over which a pure mother wept and prayed, and which she sanctified with holy kisses? Can you recall a time when you went through the world "wearing the white flower of a blameless life?" And now, your white robe is stripped off from you, your armour is broken and cast aside, there are ghastly wounds upon you. Your conscience is wounded, your good name is wounded, your purity is all stained and foul, you have trampled on the white snow of some innocent life. You have wandered out of the right way, and strayed into bad company, into the drunkard's haunt, or the gambler's den, or the house of shame. You have fallen among thieves, and they have stripped you, and wounded you, and left you half dead. Young men, is not this too true of some of those who hear me now? What will you do? Will you lie there in the dangerous path, and die, die in your sins? No, look for help -- but where? The world cannot aid you. The world is selfish, the world is hard upon those who have fallen, the world will pass by on the other side. Money will not help you, it cannot purchase clothing for you, or procure medicine for your disease. Your clothing must be bought without money and without price. Turn to Jesus, the Good Samaritan, He alone has medicine to heal your sickness. Turn to Him in weeping, in praying, and He will give you wine, which maketh glad the heart of man, even the wine of pardon; and oil to make you a cheerful countenance, even the oil of comfort to your wounded spirit. He will clothe you once again, and make you in your right mind. O wounded wayfarer on the road of life, cry out to Jesus, the good Samaritan. Some have fallen among the thieves of bereavement and loss. As they lie there in their sorrow, they tell us how their money was lost in the bank, or their savings swallowed up in bad times of trade. There are poor widows lying there, who say to us, "We have buried our husband, the bread-winner, how can we feed and educate and clothe the children? How can we struggle on through a hard world?" To them I say -- Listen for the footsteps of Jesus, the Good Samaritan. The same love which comforted the widow of Nain will comfort you. The same Hands which wiped away her tears will dry your eyes. Only believe, and turn to the Good Samaritan. Some have been beaten in the battle of life, and are nearly heart-broken. I have tried so hard to get work -- they say, but there seems no room in the world for me, disappointment has been my meat and drink day and night. Ah! my brothers, have you not been trusting to the Priest and the Levite, rather than to the Good Samaritan? The world has passed you by, but Jesus will not. He will bind up your broken heart, and show you that there is room in God's world for all who will do their duty. But there is another lesson for us to learn. If Jesus does so much for us, we ought to help each other. "Go thou and do likewise." The common, popular idea of religion, is utter selfishness. We are taught that the great end and aim of religion is to get our soul saved, as cheaply as possible sometimes. Now this teaching is utterly wrong. It leads us to think only of ourselves, it makes us go to Church from a wrong motive -- that we may get good. True religion teaches us to be good Samaritans, to do all to the glory of God, to love Him with all our heart and strength, and our neighbour as ourself. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The great lesson of the parable is this, that every man is our neighbour when he needs help, and we can give it. The Jews, as we know, had no dealings with the Samaritans, and our Lord's story showed how that middle wall of partition should be broken down.

The Good Samaritan did not stay to question the fallen traveller about his religious views, or his political principles -- he saw him in trouble, and he helped him. May we all go and do likewise. We Christians are all too ready to build up a wall of separation between ourselves and our brethren. One of these walls is that of religious difference. We disagree about some point of doctrine or ritual, and allow the disagreement to embitter our feelings, and to shut out our sympathy. Politics form another wall of separation. We differ from a neighbour in our political views, and we refuse to recognise any good in him because he does not think as we do. There are some among the rich who look down with contempt upon the poor, as though poverty were the unpardonable sin. And there are endless prejudices of rank and class which shut out man from man. Against all these things the parable of the Good Samaritan is a protest and a warning. It is the way of the world to leave a fallen man to his fate, but it is not Christ's way. It is the way of the world to speak very hardly of those who are in want and misery, for as nothing succeeds like success, nothing fails like failure. But again, that is not Christ's way. He never breaks the bruised reed, or quenches the smoking flax. My brothers, let us learn to look on all men as our neighbours, let us stretch out a helping hand to those who have fallen among thieves, let us pour the wine and oil of sympathy, and kind words where we can, let us be gentle in our judgment of another's fault, since "blessed are the merciful."

## SERMON XLIX. WALKING WITH GOD.

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(Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.) GALATIANS v.16. "Walk in the Spirit." The life of a Christian must be one of progress. S. Paul says, "Walk in the Spirit;" he does not say, stand still. It is not enough for us to have been born again of Water and the Holy Ghost, and to have received the Gifts of the Spirit from time to time through the different means of grace. We are bidden "to stir up the gift that is in us;" we are told to "grow in grace." God has set us upon our feet in the right road. He has taken us by the hand, that is, the Holy Spirit is our leader and guide; but we have something to do -- we must walk. There are some who tell us that everything has been done for us in the past, and that everything will be done for us in the future; and those who believe that doctrine never do a day's work for Jesus. They never go into His vineyard; they never make any use of their five talents, or even of one; they never put on the whole armour of God. They tell us they have nothing to do, all is done for them. I should be sorry to hold so selfish, idle, and unmanly a doctrine as that. I know very well that God has done, and is doing, for me what I could not do for myself. I know how weak I am, and how much need I have of God's guiding, strengthening Hand: but I know also that He expects something from me. He bids me fight and struggle against temptation; He tells me to press forward towards the mark -- to go up higher, to seek those things which are above, to forget those things which are behind. He would have me labour and strive to enter in at the strait gate, and to work out my own salvation. He commands me to take up my cross and follow, and all this means work, struggle, progress. "Walk in the Spirit." When Jesus had opened the eyes of the blind man, he did not continue to sit by the wayside begging, he arose and followed Christ. It is only blind folks, whose eyes Jesus has not yet opened, who are content to sit by the roadside of life and do nothing. God says to each one of us -- "This is My way, walk ye in it." Let us see what this walking means. First, I think it means going forward. There is no standstill in God's natural world, nor is there in God's spiritual world. If a child is healthy, he is growing: getting on, as the phrase is. So a true child of God is getting on, making progress, going forward every day. He goes on growing in grace till he comes of age, then God takes him to His Home, and gives him his inheritance. If you look at the tombs in a churchyard, you will see that those lying there died at all kinds of ages. Here is the tiny grave of an infant, snatched from its parents' arms almost as soon as the cross was written on its brow. But in God's sight that little one had come of age, and so was taken Home. Here is the grave of a child who had begun to do some work for God, and was as sunshine in its home, and the joy of its friends. When death took the child, people mourned because he died so young; but God had said of him, and his work, "He has come of age -- it is finished." Here is the grave of an old man, a village patriarch. It required nearly a hundred years before he came of age, and he had to walk for many a weary day, and carry his cross, before God saw that the time of harvest had come, and sent "the reaper, whose name is death." And now comes the solemn question -- are we making progress, going forward; are we striving to do the work which God has given us to do? Next, walking in the Spirit means discipline, self-denial. "I keep under my body," is the motto for every Christian man. We must turn our eyes from the sight which tempts us to leave the right path; we must close our ears to the whisper of those who would lead us aside. We must keep our mouth, as it were, with a bridle; we must lay

aside every weight. Each of us has his special temptation, which becomes a weight, a hindrance. One man is so weighted with the cares of business and money-getting, that he cannot walk in the right path. The gold and the silver weigh him down, and make him stumble. Another has piled up such a load of troubles and worries upon his shoulders that he cannot advance. One woman is so cumbered with her domestic concerns that she makes no progress towards Heaven. Another is overwhelmed with pleasures and amusements which cling about her, and hinder her from going forward. My brethren, do not let the world over-weight you, or drag you back from the right way. There is one weight, however, which we must all carry -- our cross. I have heard of a picture which represents two pilgrims along the road of life. One bears his cross on his shoulders, and steps forward manfully, looking up to Heaven; the other is dragging his cross after him along the rough road, with painful and unwilling labour. We must take up our cross and bear it if we would walk in the Spirit. If we suffer it to drag behind us, it will only hinder instead of helping us. Each sorrow, each loss, or bereavement, is as a nail to fasten us closer to our cross. Let us stretch out our hands willingly to receive the nail, sharp though it be. Remember we must be crucified with Jesus if we are to be glorified with Him. Again, walking in the Spirit means patient perseverance. A religion of fits and starts is worth nothing. There are many who come running to Jesus, like the young ruler, but when they know what being a Christian means, they go away. There are many who, at the time of a Confirmation or a Mission, declare that they will follow Christ whithersoever He goeth. But, after a little while, the enthusiasm dies out, they grow weary in well-doing, unstable as water, they follow no more after Him. If we would reach our journey's end, we must keep on walking, steadily, patiently, perseveringly. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Again, walking in the Spirit means looking forward along the road. Too much of our religion is short-sighted. We see the pleasure or the sorrow at our feet, but we see nothing of the glorious future, the rest that remaineth for the people of God. We are like those who see the clod of earth against which their foot strikes, but never lift their eyes aloft to look on the towering mountain. Men of science tell us that shortness of sight is greatly on the increase amongst us, especially with those who live in great cities. The reason for this is that the city dwellers wear out their eye-sight by looking constantly on objects close to them, without having any wider or more distant prospect. So it is with our spiritual sight. We wear it out by fixing our eyes on some worldly object close to us. One man has grown near-sighted by gazing day after day at his money bags, till he can see nothing else; and another has studied his ledger and cash book till he has no eyes left for God's fair Heaven above him; another has looked at his own picture till he sees his own cleverness or greatness reflected everywhere. My brothers, look forward, look up: see God's love and mercy on all sides of you. Come out into God's sunshine; ask Him to open your eyes that they may see the wondrous things of His law. I think, too, that walking in the Spirit means having perfect trust in God -- walking with our hand in His. If you see a man fearful about to-morrow, dreading the future, always expecting and anticipating evil, meeting misfortune half-way, be sure he is not walking in the Spirit. Hold fast to God's Hand -- trust Him. Do you remember the story of the little Russian boy who trusted in God? He and a younger sister were left utterly destitute on the death of their father. Left alone in the house, without money and food, the little boy knew not how to comfort his baby sister. At last, urged by the tears of the little one, the boy wrote on a piece of paper, "O God, please to send me three copecks (a penny) to buy my little sister some bread," and then hurried away with this strange letter to the alms box of a neighbouring church, believing in his simplicity that in this way his letter would reach Heaven. A Priest saw the little boy trying to force the paper

into the alms box. He took the letter from him and, having read it, gave the child food and assistance. Next day the Priest preached in the church on behalf of the orphans, and when he had related the story of the child's letter to God, a liberal offertory was given. Lastly, I think that walking in the Spirit means walking in hope. If we trust God and do our best, we cannot despair. We shall find the road hard and stony at times, but let us hope and go steadily forward. We shall fall sometimes, we shall make mistakes, we shall suffer defeats, we shall be cast down, and weary. Still let us hope, and go steadily forward. "Hope on, hope ever, tho' dead leaves be lying

In mournful clusters 'neath your journeying feet,

Tho' wintry winds through naked boughs are sighing, The flowers are dead, yet is their memory sweet

Of summer winds and countless roses glowing

'Neath the warm kisses of the generous sun.

Hope on, hope ever, why should tears be flowing?

In every season is some victory won."

## SERMON L. THE PREACHING OF NATURE.

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(Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.) S. MATT. vi.28. "Consider the lilies of the field." This world is God's great Temple, and the voices of Nature are His preachers. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through these preachers like the wind breathing through the pipes of a great organ. To those who have ears to hear, the roar of the ocean, or the sound of the mighty rushing wind, are as an anthem of praise. The song of birds, the hum of insects, every voice in the world of Nature combine to take part in a hymn of thanksgiving, a great Benedicite, and to sing, "O all ye works of the Lord bless ye the Lord, praise Him, and magnify Him for ever." And yet, my brothers, there are many of us too blind and too deaf to see and hear these things. To one man this world is only a gigantic farm, to be divided, and ploughed, and tilled, that it may bring forth more fruit. To another the world is merely a great market, a warehouse filled with all kinds of goods, which may be bought and sold. To some the world is like a chess-board, where each man plays a selfish game, and tries to overreach his neighbour. To others the world is a mere play-ground, where they pass a frivolous, useless existence, sitting down to eat and drink, and rising up to play. To the selfish man the world is a vast slave plantation, where unhappy slaves are forced to toil and labour to supply the needs of cruel taskmasters. To the faithless man the world is nothing better than a graveyard, where lie buried dead friends, dead hopes, dead joys, without any promise of a resurrection. But to the Christian this world is a great and solemn Temple, where he can worship the Creator, and where ten thousand voices teach him to "look through Nature up to Nature's God." When he stands in the meadow grass, or under the shadows of the pine-wood, he can feel that surely God is in this place, and that the place wherever he stands is holy ground. "Oh, to what uses shall we put the wildweed flower that simply blows?

And is there any moral shut within the bosom of the rose? But any man that walks the mead, in bud, or blade, or bloom, may find,

According as his humours lead, a meaning suited to his mind." Let us listen to-day to the preaching of Nature, and learn a lesson from the grass which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. Let us consider the lilies, and make them our teachers. The first lesson which these silent preachers would have us learn is the unfailing care of God for His creatures. He never neglects to clothe the ground with grass, or to nourish the lilies, which neither toil nor spin. Yet we who both toil and spin, and haste to rise up early, and so late take rest, are often distrustful and full of doubt. Brethren, let us work our work, but not put our trust in it. It is God's right Hand and His mighty Arm which must help us. Let us strive to do our best, and leave the result to God. Let us dwell in the land, and be doing good, and verily we shall be fed. And next, we learn from the grass and the flowers how short our time is. Every meadow, every grassy hillock in the churchyard, seems to say to us, "as for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." Yes, surely this thought should be a check to our pride, and our schemes, and our worldliness, that we must one

day lay them all aside, like a worn-out garment, and that the pleasant grass, which our careless foot is pressing, shall grow green upon our grave. Let us hearken to the warning of a quaint old epitaph which I have seen in a Yorkshire Churchyard: -- "Earth walketh on the earth,

Glittering like gold;

Earth goeth to the earth

Sooner than it would. Earth buildeth on the earth

Palaces and towers,

Earth sayeth to the earth --

All shall be ours." I read the other day that lately a workman, employed in some excavations at Rome, found a funeral urn containing the ashes of one of the Caesars. The workman knew nothing of the matter, but seeing that the ashes were very white, he sent them to his wife to bleach linen with. And this was all that remained of that body which had worn the imperial purple! "To what base uses we may return!" But the grass, and the flowers of the field, not only tell us of the shortness of life, and the certainty of death, they speak to us also of the resurrection. Looking at the world in the autumn and winter time we see nothing but death and decay. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," is the mournful text of every falling leaf, and faded flower. But God who lays nature in her grave, will, in the spring time, roll away the stone from the sepulchre. Who can look on Nature, touched by the warm breath of May, and doubt the resurrection? "Each tree she kindles by her touch bursts into leafy flames, And, like the sacred desert bush, God's presence there proclaims. The chestnuts spread their leafy palms in blessing on the air, And from their minarets of bloom call all the trees to share. With bridal blossoms, pure and sweet, the blushing orchards glow, And on the hawthorn hedges lie soft wreathes of scented snow. God reigneth, and the earth is glad! His large, self-conscious heart A glowing tide of life and joy pours through each quickened part. The very stones Hosannas cry; the forests clap their hands, And in the benison of Heaven each lifted face expands." Can we doubt, my brothers, that the same Jesus who rose from the dead, and also makes all Nature rise from the dead each spring time, will in like manner raise us up, and give us a body like unto His glorious Body, in that fair Kingdom where He maketh all things new? If we have seen our dear ones cut down like the grass, and withered like the flowers of the field, let us remember that the grass will spring again, and the flowers will once more appear on the earth; and that our loved ones will also come again, clothed in resurrection beauty by Him who clotheth the lilies of the field." Oh, rainy days! Oh, days of sun!

