

THE VILLAGE PULPIT VOLUME II TRINITY TO ADVENT

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A collection of sermons for the church calendar from Trinity to Advent, delivering practical biblical teaching through accessible preaching on Old and New Testament passages.

31 Chapters

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XXXVII. CHRISTIAN UNITY.

Trinity Sunday. S. Matt. xxviii.19. "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." INTRODUCTION. -- An ancient writer informs us that when the Egyptians named their Greatest God who was over all, they cried thrice, "Darkness! Darkness! Darkness!" And when we come to speak of the great mystery of the Holy Trinity, the utmost we can do is to repeat their cry, and say, "Darkness! Darkness! Darkness! In the name of the Father -- Darkness, and of the Son -- Darkness; and of the Holy Ghost -- Darkness!" for however much the mind may strive to penetrate this mystery, it can never attain to its solution. Just as the eye, looking at the sun, sees the Overpowering light as a dark ball, being dazzled by its excessive glory, so the eye of the mind perceives only darkness, when looking into the infinite splendour of God in Three Persons. We may, indeed, see sundry likenesses here on earth, which assist us in believing the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, but they are helps, and helps only; and not explanations. Thus, the sun may shine into a glass, and the glass reflect in clear water, and we see three suns, a sun in the heaven, a sun in the glass, and a sun in the water, which proceeds from both; -- and this assists us to understand how the Son of God is of the Father, and the Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son, and how that each is God, and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God. But, after all, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a matter of Faith, and not of Reason. We must believe, though we cannot understand. SUBJECT. -- In this Holy Trinity of Persons there is perfect unity existing, an unity of substance, an unity of Godhead, an unity of perfection, an unity of love. And on earth, among men, there should be unity. "Be ye perfect," said our Lord, "even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." The Father is love, the Son is love, and the Holy Ghost is the love of the Father and of the Son, and this love requires the same of us -- even love, or unity. This is what God wills on earth, our living unity, even as it exists in Heaven between the Three Persons of the glorious Trinity. But there are three great hindrances to Christian Unity. I. Selfishness. Each man seeks his own interest, not the general interest. Let his own selfish interests be touched, and all concord is at an end. Look at two little dogs playing together, they put their paws on each other's shoulders, and dance round each other, and roll each other over, and are full of affectionate play. Throw them a bone, and it is a true bone of contention at once. All their affection is dead, and they are fighting each other for the bone. It is the same with men, they are perfectly friendly with each other so long as no little bone comes in the way -- some little money matter -- and then there is no end to the snarling and snapping and growling. How often it is that the dearest friends fall out about money! This has been so often noticed that it has become a common saying, "Have no money dealings with your friend." Even near relations become bitter, and are estranged, over some provision in a will. All this arises from self-seeking. Each cares for himself, and not for others. Now look at the Holy Trinity. The Three Persons share in equal Power, Majesty, and Eternity. The Father commits all power unto the Son, the Son gives all honour to the Father, the Son gives over to the Holy Ghost the government of His Church. The Father shares with the Son and the Holy Ghost the Divine nature, wisdom, and glory. All three are equally eternal, equally almighty, equally perfect.II. Pride. Each man seeks to place himself before another. 'I am as good as another, or I am above so-and-so,' is a common thought. No man is content with what he is, he desires to thrust himself

ahead of another. The whole of society is like a cabbage-stalk covered with caterpillars, and none is satisfied till it has crawled to the top. The caterpillar at the bottom bites the one above him, gets over his back, and then exults, 'There is a caterpillar nearer the bottom of the cabbage-stalk than I,' and so all the way up the stalk, those below scrambling over those above, and they at the top -- at the proud elevation and unique honour of being at the head of a cabbage-stalk -- tumble off, and are buried in the soil. Was there any such pride of place in the angel host? Yes -- once. The Devil wanted to be at the top, and he fell. The other angels are content where they are, and they remain angels. If they began pushing ahead of each other, cherubim wanting to be above seraphim, and angels envious of archangels, what a falling there would be from heaven! Falling stars indeed! All turning into devils. Look at the Blessed Trinity. God the Son says, "My Father is greater than I." He places Himself in the lowest rank. He calls Himself "The Son of Man"; there is no boasting, "I am the Son of God." III. Obstinacy. That is the third source of discord. Each man follows his own will, his dogged, headlong will, regardless of the wishes and advice of others. In the Book of Judges we read that Samson caught three hundred foxes and tied them together by their tails, and put burning brands between them, where their tails were tied. What was the consequence? The wretched creatures dashed in opposite directions, each wanted to get away from the brand that scorched his tail, and so each wanted to go exactly in a different direction from the fox to which he was tied, and so the whole lot went dashing in a mad, disorderly manner among the standing corn, and destroyed a whole harvest. That is something like a great number of people I know. They will tear off in their own direction, and drag others after them who wish to go in another direction, and the fire of discord is between them. Look at the Blessed Trinity. Christ said, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." "Let us make man," was said at the Creation. God the Father did not say "I will make man," nor God the Son "I will make man in My image," nor God the Holy Ghost "I will make man, and breathe My spirit into him," but all united in one work, and that work was very good. CONCLUSION. -- When Julian the Apostate was Emperor, three Christian soldiers were brought before him. Their names were Emmanuel, Sabael, and Ismael. He ordered them to be examined apart, lest they should encourage one another in their faith and endurance under torture. Emmanuel, seeing his object, said, "Tyrant! we Three are one in one Trinity." Now, listen to our Lord's prayer, "I pray not for these alone, but for those also which shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee."

XXXVIII. GREAT SURPRISES.

1st Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke xvi.23. "In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." INTRODUCTION. -- What a great surprise for Dives! So utterly unawaited! Dives, who had lived so comfortably, clothed in purple and fine linen, and had had such a good coat, and such excellent dinners, and such a cellar of wine, and such good friends at his dinners, goes to sleep one night after a banquet, and wakes up, and lo! -- he is in hell. Surprise number one. He feels the flames, he perceives himself surrounded by demons, his tongue is burning with thirst, and he lifts up his eyes and sees! -- surprise number two! -- Lazarus, the poor dirty wretch who had lain full of sores at his door. He did not know that the fellow was dead. And -- surprise number three! -- this wretched fellow is in Paradise. There is another story of a great surprise in the Gospels. That is of the man who laid up for himself great possessions, and said to himself, "Soul! thou hast much goods laid up for many years, -- I will pull down my barns and build greater -- take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry." That night he died, and when his soul came to realise the fact that he had nothing left of all he had laid by -- that was a great surprise, and a very unpleasant one. SUBJECT. -- Let us take care that we do not have some such a great and unpleasant surprise ourselves. "Take heed," says our Lord, "to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." I. Now I am going to tell you a story of another great surprise. The king of Syria was engaged in war with the king of Israel, and one of the servants of the king of Syria told him that Elisha the Prophet saw and knew all that was planned by him against the king of Israel, and that he told the king of Israel, so that the Syrians were never able to catch him at a disadvantage, and defeat him. Then the king of Syria enquired where this prophet lived, and was told that he was then at Dothan. "Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night and compassed the city about." Then Elisha prayed to God to deceive and blind the eyes of the soldiers, and he went out of the gates of Dothan to them, and said, "This is not the way, neither is this the city; follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." So he went before, and led them along the road to Samaria, the capital of the king of Israel. Then he brought them all in through the gates, and they followed, as docile as lambs, and when they were in the market-place, he said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." And the Lord opened their eyes, and lo! they were in the market-place in the midst of Samaria, and all around them were the soldiers of their enemy, the king of Israel, with swords drawn, and in the windows were others armed with stones and javelins and molten lead to hurl down on them. Here was an unpleasant surprise! The king of Israel and all his soldiers were eager to be at them and cut them to pieces, but Elisha was too good-hearted for that, he persuaded the king to be generous, to give them their breakfast and send them home. So "He prepared great provisions for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master." They were lucky to be let off so easily, and they owed their lives to there being a Saint of God there to intercede for them. But you may be assured to their dying day they carried with them a lively recollection of the very unpleasant surprise it was to them when their eyes were opened, and they found themselves in the midst of their enemies, when they fondly supposed themselves in the humble and undefended