What are ye all when the year is done?

Who shall remember snow or rain? Oh, years of loss! Oh, joyful years!

What are ye all when Heaven appears?

Who shall look back for joy or pain?" And again, the flowers teach us a lesson of usefulness. They are sent to make God's earth beautiful and sweet, and to gladden the heart of man. Surely we are sent for the same purpose. Most of us are destined to occupy a lowly place in life. Our position is like that of the humble violet, not of the towering forest tree. But, my brothers, the sweetest spot is where the violet blooms, and it is better to be sweet than to be grand. Never suppose that you can

do nothing because God has placed you in a quiet corner of the world. God put you there as He puts a violet in a lonely nook, that you might make your corner sweet. If we could only remember this we should not have so many prickly tempers, and black looks, and cruel words spoiling our home life, and making the world a desert. Life would be what God would have it to be, if each of us would try by gentleness, by good temper, by unselfish love to make his corner sweet. Make up your minds now; say to yourselves -- I cannot do any great work for God or my fellow man, but I will try by purity, by cheerfulness, by thought for others, to make my home sweet. And once more, the flowers teach us to be a comfort to our neighbours. When the earth is wrapped in snow, and the skies are grey and cold, and no leaf hangs on the tree, the snowdrop puts forth its fair, pure blossom to cheer and comfort us. The sight of that living flower when all the world seems dead, is like a message from the other world, whispering of coming spring and the resurrection. Well, there are times when it is winter weather in our heart. When sorrow and loss have made life desolate as a December day, and blessed, thrice blessed, are they who come to comfort us, and to whisper of brighter days in store. In the highest part of the Peak of Teneriffe, far above the clouds, and in a dry and burning waste, there grows a plant which, in the spring time, fills the air with delicious fragrance. There are some of us who may be condemned to live in a barren and dry land of hard work, and lonely trouble. But loving natures, and gentle words, can make that desert blossom as the rose. The beauty of holiness, the sweetness of sympathy, will make the poorest home lovely and fragrant. May Jesus, the Rose of Sharon, teach us to learn the lesson of the lilies, and to make our lives sweet with purity and love.

## SERMON LI. PAST KNOWLEDGE.

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(Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.) EPHESIANS iii.19. "To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." There are some things which no earthly school can teach us, no earthly science explain. Science can do very much, it has done marvellous things, and will do still more. Men can work now with ease such wonders as would have sent them to the fire as wizards three hundred years ago. Science can calculate the exact time of an eclipse ages before the time, science can connect two worlds with the electric wire, science can make the powers of earth, and air, and fire, and water its slaves; but science cannot teach us the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, or show us how to find the peace of God which passeth all understanding. No, we must go to the school of Jesus Christ to learn these things; and in that school the learned, and the ignorant, the powerful, and the lowly, are just on a level. The man of science may be there, like Sir Isaac Newton, of whom some one said that he had the whitest soul of any man he had ever known. But it was not the power of the telescope which had brought the love of Jesus to his sight. The poor, ignorant cottager, who cannot even read, may be there. He is no scholar, but he has learnt what some scholars are ignorant of, to trust God and love his neighbour as himself. Yes, brethren, if we would learn to know the love of Christ, we must go to His school, we must kneel at His Feet, we must hold close communion with Him, we must daily endeavour ourselves to follow the steps of His most holy life. Grey-haired old man, tender little child, anxious mother, busy worker, Jesus calls you to learn the lesson of His love, saying, "Come, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." But S. Paul says that the love of Christ passeth knowledge. And indeed we poor, sinful, selfish creatures can never hope, at least here, to understand all the wideness, the depth, the power, of that love. When the astronomer looks up at the starry sky above him, he does not think so much of what he knows about that shining world as about what he does not know. He thinks of the mysteries which those calm skies hold, and of the countless stars which no telescope has ever yet brought within the range of human eye. So the more we learn of the love of Christ the more marvellous it appears. There are some among us who know absolutely nothing of the love of Christ. They are as ignorant of it as a blind man is of the beauties of Nature. To them Jesus is a character in history who did certain things, who suffered for them and for others, and with that they are quite content. But they know nothing of the love of Christ, and care nothing about it because they do not love Him themselves. Such people either neglect the duties of religion altogether, or perform them as an idle schoolboy does his task, unwillingly, grudgingly. There is no love in their service, and therefore it is worthless. There are many, I trust, who hear me now who have learned something of the love of Christ; others who would willingly learn. To them I say, come into Christ's school to-day. A willing scholar can always learn, if you want to love Jesus you have begun already to do so. First, let us think of some things in the love of Christ which make it wonderful, past knowledge. The love of Christ is wonderful because it is impartial. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Look at the sunshine pouring down over a great city, and think on what different characters the light falls. The same sun shines on the Church and its faithful worshippers, and on the house of shame and infamy. The same light gilds the dying bed of the Christian, and the couch of the infidel and blasphemer. The

same beam glitters on the blessed Altar of the faithful, and on the cell of the impenitent murderer. Look at the sunshine and the shower in the country. The fields of the earnest, prayerful man, and those of the unbelieving, prayerless scoffer lie golden under the same sunlight, are watered by the same showers. And why is this so? Surely it is a type of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Surely it teaches us the wondrous height, and depth, and breadth of divine love. It warns us not to be kind and loving only to the good and gentle, but to love our enemies, to do good to those who persecute us and speak evil of us, to try to give all a chance to amend, even as God, in His long-suffering mercy, makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good. We shall get to know more of the love of Christ if we learn to be more impartial in our love for our fellow men. I know a little island where the society, small enough already, is divided into certain classes, and it is considered a want of breeding for one class to unite with another. You can imagine the angry feelings, and petty jealousies, which such a system excites. But even in the greater world we are too much inclined to surround ourselves with a circle of friends and acquaintances, and to leave the rest of the world unknown and uncared for. The love of Christ teaches us to see in every man a brother, a neighbour, whom we must help if we can. The love of Christ would have us look on ourselves and others as one great family, joined together by one common Faith, one Holy Baptism; or as one consecrated building, where high and low, rich and poor, are all built into their appointed place, "Jesus Christ being the head corner-stone." My brothers, try to be more wide, more liberal, more impartial in your love for others, if you would learn the love of Christ which is wider than the ocean, impartial as the sunshine -- passing knowledge. Again, the love of Christ is wonderful in its effects. It makes the brave still more heroic; it makes the timid courageous, the sad joyful, the hardened tender. It was the love of Christ which made S. Stephen brave in the hour of his martyrdom, and taught him to pray for his murderers. In all the long roll of heroes there are none so great as those who fought under the banner of Christ's love. Feeble old men, little children, weak women, were transformed by that marvellous power; they could do all things through Christ who strengthened them. They suffered and died, but their death gave life to the faith of Christ. Did you ever read, brethren, how the last fight of gladiators in the Colosseum ended? It was when Rome had become Christian, but still the cruel sports of the people had not been entirely given up. After a famous victory, the Emperor, a feeble boy, and all the great men of Rome, went to the crowded theatre to witness the amusements given in honour of the triumph. After the harmless sports were over some gladiators entered the arena armed with sharp swords. The people shouted with delight because the old savage amusements of their heathen days were restored to them. Suddenly an old man, dressed in the habit of a hermit, and unknown to all, sprang into the arena, and declared that as Christian people they must not suffer men to slay each other thus. An angry cry rose from the eager crowd. The gladiators, disappointed of their gain, menaced the hermit fiercely, crying, "back, old man, for thy life." But the stranger stood fearless before that angry mob, he heeded not the swords of the gladiators, nor the yells of the people, but solemnly protested against the deed of blood. In another moment he lay dead on the red sand, pierced by a dozen wounds. He died, but his words lived. When the people saw the fearless courage of a weak old man, shame filled their hearts; the sports were stopped, and never again did the gladiators fight in the Colosseum. My brothers, if we are learning the love of Christ, we shall be brave to do the right, come what may. Again, the love of Christ is wonderful in its effect on our work. It is a common saying that such and such a work is a labour of love; and, believe me, that is the best done of all which is done for love. Did you ever watch a young mother making the

clothes for her first child? Never before has she bestowed such care, such thought, such patience, on her sewing, every stitch is prompted by love. Long ago, there was an old Cathedral somewhere abroad, I cannot tell you where. On one of the arches was sculptured a face of exceeding beauty. It was long hidden, but one day a ray of sunshine lighted up the matchless work, and from that time, on the days when the light shone on the face, crowds came to look at its loveliness. The history of that sculpture is a strange one. When the Cathedral was being built, an old man, worn with years and care, came to the architect, and begged to be allowed to work there. Fearing his age and failing sight might cause the old man to injure the carving, the master set him to work in a dark part of the roof. One day they found the stranger lying dead, with the tools of his craft around him, and his still face turned up towards that other face which he had carved. It was a work of surpassing beauty, and without doubt was the face of one whom the artist had long since loved and lost. When the craftsmen looked upon it, they all agreed -- "this is the grandest work of all, it is the work of love." We, my brothers, are all set to do some work here in the temple of our lives, and the best, the most beautiful, the most enduring, will be that which we do because the love of Christ constraineth us. And yet once more, the love of Christ is wonderful in its power of pardon. Have you ever known what it is to have sinned grievously, and to have repented truly? Have you felt the shame, the sorrow, the misery of knowing your sin, and the exquisite sense of relief when you knew that you were pardoned? Have you known the power of Christ's absolving word? Have you felt that He has given the prodigal the kiss of pardon, that He has carried the lost sheep home once more, that He has said to you -- "I will, be thou clean, depart in peace?" To know this is to know the love of Christ. Are there no prodigals here now who have not yet arisen and gone to their Father? Are there no weak, tempted women straying into danger, like the lost sheep? Are there none here who are carrying about some secret sin which poisons all their life? If there are such, I say, come and make trial of Christ's love to-day. "Come, drink of the water of life freely." Come with your sin, your sorrow, your trial, your temptation, to the feet of Jesus, and you shall learn "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

## SERMON LII. THE PRISON-HOUSE.

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(Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.) EPHESIANS iv.1. "The prisoner of the Lord." This is what Paul the aged called himself in writing to the Ephesians. He had appealed unto Caesar, and he was a captive at Rome. But he does not style himself Caesar's prisoner, but the prisoner of the Lord, whose he was, and whom he served. Let us think first of the place and manner of St. Paul's imprisonment. The place was Rome, the capital of the world. A city full of glorious memories of the past, and famous in the present for art, and eloquence, and learning. Its soldiers could boast that they had conquered the world, and could point out the tombs of Pompey and of many another hero along the Appian Way. Its streets had been trodden by some of the greatest of poets, and its Senate-House had echoed with the burning words of the first orators of the world. Rome was full of contrasts, wealth and beggary, beauty and squalor, the palace of Caesar, and the haunt of vice and shame, were close together. The city was ruled over by a cruel tyrant, at once a hypocrite and a monster of iniquity. It was in such a place, so glorious and so shameful, that S. Paul was a prisoner. He was not, however, confined in a dungeon. By the favour of the Praefect of the Praetorian Guard, whose duty it was to take charge of all prisoners awaiting trial before the Emperor, the Apostle was allowed to live in a hired house of his own, to have free access to such friends as he had, and to preach the Gospel freely to those who would hear him. But still S. Paul was a prisoner. After the Roman fashion, he was chained to a soldier, and at night probably two soldiers were linked to him. Perhaps no such wonderful sermons have ever since been preached as those spoken by S. Paul, "the prisoner of the Lord." We can fancy the old man, grey-haired, and bent with suffering, and want, and hardship, bearing on his wrinkled face and scarred body those marks of the Lord Jesus, of which he tells us, and yet brave, unflinching as ever. We can picture him preaching the Gospel of Jesus with the same boldness in his bonds as when at freedom, glorying in the cross of his Master, and rejoicing that he is permitted to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. We can fancy even the stern Roman soldier watching with admiration, as the old man exhorts his hearers to show themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ, to fight the good fight, to take unto them the whole armour of God. Whilst many a Christian's heart must have swelled with emotion as the fettered hands were lifted in earnest exhortation, and the blessing was given amid the clanking of the Apostle's chains. And thus all the hearers of S. Paul must have been struck with the wonderful faith and patience of the man; just as we are struck when we read his words to-day. Although he was an exile, a prisoner, waiting for a trial where he would have little chance of justice, knowing that the sword hung above his head ready to fall at any moment, S. Paul utters no complaint, no murmur of discontent. On the contrary, he bids his hearers rejoice in the Lord alway; he himself thanked God, and took courage; he tells his disciples that he has learnt in whatsoever state he is, to be content. He is poor, yet making many rich. He has nothing, yet possesses all things. He has that peace of God which passeth all understanding, that good part which shall not be taken away. The heathen tyrant can make him a prisoner, but his chains cannot keep him from the glorious freedom of the sons of God. Persecution may drive him from his home, but nothing can rob him of his home eternal in the Heavens. The sword of the Roman may slay him, but to him to die is gain, and he is ready to be offered. He has suffered want, and sorrow, and

loss; he has endured perils by land and by sea, by robbers, by shipwreck, by the heathen, and by his own countrymen, but for this S. Paul cares not, he has kept the faith, he has run the race set before him, looking unto Jesus, and he knows that the crown of glory is laid up for him. A great preacher of our day tells us how they brought the news to Athens that the battle of Marathon was won. The swiftest runner had come panting and exhausted with the glad tidings of victory, and worn out with exertion, he dropped, and died on the threshold of the first house he reached, sobbing out with dying breath the words -- "Farewell, and rejoice ye, we, too, rejoice." So the Apostle, the prisoner of the Lord, dying daily, and expecting each hour to be his last, tells the glad tidings of Christ's victory over sin and death, and whispers with his dying breath, "rejoice." It is no wonder that such a preacher should have produced marvellous results, and should have begotten many spiritual children, as he tells us, in his bonds. Luke, his fellow traveller through so many varied scenes, was there to comfort Paul the aged in his bonds. Tychicus, who had formerly accompanied him from Corinth to Ephesus, was ready to carry the Apostle's letters to the Churches; and Mark, who had once failed in his ministry, was once more restored to the side of his great teacher. Others, too, were with him, but none perhaps was dearer to S. Paul than a certain slave, Onesimus, who had fled from his master, Philemon, in Colossae. This runaway slave had found his way to Rome, and here probably some one, who had seen him in the house of his Christian master, took pity on the fugitive, and brought him to S. Paul. How tenderly the prisoner of the Lord dealt with the erring slave we can well imagine, as we read the loving words which the Apostle wrote in his Epistle to Philemon. Then, too, we can fancy the prisoner of the Lord talking to his jailor, the stern Roman soldier, who was chained to him night and day. Often in the long night watches, when the care of all the Churches kept S. Paul from sleep, he must have conversed with the warrior so closely linked to him. I think we may believe that a yet closer link than that of the iron chain at last united the prisoner and the guard. I think that the earnest prayers, and burning words, of that brave soldier of Jesus Christ, must have led the soldier of Caesar to take up his cross, and follow Jesus. And now what lesson can we learn from the prison-house at Rome? We can learn this, that this world in which we live is in one sense a prison-house to all. It is a prison-house of hard work. In our great cities the roar of traffic, the rattle of machinery, the shriek of the steam-whistle, the eager crowds flocking to office and bank and exchange all mean one thing -- work. Every man's talk is of business; he is in the prison-house, and he is chained to his work. Next, this world is a prison-house of sorrow and trial. Every one who has lived any time in the world can show you the marks of his chain. Every one whom we meet is wearing a crown of thorns. It is hidden under the scanty white locks of the old, and the sunny tresses of youth. It is covered by the soldier's helmet, or the peer's coronet, or the widow's cap; but the crown of thorns is there. Specially is this world a prison-house to those who strive to do their duty, and help their fellow men. For them in all ages there have been prison bars, and chains of persecution. Joseph resists temptation, and he is cast into prison. But the iron of his chain made his soul as iron, and changed the spoiled darling of his father into the wise ruler of Egypt. He was the prisoner of the Lord, and this suffering was the way to glory. Truly says a great poet (Milton), "who best can suffer, best can do." If we would look on some of the greatest teachers, philosophers, and benefactors of mankind, we must look for them in a prison-house. Socrates, when seventy-two years old, was a prisoner, and condemned to drink poison, because he taught higher lessons than the mob could understand. He died discussing the immorality of the soul, and his farewell to his judges was full of quiet dignity. "It is now time," he said, "that we depart -- I to die, you to live; but

which has the better destiny is unknown to all, except to God." Bruno was burnt at Rome, because he exposed the false philosophy of the day. When Galileo, an old man of seventy, taught the truth about the earth's motion, they cast him into the dungeons of the Inquisition, and after death the Pope refused a tomb for his body. And so for many others who dared to do their duty and to speak the truth, -- reformers in religion, in science, in politics, -- there was a prison-house, there was a chain. But the stone walls could not confine the mind; the iron chain could not bind the truth. Some of the most glorious works in literature were composed in prison. The prison-house at Rome has given us some of those Epistles of S. Paul which have gone far to convert the world; and the finest allegory in the English language was written in Bedford gaol. "If we suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are we." If we are the prisoners of the Lord, let us welcome the chain of trial, of sorrow, of self-denial, of persecution. There are prisoners who are not the Lord's. There are some fast bound in the misery and iron of bad habits, and habitual sin. These are lying in the condemned cell, bound hand and foot with the devil's chain. The drunkard, the impure man, the unbeliever, these are prisoners, but not the Lord's. I do not speak now of them. I speak to you, my brothers, who are trying to live a godly and a Christian life, the life of duty. And I tell you that you will often find this life a prison-house, where you must give up your own will, deny yourselves, learn to endure hardness, and to bear the chain which suffering, or neglect, or ignorance put upon you. If you are indeed the prisoners of the Lord, the iron of your chain will make you brave to suffer and be strong. The same hope which sustained Paul the aged long ago will sustain you now; the glorious certainty that after a while the Lord looseth men out of prison, and receives them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

## SERMON LIII. FIRM TO THE END.

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(Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.) 1 COR. i.8. "Who also shall confirm you unto the end." Steadfastness is one of the most important characteristics of a Christian. Perhaps you will tell me that love, and self-denial, and patience, and faith are the chief marks of Christ's followers. And I answer that these things are useless without steadfastness. It will not avail us to be very loving, and self-sacrificing, and patient, and trustful for a little while, and then to fall away, and be selfish, and impatient, and faithless. It is not the best regiment of soldiers which makes the most headlong charge, but which can stand firm against the enemy. The Spartans of old were forbidden by their laws ever to flee from a foe. In the Pass of Thermopylae stands a monument to Leonidas and his followers, bearing this inscription -- "Go, stranger, and tell at Lacedaemon that we died here in obedience to our laws." My brethren, what we want, as soldiers of Jesus Christ, is not so much zeal, or enthusiasm, or outward profession, as firmness to the end, steadfastness to die, if need be, for the laws of our God. We find plenty of people ready to make professions, to be very zealous in the service of God, but after a time the fire of their zeal dies out into dead ashes; they have no staying power; like the seed on the rocky ground they wither away, because they have no root. Such unstable religion as this is useless. We must be firmly rooted and established in the faith. We must endure to the end, if we would be saved. We must, for our part, hold fast to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and He, for His part, will confirm or strengthen us unto the end. Every period of the Church's history has had its special dangers and temptations. The Corinthians had theirs long ago. We have ours to-day. Let us see what some of the special dangers of the Church are now, and how Jesus provides means to confirm us to the end. First among these dangers we may place the restless spirit of the age. This is the result of various causes. The spread of education is one cause. Men are taught to cultivate their heads at the price of their hearts. Children are sent to schools where God is almost shut out. Many people get that "little learning" which "is a dangerous thing," and which makes them doubtful and uncertain in the faith. The growth of cheap literature is another cause. The printing press which gives us a cheap Bible and Prayer Book, and a vast amount of pure, useful reading, also sends out much that is dangerous, and positively wicked. The most holy mysteries of the Christian faith are held up to mockery and ridicule, and treated as old wives' tales; and the restless spirit of the age leads people to read these things, and to have their faith shaken and their ideas confused. Thus we find nowadays people arguing and doubting about doctrines which at one time were taken for granted. One says, perhaps we shall rise again after death; another wonders if there be such a place as Hell. One thinks that God answers prayer, another is doubtful about it. Now we do not find S. Paul and the other Apostles talking in this way. We do not find the early Church talking in this way. They could say, "I know in whom I have believed. I believe, therefore will I speak." The fact is, some of us in these days are getting too clever. We have got a few drops of learning, and we fancy that we can pour the whole great ocean of knowledge into our poor little bottle. Education is a great and glorious blessing, but, like every other blessing, it may be put to a wrong use. And when we find shallow young men and women, who have just mastered enough subjects to be able to pass an examination, sneering at the Bible, and calling religion superstition and folly, we can only wish that

they had drunk deeper, or not tasted, of the water of knowledge. True education makes us humble, because it shows us our ignorance. My brothers, what are the doubters and the unbelievers going to give you in exchange for what they rob you of? They can perhaps rob you of your faith in Jesus Christ as a Saviour. But what then, they cannot make you forget that you are a sinner. You know better, your own heart tells you the truth. They can take away the Saviour, and only leave you your sins. The doubter may scoff you out of believing in the resurrection. But can he laugh you out of believing in death? When your little child dies, and you look at the loving eyes closing for the last time, what comfort has your doubting friend to give you? Not a word. He leaves you alone with your dead, and he has robbed you of the only hope which makes death bearable -- the resurrection unto eternal life. You come to your own dying bed; is there one of these doubting, scoffing faith-destroying friends who can bring peace or calm to your last hours? Will it be any comfort to you to hear them say that "there is nothing new, nothing true, and that it does not signify?" They tell you one fact, which you know already, that you are dying. But beyond that they know nothing, hope nothing, believe nothing. My brothers, do not let these people, with their shallow talk and shallow books, rob you of your peace, cheat you out of your birthright. Look at the lives of these doubters, and then look at the lives of Jesus and His saints. See which example is the purer, the more noble. Which is better, to imitate the life of self-sacrifice which Jesus led, to copy the dauntless faith of S. Paul, the loving gentleness of S. John, the humble penitence of Augustine, the fearless courage of Savonarola, or to sit at the feet of those who spend a selfish life in trying to describe a world in which there is no God? Another of the dangers of the day is a constant desire for something new, and, if possible, sensational. There are some who would have their religion as full of novelties as their newspaper, or their amusement. The old paths which God has given us to walk in have become too commonplace for such as these; and they run eagerly into any new way, however fantastic. And, above all, these people want a religion which is made easy for them. They have no objection to being saved provided that the process is quick, easy, and costs them nothing. They turn away from the thought of self-denial, of keeping under the body, of fasting and prayer, of watchfulness and self-examination. They must be made good all at once, and be admitted into the front rank of saints, without having fought and suffered in a lower place. My brethren, beware of this mushroom religion, which grows up suddenly, and as suddenly vanishes away. The best fruit is not that which ripens most quickly, and the best Christian certainly does not come to maturity all in a moment. There is a fable of the Persians which tells us how a gourd wound itself round a lofty palm-tree, and in a few weeks climbed to its very top. The quick-growing gourd asked the palm-tree its age, and the tree answered, "an hundred years." Then the gourd answered boastingly that it had grown as tall as the palm in fewer days than the tree could count years. "True," answered the palm-tree, "every summer has a gourd climbed round me, as proud as thou art, and as short-lived as thou wilt be." These, then, are some of the special dangers of the time -- an unfixd, unsettled faith, leading men to question, and argue, and doubt, when they should believe; and next, a restless desire for something new and exciting in religion. And, besides these, there are special dangers peculiar to ourselves, arising from our position, or temperament. This is a specially busy age, when men must work if they would eat bread. Every walk of life is crowded, and the competition in every calling and business is most keen. Now there is great danger in all this to a man's spiritual life, if he has not God with him in his work. He will become selfish, unscrupulous, and determined to gain a place, and make money at any cost. He will think only of himself, and God is not in all his thoughts. There are some who would have us

believe that religion is one thing and business another, and that the two must be kept distinctly apart. Never believe that false doctrine, my brothers. A Christian man may not take part in any work on which the name of God may not be written. Whatever business he may engage in, a Christian must always remember that he must be about his Heavenly Father's business. The great merchants of old times used to begin their ledger and business books at the new year by writing "Praise be to God" on the top of the first page. I would that all men of business could honestly do the same now. Consecrate your work to God, so that you need not be ashamed to pray about it, to study the Bible about it, to write Praise be to God on all your business transactions. And last of all, a word as to the means by which Christ will confirm or strengthen you unto the end. I can tell you nothing new about this, I would not if I could. The old wine of the Gospel is better than all the new inventions with which some men would poison the cup of religion. God confirms you by the gift of the Holy Ghost, given by His Word, and Sacraments, and means of grace. Let no one laugh you out of believing in the Bible; let no one argue you out of trusting in that Book which has been the guide, the teacher, the comforter of tens of thousands. The followers of new creeds would like you to exchange your Bible for their books. They will offer you the gospel of selfishness, the gospel of pride, the gospel of hopelessness, the gospel of money-making; turn away from them, and hold fast to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hold fast to the Sacraments of the Church. Let the scoffer sneer, let the proud man refuse to bend before the Altar of his Lord; but let nothing drive you from the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's love. Hold fast to prayer. Let no crowd of difficulties, or worries, or troubles keep you back from Jesus. Press through the crowd like that woman of old, and touch the hem of Christ's garment, in prayer. Only hold fast to your Bible, to your Altar, to your prayers, and "the Lord Jesus shall confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ."

## SERMON LIV. SCHOLARS OF CHRIST.

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(Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.) EPHESIANS x.20. "Ye have not so learned Christ." Education is a very prominent feature in the England of to-day. Schools are among the most conspicuous of our public buildings, and competitive examinations are thronged by eager crowds; and, seeing all this, it seems almost impossible that a few years ago most of our poorer brethren could neither read or write. I am not going to speak to you now about the blessings and the evils of the present state of education; I want you to think of another school, and another kind of lessons, which are far more important than all else in the world. The time comes when the schoolboy can lay his books by, and when the young man quits college, they have finished their education. But it is never so in Christ's school, about which I am going to speak. As long as we are here in the world we must go to school. And when we come to die, our education is not finished, but we go to a higher class, as it were, to learn such lessons as we never could master on earth. In the school of Jesus Christ it is not always the oldest or the cleverest who are the best scholars. There are white-haired old men who are only just learning the alphabet of Christ's religion, in the lowest place; and there are little children, so pure and white-souled, that they have already mastered some of the hardest lessons. In other schools the scholar must be naturally clever, or, at least, most industrious, if he is to gain a high place, and win a prize. In Christ's school there is a place, and a prize, for the dullest, and he will succeed very well if only he wants to learn. I have known many people who, as they said, "were no scholars," and yet they were not very far from the kingdom of Heaven. Brethren, some of us have never yet been to Christ's school. We have been playing truant, or altogether taken up with the lessons of that great, selfish, public-school -- the world. I want you all to come to Christ's school to-day, old and young, clever and dull, and to hear some of the lessons which that school teaches. I think that if we examine ourselves honestly in these lessons, we shall find how little we really know, and we shall begin with shame to take the lowest place. And we must remember this, that in Christ's school we shall have to unlearn a great deal which the world's school has taught us. The world will have instructed us to take care of ourselves, at the expense of others. One of the favourite mottoes in the great world school-room is -- "every man for himself." The world will have taught us that to make money, and to be successful, are the highest aims possible. And there are many similar lessons which are being daily learnt in the world school. Now, when we become scholars of Christ, we have to unlearn a great deal of this. Instead of finding the text, "every man for himself," placed conspicuously before us, we see another, and quite opposite command -- "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." We were taught in that other school outside that to make money and to succeed were the greatest good. Here we are instructed differently. "Lay not up for yourselves treasure on the earth, where rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." One of the chief things which we learnt in the world's lesson-book was to mistrust our fellow men, and to be ready to resent an injury when discovered. In Christ's school the lesson is quite different, we are told to love our neighbour as ourself, and more than this, to love our enemies. There are some here to-day, perhaps, who are very old scholars of the world's school. They have got all its lessons by heart, they can repeat its selfish maxims, and practise its hard teachings. My brothers, God grant that you may find out how