little town of Dothan. II. Now for you! -- Whither are you going? Whither are you being led? Are you at all aware? I very much fear that a great many of you are as blind and as ignorant of the road you are treading as were those soldiers of the king of Syria. You are going on headlong, chattering with one another, laughing and singing, in open order, very little discipline, and perfectly confident that you will come to no harm. Take care! Some day your eyes will be opened, and you will experience an unpleasant surprise. Then, when your eyes are opened you will see yourselves surrounded by the enemies of your souls, ready to drag you to destruction, and no help near. Very unexpected was this case of the Syrians, that the prophet prayed for them, and that instead of being put to death they were fed and sent away in peace. That is not what you must expect. Dives, when his eyes were opened, cried to Abraham, but got no help, no, not even a drop of water to cool his tongue. III. No man need go blindly to destruction, for God has given him guidance, and power of seeing whither he goes. The prophet led these soldiers of Syria into the midst of their enemies, but God's good Spirit, which is our guide, will lead us into the Land of Righteousness if we will listen to His voice, and go where he points the way. We have no right to plead blindness and ignorance, if hereafter we find that we have gone astray, and our eyes are opened when we are in the midst of our enemies, for blindness can not come upon us unless we wilfully shut our eyes to the light, and with the teaching of Christ and His Church ever sounding in our ears, we have no right to plead ignorance. Moreover, God is so merciful, that He never allows any to go to destruction unwarned of their danger. As He sent His angel to stand in the way of Balaam, so will He send some check, and throw some obstacle in the road you are treading, to bring you to your senses in time, and will not allow you to perish, unless you wilfully and deliberately persist in the road of evil, knowing the consequences, and knowing whither you are going. CONCLUSION. -- Lastly. It was a great surprise to Lazarus when he found himself in Paradise. He had no doubt hoped and prayed to be admitted there, but when he found himself there, he was amazed to see how far its happiness and its peace surpassed his expectations. So with those of us who are found meet to enter Heaven. However great our anticipations, they will be surpassed. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, to conceive those good things which God hath prepared for those who love Him. May He bring us all to that glad surprise.

XXXIX. THE HOLY COMMUNION.

2nd Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke xiv.16. "A certain man made a great supper." INTRODUCTION.

-- When the fulness of time was come, God the Eternal Father said: "In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, I have no pleasure." Then said the Son, "Lo, I come." He came that He might take away the valueless sacrifice, and establish the one full and perfect propitiation for the sins of the world. And indeed it was time. All creation was groaning and travailing in pain, and waiting for redemption, then said He -- "Lo, I come." The souls of the faithful were in Hades, prophets, patriarchs, and kings, desirous to see His Day, prisoners of Hope, desirous to be released by His Blood of the Covenant, -- then said He -- "Lo, I come." Men wandered in darkness, desiring light, the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint, and in their error, darkly, and in their sickness, faintly, they sought the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him; then said He -- "Lo, I come." They knew not the way of God how they might walk, and they needed a guide; then said He -- "Lo, I come." They were sunk in sin, and found that the old bloody sacrifices and burnt offerings could not take away guilt, they needed a more perfect sacrifice; then said He -- "Lo, I come." They knew not what the nature of God was, and they formed to themselves gods, in the likeness of men. How should they know without a teacher? Then said He -- "Lo, I come." Nor is this all. At this day, still His answer is, promptly, when He is needed -- "Lo, I come." Does any father desire his dear little one to be taken into the arms of Christ and blessed, still His answer is -- "Lo, I come." Does any man need direction, guidance, help in the way of life? He says, "Lo, I come; I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Does any desire sustaining food by the way? He says -- "Lo, I come, and the Bread I give is My flesh, which I give for the life of the world." Is any burdened with the weight of sin, and desires pardon and reconciliation, He says -- "Lo, I come, though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as wool." Is any in sorrow, and heart sore? He says, "Lo, I come to bind up the broken-hearted." Is any dying? -- He is still ready with His answer, "Lo, I come, when thou goest through the waters I am with thee." You see how striking is the readiness of Our Blessed Lord. Now look at to-day's Gospel, and see how this is met by man. Christ is represented as having made a great supper, the Holy Eucharist, and to that he invites all Christians, and He sends forth His messengers to bid them come, then they all with one consent begin to make excuse. The messengers go to the man who has bought oxen, and invite him to the supper of his lord, and his answer is, "I pray thee, have me excused." They go to a man who has bought a farm, and his answer is, "I pray thee, have me excused." They go to a man who has married a wife, and his answer is, "I cannot come." "Lo, I come!" says Christ. "I cannot come," says man. "Lo, I come to man," says Christ. "I cannot come to Christ," says man. It was the rule among the early Christians to communicate every Lord's Day. The rule of the Church, as laid down in the service-books, then ordered that all those who were open and scandalous livers, all those who had committed some deadly sin, and had not been reconciled to God, should leave church before the Consecration, after the reading of the Gospel. Now suppose some good old bishop of that day were to rise from the dead, and come into this church, what would he see? -- Directly the sermon is over, -- a rush of almost all in the church, men, women, and children, running out of the door, and only three or four, or at most a dozen, remaining to partake of the Lord's Body. That is what he

would see. Now, what would he say? -- He would lift up his hands in horror, and say, "What is this? All these notorious sinners! All these open profligates! All these burdened with mortal sin, cutting them off from the grace of God! Take me back to my grave, I do not want to see any more of such horrible days." But if I happened to be present, I would say to him. "You are jumping to conclusions too rashly. Times are altered. It is not the criminals and profligates who go out of church before the Consecration of the Blessed Sacrament, and are unworthy to eat of the Lord's Body, it is those who cannot make up their minds to do exactly what the Lord commanded; it is those who are half-hearted, who wish to serve God, but do not want to serve Him very much." Then, I doubt not, the old bishop would turn upon me with a wrathful face, and say, "Let me go back to my grave! This is worse! A thousand times worse! The whole Christian world has grown cold of heart, and dead of faith, if all with one consent begin to make excuse, and say, 'I cannot come.' I had rather they were either hot or cold, but because they are neither hot nor cold -- away! I cannot bear to look at their faces! Let me go back to my grave." III. I know what is passing in your minds as well as if you had got glass skulls. And this is what I see that not a few of you are thinking. "Ha! there is the Parson at it again! always hammering away at Communion. Can he not leave us alone? Let him talk to us of other matters; let him preach to us some real stinging gospel truth, and make us wince. Anything but this eternal preaching about coming to Communion." Now I will tell you why I preach about this, and hammer, hammer, at it. Because it is good stinging gospel truth, and the grumbling that is going on is because your consciences really are wincing at what I say. Listen: -- other folks talked like you in olden times. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, God in mercy sent them Bread from Heaven, the manna, to feed them on their way through the wilderness. What said the people in return for the blessing? Were they very grateful? Were they very eager to gather up the Angels' food? By no means, they sat grumbling in their tents and said, "Our soul is dried away; there is nothing beside this manna before our eyes." Put into modern language that is, "Our souls have dried up for want of preaching of free justification, and no good at all in keeping the law; we don't want any of your Sacramental teaching, no Communion for us, we can do very well without that, our soul abhorreth this light food, as for this Holy Communion, there is nothing but that preached to us, year in, year out." Well! If this Sacramental teaching be not God's own blessed Gospel, there is no meaning in words. Listen to this! I never said anything so strong, and this is what Christ Himself spake: -- "I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I give for the life of the world." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Now -- mark you. When Jesus said this, many of His disciples said, "This is a hard saying" -- and, from that time they went back, and walked no more with Him. It is so still, it will be so always. Just as many of the old Israelites loathed the manna and said, "Our souls are dried away; there is nothing but this manna before our eyes," so there always will be faithless disciples who when they hear the invitation to partake of the Body of Christ, the true Manna, will say, "This is a hard saying," and will thenceforth no more walk with Him.