greatly your education has been neglected! God grant that you may learn, before it is too late, how little you know about the things which concern your peace. You, who have grown grey in the great world school, learning its sordid, selfish lessons, grinding away at its daily tasks, adding up your sums of addition, and interest, scanning the money table with eager eyes, practising your skill in profit and loss, and daily writing as your one copy -- make money, and be rich -- to you, I say, come into Christ's school to-day, and see whose teaching is the better: that of the world, or that of the Son of God. There comes to every school a day of breaking up, when the scholars go home. One day a man is missed in the great world school. His place is vacant. The shutters are up at the shop, or office, the servants at the place of business speak in smothered whispers. They miss the sound of the master's voice, the echo of his step upon the stair. He has learnt his last lesson in worldliness, and his schooling is over. The world has broken up, as far as he is concerned, and he has gone home. But where? He knew nothing beyond the world's lessons, he never provided for another home. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Briefly, then, let us look at some of the chief lessons which we must learn in the school of Jesus Christ. First, we must learn to hate our old sins. Like David, like S. Peter, like every penitent, when we think of the past we abhor ourselves, and sit down among the ashes of humiliation. Like the Prodigal, we cry, "I am no more worthy to be called Thy son." If you find yourself taking pleasure in the thought of former sin, boasting of your evil deeds, be sure you are yet in your ignorance, you have never learnt the alphabet of Christ's lesson. Next, we must learn to know our own weakness, and our need of a Saviour. The world will not give us that lesson. The world will tell us to make our own way, to trust to ourselves, to our cleverness, and sharpness. In Christ's school we shall be taught our weakness, and shall learn to say, "Lord, save me, I perish." Another of the lessons we must learn is to conquer ourselves. The world gives a great many instructions about conquering difficulties, beating down obstacles, overcoming enemies; but it is Christ's school alone which can show us how to conquer ourselves. You have probably noticed the change in a young country lad after he has enlisted for a soldier, and gone through his drill. Whereas he was a high-shouldered, slouching, ungainly figure, now he has learnt to carry himself like a soldier, he has conquered the old bad habits which he acquired by lounging in the lanes, or plodding along the furrow. My brethren, we have all got our bad habits, our ugly tempers, our sharp tongues, our discontented feelings, and it is only the drill of Christ's soldiers, and the teachings in Christ's school, which will make us get the better of them. Christ's school will make a radical change in us. Jesus -- our Master -- says, "behold I make all things new," and we know that they who are in Christ are become new creatures, old things are passed away. We may be quite sure that if we are Christ's scholars we shall be changed people. S. Paul tells us, as he told the Ephesians, some of the marks of this change. We shall learn to speak, and act, the truth. "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour." We shall learn to control our temper, -- "be ye angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." We shall learn to work, and to work honestly, -- "let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good." We shall learn to control our tongue, -- "let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying." We shall learn to be kind and gentle to our neighbours, -- "let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." The great world school will teach us to practise these things, but not the school of Jesus. There we shall learn "to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven us." And we shall learn in Christ's school

to be brave. The world school can teach us a certain kind of courage, but not the highest, nor the best. The world can teach us how to resent an injury, not how to forgive one. It is in Christ's school only that true heroes are made. The world can make such soldiers as Caesar, or Napoleon, but the school of Christ alone can make a Havelock or a Gordon. I have read of a poor boy who came to school with a patch on his clothes. One of his schoolmates singled him out for ridicule and insult; and the boy answered -- "do you suppose I am ashamed of my patch? I am thankful to a good mother for keeping me out of rags, and I honour my patch for her sake." All the noble army of martyrs, of every rank and kind, learnt the secret of their courage in the school of Christ, and have left us an example to follow."By all the martyrs, and the dear dead Christ;

By the long bright roll of those whom joy enticed

With her myriad blandishments, but could not win,

Who would fight for victory, but would not sin;

By these our elder brothers, who have gone before

And have left their trail of light upon our shore,

We can see the glory of a seeming shame,

We can feel the fulness of an empty name."My brothers, it may be there are some here now who have not so learned Christ. Who have been in the world's school from the beginning, and have grown weary of its selfishness, and its hollow maxims. If it be so, pray now that Jesus, the Great Teacher, may give you a new heart, and a new mind, bow the proud head, and bend the unwilling knee, say to the Lord -- "Lord Jesu, make me as a little child, let me come to school to-night."

## SERMON LV. WARY WALKING.

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(Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.) EPHESIANS v.15. "See then that ye walk circumspectly." Some people tell us that salvation is the easiest thing in the world. We have only to feel that we believe in Jesus Christ, and all is done. Now neither Jesus Christ Himself, nor the Apostles whom He sent to teach, tell us anything of the kind. On the contrary, our Saviour, whilst He dwells on the fulness and freedom of salvation, offered to all without money, and without price, tells us that many are called, but few chosen. He warns us in to-day's Gospel that when the King makes His Great Wedding Feast of salvation numbers make light of it, and go their way to their farm, and their merchandise. He shows us how, when the Bridegroom cometh suddenly. He finds half of the virgins in darkness, their lamps gone out, and He commands us to watch, because we know not the day nor the hour of the Lord's coming. He tells us also that the way of life eternal is a narrow way, and the gate of salvation a strait gate, whilst the road to eternal ruin is broad, and easy. Our Lord bids us strive to enter in at the narrow gate, and assures us that few there be who find it. Now all this does not put the Christian life before us as a life of idleness, and inaction; nor does it describe salvation as a very easy thing. Both Jesus and His holy Apostles tell us that we must strive, climb, fight, run the race patiently, walk circumspectly, watch, pray, arm ourselves, have on a wedding garment; a very different doctrine this from that dangerous, do-nothing creed, which some would have us accept. I think S. Paul had the narrow way and the strait gate in his mind, when he told his followers to walk circumspectly, looking around them, minding their steps, proceeding with care and caution. It used to be said of old that all roads led to Rome, because she was the capital of the world. And nowadays, in the most remote country place in England, you will find a road which leads to London. But all roads do not lead to Heaven. Some foolish people like to believe that they can travel anyway they please, and yet reach Heaven at last. They love to imagine that they can hold to any doctrine, however false and extravagant, and set up a gospel of their own, and yet find the way to Heaven. There are some who choose to walk in a way which seems right in their eyes, a way of selfishness, and pride, and obstinacy; they will have their own way, they tell us. Yes, but it is not God's way, and it does not lead to Heaven. There are just two roads from this life to the life to come, no more. The narrow way of God's commandments, ending in the strait gate which opens on Heaven; and the broad road of sin, terminating in the wide gate of Hell. Let us think of some of the rules by which we must walk in the narrow way. We must walk humbly. It is a narrow way remember, and if we walk with our heads lifted up by pride, we shall miss our footing, and slip from the path. The gate, too, is strait, or narrow. It is like one of those low-pitched, narrow entrances which you may still see in old buildings, and which were common once in all our ancient towns. A traveller could not get through these gates unless he bent his head, and bowed his shoulders. So, my brothers, if we wish to enter into the gate of life eternal we must do so with bowed head, and with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart. Pride cast Satan out of Heaven, pride locks the door of life against many a man now. An unbeliever once asked, with a sneer, who made the devil. And he was answered that God made him what he was, and that he had made himself what he is. So is it with us all. God makes us His children, heirs of Heaven, and we too often, by our foolish pride, make ourselves into devils. Believe me, the gate of

life eternal is far too narrow to admit us with the great swelling garment of pride puffed out on all sides of us. Next, if we walk along the narrow way we must not overload ourselves. There are some burdens which we must bear, but the dear Lord, who laid them upon us, will give us strength to carry them. It is the burden of the world's making which will hinder us. We see a man who wants to walk in the right way, who hopes to pass through the narrow gate, who has so loaded himself with worldly things that he goes staggering along, till at length he slips off on to the broad road to destruction. He is like one escaping from a shipwreck, who tries to swim ashore with all his money bags, and is sunk to the bottom by their weight. Sometimes people, coming home from abroad, bring with them a quantity of smuggled goods, and their clothes are all padded with laces, and other ill-gotten gear. What happens? They are stopped at a narrow gate, and stripped of all their load before they are permitted to return home. So, my brothers, if you would pass the gate which leads home, to the rest which remaineth for the people of God, you must not overload yourselves with this world's gear. You must not fill up your thoughts with your business, and drag that burden with you to the very edge of the Churchyard mould. You are just blocking up the way to eternal life with your bales of goods, your manufactures, your business books. Some of you are blocking God's highway with the waggons of worldly commerce, others with the gay chariot of frivolous pleasure. Here is a woman trying to walk in the narrow way. She has a crowd of children hanging upon her skirts. She has tried to be a good mother, but she has let the cares and plans for her children draw her away from God, and we see her dragged from the narrow way by those whom she ought to have helped along it. Believe me, it is not open, notorious evil-doers who form the majority on the broad road to destruction. It is not the murderer, the thief, the drunkard, the adulterer, the unbeliever, who crowd that down-hill road. They are there with the rest, but they are outnumbered by those whom the world calls very respectable. Amid that crowd of all ages and ranks, there are those who have attended our Church Services, and knelt at our Altars, some of them do so still. They have no vulgar vices, they never swear, or exceed moderation in food and drink, they have wives and families, and they pay their way like respectable householders. And yet, -- Oh! the pity of it -- they are travelling on the broad road. It is not open; disgraceful sin which has placed them there, but just worldliness. The dust of the world has filled up every corner of their life, and they have no room for God. The windows of their soul are so begrimed with the dust and cobwebs of this life that the sunshine of God's Holy Spirit cannot shine through them. One is so taken up with his farm that his heart and soul seemed buried in the soil of it. The Gospel message rings in his ear, but he makes light of it. Another is so occupied with his merchandise, with making, and getting, that he has no time to see how it stands with his soul, no time to think of the account to be rendered to God when all earthly accounts are closed for ever. One is so eager to obtain a good position for himself, or his children, in the world, that he utterly neglects to fit himself, or them, for a place in the world to come. With some the idol is work, with others pleasure, but in either case they worship an idol, and not God. There are women whose minds are so taken up with the latest fashion, and the newest dress, that they have neglected the white garment of holiness, and forgotten the old, old fashion -- death. My brothers, my sisters, take heed. It is not so much the coarse vices of the brutal and ignorant which ruin souls, as the selfish worldliness of those who ought to know better. If you are living for self, for work, for pleasure, for society, for anything but God, then, in spite of your respectable name, and your outward forms of religion, you have slipped from the narrow way which leads to life eternal. If you are determined to make this world your Heaven, you must not be astonished if you are shut out of Heaven in the world to come.

If these poor worldly folk could only see the end, could only understand now how hollow and worthless, and disappointing, the things of this world are at the last, they would cast aside every weight, and strive to regain the narrow way of God's commandments. History is full of instances of those who found, some too late, that the pleasures of the world are worthless. How melancholy is the declaration of one who says, "I have dragged on to thirty-three. What have all those years left to me? Nothing except three and thirty." Diocletian the Emperor tells us that he is happier planting cabbages at Salona, than ruling the world at Byzantium. Another Emperor, Severus, declares that he has held every position in life from the lowest to the highest, and found no good in any. Look into the history of France, and see what the world gave to Madame de Pompadour at the last. She had sacrificed virtue and honour for the glitter of the court of Louis XV. And now in the latter days she tells us that she has no inclination for the things which once pleased her. Her magnificent house in Paris was refurnished in the most lavish style, and it only pleased her for two days! Her country residence was charming, and she alone could not endure it. They told her all the gossip of the gay world, and she scarcely understood their meaning. "My life," she says, "is a continual death." At last the end came. And as they carried her to her burial, the king, who had once professed to love her, said with utter unconcern -- "The Countess will have a fine day." This is what the world gave to Madame de Pompadour. My brethren, I have been striking the old notes to-day, and re-telling an oft-told story. But sin and sorrow are ever the same, and the one great concern of your life and mine is the same as when Jesus died for us on Calvary. Let us take heed to our ways, and see on which road we are journeying. If we have gone out of the way Jesus will bring us back, if we want to come back. Ask Him, brothers, ask Him now. Pray as perhaps you never prayed before. "True prayer is not the imposing sound

Which clamorous lips repeat;

But the deep silence of a soul

That clasps Jehovah's feet." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate. For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, which leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat."

## SERMON LVI. STRONG CHRISTIANS.

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(Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.) EPHESIANS vi.10. "My brethren, be strong in the Lord," A weak and cowardly soldier is a pitiful object, but a weak-kneed, cowardly Christian is still more so. S. Paul told the Ephesian Christians to be strong in the Lord, and in these days especially we need strong Christians, strong Churchmen. I do not mean that we want men to presume on their strength, to repeat the sin of the Pharisee of old, and talk of their righteousness, or condemn their neighbours. I do not mean that we must be noisy and violent, and quarrelsome in our religion. None of these things are a proof of strength. A giant of power is ever the gentlest, having the hand of steel in the glove of silk. So the stronger a Christian is the more humbly he bears himself. A writer of the day says very truly, "if the world wants iron dukes, and iron men, God wants iron saints." Much of the unbelief and indifference of these days is caused by the weakness of professing Christians. When a man can point to a soldier of Christ who has deserted his post, and fled from the battle, it is no wonder that he hesitates to join an army which has such weak and cowardly warriors. When the enemies of the Church can show us unprincipled Churchmen, who have no firm faith in the doctrines which they profess, who have drifted away from their moorings, and, like ships without ballast, are blown about by every wind, it is not surprising if these enemies still remain outside the Church. Can we marvel that some should sneer at Holy Baptism, when they can name those who have tried to wash out the sign of the Cross with every kind of sin? Can we marvel that they make light of Confirmation, when we have so many who have been confirmed going back from holiness, forsaking their Church, and joining the world, the flesh, and the devil? Or need we wonder that they neglect the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and try to keep others from it, if they lay their finger on the Communicant whose life is bad? My brothers, we need to set our own house in order, we of the Church are as a city on a hill, men look at us, and woe unto us if the light within us be darkness. What we want are strong Christians to set a strong example. Teaching, argument, may do much with a careless world, but the example of a consistent, holy, life will do far more. Brethren, be ye strong, first of all, in Faith. Be quite sure that you do believe; be quite clear what you believe, and then show your faith strongly. Our faith is not built on sand, but on a rock. It is not founded on such words as -- perhaps, I suppose, I hope. No, the Creed of the Church says, I believe. There are crowds of people outside who will all tell you what they do not believe. There is the infidel who says he does not believe in God. There is the man who says he believes in God, but not in the Blessed Trinity. There is one who tells you that he believes in Jesus Christ, but not as God, only as Man. Then comes another and declares that he does not believe in eternal punishment. One says that he does not believe we are born again in Holy Baptism, another will not believe in the Baptism of infants. Some will not believe in Bishops, and others refuse to credit any sect but their own. But the Church says plainly and boldly, I believe. The Faith once delivered to the saints, the Faith which Jesus taught to the first Apostles, the Faith which S. Paul preached, and for which he died, is ours. Let us hold fast to it in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Be ready to give a reason for the faith that is in you. There are mysteries which none of us can understand, but, thank God, we can believe. And we must show this faith of ours not only by believing in the doctrines of the Church, but by putting our full trust

and confidence in the mercies of God. Where is the use of talking about our faith if we are poor, fearful, unhappy people? If our faith is not strong enough to let us trust God for to-morrow it is not worth having. It is the melancholy, over-anxious, troubled about many things Christian, who is always anticipating misfortunes, who does so much harm. Brethren, trust God all in all, be strong in the Lord, be strong in your faith. Next, brethren, be ye strong in your language. Now, do not misunderstand me. I do not mean that you are to copy those who, in pulpit and on platform, declare their favourite views and theories in words of the most violent and intemperate kind. But I do mean that when the time comes to speak out, you should speak boldly and plainly. Let the world know that you do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrines of His Church, and that you are not ashamed to own it. Never be afraid to show your colours, or to declare the name of your Leader. When Lord Nelson was going into his last battle, they wished him to cover, or lay aside, the glittering orders of victory which adorned his breast. But the hero refused, and perhaps his refusal cost him his life. Well, let us never hide the marks of our profession as Christian soldiers, even if we have to suffer, let men know that we bear about in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! we want these strong Christians in shop, and factory, in omnibus, and railway carriage, in soldiers' barrack-room, in schoolboys' dormitory, in servants' bed-chamber, -- Christians who speak out strongly for Jesus. Again, brethren, be strong in self-sacrifice for Jesus. We must not forget our cross. The surest mark of a Christian is a willingness to deny ourselves for the sake of others. Let me tell you the stories of two simple servant maids who, under very different circumstances, gave up their life for the life of little children. The scene of the first story was in America, nearly five and twenty years ago; that of the second story was in London, only a few weeks since. A young English girl had taken service in a family going to America, and her special duty was the charge of the three motherless children of her widowed master. One cold day in December they all embarked in a great Mississippi steamboat bound for the far North West. Day after day they steamed through the swollen river, where pieces of ice were already showing, past dark and gloomy shores, lined with lonely forest. One night, near the end of their voyage, the girl had seen her charges, two girls and a boy, safely asleep, and now, when all the other passengers had retired, she was reading in the saloon. Suddenly the silence was broken by a terrible cry, which told the frightened passengers that the steamboat was on fire. The captain instantly ran the vessel for the shore, and ordered the people to escape as best they could, without waiting to dress. The faithful servant had called her master, and then carried the children from their beds to the crowded deck. Quickly the blazing vessel touched the muddy bank, and the father placed the shivering children and the servant on one of the huge branches which overhung the river. A few other passengers, fifteen in all, reached other branches, the rest went down with the burning steamer. But what hope could there be for the children, just snatched from their warm beds, and now exposed unclad to the bitter December night? Their father had no clothing to cover them, and, as he spoke of another steamer which would pass by in the morning, he had little hope of his children holding out. Then the servant maid declared that if possible she would keep the little ones alive. Clinging in the darkness to the icy branches, she stripped off her own clothing, all but the thin garment next her body, and wrapped up the shivering children. Thus they passed the long, dark hours of that terrible night. I know not what prayers were spoken, but I know that Jesus, who suffered cold and hunger for our sakes, made that servant girl strong to sacrifice herself. During the night one of the children died, but in the morning, when the first light came, the little girls were still alive. Then, when her work was done, the freezing limbs of the brave girl relaxed their hold, a

deadly sleep fell on her, and she dropped silently into the rushing river below. Presently a steamer came in sight, and the two children, for whom she had died, were safe. Only quite lately there was a great fire in London. In the burning house were a husband and wife, their children, and a servant maid. The parents perished in the flames, but the servant appeared to the sight of the crowd below, framed, as it were, in fire, at a blazing window. Loudly shouted the excited crowd, bidding the girl to save herself. But she was thinking of others. Throwing a bed from the window, she signalled to those below to stretch it out. Then, darting into the burning room, she brought one of the children of her employers, and dropped it safely on to the bed. Fiercer grew the flames, but again this humble heroine faced the fire, and saved the other children. Then the spectators, loudly cheering, begged her to save herself. But her strength was exhausted, she faltered in her jump, and was so injured that death soon came to her. My brothers, no one will raise a grand monument to Emma Willoughby, and Alice Ayres, who passed, the one through water, the other through fire, for Christ's dear sake. But surely in God's great Home of many mansions their names are written in letters of gold. Lastly, brethren, be strong in fighting the battle. You know that life is a great battle-field. And you know, too, that as Christians yours is the good fight. Put on, then, the whole armour of God. Do not trust to any newly-invented weapons. Take the same armour in which S. Paul, and many another veteran soldier of Christ, fought and conquered. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood." No, our battle is with Satan and his hosts. One of old says that we must strip if we would wrestle with the devil. We must cast aside every weight, strip us of all the hinderances, and worldly cares, which weigh us down; and be clad in the spiritual armour of God. Hold fast to the old armour, the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness, the sword of the Spirit. Be strong in the strength of the Holy Ghost, for your strength shall be made perfect in weakness. Stand, as Christ's soldiers, side by side, shoulder to shoulder, with your faces to the foe. When Napoleon retreated from Moscow, and the main body had passed by, the mounted Cossacks hovered around the stragglers, who, overcome by cold and fatigue, could only force their way slowly through the snow. Many a weary Frenchman thus fell beneath the Cossack lances. Presently a band of these fierce horsemen saw a dark object on the snowy plain, and dashed towards it. They were face to face with a small body of French who had formed into a square to resist them, their bayonets at the charge. The Cossacks rode round and round, seeking for a weak place for attack, and finding none. At length they charged the square, and found it formed of frozen corpses. The Frenchmen had died whilst waiting for the foe. Brothers, may death find us fighting the good fight. "Be strong in the Lord."

## SERMON LVII. THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

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(Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.) S. MATTHEW xviii.28, "Pay me that thou owest." The Gospel shows us in a parable a picture of a king who called his servants to a reckoning. That King is the Lord God Almighty. We are His servants, and He calls us to account every day. All we possess we owe as a debt to God. Day by day He gives us our food, and supplies our wants by His good Providence. On every hour of our existence is written, Jehovah-Jireh -- The Lord will provide. Day by day God takes care of us, and shields us from danger. He provides for our souls as well as for our bodies, and gives us the ministry of His Church, the grace of His Sacraments, the teaching of His Bible, the blessing of prayer. And all these blessings are a debt which we owe to God, and He is ever saying to us. "Pay Me that thou owest." And how can we pay? By doing what God bids us. By using our gifts in His service. We can give Him worship, not only worship in Church, but in all our everyday life and work, "doing all unto the glory of God." We can show forth His praise not only with our lips but in our lives. God has given us hands and brains to work with; and He says, "Pay Me that thou owest." That means that we must do good work, honest work, unselfish work, because we owe our power to labour as a debt to God. He has given us a voice, and He says, "Pay Me that thou owest." That means that we must use our voice to sing God's praise, to maintain His honour, to spread the truth of His Gospel, to comfort His people. We must devote our voice to speaking good words, and never defile it with vile language in the devil's service, because it is a debt which we owe to God. So with our health, our strength, our time, for all these God reckons with His servants. If we are misusing these things, wasting our time, devoting our strength to mere selfish, worldly pursuits, neglecting our opportunities, terrible will be the final day of reckoning when God will say for the last time, "Pay Me that thou owest." We read in the parable of to-day's Gospel that one of the king's servants owed him ten thousand talents. This was so vast a sum that no man could possibly pay it. In that servant we see ourselves. We owe a debt to God which we cannot pay. The wages of sin is death, and as sinners we are like the servant, we owe a vast debt, and we have not wherewithal to pay. Nothing that we can do will put away our sin, or excuse us from the penalty. That servant in the parable prayed his lord to have patience, saying that he would pay all. We may think foolishly that we can pay the debt of old sins by leading good lives now. But it may not be. If a man owes money he is not excused the debt because now he pays his way. Our sins are the great debt of ten thousand talents. God's law is written in the ten commandments, and we have broken them a thousand times. We cannot pay. The king in his mercy forgave the servant. So God forgives us through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. He paid the debt which we cannot pay, He bore our sins, the sin of Adam born with us, and the actual sins of our lives, on the Cross of Calvary. His Blood was the price which paid the debt. When we are baptised we are baptised into His Death, and the sin of Adam is forgiven. When we repent truly of a sin of our own committing, we are made partakers in the benefits of His Passion. When we come devoutly to Holy Communion our sinful bodies are made clean by Christ's Body, and our souls washed in His most Precious Blood, and our sins are forgiven us. But the parable not only teaches us our need of pardon, and the fulness of God's mercy, but the necessity of forgiving each other. The servant who owed the vast debt was pardoned. Yet he

would not forgive his fellow servant who owed him a trifling sum. The story of the unmerciful servant is being repeated everywhere around us. We see men crying to God for mercy -- poor, sinful, debtors, bankrupts, who have not wherewithal to pay. Every day we are obliged to confess that we owe a debt to God, and cannot pay it. And every day the Lord of mercy and love forgives us our debt. Yes, but only on certain conditions. God has Himself taught us to say, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. If we are unmerciful servants, refusing to our fellow men what God gives us, He will treat us as He treated the servant of the parable. He had forgiven him all, but now He withdraws His pardon, and delivers him to the tormentors. A man with an unforgiving spirit, who nourishes hatred and revenge against a neighbour, is already possessed by a devil, and his future must be spent in the society of devils. And now bring the matter home to your own individual cases. Are you nourishing bitter, unforgiving feelings against anyone who has injured you? Is there anyone whose success annoys you, and whose misfortune would give you pleasure? Are you thinking of some wrong done to you, some hard word spoken about you, some unjust judgment passed on you; and are you hoping that a day may come when the person who has so acted, or spoken, may suffer for it? My brothers, if so, you are just so many unmerciful servants, going through the world, and seizing your brother-sinners by the throat, and saying -- "Pay me that thou owest." Give up calling yourselves Christians, give up asking God to pardon you, unless you can freely and fully forgive your brethren the little debts of this little world. A certain king of France said that nothing smelt so sweet as the dead body of an enemy. And there are people among us now who tell us that revenge is sweet. But it is false. To forgive is sweet, is blessed, to hate brings only the remorse of devils. But you tell me it is so hard to forgive sometimes. So it is, but the greater the pardon given the greater the blessing. And remember that forgiveness must not be measured, and stinted, but free, and full. We must not say, "I will forgive him this once, but never more." S. Peter asked Jesus how often he should pardon a brother's sin, and suggested seven times. The Jewish teachers said that after three faults men need not forgive. S. Peter was in advance of them, but the Lord's answer must have astonished him, -- "until seventy times seven," that meant always, without stint, or measure. And remember also, that forgiveness must be real and true. We may not forgive with our lips, and bear malice in our hearts. Such sham forgiveness is only too common. A man was lying on his sick bed, and the clergyman by his side was urging him to be reconciled to some one who had injured him. After much persuasion the man said, "If I die I will forgive him, but if I live he had better keep out of my way." And again, our forgiveness must be willing, not forced from us. As says our greatest poet -- "the quality of mercy is not strain'd;

It droppeth, as the gentle rain from Heaven,

Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:

Tis mightiest in the mightiest." A boy, nearly broken-hearted with grief, stood by his mother's coffin. "Oh! let me see my dear mother once more, only once more," he pleaded. A man who was about to screw down the coffin-lid thrust him aside with brutal violence, and even struck the orphan child. Years afterwards that man stood in the dock, to be tried for his life as a murderer. He had no counsel to defend him, but just as the case commenced a young barrister rose in court, and offered his services to the prisoner. His speech for the defence was so eloquent, and so convincing, that the prisoner was acquitted. Outside the court he turned to thank his preserver.

The stranger looked at him steadily, and said, "Do you remember years ago, driving a poor, broken-hearted boy from his mother's coffin with a curse and a blow? I was that boy." The man was overwhelmed with shame and confusion. "Why have you given me my life?" he asked. "To show you," answered the other, "that I can forgive." Oh! my brothers, if we would find pardon for our many sins, let us ask Him who prayed for His murderers to teach us how to forgive. "Walk with care 'mid human spirits,

Walk for blessing, not for ban;

'Twere better never to have lived,

Than lived to curse a deathless man.

## SERMON LVIII. THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY.

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(Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.) PHIL. iii.20. "Our conversation is in Heaven." People often fail to get at the meaning of this glorious text because they mistake that word conversation. Really the text means -- our citizenship is in Heaven, we belong to the Eternal City. Once S. Paul declared with pride that he was a Roman citizen; and when the Chief Captain in surprise declared that he himself had purchased that privilege at a great price, the Apostle answered, "but I was free born." Every Christian has the right to call himself a citizen of Heaven, and to declare that he is free born. When in Holy Baptism we were born again of water, and of the Holy Ghost, the freedom of the City was given to us, and we were made a peculiar people, citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem, with all the privileges, and all the responsibilities, belonging to such a position. Get this glorious fact into your minds, brethren, not that you are going to belong to Heaven, but that you do belong to it now. Here in earth you are foreigners, strangers and pilgrims. Here God's Israel is in exile by the waters of Babylon, Jerusalem on high, the Heavenly Sion, is yonder, and that is home. Heaven is yours now, if you forfeit it, if you lose your inheritance, it will be from your own fault, your own sin. First, I think that the fact of Heaven being our home should make us love it. Sometimes we find people who have willingly settled in a foreign country, and done their best to forget the manners and language of their native land. But such cases are very rare. If you meet with an Englishman out in the Colonies, he always speaks of the old country as home. Even colonists who have been born in our foreign settlements, and have never seen England, speak of going home when they visit it. In many an Australian hut, or New Zealand farm, there is a swelling of the heart, or a glistening in the eyes, as the faded flowers drop from the home letter. The flowers are poor enough, and dead enough, but they once grew in a home garden, or blossomed in an English meadow. One of our great novelists tells us how two men in Australia walked many weary miles only to listen to the song of the skylark. That homely bird was precious in their eyes because it reminded them of home. I have read that when Swiss soldiers are abroad, they are not allowed to play, or listen to, their national airs. The music reminds them of their cow-bells ringing among the fair valleys and mountains of their native land, and under its influence some have deserted the army, and some even died of grief. The German loves to talk of the Fatherland, and has a word in his language which very strongly expresses home-sickness. Talk to a Scotsman about the beauties of Venice, or Rome, and he will tell you that you should see Edinburgh, or Aberdeen. Speak to an Irishman of the wonders of the tropics, and he will at once begin the praises of the Green Isle. The love of home is the very root and core of our nature. Well, if we love our earthly home, where we stay for so short a time, where, after all, we are but strangers and pilgrims, we ought still more to love Heaven, whose citizens we are. A child was once asked where his home was, and answered with eyes full of love -- "Where mother is." Brothers, our home is where Jesus is. Next, I think we ought to be proud of being citizens of so fair a city as Heaven. A Greek of old was proud to belong to a country which could boast of the learning of Athens, the wisdom of Plato, the courage of Leonidas. If a Roman in former days was asked to do a mean, or dishonourable action, it was enough for him to answer, "I am a Roman citizen!" A burgess of London City to-day is proud of the position which he holds, and of the rights and privileges gained by many an ancient charter of freedom. But what