XL. RECEIVING AND REJECTING.

3rd Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke, xv.2. "This Man receiveth sinners." INTRODUCTION. -- In to-day's Gospel our Lord represents Himself as a Good Shepherd seeking His lost sheep, going out into the wilderness after them, to bring them back into the fold. The fold is that place where He keeps His flock shut behind the hurdles of the Ten Commandments. Every now and then a sheep leaps one of these hurdles, or pushes his way between them, and runs away into forbidden pastures. Then the Good Shepherd goes after the erring sheep, and brings it back. "And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." SUBJECT. -- Christ is not always to be regarded as the Saviour receiving sinners. The time will come when He will be the Judge, rejecting them. He is a shepherd now, bringing back the straying sheep, and replacing them in the fold, but one day He will do just the contrary, He will go to His fold, and pick out the incorrigibly bad sheep, and cast them out. I. We will consider Him now as the Good Shepherd. What is His purpose in bringing back the straying sheep? That they may remain within bounds for the future. Christ has come to save sinners, that is to say, He brings them to repentance, and pardons their transgressions, in order that, for the future, they may walk in newness of life, and not commit the sins of which they were guilty before. Thus if He brings back one who has been a liar, it is to truth that he returns, and Christ expects him to speak the truth ever after. If He brings back a drunkard, it is to temperance, and He expects him to be sober for the future. If He brings back one who has sinned through impurity, it is to chastity and modesty. This is what S. Paul means when he says, "Put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour. Let him that stole steal no more, let no corrupt conversation proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another." II. We will consider Christ as the Judge. The time will come when He will separate the bad from the good, when He will go over His fold, and pick out all those diseased sheep which are good for nothing, and which taint and infect the others, and will cast them outside. That is to say, the time will come, when Christ will no more call sinners to Him, and bring them to His Church, but will examine those who are in His Church, and unless they have mended their ways, unless they have become better for being there, He will throw them out, and have nothing further to do with them. When Joshua was leading the people of God into the Promised Land, God said to Joshua, "Up! Sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow." In what did this sanctification consist? "Joshua rose early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: and he brought the family of Judah; and took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: and he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi was taken." Then Joshua learned how this man had sinned and incurred the anger of God, and he and all Israel carried him and his family outside the camp unto the valley of Achor, "and all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." That

was the sanctification of Israel, -- the putting away the black sheep out of the flock. When Jesus sat with His Twelve in the supper chamber, at the Last Supper, Judas rose and went out, and when he was gone forth, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." A little while before, while Judas was in the room, we are told, "Jesus was troubled in spirit." But the moment the evil one among the Apostles was cast forth, the glorification of the Son of Man began. So it is now, and so will it be hereafter. Now, as long as there is evil in the Church, as long as there are sinners who will not amend, as long as there are tares growing up with the wheat, -- so long "Jesus is troubled in spirit." But when the great Day comes, when our true Joshua will lead the people of God into the Promised Land, then He will sanctify His people by casting out from among them the Achans; then from the company of His Elect the Judases will be banished, and the Son of Man will be glorified indeed. CONCLUSION. -- Therefore, my Brethren, be careful to amend. You may have been strayed sheep who have been mercifully brought back to the fold, if so, amend your ways, and grow in holiness and in spiritual health; or in the Last Day you will be thrust forth as incurable, and the Children of God will be sanctified, whilst you are buried in the valley of Achor.

XLI. RASH DECISIONS.

4th Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke vi.37. "Judge not -- condemn not -- forgive." INTRODUCTION. -- Our Lord here condemns all rash judgments. We know not the motives of other men's actions, and therefore have no right to pass a sweeping condemnation upon them. From our ignorance, we ought to be cautious and merciful in our judgments, and from our own weakness, we should be forgiving to those who have trespassed against us. Rash judgments arise from pride. It is because we are puffed up with a high opinion of our own selves, our own goodness, the soundness of our judgment, the sharpness of our perception, that we are so prompt to pass judgment on others. SUBJECT. -- This same Pride urges us to something else, Persistency in maintaining that on which we have determined, even after we know it is unwise. It is of this which I am going to speak to-day. This fault is so closely akin to rash judgment of others, that I may well address you on the subject upon a Sunday when our Lord warns against the other. I. Many a man, out of pride, sticks to what he says after he knows that it is wrong. He will not admit that he is wrong, or he is moved by a false sense of what is due to himself to hold to his word, or to his opinion, when his conscience tells him that he is in error. You must have met with those stubborn persons who are not to be moved by any argument, not to be convinced by any proof, that they are wrong. They have made up their minds once for all, and are no longer open to reverse their decision. Let us look to Scripture, and see if we have any examples of such. I find two; and one of these is in a man of whom we might have hoped better things -- King David. I. When David came to the kingdom, he was very anxious to show kindness to any son of Jonathan whom he might find; and he heard of Mephibosheth, who was lame in both his feet, and at once made over to him all the landed property that had belonged to King Saul, his grandfather. After seven years, Absalom, David's son, conspired against his father, and David was obliged to fly from Jerusalem, with a few friends. As David was escaping, there came to him Ziba, a servant of Mephibosheth, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine. Then David asked Ziba what these were for, and Ziba answered that he had brought them to the king as a present, thinking he might need them in his flight. And the king asked after Mephibosheth; then Ziba said, "O! he is at home in Jerusalem, he said in my hearing, A good time is coming to me. To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." Now all this was a wicked lie. Mephibosheth had sent the present, and Ziba had promised to tell David why his master could not come with him, because he was crippled in both his feet, and could not get about. As for any idea of recovering the throne of Saul, it had not once entered his head. Now when David heard the slander of Ziba, he was very angry with Mephibosheth, and at once he judged him, and condemned him, without waiting to hear more, and said to Ziba, "Behold, I will give thee all that belonged to Mephibosheth, if ever I get back to Jerusalem and recover my power." Not long after there was a great battle, and Absalom was slain, and the enemies of David put to flight. Then David returned over Jordan from the wilderness where he had taken refuge, and Mephibosheth met him. This good man, full of love for David, "had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes," all the time of David's absence, to shew his great grief. David at once reproached him for his disloyalty, and

then only he heard how great a lie Ziba had told. Then David answered, "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land." Mark the wicked injustice. The lying, slanderous servant is rewarded with half the property of poor Mephibosheth, -- why? -- because David had promised him the whole when misinformed. David knows that Ziba has acted falsely, yet, because he had said to him that he should be given the land of his master, he keeps his word to him, though he knows he is doing an injustice to Mephibosheth. There you have a pretty example of an obstinate man sticking to what he has said, after he is convinced that he has been misled, and doing a great wrong rather than acknowledge that he had judged rashly, and condemned on no good grounds.II. I can give you another example. King Herod was pleased with the dancing of the daughter of Herodias one evening at a supper, and he swore to her, when he was half tipsy, that he would give her what she liked in reward for her display. Then she asked him to cut off the head of S. John the Baptist, and give it her in a dish. Now, as soon as she asked this, the king was sorry, for he knew that S. John was a good man, and he knew also that he had no right to have a man murdered in prison to please the whim of a wicked woman; however, because he had passed his word, he was too proud and cowardly to go back from it, and refuse her what she had no right to ask. Then he sent an executioner, and he cut off the head of the saint, and put it in a dish, and it was brought thus to the girl, and she carried it to her mother.III. A man is right to stick to his word, if his word be right. He is right to stick to his promise, if he have promised that over which he has a just right. He is right to stick to his opinion if his opinion be founded on good grounds, and if he have heard nothing that ought to cause him to alter it.But -- no man has any right to stick to his opinion simply because it is his opinion. He has no right to hold a promise which he had no right to make. He has no right to adhere to a harsh judgment simply because he has formed that judgment.When our Lord bids us not judge, He bids us be very cautious in forming a decided opinion, and in sticking to it through thick and thin. We know so little here, and so imperfectly, that our opinions must be formed on uncertain grounds, and therefore we have no right to be tenacious about them. Yet many persons are as touchy about their opinions as though it were a sacrilege to dispute them. Some of the greatest injustices have been done through obstinacy, in clinging to opinions that have become untenable.CONCLUSION. -- Remember then the lessons taught you by our Lord in this day's Gospel, and also by the conduct of David. Be very cautious of forming a judgment, and when you have formed one, do not allow Pride to stand in the way of confessing your fault, and changing your opinion, when you are given reasonable grounds for so doing.