ought we to think of the privileges and glory of belonging to that City which is God's Home; of being fellow citizens with the saints in light; of claiming as our brethren that great multitude which no man can number? Each town and city of earth is proud of its most famous citizens, but what city can show such names as our City, Jerusalem on high? What streets are crowded with such a goodly company as the streets of Heaven? All that is great and good, glorious, pure, gentle, self-sacrificing, finds a place in Heaven. Mighty Preachers and Apostles, like S. Paul or S. Chrysostom; simple girls, like Naaman's maid, or Veronica, the farm-servant; brave women who died martyrs for Jesus in the Arena, and those who lived as witnesses for Jesus, like Grace Darling, and Florence Nightingale, and Sister Dora; these, and such as these, of whom the time would fail me to tell, form the company of Heaven. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things." And think, too, "'Tis mine, 'tis mine, that country, if I but persevere." We must remember, however, that a citizen has certain duties, as well as rights and privileges, and if he neglects the former he forfeits the latter. We, as citizens of Heaven, though exiles here in earth, have certain duties and responsibilities laid upon us; if we fail to perform them, we lose our position as God's people. When an Englishman goes abroad to a foreign country he is at once recognised. When the foreigner sees the reckless courage, the cool daring, the love of adventure, displayed by his visitor, he says at once, "that is an Englishman." We are here in a strange land, does the world take notice of us as those who belong to Jesus? Does the world recognise us, by our manners, and way of life, as citizens of Heaven? Think of some of the duties laid upon us as those who have received the freedom of the City. We are bound, first of all, to keep ourselves, as far as possible, unspotted from the world. We must live in the world for a time, but we must not be of it. If an Englishman were compelled to live for a season among savages, whose habits were horrible and disgusting, he would take care not to become like them. He would think of himself as being a civilized man, to whom the manners of the people were revolting, and he would endeavour, whilst avoiding their example, to set them a better. So should a Christian man be in the world. He cannot avoid seeing and hearing much that is evil. But let him take care lest, like Israel of old, he mingles with the unbeliever, and learns their ways. Let him remember that he is a citizen of Heaven, and that he has no more right to take part in the frauds, and lies, and impurity of the world, than Lot had to join in the abominations of Sodom. A Christian man should stand above the waves of this troublesome world, as a lighthouse stands above the tumbling billows of the sea. And, like that beacon, he should give forth a warning light, clear, bright, and steady. Next, as citizens of Heaven, we are bound to work for our Heavenly Master. No matter that we are in a foreign workshop here in this world, no matter that we are employed by earthly masters, one Master is ours, and He is in Heaven. We must be busy about our Father's business, we must do all, looking unto Jesus. Suppose that the Queen were passing through this parish, and were to stop at one of your homes, say that of a cabinetmaker. And suppose that she were to order him to make her a cabinet after a particular pattern. Well, the man would be very much flattered at the order, and you may be sure he would take the greatest pains to put good work into the cabinet. "You see it is for the Queen," he would say to his neighbour, in explanation of his extra care. Now, my brothers, whatever kind of work we have to do, we ought to do it as well as we can, saying to ourselves, "it is for the King of kings, you see." Oh! if men would only remember that, then there would be no more cheating, and swindling, and lying in trade; no more labourers and artizans scamping their work, putting in bad material, working short time, and committing the endless

dishonest acts which disgrace a Christian land. Try to remember that whatever you have to do, you are working for God, you are a citizen of Heaven, and to your Heavenly Master must the account be rendered. There shall enter into Heaven nothing that maketh a lie. If our lives are not quite genuine and honest here, we are locking ourselves out of Heaven. Let us, as citizens of no mean city, keep aloof from the hypocrite, the teller or maker of a lie, and speak every man truth with his neighbour. Again, I think that as citizens of Heaven, we ought to take very good heed to our words. You know how our streets and lanes in this world are defiled and made hideous by vile language. Can you fancy that sort of talk in the streets of the Heavenly City? No, there shall not enter there anything that defileth, peace is upon her palaces. The swearing tongue, the impure tongue, the angry tongue, can find no place there. The cruel, slandering tongue talks many a soul into ruin, for they have no room for the scandal-monger in Heaven. Let us guard our speech, brethren, let us remember that, as Heavenly citizens, our lips should be sanctified by the fire of God's Altar. "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." Once more, as citizens of Heaven, we must keep our home ever fresh in our minds. Here we are strangers in a strange land. You know how we English abroad always cling to anything which reminds us of home. The settler in the Australian Bush keeps Christmas Day beneath the burning summer sky exactly as he always kept it amid the snow and ice of an English winter. When letters come, how eagerly are they read if they come from home! Many a rough miner on the other side of the world grows gentler as he looks at the faded photograph, or the yellow note paper; they remind him of home. Well, here in earth, far from our Heavenly home, we have certain means of keeping its memory fresh. We can go to God's Holy Church, and there join with Angels and Archangels and all the company of Heaven in praise and adoration of our King. We can read our Bible, and then we gaze, as it were, upon the picture of Saviour Jesus, and upon the faces of our brother citizens who have entered by the gates of pearl. We can pray, and so send a message to our City, and get an answer back again, a blessing coming like a sweet flower sent from the fields of Paradise. When our soldiers do noble deeds abroad, their thought is -- what will they say in England? Let us do our duty here in a strange land, thinking -- what will they say in Heaven? My brother, my sister, let this thought help you to struggle against temptation -- I must walk worthy of my vocation, I am a citizen of Heaven.

## SERMON LIX. THANKFUL SERVICE.

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(Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.) COL. i.12. "Giving thanks." In one of our northern coal-pits there was a little boy employed in a lonely and dangerous part of the mine. One day a visitor to the coal-pit asked the boy about his work, and the child answered, "Yes, it is very lonely here, but I pick up the little bits of candle thrown away by the colliers, and join them together, and when I get a light I sing." My brothers, every day of our lives we are picking up blessings which the loving Hand of God has scattered around, every day we get the light, but how many of us sing? I want to talk to you about the duty and blessing of thankfulness, and how it can be shown. Gratitude is the root of all true Christian service and worship. If we go to Church, and give money for religious purposes, only because we want to stand well with God, or to get something from Him, our service is mere selfishness. We are like people buying votes to get themselves into a charitable asylum. All we do in the service of God should be done from a motive of thankfulness. The thought should be, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" If a man does the state some great service we give him a pension, or a statue. It is nothing very much, but we do what we can to show our gratitude. During the last American War a farmer was discovered one day kneeling by the grave of a soldier lately killed in battle. He was asked if the dead man were his son, and answered that the soldier was no relation: and then he told his story. The farmer, who had a sickly wife, and several children, was drafted for the army, and had no one who could carry on his farm, or take care of his family, whilst he went to the war. Whilst he was overwhelmed with trouble, the son of a neighbour came forward, and said, "I have no one depending on me, I will go to the war in your place." He went, and was killed in action, and the farmer had travelled many a weary mile to kneel beside his grave, and to carve on the headstone the words -- "Died for me." Brethren, what ought our gratitude to be to the Lord Jesus, who loved us, and died for us upon the Cross of Calvary? True gratitude is shown by deeds as well as words. We must try to show our thankfulness to God not only with our lips but in our lives. Too many people are content to get all they can from God, and never to give anything in return. They tell us that they are poor miserable sinners, who can do nothing, and give nothing, they must leave all to the mercies of Jesus. Now, brethren, this is very often mere selfishness. They do not want to give anything to God, they are not really thankful. It is not true to say that we can give nothing to God. We are bidden in the Gospel to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. We can all give God worship, and we should give it in the best way possible, as a token of our thankfulness. It is for this reason that we build beautiful Churches, and decorate them with stained glass windows, and rich carvings. Such Churches are thank-offerings, signs of our gratitude to Him who on earth was homeless, who was born in a stable, who had not where to lay His head. There are people who murmur at the expense of building and decorating such Churches. They say, "To what purpose was this waste?" They are very nearly related to Judas Iscariot of old, who asked the same question, and, like him, they love themselves, and the money bag, better than their Master. These people tell us that God does not care for handsome Churches and stately services. So they would give the Almighty a white-washed building, whilst they dwell in a fair and costly mansion. They would have fine damask and soft covering for their table, whilst they have dirty linen and a moth

eaten cloth for the Altar of their God. They will drink out of cut-glass and silver at their feasts, and they leave the feast of Christ's dying love, the Blessed Sacrament of praise and thanksgiving, to be celebrated in vessels of base metal. Their houses are kept in excellent repair, and cleansed by careful hands, but they suffer the House of God to fall to decay, and allow His Presence Chamber to be defiled with dirt. And all this arises from a want of thankfulness to God. If we are thankful we do not grudge what we give, we feel that we can never do enough for Him who has redeemed us. But these people say, "God does not care for a beautiful Church, He loves simplicity." Where has God told us this? David believed just the opposite. He said that he was ashamed that he should dwell in a house of cedars, whilst the Ark of God dwelt among curtains. You know how he was prevented from building the Temple, and how Solomon did the work. Now, did Solomon act upon the mean principle of building a poor, cheap house for God, whilst he erected a gorgeous palace for himself? No! the Temple was one of the most glorious buildings ever seen, and those that were erected in later times were splendid also. We find our Blessed Lord attending the Temple services, and those services were beautiful and elaborate. There was nothing in the Temple or its worship to suggest that God prefers the ugly, white-washed building, and the slovenly, irreverent, service which some would offer Him. If you love someone very dearly you do not visit him in your oldest and dirtiest garments, you do not send him the cheapest present you can buy, nor put up a roughly erected tombstone to his memory. You give him the very best you have. If you love God you will do the same to Him. Again, we show our thankfulness to God by giving Him a hearty worship in His Church. I wonder how many people know exactly why they come to Church at all. Some say they come to get good. That is mere selfishness. Some say they come because it is respectable. Yes, but worthless, unless it means something more. Others would tell us, if they were quite honest, that they come to Church because they want to stand well in the good opinion of the Clergyman, or with the Squire. This is sheer hypocrisy. There is only one true reason for coming to Church, -- the fact that we love God, and are grateful to Him for all His mercies, and want to show it. We should come to Church to worship God with the best member that we have; we should come with the feeling -- "I was glad when they said unto me we will go into the House of the Lord;" "I love the place, O Lord, wherein Thine honour dwells." All slovenliness in the performance of the service, all irreverence, or signs of inattention, and indifference, are tokens of a want of thankfulness. We should get this thought fixed in our minds when we enter Church, -- I have come here to-day mainly to thank God for His great goodness to me, and to all men. I have come also to ask for certain things, the forgiveness of my sins if I am truly penitent, the help and strength of the Holy Spirit to renew my life; I have come to ask for those things, which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul, and I seek instruction in the lessons, the Gospel and Epistle, and the sermon. But the chief object of my presence here is the worship, the glory, the honour of God. And so I will give Him the best I have. If you once grasped that fact, my brothers, we should have no silent lips, no sleepy eyes, no lounging bodies, no irreverent conduct in God's Holy Church. Remember God is present in His Church, therefore we must behave with the greatest humility and reverence. In some Churches you will see the people obstinately sitting throughout the service, but if one of the Royal Family enters, they all rise up. Now, if we remember that the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, is present, we shall stand up to do Him honour. It is defrauding God of the honour due to Him when we refuse to show Him marks of reverence. Do you know that in the House of Lords it is always the rule for members to bow to the throne, although it is empty, as being the seat of the Majesty of England. We bow to the Altar as being the

throne of the Most High God, the place where He visits His people in the Blessed Sacrament. There we should honour and reverence God, in whose presence we are, with the best members that we have. Our heads should bow in humility before the God of Heaven and earth. Our knees should bend in adoration before Him who is worshipped by the Heavenly Host. Our eyes should be fixed upon our Prayer Books that they may not wander. Our thoughts should be centred on the fact that God is there with us, that we are in the presence-chamber of the great King. Our voices should be used to praise God in chant, and psalm, and hymn, and to offer prayer or thanksgiving. If we are silent we are defrauding God. God's Priest does not say, "let me pray for you," he says, "let us pray." We cannot worship God by proxy, we cannot give God what He asks by means of a choir, whilst the congregation is silent. Let us, each one of us, for the future, remember why we have come to Church, and that it is our individual business to worship God with reverence and holy fear. And in all you sing or say here, be in earnest, mean what you say. It is an insult to God to say words which you do not believe, or understand. Once in a certain Church, during Lent, an Easter hymn had been put down by mistake, and was sung very heartily by the choir. The choir-master after service spoke to the singers, regretting that such a mistake should have occurred. And he was answered, "Oh, it does not matter, we only think of the tune, and do not trouble about the words." I am afraid that too many hymns are sung in the same careless fashion, but if so, they are not praise. "Sing ye praises with understanding." One word more; we are bidden to render unto Caesar what belongs to him, and to God what is His. This world has certain claims upon us. Part of our time and our money must be devoted to our business and our position in the world. But not all of our time and money must be so given. God claims His share, and our gratitude for His mercies ought to make us gladly render unto God the things that are God's. He claims a certain part of our time for His public worship in Church. If we stay away from His House, or if, when there, we are careless, and indifferent, we are robbing God. God claims a certain part of our money, to be dedicated to the relief of the poor, or the maintenance of His Church. If we spend all our money on the world we are defrauding God of His right. May He grant us all more thankful hearts, for Jesus Christ's sake.

## SERMON LX. GATHERING THE FRAGMENTS.

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(Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.) S. JOHN vi.12. "Gather up the fragments that remain." The fragments that remain! What are they? Something more than the remnants of that miracle of feeding. We have come to the last Sunday of the Church's year, only a few more fragments, a few more days, remain, and then Advent will have come, and we shall begin a new year. Again we shall hear the warning cry -- "Prepare to meet thy God." Brothers, are we ready to meet Him? We are one year nearer the day when we must render in our account; one year nearer the time when the Master will come to reckon with His servants; one year nearer the return of the Bridegroom. What of our lamps, are they burning? What of our talents, have they yielded interest? Another year gone -- eternity nearer by twelve months; surely this is a solemn time for us all. Let us gather up the fragments of time that remain before Advent. Do not put off making resolutions, or giving up bad habits, till next Sunday. We know not how few fragments of our life remain. As says a Bishop of our Church, "they who dare lose a day are prodigals, but those who dare misspend it are desperate. Time is the seed of eternity, the less that remains the more valuable it becomes. To squander time is to squander all." The events of one brief day have often influenced a whole life, aye, a whole eternity. The flight of a bird determined the career of Mohammed; a spider's spinning that of Bruce; and a tear in his mother's eye that of Washington. Voltaire, when only five years old, committed to memory an infidel poem, and grew to live and die an unbeliever; whilst Doddridge, as a child, studied the Bible from the pictured tiles at the fireside explained by his mother. Use the moments, the fragments, that remain, and so begin this Advent season rightly, your lamp burning, the works of darkness cast away, the armour of light girded on. But not only must we look forward, the end of the Church's year is a fitting time for looking back. Some of us can do so joyfully, thankfully, peacefully. Week by week the teachings of Holy Church have shown them the life of duty, and they feel that they have tried to live that life by the help of God's Holy Spirit. The first half of the year's teaching showed us God's love for us, the second half taught us how we can show our love to God. Last Advent told us of the battle of life, the good fight of the faith, and the love of God strengthening us in the conflict, and promising the crown of victory. Christmas brought us once more the dear, glad, tidings that Jesus is our brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Epiphany showed us our Saviour manifested in our work, in the changed character of a believer who out of weakness is made strong, in the cleansed sinner whose leprosy is healed, in the storm of life made calm. The star of Epiphany led us to Jesus, to hope, to rejoicing, and gladly we offered our gifts, to the King our gold, to the Great High Priest our incense, to the Crucified our myrrh. Lent showed us the sterner side of the life of duty, and brought its lessons of self-denial and self-restraint. Those of us who went out into the wilderness of this world with Jesus, "glad with Him to suffer pain," resisting the tempter, found their reward at the glad Easter-tide. The sorrow which had endured for the night of Lent gave place to the joy which came with Easter morning. And so in every Sunday of the year we trace the golden thread of God's loving mercy lying along the narrow way, the path of duty. If we have tried to keep in that path, then we can look back joyfully over the year that is gone, and for the future we can, like S. Paul, "thank God, and take courage." They tell us that the fishermen of Brittany, when going forth on a voyage, offer this prayer -- "Save us, O

God, thine ocean is so large, and our little boat so small." That may well be our prayer as we begin another year. "Gather up the fragments." For some of us that will be a sorry task; we are like children crying in the midst of the broken pieces of some costly vase, shattered by our carelessness. The fragments that remain! How many remain of the lessons and warnings of the past year? How much of the good seed remains undestroyed by the choking thorn? Some of us made good resolutions last Advent, we started well with the beginning of the Church's year, we girded on our armour, we determined to make a fight for the true faith, and we took a firm stand on the promises of the Gospel. And now nothing remains of those good resolutions except the broken fragments to witness against us and upbraid us. As for the good fight, we have fled from the battle beaten, our shield has been left disgracefully behind, we have turned ourselves back in the day of battle. My brother, what is that dark stain upon the white robe of your purity? It was not there a year ago. Last Advent you could look father and mother, aye, the whole world, in the face. And now you have a guilty secret spoiling your life. You may cry with Macbeth -- "Had I but died an hour before this chance

I had liv'd a blessed time; for, from this instant, The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees

Is left." You cannot wash away that stain, even though you could "weep salt oceans from those eyes." To look back mournfully will not help to undo the past. To lament over the fragments of a misspent year, or the memory of broken resolutions, vows unfulfilled, and chances lost, will not bring back "the tender grace of a day that is dead." The thought would be maddening if we did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The knowledge that we cannot recall one lost day, nor alter one past page in our life's story, would bring a remorse cruel as the fabled vulture which ever fed upon the vitals of the chained Prometheus. But thanks be to God, Jesus says, "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold, I make all things new." Dear brothers and sisters, some of us need to turn over a new leaf, to make a fresh start, how shall we do it? Let us take our secret sin, our secret sorrow, to Jesus now. Let not the sun go down and find us impenitent, unpardoned. Let us no longer go through life like galley slaves, chained and labouring at the oar. Jesus waits to strike off our chains, He came to preach liberty to the captives. Think of that, you who are yet prisoners, slaves of some sin. Jesus will set you free. As long as you hide your fault you are a slave, you are torn and bitten by remorse, the worm that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched. Tell the story of your sin to Jesus now. Never mind how sad, how shameful it is. He is the same Jesus, remember. The same who cleansed the Magdalene, who pardoned the adulteress. Can you, will you, say to-day -- "We come to Thee, sweet Saviour,

With our broken faith again;

We know Thou wilt forgive us,

Nor upbraid us, nor complain. We come to Thee, sweet Saviour,

Fear brings us in our need;

For Thy hand never breaketh

Not the frailest bruised reed." "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Let Advent find us once more fighting the battle from which some had retreated. Let the marks and scars upon our armour teach us our danger, and help us to fight more watchfully, more humbly.

Let the mistakes, the weaknesses, the negligences, the ignorances of the past, be warnings to us for the future. "Saint Augustine, well hast thou said

That of our vices we can frame

A ladder, if we will but tread

Beneath our feet each deed of shame. Deem not the irrevocable past

As wholly wasted, wholly vain,

If, rising on its wrecks, at last

To something nobler we attain. "Do you remember the Eastern story of the magician, who gave a ring of vast beauty to a certain prince? Not only was the ring set with priceless gems, but it had this wonderful quality. If the king indulged in any evil thought or wish, or devised any sinful act, the ring contracted on his finger, and warned him by its painful pressure. My brothers, does the ring of conscience press no finger here to-day? Is there no one here now who says in his heart: "Would to God that I were as in years past?" If so, cling to the cleansing Hand of Jesus now. A well-known Scottish physician tells us that, during a terrible outbreak of cholera, he was summoned to a small fishing village where the plague had broken out. As they approached the place by boat, they saw a crowd of anxious watchers waiting for the doctor's arrival. Suddenly an old man, of great height and strength, dashed into the water, reached the boat ere it could reach the land, and seizing the doctor in his mighty arms, carried him helpless through the crowd to the bedside of his cholera-stricken grandson. Brethren, if the plague spot of sin is upon you, seize upon the Hand of the Good Physician, clasp Him in your arms, cry to Him now: "wash me thoroughly [Transcriber's note: thoroughly?] from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin!"

## SERMON LXI. WHAT THE FLOWERS SAY.

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(Children's Flower Service.) PSALM ciii.15. "As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth." Children, have you ever heard of the language of flowers? Now, of course, we know that flowers cannot speak as we can. I wish they could. I think they would say such sweet things. But in one way flowers do talk to us. When you give them some water, or when God sends a shower of rain upon them, they give forth a sweet smell; I think that the flowers are speaking then, I think that they are saying, "thank you." Let us listen to the preaching of the flowers to-day. What do they say to us? Well, some say one thing, some another; but there is one thing which all of them say -- "trust God." God takes care of the flowers, and sends them dew, and rain, and sunshine, and fresh air, and they tell us that the same God who cares for the flowers cares also for us. And next, I think, all the flowers say to us, "thank God." See how the daisies in the meadow seem to look up thankfully to God. Someone says that God smiles on the earth, and that the earth smiles back again with its flowers. Is not that a pretty thought, children, that the flowers are the smiles of the grateful earth? Next, the flowers say to us, "be contented." They are quite satisfied to grow, and smell sweet, and look pretty, in the place where God puts them. Now, just as God plants the flowers in a certain place, some up high on the hills, others down low in the valley; some in the Queen's greenhouse, others in the cottager's garden, so He puts you children in your right place. Be quite sure, my children, that the best place for us is where God puts us. Have you ever noticed the sweet-scented wall flowers growing on an old stone wall? They have scarcely any earth for their roots, only a little bit between the stones, yet they make the old wall beautiful, and no flower smells sweeter. They teach us to be contented. They seem to say, we have no grand place to grow in, no carefully-prepared bed, only a bit of old wall for our home, but we are quite satisfied, and we mean to make home as bright and sweet as we can. Let us learn the lesson of the wall flower. Let us try to make home bright and happy, and sweet, no matter how poor it is. Another thing which all the flowers tell us is this, "remember that you must die." When the Autumn and Winter come we say the flowers are dead because we cannot see them. But the flowers are not really dead. They are sleeping in the earth till the Spring comes again. God has put them to bed in the warm ground, and when the proper time comes they will waken up. Just what God does to the flowers He does to us. One day He will send us to sleep, and take our soul to a safe place in Paradise, whilst our body is put to bed in the earth beneath the soft and pleasant grass. People will say that we are dead, just as they say the flowers are dead. One day the resurrection morning will come, it will be our spring-time, and God, who raised Jesus Christ from the grave, will raise us up again. So you see, children, the flowers tell us not only that we must die, but that we must rise again. What else do the flowers say to us? I think they say, "keep in the sunshine, be happy." You always find that flowers are on the sunny side of things. So ought we to be. A plant cannot grow, and blossom, in a dark cellar. It must have sunshine. So if you want to be God's children, that is, good children, you must have sunshine in your hearts, sunshine in your faces. Look at the face of an innocent child, one who is gentle, obedient, loving, pure. You will see the face full of sunshine. But look at the face of a child who has done something wrong; who has told a lie, or done some cruel, mean, or dishonest act. There is no sunshine on that face. There is nothing but a dark heavy cloud. The ill-tempered

child has no sunshine on his face. He lives down in a dark cellar. The discontented child has no sunshine on his face. He lives down in a black dungeon with Giant Despair. My children, ask God to keep you innocent; or if you have done wrong, ask God to forgive you for Jesus Christ's sake, then you will have sunshine, you will be happy. There is another thing which the flowers say to us -- "Be sweet." There is nothing so delicious as to go into a flower garden after a warm shower, and to smell the sweet scents. Well, God has sent you into the garden of this world to be sweet like the flowers. How can you be sweet? You can be sweet-tempered, sweet-mannered, sweet-spoken. Sometimes you hear people say that someone has a sweet face. Now that need not mean a pretty face; a person may be pretty, and yet not sweet. Those who are sweet-tempered show it in their faces. You know how a bunch of flowers in a room makes it sweet and wholesome. Now every good child in a home, or a school, is like a nosegay of blossoms, making the place sweet and wholesome; and every bad, vicious, unruly, child is like the smell which comes from poisoned water. When I used to visit the sailors in their ships to talk to them about God, I used to say to them, "Now I want one of you men to be a little pinch of salt in this ship, I want you to keep things sweet. Who will be the little pinch of salt?" You understand what I mean, children? I wanted a good man, who prayed, and read his Bible, to help the others, to try and stop bad talking, to keep things sweet, as salt does. Well, I want each of you children to be God's sweet flower, and to try to make your home sweet by your gentleness, your good temper, your love. Some children are regular stinging nettles in a home, or a school. They always make people uncomfortable. They sting with their tongues, and they sting with their looks and their tempers. Make up your minds, dear little ones, to be, by God's help, sweet flowers, not stinging nettles. And now, before I leave you, let us think what one special flower teaches us. I told you that there is such a thing as the language of flowers, that is, that each flower has its special meaning. Well, what does the rose say? Surely the rose says, "love one another!" Do you know who it is who loves us best, and who has done most for us? Our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, and it is for that reason, I think, that He is called in the Bible a Rose, -- the Rose of Sharon. Whenever you see a rose, think of Jesus, the Rose of Sharon, and remember what He says to you, "Little children, love one another." I will tell you a story about a rose. A little brother and sister lived in a crowded court in a great city. It was a wretched, dirty, ugly, place, where scarcely any sunshine ever came, and where the people were often rough and wicked. Little Willie and his sister knew nothing about green fields spotted with daisies, they had never seen a flower. One day a kind friend took all the poor children living in the court for a drive into the country. I cannot tell you how happy Willie and his sister were when they saw the trees and hedges, which were all new and strange to them. Presently they passed a garden in which were growing some sweet-smelling red flowers. Willie had never seen anything half so lovely, and he was anxious to know what the flowers were called, so they told him that they were roses. Well, after a time, when the Winter came, little Willie fell ill. Day after day his sister sat beside him, holding his thin white hand in hers. Often they talked about that wonderful day in the country, where they had seen the roses. Often, too, they talked about Jesus, and the still more beautiful country where He lived. The children were very ignorant, but they had been to Sunday School, and learnt something about the dear Lord who loves children. One cold, dark day, little Willie was much worse, and he said to his sister -- "Oh! I wish I could see a rose once more. I wish you would go and get me one of those roses we saw that day!" So the little sister, who loved him dearly, set out to walk to the place where they had seen the flowers. After a long and weary journey, she came to the field where they had played, and the garden where the roses grew. But the field and the

garden were white with snow, and there were no roses there. The little girl was worn out with hunger and fatigue, and she dropped on her knees in the snow, and prayed, and this was her prayer -- "Dear Jesus, send me one rose, only one, for little Willie." Just then a carriage came along the road, and the lady who rode in it had a beautiful red rose in her hand, which had grown in a greenhouse. She dropped it from the window, I suppose, by accident, but when the little girl saw it lying on the snow, she thought that Jesus had sent it to her, and took it up lovingly to carry to her brother. But she had no more strength to struggle through the cold night, and when the morning came they found her dead upon the white snow, with the red rose in her hand. That night little Willie, lying alone in the cold, dark, garret, also died. And the writer of this story thinks that when the brother and sister met in the Paradise of God, the sister, who gave her life for love, carried a beautiful flower in her hand, and said, "Willie, here's your rose." So thinks the writer, and I think so too.