XLII. THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.

5th Sunday after Trinity S. Luke v.5. "We have taken nothing; nevertheless at Thy word, I will let down the net." INTRODUCTION. -- S. Peter and the other Apostles had been fishing all night, and had met with no success at all, then Jesus entered into the boat of Simon, and bade him launch out and let down his net. S. Peter did not hesitate. He had met with no success when fishing in the night, nevertheless now, at the word of Christ, he fishes again, and this time the net encloses a great multitude, so that the net breaks. No doubt our Lord desired to show those who were to become fishers of men that there were two ways of doing a thing, and that one way would be successful and the other would not. If they were going to become fishers of men, they must try to catch them by carrying Christ, i.e. a Christlike spirit, with them, and the spirit of Christ is love and gentleness. If they were to be successful in winning souls, they must have a loving zeal, and that would gain more than hard work without love. SUBJECT. -- We are all of us, in our several callings, fishers of souls. Of course, especially are the clergy fishers, but not they only, every man who loves God must seek to win souls for God, every man who is in the net of the Church must seek to draw others into the same net. If the fisher is to be successful, he must fish in the spirit of Christ, that is, actuated by love, and must deal gently with the souls he desires to gain. I. I say, we are all fishers. Those of us who are parents desire to draw to Christ the souls of our children, those who are masters, the souls of their servants. The husband seeks to win the wife, and the believing wife the husband. "What knowest thou, O wife," says S. Paul, "whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" The servant seeks to win the fellow-servant, the labourer in the field has the welfare of his fellow-labourer at heart, and seeks to draw him to God. It was Cain who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And the same isolating, selfish spirit is in those who take no interest in those they associate with, and do not seek their good. I was much struck last spring with something a gentleman said to me, who had been a good deal in America; he was much surprised and struck with the interest felt in England by the rich for the poor, by the master and mistress for their servants, by the landowner for his tenants, and he said to me, "This seems to me the most marvellous thing I have seen in England. With us a master cares not one snap of the fingers what becomes of the man he employs, he no more thinks of what becomes of him than he does of a dollar that passes through his hands. He sees that he does his work, and if the man dies, the master gets another in his place to-morrow, and asks nothing about the man who has disappeared." Well! I thank God we are not come to that yet, however advanced we may be in our independent ways; and it is not right and Christian that we should. II. Now we come to the way in which we are to try to draw other souls to Christ, the souls of our children, of our servants, of our companions, of our fellow-workers. The first principle of success is gentleness. In the 4th chapter of the 2nd book of Kings we have this story. There was a Shunammite woman who had an only son. She was a good kind-hearted woman, who had shown much hospitality to the prophet Elijah [Transcriber's note: Elisha?]. One day the little boy ran out into the harvest field, when the sun was hot, and he had a sunstroke, and was very ill. "He said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then he died. And

she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out." Then she ordered one of the servants to saddle an ass, and drive her to the prophet; and when she found him, she told him the piteous story, and how the poor little fellow whom she loved so dearly, and who was such a darling of his father, and such a pet of the old Elisha when he paid them his visits, was lying white and dead upstairs on the bed. Then Elisha was sorely troubled, and he gave his staff to his servant, Gehazi, and made him run as fast as he could to the house of the Shunammite. "Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again; and lay my staff upon the face of the child." Gehazi obeyed, but it was of no use. "He laid the staff upon the face of the child: but there was neither voice, nor hearing." Then Elisha came himself, and he shut the door, and laid himself beside the little body, and put his lips to the lips of the child, and his warm loving heart against the little dead heart, and took the chill hands in his. Then the spirit of the child came back into him again, and he sat up, and Elisha delivered him alive to his mother. Now this story contains some lesson for us. And this is the short comment on the miracle by an old writer, "Him whom the rod of terror will not rouse, love will." Or in other words, we may learn by this that gentleness will succeed where harshness will fail. In the time when all the north of England was heathen, there was an assembly held at Iona to decide who should preach the gospel to the English of Northumbria. Then one missionary was sent, and after having laboured for some years, he came back to give an account of his mission. And a council was held, and he said, "Those Northumbrians are a stiff-necked, hard-hearted people. I threatened them with God's wrath, I spoke to them of Hell-fire, I warned them of the terrors of judgment, I denounced the vengeance of God on them, and they would not be converted." Then one sitting in a bark seat said, "My brother, it seems to me that you went the wrong way to work. You should have gone in love, and not in wrath. You should have tried to win, and not to drive." All eyes were turned on the speaker, and it was decided with one voice that he should be sent, and he went. His name was Aidan -- and he was the Apostle of all Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire. He had the joy to see the whole people bow their necks to receive the yoke of Christ. What says S. Paul? "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" If he had come with the rod, he would have gone back disappointed. CONCLUSION. -- Let us then, dear brethren, in dealing with the souls of others, approach them, not with the rod, or we shall fail to awake them to a new and better life, but in love, and in the spirit of gentleness, and then we shall meet, I doubt not, with good success.

XLIII. PERSISTENCY IN WRONG DOING.

6th Sunday after Trinity. S. Matt. v.25. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him." INTRODUCTION. -- I spoke to you the Sunday before last about the obstinacy of persisting in an opinion after you have good cause to believe that this opinion is unjust, or unreasonable. I am going to speak to you to-day of another form of obstinacy. SUBJECT. -- My subject is Persistency in doing wrong, because you have begun wrong. This is only another form of the same fault. The other is thinking wrong persistently, this is perseverance in doing wrong. And the source of both is the same, Pride. Pride stands in the way of altering an erroneous opinion, and in the way of altering a wrongful course of action. I. In the tenth chapter of the second book of Samuel we have a striking story of the way in which a man having once done a wrong, persists in it, and it brings about his ruin. King David, when firmly established on his throne, began to look about him to see who had been kind to him in his day of adversity, and to reward, or thank them. He showed his gratitude to the memory of his friend Jonathan by investing his son Mephibosheth with his grandfather's property. Then he remembered that Nahash the King of Ammon had shown him hospitality, and he heard also that he was just dead. So David said, "I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me." And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. The message was kindly intended. David wished to show that he was not forgetful of past favours, that he was ready to make a lasting friendship with Hanun, and he desired to exhibit his sympathy with the son for the loss of his father. These were the three motives actuating David, all good. Now, how did Hanun act? One would naturally suppose that he would appreciate these motives, and that he would be glad, when scarce settled on his throne, to secure the powerful friendship of King David. No! -- he was young, insolent, inconsiderate, and fond of practical joking, -- a vulgar-minded fellow, puffed up with conceit at his elevation to power. Hanun took the servants, the ambassadors of David, and shaved off half their beards, and cut off the lower half of all their clothes, and sent them back to David. And when it was told unto David that his messengers had been thus ignominiously treated, "he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed, and said, Tarry at Jericho, until your beards be grown, and then return." As soon as Hanun and his Ammonites had done this, what was their next step? -- As perhaps you are aware, by the laws of civilized and uncivilized people, the persons of ambassadors are held to be sacred. Therefore Hanun had not only done an insolent, and utterly blackguard trick, but he had gone against one of the first laws of nations. What he ought to have done, was at once to send to David a most humble apology, with an acknowledgment that he had acted wrongly. But he was too proud for this. He would not admit that he had erred. He at once sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers, and of King Maacah a thousand men, and of Ish-tob twelve thousand men, so that this malicious trick began to shew that it was an expensive one. Then David's army drew up in array against this army of Ammon and their hired allies, and at once, all the mercenaries ran away. So then there was nothing for it but for the Ammonites to return as quickly as possible within the walls of their city. Now, what should Hanun have done? It was clear that David was not eager to punish him, for he had not even sent his army against Ammon till

Hanun had collected the great host against him, and as soon as the Ammonites, deserted by their auxiliaries, had retired within their walls, the army of David had not pressed them, but gone quietly back to Jerusalem. What then ought Hanun to have done? Of course, he should now have sent his apology, and said how wrongly he had acted, how ashamed of himself he was, and how desirous he was to have the past forgotten. But no, having done wrong once, his pride would not let him acknowledge it, and he went on. He now engaged Hadarezar, King of the Syrians, and this time there was a great battle, and David slew of the Syrians seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote the captain of their host, so that he was left dead on the field, and all the Syrians who could escape ran away for their lives. Then Hadarezer had had quite enough of fighting against Israel, and he made peace with David, and "So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more." Now the Ammonites were left completely without auxiliaries. What chance was there for them? Still David did not press them. A whole year passed, and he made no move. He was waiting for an apology. But no. That headstrong Hanun was still too proud to make it. He would die with all his people rather than say he had done wrong. So, at the end of a year, David sent his army against the Ammonites, and destroyed them utterly. He killed Hanun, and took away his crown, and plundered his capital town, and ruined all his cities. That was the end of one practical joke unapologised for. II. In the Gospel for to-day, our Lord warns against the same hard-headedness in persisting in refusing an apology, and to make up friendship that has been broken. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." He urges Christians when they have done an injury to any, frankly to confess it, to put their pride in their pocket, and to ask forgiveness. It is not an easy thing to do, to acknowledge that you have done wrong, but there is more true courage in doing so, than in persevering in spite of the consequences, in wrong doing. Many a lasting and miserable quarrel has arisen because at the outset one little word has not been said, which would have made all things smooth. Two families become estranged and bitterly hostile, because some one has reported to the mother in one, that the mother in the other had made a disparaging remark about her. A little word, and all would be explained, and set to rights. "Let not the sun go down on your wrath," says the Apostle, and an excellent piece of advice this is: -- Make up all quarrels the same day that they break out. There was a good old bishop of Alexandria called John the Almsgiver, and he and the Governor of the city were great friends. Something occurred which made a breach between them. If I remember aright, it was this. The bishop was very charitable, and was always urging the rich people to give to the poor, and they were constantly sending him money to distribute among the sick and needy. Now at this time the Governor had experienced some difficulty in raising the taxes, and this ruffled his temper. He was on a visit to the Bishop, when he saw on the stairs a number of servants of a rich lady bringing up, as a present to the bishop some pots, labelled "Virgin Honey." The Governor said he did not believe they were pots of honey, but pots of gold, and when the bishop offered to open them and let him see for himself, he dashed out of the door in a rage, and said, "No wonder I can't get money in taxes when you swindle it out of the people, to feed the beggars on honey." When the Governor was gone, the old Bishop was very troubled, and he sat in his room all the rest of the day, waiting for the Governor to come and make it up with him. But no! the Governor was fuming with anger and would do no such thing. That evening the Governor had a party, and as he was sitting at table with the guests, a little scrap of

paper was put on his plate, a servant of the Bishop had brought it. The Governor took it up and saw, "Dear old Friend -- THE SUN IS SETTING." Then his heart relented, he excused himself to his guests, and ran to the house of the Bishop, and they fell into one another's arms and made friends again. CONCLUSION. -- Now remember this story. Whenever you have a quarrel with another, let not the sun go down on your wrath. Make it up before set of sun.

XLIV. THE MEASURE OF SIN.

7th Sunday after Trinity. S. Mark viii.2. "I have compassion on the multitude." INTRODUCTION. -- In to-day's Gospel we see the tender compassion of our Lord for those who came into the wilderness to hear Him. This is only one example out of many of His great love and mercy: and indeed "His mercy is over all His works." "Thou, O Lord," says David, "art full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering and truth." This is a verity of which we are so convinced that it is quite possible we may overlook the other truth, that His mercy, though unlimited in extent, is limited in its application. His mercy is extended for a definite purpose, and when it ceases to avail for this purpose, then it ceases to flow. What that purpose is, S. Paul tells us. "Knowest thou not," he says, "that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." That is, God is merciful that we may amend, not in order that we may continue in sin. Now, if men thought that when they had fallen into grievous sin there was no more a hope of recovery, then they would sink into despair, and become hard and impenitent. But that this may not be the case, God assures us of His mercy, but he assures us of His mercy only to insure our amendment. SUBJECT. -- It seems plain from Holy Scripture that to each man there is a fixed measure of sin, and that if he fills that measure, after that there is no place for repentance, and no more pardon. This is a very terrible truth, -- but a truth it is, as I shall show you. I. There was a nation of Canaan called the Amorites, and God promised to Abraham that He would give their land to his descendants, but that He could not give it yet without injustice. The land was in the possession of the Amorites, a people on their trial, and till the day of their probation was expired, their kingdom could not be taken from them. "In the fourth generation," God said, "thy seed shall come hither, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Now actually it was not till four hundred and seventy years later that the destruction of the Amorites was accomplished. Four generations after Abraham, that is some two hundred and forty years after, the measure of their iniquities was full, and yet they existed on till Joshua crossed Jordan with the Israelites, and then they were all put to the sword. In the New Testament we hear the Jews addressed as though they also had a measure of sin they must fill up before God would forsake them. Our Lord says to them, "Ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell? Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise-men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify: and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." The Jewish nation had done great wickedness, but the measure of their iniquities was not full till they had rejected Christ, and had refused to listen to His Apostles, and the Holy Ghost speaking through their mouths. Till then He would not cast them off entirely. II. David prays to God, "Lord, let me know the number of my days, that I may be certified how long I have to live." No doubt, God has fixed for all men a certain length of life. No doubt also He has set for each a certain limit of forbearance; a line, an invisible line drawn somewhere, and He says to man, Thus far mayest thou go, and I will still be merciful and pardon, but no further. Transgress that line, and I forgive no more. My Spirit will not always strive with man. In those cases which I have quoted to you, God is dealing with nations, but He

deals with individuals in the same way. His laws are uniform; as He deals with an assemblage of people, so He deals with single individuals. If He fixes a bound to nations, beyond which they cannot go without His forsaking them, it is because there is the law, which is of general application to all human beings; a law applying to single persons, and to persons in the aggregate. In the Prophet Amos we read a message from God to Judah, "Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." This means, if I mistake not, Judah has committed some two or three gross sins, and I was ready to turn away the punishment, had there been a sign of repentance, but when to the three they added a fourth, then it was too late. The time of repentance was past, and the punishment threatened must fall. And now perhaps you can understand a saying of S. John in his first Epistle. He says: -- "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it." S. John is not speaking here of what we call mortal sins, but of mortal sins continued till the measure is filled up, and when the last sin has been added which completes the measure, that is the sin unto death, which it avails nothing to pray for, for that sin ends in death. Before, there was life, spiritual life, perhaps flickering, but extant, then comes the last sin, and the life is gone out, all is dark, and dead, and cold, no more fanning of the black ashes is of any avail, the fire is out and cannot be revived. III. How does God deal with those who have gone beyond this measure? In one of two ways. Either: -- 1. There comes a sudden call, -- a sudden death-sickness or accident cuts them off. Or: -- 2. Dead impenitence settles over the soul, which no longer wishes for anything better, which feels no desire for pardon. Of the first case, we have instances in Scripture. King Belshazzar had committed many transgressions, he was weighed in the balances, but still found wanting in the final and irreversible act of wickedness, till that night when he brought out the sacred vessels used in the temple to drink out of them at his riotous banquet in his palace. That act of sacrilege was the one sin which weighed down the balance. What says the sacred text? "In that night was Belshazzar the King of the Chaldeans slain." I may instance also Judas, who having for long been a thief, added to his former sins the one last and terrible sin of selling his Master, and then a fit of madness came over him in which he hung himself. But sometimes hardness and impenitence is the result. The conscience is dead, and, to use S. Paul's words, "there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." CONCLUSION. -- Let us, therefore, be very cautious of adding sin to sin, that grace may abound, but rather fly from it as from the face of a serpent. We know not what is the number of our days determined by God, and we know not what is the number of our sins beyond which there is no forgiveness.