## SERMON LXII. DAILY BREAD.

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(Harvest Thanksgiving.) PSALM lxxv.9. "Thou preparest them corn." "Come, ye thankful people, come," and let us thank God for another harvest. Once more the Father, the Feeder, has given bread to strengthen man's heart, and we turn from the corn stored in the garner, to God's own garner the Church, where He has stored up food for our souls. And first of all, my brothers, let us be honest with ourselves. Are we quite sure that we are thankful to God for the harvest? We have decorated God's House with the first-fruits of the year, we have met together now to celebrate our Harvest Festival; but is there real meaning in all this? Are we thankful to God? if not our Festival is a mockery. Let me give you a few thoughts which may help you to be thankful. The first thought is this: the harvest is God's harvest, not yours. "Thou preparest them corn," is spoken of God, not of man. Corn is unlike any other kind of food, it is the direct gift of God to man in fully-developed state. Other fruits of the earth are given to man in a wild state, and he must improve them by care and cultivation, till the wild vine is turned into the rich wine-producing plant of the vineyard, and the sour crab into the delicious apple. It is not the case with corn. No one, says a writer, whose thoughts I am following, has ever discovered wild corn. Ages ago, when the Pharaohs reigned in Egypt, and the Pyramids were a'building, men sowed just the same corn that you sow to-day. Corns of wheat like our own have been found in the hands of Egyptian mummies which have been dead for thousands of years. The grain which Joseph stored in Pharaoh's granaries, and with which he fed his brethren, was precisely similar to the produce of your own fields. Geologists tell us that there is no trace of corn to be found in the earth before the creation of man. When God made man He created corn to supply him with food. The old Greeks and Romans had a dim perception of this when they thought that corn was the gift of the goddess Ceres. You know we call all varieties of corn cereals, after that same goddess. In these days there is, with some, less religion than ever the old heathen possessed. They would shut God out of the world of Nature, and see in a harvest-field only man's cleverness and energy. Let us rather humble ourselves before God, and see that it is His Hand which sendeth the springs into the rivers which run among the hills, where all the beasts of the field drink thereof, and the wild asses quench their thirst; beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation, and sing among the branches. Let us believe that it is God who watereth the hills from above, so that the earth is filled with the fruits of His works; that it is God who bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, that He may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart. Whilst the unbeliever, blinded by his self-conceit, is worshipping his own little stock of knowledge, and neglecting God, let us be singing our Te Deum -- "We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord." Here is another thought which will help you to recognise corn as being specially the gift of God to man. It grows all over the world. Wherever man can live, corn of one kind or another flourishes. "From the bleak inhospitable wastes of Lapland to the burning plains of Central India, from the muddy swamps of China to the billowy prairies of America, from the level of the sea-shore to the lofty valleys and table-lands of the Andes and the Himalayas, it is successfully cultivated. The emigrant clears the primaeval forest of Canada, or the fern-brakes of New Zealand, and there the

corn seed sown will spring up as luxuriantly as on the old loved fields of home." [1] All this should teach us to see in the harvest the result, not of our skill and cleverness, but of the good God's lovingkindness. Ask yourselves now, my brothers, whether you are truly thankful to God for this harvest: is your presence here to-day a real act of thanksgiving, or only an idle form? Among the many curious relics of the past which were dug up in the buried city of Pompeii were some loaves of bread, looking just as they did when they came out of the oven. Think of those loaves baked eighteen hundred years ago, and still preserved as witnesses against that wicked city. God was good to those people in Pompeii, and prepared their corn, and bread to strengthen their heart, just as He does for us. And they went on thankless and careless in their sin, till the fiery stream overtook them, and that same fire which destroyed them preserved the bread, as a sign of God's goodness and man's ingratitude. There is yet another thought about the corn, which ought to make us feel how dependent we are upon God for our daily bread. Unlike the grass which is permanent as a food for cattle, or certain trees which bring forth fruit season by season, corn must be sown annually. Man depends upon the result of each year's sowing for the staff of life. And we are told that as a fact there is only as much corn in the world in each year as the world can consume in that time. "It is not probable that there was ever a year and a half's supply of the first necessary of life at one time in the world." Thus, as every harvest-time comes round, we are almost looking famine in the face, and then God opens His Hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness. Rightly indeed do we pray, "Give us day by day our daily bread." And now let us look at the spiritual meaning of all this. As corn is the special gift of God to man, so is the gift of grace and pardon. God gives us what we cannot obtain for ourselves, does for us what we are powerless to do. As He feeds our bodies with the bread of corn, He feeds our souls with the Bread of Heaven. His Holy Catholic Church all over the world is a great granary stored with precious food. Just as corn grows wherever man lives, so wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's Name there is He in the midst of them, feeding their souls. The exile in a foreign land can sow his corn seed, and gather the same food as in the fields of home. The same exile can find beneath other skies the same holy teachings, the same blessed Sacraments, the same prayers, as in the Church of his childhood. The bread of earth and the Bread of Heaven are God's two universal gifts to man. The penitent sinner can kneel at the Feet of Jesus, and find the grace of pardon beneath the skies of England, and India, and New Zealand, alike. The faithful Churchman can come to the Altar and receive the Body and Blood of his Saviour, even the Heavenly Bread to strengthen man's heart, all over the Christian world. As God gives us everywhere light and food, without which we cannot live, so does He give light and food for our soul. As says a Saint of old (S. Thomas a Kempis), "I feel that two things are most especially necessary to me in this life; prisoned in the dungeon of the body, I acknowledge that I need two things, food and light. Therefore Thou hast given me, a sick man, Thy Body for the refreshment of my soul and body, and hast made Thy Word a lantern unto my feet. Without these two I cannot live well; for the Word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament is the Bread of Life." My brothers, whilst we thank God for giving us this harvest of corn, let us still more thank Him for the harvest of spiritual blessing, for the precious grace and mercy which make glad the hearts of hardened sinners, for the anointing of the Holy Spirit which makes our faces shine with joy and gladness, for the Bread which came down from Heaven, and which strengthens our hearts to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants. One last word. The return of seed time and harvest teaches us that we are all sowers, and that the harvest is the end of the world. We seldom reap here the full results of our acts whether they be good or evil. "The

evil that men do lives after them," yes, and the good too. It may seem to some of us who are trying to do our duty, trying to live as God's servants, that there is no harvest for us. We seem destined to labour in the weary field of the world, and to see no fruit of our labours. Ah! brothers, the harvest is not yet, but it will come, the harvest of the good and of the evil, since -- "We are sowers, and full seldom reapers,

For life's harvest ripens when we die,

'Tis in death alone God gives His sleepers

All for which they sigh. Cast thy bread upon the waters: after

Many mornings, when thy head is low,

Men shall gather it with songs and laughter,

Though thou mayest not know." [1] Hugh Macmillan's Bible Teachings in Nature, to which work I am indebted for the structure of this Sermon.

## SERMON LXIII. GOD'S JEWELS.

(Schools.) MALACHI III. 17. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." There is a legend of old time which tells us how a certain Jewish Rabbi returned to his home after a long absence. His first question was -- "Where are my boys?" for his wife had greeted him alone. Then, instead of answering her husband's question, the wife asked his advice. She told him that some years before someone had lent her something very precious, and she would know whether after fourteen years the loan became hers. The Rabbi gently reproved his wife, and assured her that the treasure thus lent could not become her own. Then the wife told him that on that very day He who had lent the treasure had returned and claimed it. "Ought I to have kept it back, or repined at restoring the loan?" she asked. The Rabbi was astonished that she could ask such a question, and again enquired anxiously for his two boys. Then the wife took him by the hand, and turning back the sheet upon the bed, showed him the two boys lying dead. "The Lord who gave hath taken. They are dead." My brethren, we who are parents should learn to look upon our children as a precious loan from the Lord. They are God's treasures, His jewels, and He lends them to us for a little while. Now, to-day, I have to speak to you about schools, and the duty of supporting a Christian, as opposed to a mere secular education. But, first, I want to speak about another kind of education, the teaching of home. I would speak most earnestly to you mothers, because as you are the earliest, so are you the most powerful teachers of your children. It is a tremendous responsibility which God has laid upon you. He has lent you a precious jewel, an immortal soul, which will be saved or lost mainly through your influence. Well says a writer of the day, "Sometimes mothers think it hard to be shut up at home with the care of little children. But she who takes care of little children takes care of great eternities. She who takes care of a little child, takes care of an empire that knows no bounds and no dimensions. The parent who stays at home and takes care of children is doing a work boundless as God's heart." O mothers! never grow weary in well-doing, never think the children a trouble and a weariness, but a precious loan which God will ask one day to have restored. May none of you ever have to say -- "I wonder so that mothers ever fret

At little children clinging to their gown,  
 Or that the foot-prints, when the days are wet,  
 Are ever black enough to make them frown.  
 If I could find a little muddy boot,  
 Or cap, or jacket, on my chamber floor;  
 If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,  
 And hear it patter in my house once more;  
 If I could mend a broken cart to-day,

To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky,  
There is no woman in God's world could say  
She was more blissfully content than I.  
But ah! the dainty pillow next my own  
Is never rumbled by a shining head;  
My singing birdling from its nest is flown;

The little boy I used to kiss is dead." My sisters, God would have you who are mothers to be nursing mothers for Heaven, your nursery, your home, the school of Christ. Let every mother here take to heart the story of Monica and Augustine. You know that the future Bishop and famous preacher was as a young man given up to all kinds of vicious courses, and refused to embrace the faith of his mother, a devoted Christian. His dissipation and impiety were a constant source of sorrow to the gentle Monica, who never ceased to pray for him. When Augustine was a student at Carthage, drinking deeply of the beautiful poisoned chalice of heathen literature, the mother's letters to her son were full of the sweet lessons of Christianity. Still Augustine persevered in the old evil way, and when he gained fame as a teacher he still disregarded the words of Monica She prayed on, but almost in despair. One night she dreamed that an angel appeared to her, and promised that where she was there her beloved Augustine should be. She told the vision to her son, who made light of it, saying, that if it meant anything, it was that she should adopt his faith. "Nay," said his mother, "it was not said to me, 'Where he is you shall be,' but, 'Where you are he shall be.'" Still the years went on, and there was no change in Augustine. Monica consulted a great Christian Bishop, who bade her persevere, since it was impossible that the child of so many tears and prayers should perish. After a while Augustine journeyed to Rome, his mother's prayers going with him. There he heard S. Ambrose preach, and his heart was touched. There was a hard struggle between the old life and the new for a time, and Monica was with Augustine in his conflict. At last she saw of the travail of her soul, and was satisfied. O mothers, pray as Monica prayed for Augustine, if you would have your children grow up as God's children set them a strong example, and pray without ceasing. There is, in a certain country Churchyard, a grave-stone with this epitaph -- "He loved little children." Few of us could wish for a better. Sometimes a whole life is written in one sentence, it was so, no doubt, in this case. There is not, to my mind, among all the epitaphs in S. Paul's Cathedral, or Westminster Abbey, telling the praises of soldiers, heroes, statesmen, anyone to compare with the simple sentence -- "He loved little children." Now, brethren, if we love little children, we can best show our love by having them brought up as Christian children; by having them taught to love the Church of their Baptism, and to know and reverence the Bible. The question of the day is education with God or without God, a creedless School where the young may believe anything, or nothing, or a Church School where they are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and grounded in the faith of their fathers. Perhaps there was never a time when England was in so critical a state as now, and its future depends on our children. Outside enemies are clamouring at the doors of the Church, crying, "down with it, down with it, even to the ground." The Franchise will be practically in the hands of everyone; and what will the future of the Church and the State be, when this new power is placed in the hands of those who have been brought up without any definite religious faith? The policy of

the day is to shut God out of our Schools, as we have tried to shut Him out of our legislature and our commerce. We find our boys at the Public Schools, and our young men at the Universities, frequently taught by men who openly profess unbelief, and talk of the Incarnation and kindred doctrines as "beautiful myths." We find the children of our parishes brought up in creedless Schools, where all dogmatic teaching is excluded, and we may well fear lest England should drift into the utter unbelief of France. My brethren, you may take care of your children's intellects, you may give them what is called a "good education," but I tell you no education can be good which is not based upon the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may educate a child to pass one of the endless examinations of the day, but we must remember that there is a great and final examination to be passed, when all earthly competitions are ended. Remember your child's soul, and educate him for Heaven.

## SERMON LXIV. MUTUAL HELP.

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(Female Friendly Society.) S. MARK iii.35. "Whosoever shall do the Will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and My mother." There are just two points which I want to put before you to-day. First, what you as Christian women ought to be. Secondly, how you can help each other to be so. On the first point I would ask you to remember the glory and dignity of womanhood. You get this dignity from Jesus Christ, who was born of a woman, and who said, "Whosoever shall do the Will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and My mother." Before Christ came into the world the condition of women was most miserable. They were degraded, despised, treated as slaves, and beasts of burden, as they are in heathen lands to this day. Since Christ came every good woman is loved, honoured, and respected. Jesus Christ set us the example. It was on a woman's breast that the Son of God found earthly refuge. It was to a woman who had been probably a great sinner, and out of whom He had cast seven devils, that Jesus gave the first news of His Resurrection. He told Mary Magdalene to announce the Gospel of the risen Jesus to His disciples. This, my sisters, is the true work of every Christian woman, to teach those around you, the children, the household, the busy men, the Gospel of the higher life, the Gospel of the Resurrection. And this is not to be done with the preacher's voice from the pulpit, but with the still, small voice of love and gentleness, and sweet temper, and purity; by that most powerful of all sermons -- a good example. Next, I want you to remember the wonderful power which God has given you, and which you can use either for good or evil. God has, in one way, made men stronger than women. But every woman has influence, the power of leading others right or wrong. Do you know that from the time of Eve women have mainly made the history of the world? Men may have done the deeds, but women have led the men. "The hope of France is in our mothers," said a famous French Bishop, and every good man owes the best part of himself to his earliest and best teacher and guide -- his mother. The origin of most sins also can be traced to the influence of a bad woman. Samson, the giant, becomes the blinded, helpless slave, by trusting to false Delilah. Ahab loses honour and life by making Jezebel his counsellor. Mark Antony, the conqueror, sits helpless at the feet of Cleopatra. Never forget the power of leading others which you have as mothers, wives, or sisters, and take good heed that you lead them in the right way. Secondly, let me give you a few homely words of advice about the special temptations and dangers which surround you, and the best means of helping each other to resist them. Many of you passed from home life into domestic service, where you have very frequently to stand alone, without the help of parent or teacher. Every position in life has its special trials and temptations. I have temptations which do not come to you; you have trials from which I am free. I have heard many life-stories like yours when I have been holding a Mission, and therefore I know far more of your special temptations than you imagine. One of these special dangers is bad company. You all have your holidays, and your "days out," and you naturally look forward to them very eagerly. But, my sisters, stay, and ask yourselves the question -- How do I spend my holidays? If the day be Sunday, do you keep God's Commandment, and observe the Sabbath Day to keep it holy? If not, how can you expect to be kept from evil? You promised in your Baptism and your Confirmation to keep all God's Will and Commandments, and one of these is, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day."

Take care what company you keep. If you cannot say, "I am a companion of all such as love the Lord," be sure your company is of the wrong sort. I have known many a one who has lost name, fame, character, all that a woman holds most dear, and who has brought an honest name to disgrace, and broken a mother's heart, by mixing with bad company. The proverb says that a person is known by his friends, by the company he keeps. You cannot touch fire and escape burning, and you cannot keep company with those who laugh at religion, who make a mock at sin, who never pray, who talk immodestly, and are disobedient to the wishes of parent or employer, without falling into sin yourselves. If any of you who hear me are entangled with such company, make up your mind now, and give it up. Be brave enough to do what is right. Ask God to make you brave. And one word more, help each other to do what is right. I say to you who want to go in the right way, keep each other company. None of us can stand alone, we need help. You have probably heard the story of the blind man and the lame man who were called to journey to a distant place. What was to be done? The blind man could not see, the lame man could not walk; so they helped each other: the blind man carried the lame man, who directed him in the right way. Some of you have stronger wills and characters than others, let the strong help the weak. But how can you best help each other? Soldiers in battle assist each other by closing their ranks, and keeping together. There is the secret of strength, keep together. Let all the members of your society march together. Try to set each a good example, a strong example, by prayer, by reading your Bible daily, by attending the services of the Church as frequently as possible, by coming to the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament, whenever it is possible. Above all, pray, intercede, for each other. THE END.

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