XLV. CASTING BLAME.

8th Sunday after Trinity. S. Matt. vii.15. "Inwardly they are ravening wolves." INTRODUCTION. -- A Schoolmaster finds one day that several of his scholars are playing truant. The morning passes and they do not arrive. At last, in the afternoon, the truants turn up. The master has a strong suspicion where they have been: however, he asks, "Why were you not at school this morning?" "Please, sir, mother kept me at home to mind the baby." "Indeed -- let me look at your mouth." He opens the mouth, and finds it black inside. "Ah! I thought as much, rambling in the woods, picking and eating whortleberries." So with the others, they make their excuses, but he looks into their mouths, and the black colour betrays them. Now, my friends, I am almost afraid to look in your mouths, lest I should see them black, not with whortleberries, but with something much sweeter, blame and fault-finding. You are, I suspect, all of you nearly fond of abusing your neighbours, of finding fault, of telling unkind things of them, of blackening their good names. SUBJECT. -- I am going to take as my subject to-day the Casting of Blame. I. "Be ye merciful," said our Lord, "even as your Father which is in heaven is merciful." He did not mean only in our dealings with others, to be merciful to their bodies, and merciful in not exacting debts, and merciful in not punishing neglect, and so forth, but He meant also that we were to be merciful with their characters. We are not to be ready to impute evil, not ready to cast blame, not ready to believe hard things of others and retail them to our neighbours, but to be very slow to suspect evil, very slow to charge it on others, and exceedingly slow to say what is evil of others. "Charity," says S. Paul, "is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." It seems to me, that charity is the exact reverse of this fault-finding, blame-imputing character. "Charity thinketh no evil," but how is it with you? Do you not always suspect that the motives of people are bad, do you not always think people are worse than they really are? "Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity." Ha! there is a bit of scandal, something very bad has come out about So and so. What a running about from house to house! the village is like a hive of bees swarming. Do you mean to tell me it is not a delight, a joy to you, to have this little bit of iniquity to talk about? I know better. "Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity," but charity is not to be found in that tittle-tattling, excited crowd of talkers. "Charity believeth all things" -- will, that is, believe and trust, as long as it is possible, that people are not so bad after all, that the stories told are not true, and "Charity hopeth all things," hopes even against hope that it is so. O! what a blessed thing is charity! S. Paul said he would rather have that, than be able to speak with tongues, and to prophesy; he would rather have that than work miracles. It is a better thing even to have that than Faith. But, alas! if it be such a good thing, it is also a very rare one. II. How very often we cast blame when there is no cause, and are therefore guilty of serious injustice. I was one day walking in the street of a little town, when a poor inoffensive dog passed me. He went quietly along without a thought of doing anyone an injury, when he happened to pass a knot of boys just come out of school. At once one of the urchins took up a stone and threw it at him, the others clapped their hands, and hooted after him, "Hit him! Knock him over! Mad dog!" Away ran the unhappy cur, and all the boys yelling after him, throwing dirt, and striking at him with sticks. What next? Everyone in the street ran to the door, and saw the brute tearing down the way, with

his tail between his legs. Then out of every door rushed all the house-dogs, the butcher's dog, and the coach-dog, and even the little lap-dog jumped up, and ran down stairs, and out of the door, to join in the barking, and away went all the dogs of the place after the poor wretch. There was a tumult! And the people in their doors and at their windows shouted, and one said, "Kill him! he is mad!" and another, "He has bitten a woman!" and another, "He has stolen some meat!" and another, "He has knocked over a child!" Now all this arose from one boy throwing a stone at a harmless dog. And all the things said about the dog were untrue. The proverb was verified, "Give a dog a bad name, and you may hang him." Is not this very much like what takes place among men? Someone throws blame on a poor harmless person for no cause in the world but out of sheer malevolence, or love of mischief, and at once others join in. Everyone has something to say, everyone joins in the general abuse. No lack of blame. No lack of unkind things said. And -- all untrue, all unjust! I do not mean to say that when a person has done what is wrong we are not to speak of it at all; but what I do say is, that we should be very careful indeed not to cast blame till we are quite sure that we are justified in doing so. "As for this way, we know that it is everywhere spoken against," was what was said of Christianity. All sorts of bad, lying things were said of the early Christians, that they killed and ate children, that they practised horrible idolatries: the stories were not true, but they were believed, simply because everyone said these things were done. III. Now this is the advice I give you: -- a. Be sure that blame is just before you cast it. b. Be merciful in attributing blame even when it is deserved. First: -- Be sure that you have real cause to cast blame, be sure that you are not committing a great injustice, and doing another a grievous injury which is unmerited. "Do to others as you would they should do to you." Consider how miserable you would feel were you the subject of unmerited blame. Secondly: -- Be merciful in attributing blame even when it is deserved. Remember that you yourself are not guiltless. There are things that you have done which deserve censure quite as much as those things you blame in others. One day a woman, taken in adultery, was brought before Christ, and the Jews desired to stone her to death because of her sin. Then our Lord said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And when they heard it, being convicted by their own consciences, they went out, one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last. I say to you: when you are inclined to cast blame, even when just, think, "Am I without sin, that I should judge and condemn another?"

XLVI. PETTY DISHONESTY.

9th Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke xvi, 3, 4. "What shall I do? -- I am resolved what to do." INTRODUCTION. -- The dishonest Steward in to-day's Gospel shows us the natural tendency of the human heart when in a scrape -- to have recourse to dishonesty to escape from it. He knows that he is about to be turned out of his stewardship because he has been wasteful -- not dishonest, but wasteful. He has not been a prudent and saving steward, but a sort of happy-go-lucky man who has not kept the accounts carefully, and has been content so long as he has not lost much money. So soon as he sees himself about to be turned out of his stewardship, he is wakened out of his easy-going ways with a shock, and he says to himself, "Here am I in a predicament! I shall lose my livelihood, and am not likely to get another situation; I am too old to work with my hands for my living, and I have too much self-respect to try. What can I do? -- I am resolved what to do. I will cheat my master." SUBJECT. -- I believe that a very similar process goes on now-a-days in a great many hearts. Bad times come. What is to be done? There is nothing for it but to be just a little bit dishonest. Honesty won't pay. So the manufacturer weaves bad silk, and makes shoddy cloth, and the wine-merchant doctors his wine, and the brewer his ale, and the milkman puts water into his milk, and the buttermilk sells butter made of Thames mud, and the calico is dressed with chalk, and the ready-made clothes come to pieces because the thread's ends are not fastened, and the farm work is half done, and the whole trade and commerce of the country is one great system of adulteration and petty cheating. I. Abraham was a very scrupulous man. In all his dealings he was perfectly just and honourable. Once five kings came into the valley of the Jordan, and made a sudden onslaught on the towns there; they carried away all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and thoroughly sacked the cities. They did not only that, but they carried off as well a great number of the inhabitants as captives. Then Abraham lent his servants to the king of Sodom to help him to recover the booty and liberate the captives, and there was a battle, the result of which was that the five kings were defeated, and all the spoil and the prisoners recovered. Then the King of Sodom offered Abraham the booty in repayment for his valuable services. He said, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." But Abraham answered, "No! I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abraham rich." Now, this was just an occasion when he might have fairly claimed remuneration from the recovered plunder, but no! he was far too scrupulous. He knew of what that plunder consisted -- it was made up of the household goods of the inhabitants of the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah; of all the sticks of furniture, and clothes, and crockery, and household ornaments that the people valued. He would not deprive them of one, lest they should think that Abraham had enriched himself at their expense. He puts an extreme case, -- lest some poor woman should lament that she had lost all her thread wherewith to mend her torn clothes, and say, "Ah! I had plenty of thread once, but Abraham has it now," or another should say, "I have no buckle to my shoe, Abraham has taken of the spoil, and my shoe-buckle he has got now." Well, now listen to what follows immediately. This upright conduct of Abraham so pleased God, that we read, "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." How many are there now who act like

Abraham? How many who fear lest it should be said of them that they had been enriched by those whose money they had no right to take? There would be fewer failing banks, and the little stores of widows and orphans swallowed up, were the bankers more of the mind of Abraham. There would be fewer swindling speculations swallowing up the savings of the thrifty, if men shrank from taking that which is not lawfully and fairly their own. II. All purchases, and all agreements for labour, are contracts. The purchaser asks for one thing, and of that thing a certain amount, and if for his money he is given another thing, or a smaller amount than that for which he has paid, then there is dishonesty. If you went to a shop and asked for a pound of tea, and were given something which was not tea, or tea which weighed less than a pound, you would be dealt with dishonestly. So if you go into another shop to buy flannel, and purchase three yards, and then when you come home and measure it, you find that it is six inches short, you would have been dealt with dishonestly. In both cases you would be exceedingly angry with the traders, and justly so. But consider, do you always act justly with your employers? When you are hired for a day's work, do you give good work? And is the time just measure? Or is there much idling and talking when you are unobserved? Let there be honour and fairness all round. How would you like to be paid in clipped coin, that was not full weight? And yet you have no scruple in giving clipped time, and work in short weight. I speak plainly about this, for it is a crying evil of the day. There is everywhere apparent a lack of conscientiousness in the dealings of man with man. We used to do a large trade with our manufactures in Europe and the East, and now we have to a large extent lost it -- because we have sent out bad material and sold it as good. It is a common complaint that men do not work now as well as of old in every department of industry. They rob their masters of time and labour, which they have contracted to give. Then the masters say, "What shall we do? -- we are resolved what we will do, we will make up the loss by adulteration of our goods." Then purchasers discover this and refuse to buy, so the trade of the country declines. III. Remember, then, in all your transactions, how Abraham dealt with the King of Sodom, and how God rewarded him for his honesty, and you may be very sure that God will not overlook you if you deal with others faithfully. The eye of God is over all, and He sees whether you fulfil your obligations honestly or not, and He will certainly bless abundantly those who recognise His presence. S. Paul bids all who serve others -- we all do that in one way or another -- do their duty, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as though they were working for Christ, not as if they were doing the will of man, but the will of God, from the heart, "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."

XLVII. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

10th Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke xix, 42. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." INTRODUCTION. -- I spoke to you the other day about the measure of sin, and showed you that there was a certain limit allotted to every man, beyond which he could not go and still expect forgiveness, a point in the downward course at which the Holy Spirit will cease to strive to hold him back. We see in this day's Gospel that there is also a Day of Grace, a period, that is, during which God is ready to give pardon and strength and guidance, and that if this Day of Grace be wasted, then those things belonging to our eternal peace which were offered are withdrawn, or hidden from the eyes. This is, in fact, the same thing as what I said about the measure of sin; after a time of sin and neglect, the opportunity for redeeming the past is lost beyond recall, and that time is measured out by the amount of the transgressions of the person or the people with whom God is dealing. SUBJECT. -- I am not, however, going to speak to you again on this subject from another aspect, but of sin itself, and the consequences it brings. Those consequences we overlook. We believe that God for Christ's sake pardons sin and wipes away transgressions, but we forget altogether that He does not deliver us from the consequences of sin, or, at least, not from all of them. I. Sin is the transgression of God's commandment. And it entails three consequences. 1. It separates from God. 2. It entails punishment. 3. It leaves a stain. God has given His Commandments for the good of men. They are the maxims by which they must rule their conduct, in order that the world may go on in peace and orderliness, and that they may remain in communion with Him. Sin is the violation of this law, the break-up of order, the disturbance of peace, and the interruption of communion. II. It separates from God. When mortal sin has been committed, the flow of divine grace is arrested, just as when something gets into a pipe it chokes it, so that the stream of water can no longer run till the stoppage is removed. Thus the presence of mortal sin in the conscience at once cuts off from the favour of God, and prevents growth in the spiritual life. The sinner is guilty in the sight of God, and if he die in unpardoned deadly sin, stands in great danger of being lost. Now, here it is that Christ intervenes. He reconciles the sinner to the Father, and He takes away the barrier which separates them. He removes the stoppage which interferes with the flow of Grace. In one word, He removes the guilt. That is the work of the Atonement. For this Christ died. But for the Cross of Calvary, man, once alienated from God by sin, must remain in alienation. "Christ," says S. Paul, "having made peace through the blood of the Cross, hath reconciled all things unto Himself. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in God's sight." It entails suffering. God's law is that all sin must be punished -- that is, where there is transgression, suffering must follow. When a man squanders his fortune by extravagance, he may bitterly repent, but he continues to suffer for his folly. When a man has got drunk, he may be full of sorrow for what he has done, but he has a headache next day all the same. When a woman has lost her character, she may weep tears of bitter repentance, and God may pardon her as He pardoned Magdalen, but she can never recover her character, and must suffer the consequences of her act. In this world or in the next, all sin must be expiated by

suffering. Christ by His death removed the guilt of sin, but not the suffering for sin. S. Peter bids us remember that suffering remains a consequence, for he exhorts us, "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." That is, the sin is wholly expiated only when the suffering it brings after it has been undergone. It leaves a stain or scar. No man is the same after sinning as he was before. The sin may be forgiven and suffered for, but the scar remains on his soul. The soul as it leaves the hand of God is white and innocent, in its passage through life it meets with many self-inflicted wounds, these wounds of the soul are sin. Thus it suffers till the wound is healed, and the medicine of the soul is the blood of Christ. The blood heals, but the scar remains. The soul, as seen by God and angels, is marked all over with the traces of the sins which have torn it. The baptized child is given a robe of innocence white as snow. Every sin is a stain upon it, and if you could see now, as angels see, your baptismal garment, you would find it spotted and smeared all over. Suppose I were to take this surplice and splash it over with ink, I might with much labour take out the ink stains, but never so entirely cleanse it that no trace remains. Or I might walk in it through the bushes, and get it torn with the thorns and brambles. Then all the rents might be carefully darned up, but -- the surplice would never look as sound and beautiful as when new. This is precisely like the state of the soul after sin, it is torn and stained, and although the sins may be forgiven, and the stains washed, and the rents healed, yet to the end of life the marks remain of where they have been, the effects are uneffaced. III. Now what are some of these effects? In the first place, every sin weakens the soul. It takes from it not only its innocence, but its power of resistance. Just as a wound weakens you by the loss of blood, so a sin weakens you by loss of resisting power. You are not so strong to fight against evil after sinning as you were before. In the second place, you have become more careless and even hardened about sin than you were before. When you have a new coat or gown, you are very careful of it that it be not spotted and torn, but once it loses its first newness, you are not so particular, and the more spotted and torn it becomes, the less you care for the injuries done it, you say, "It is an old dress and very much used, another stain or patch does not matter." So with the soul, when you have become accustomed to sinning, you no longer dread sin. CONCLUSION. -- And now remember, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, and dread sin for its consequences, lest by over much confidence you may exceed your measure, and then the chance of recovery will be gone from you for ever.

XLVIII. SELF-INSPECTION.

11th Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke xviii., 13. "The Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner." INTRODUCTION. -- I have spoken to you on former occasions pretty strongly upon the evil of backbiting, slandering, and casting of blame without sufficient cause. I am not going to address this day those who speak evil, but those of whom evil is spoken. The Publican in the Parable stood far from the Pharisee, who had no good word for him, even in his prayer, and he took a great deal of blame to heart, and prayed to God for mercy on him for his shortcomings. No doubt the Publican was well aware in what estimation he was held by the people, and how utterly he was despised by the Pharisee. The Publican was the tax-gatherer, and as the tax-gatherers in those days were often hard men, and exacted more than was due to the State, that they might pocket the difference, the general opinion was that they were all of them dishonest men, and men without hearts. This was not true, we know, of this Publican, nor of Zacchaeus, nor of Levi, who are commended in the Gospel. Perhaps this Publican who was praying, saw the Pharisee cast a contemptuous glance at him, perhaps he even heard the words of his prayer, but if so, he made no attempt at justifying himself. His prayer was not, "God, I am not what other men say of me, unjust, hard-hearted, peculating, exacting: on the contrary, I am strictly honest in my dealings, and I am very forbearing and tender-hearted, and I do not press for payment when no money is to be got." No! nothing of the sort! all he says is -- "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." SUBJECT. -- I would have those who are blamed by others, instead of manifesting great eagerness to excuse themselves, and clamouring against those who speak against them, look into their own hearts and lives, and see if there be not something blameworthy there. I. King Philip of Macedon was informed by some of his courtiers that one of his officers, Nicanor by name, was always speaking evil of him, that wherever Nicanor was, there he did nothing but grumble against the king, and disparage and blame him. What was to be done? Should he be arrested and thrown into prison. "No!" said King Philip, "Before punishing Nicanor, I must look and see whether I have not given occasion for this abuse of me." Then the king thought things over, and it occurred to him for the first time that he had not rewarded Nicanor for some signal services he had rendered him. By some oversight no notice had been taken of Nicanor, though he had risked his life for the king. Then Philip sent for him, and gave him a good appointment, which brought him in a handsome income, and was one of great honour. Some while after, Philip said to his courtiers, "How does Nicanor speak of me now?" They answered that he was never weary of praising the king. Then Philip said, "Do you not see? it lies in ourselves whether we are well or evil spoken of." It is seldom indeed that you will escape blame, that evil of some sort will not be spoken about you. When that is the case, remember what Philip said, "I must look and see whether I have not given occasion." Always go to your own heart, always examine your own life, and see whether, after all, there be not something there which is wrong or unwise, and which may be altered, so as to cut off occasion from evil speakers. As the proverb says, "There is no smoke without a fire," and it is not often that blame is cast without there being some cause for it. It may be attributed unjustly, but it is sometimes just, though excessive. Everything casts a shadow, and if you see a shadow you may

be sure there is some body to cast it, though the shape and size of the shadow may be wholly unlike and out of proportion to the object which throws it. A tree casts a shadow, a house casts a shadow, a needle casts a shadow, even a hair -- where the shadow is, there is some substance to fling it; where great blame is cast, there is some occasion for it. You may have stood on a rock, and seen your shadow thrown all down a valley and up the side of an opposite hill, an enormous figure, and a ridiculous caricature of yourself. So the blame cast on you is often excessive and altogether unreasonable and monstrous. Nevertheless it would never be cast at all unless there were some little fault to cast it. Stick up a pin on a table when the sun is low, and it will throw a shadow from one end of the table to the other, four feet long, and the pin is only an inch in height. So is it with faults: little faults throw long shadows, cause great talk, but there would be no talk at all if the little faults were not there. II. What then is it that you should do? Examine yourselves whenever you are blamed, and do your utmost to correct what is amiss in you. "Blessed are ye," said our Lord, "when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely." Why? Why when falsely? Because it will make you all the more watchful that you give no offence, that you avoid even the appearance of evil. Blessed are ye when men revile you, and say all manner of evil against you, for then you will examine yourselves, and if you see there is any ground whatever for what they say, you will amend your ways; and blessed are ye when they speak evil against you falsely, for then, though their blame be exaggerated and lying, yet it will make you infinitely more particular to live a blameless life, and to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men. CONCLUSION. -- If you do not use for your self-correction any blame you may undergo, then you may be sure that more and more will attach to you. You may surmount one calumny, but others will follow at its heels. In Revelation we hear that an angel cried, "One woe is past; and behold there come two woes more hereafter." So will it be with you, if the first woe does not profit you to make you better. If the plague of stinging, tormenting insects had made Pharaoh better, and amend his ways, the other plagues would not have fallen upon him. Thus, when you are tormented by evil tongues and spiteful words, if you do not strive your utmost to live better lives, and undo any wrong you may have committed, though the first woe may be past: behold, there will come two more woes hereafter.

XLIX. PERFECTION TO BE SOUGHT.

12th Sunday after Trinity. S. Mark vii., 37. "He hath done all things well." INTRODUCTION. -- It was said by an old heathen writer that God cares for Adverbs rather than for Substantives. That is to say, God had rather have things done well, than that the things should be merely done. He had rather have you pray earnestly than pray, communicate piously than merely communicate, forgive your enemies heartily than say you forgive, work diligently than spend so many hours at work, do your duty thoroughly than solely be content with discharging your duty. Of Christ, observe what is said. It is not "He hath opened the eyes of the blind, He hath unstopped the ears of the deaf. He hath loosed the tongue of the dumb, He hath healed the sick," but -- "He hath done all things well." The eyes do not become dull again, nor the ears again lose their power of hearing, nor the tongue stutter once more, nor the sick relapse into their sickness -- what He hath done He hath done well and thoroughly. SUBJECT. -- This, then, is what God desires of you -- whatever you undertake, to do it well. Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. It is not sufficient for us to coldly perform our duties, we must perform them with zeal and thoroughness. The prophet Amos was one day shown a vision. "Behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in His hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more." In this vision we have the work of God, as carried out by the Israelites, represented under the form of a wall. God had given them certain duties to perform, so much work in this world to be done for Him, and He left them to themselves for a while. Then they thought, "God is not here, He is not a hard overseer, we will work as we like, and take it easy. So long as the thing is done, it does not matter very much how it is done." So they did every thing in a careless, slovenly manner. They neglected their duties or carried them out in a bare formal manner. If we come back to the comparison of a wall, it was just as though masons engaged on one put in any sort of stones, any how, and did not trouble whether they built it in line and upright, whether some of the stones stuck too far out, and some were too far in. Then God appears to Amos and says, "I will not again pass by them any more; there has been too much of this sort of work. I will not overlook it, I will try it with the plumbline of My justice, and the bad work shall be pulled down, the jutting stones knocked away, and the crooked wall made straight." This vision applies to you quite as much as to the Jews. You have got a set task: you have to build up the wall of the Lord, that is, day by day you have to work at your salvation, and put in at least one stone so as to raise the work, and what you build must be good, and upright, and in line. You have a prayer to say, say it well, say it with devotion. Then it is a stone put on the wall in its right place, and it is a good stone of the right quality. You have quarrelled with a neighbour, you have made it up, heartily and bear no more malice, that is a good stone; -- forgiveness of injuries -- a capital stone that won't let the water through. Lay it level, and lay it upright. You have a chance of showing a kindness to someone who needs, do it quietly and without fuss or show. That will stand. It was otherwise with the Pharisees. When they did their alms, they made a noise and called attention to it. That was like putting a stone in the wall that stuck a long way out, so that all might see it. When the Lord comes with His plumbline, He will knock it off with His trowel, and it

will go all to pieces like a bit of slate, and be no good at all. You come to church, and you take my sermon home. What will you do with it? Toss it away on your road home, and make no use at all of it? I hope not; build the lesson I am giving you tight into your lives, and it will raise your wall, and you can lay other good lessons on top of it. What do you do with your Sunday? Is it wasted in lounging about, ferreting rabbits, idle talking? If it be so, then it will add nothing to the wall of your salvation. It will be like a mere lump of earth put in where there should have been a stone; it will wash out and leave a hole. Now remember that our great architect, Jesus Christ, is the man with the plumbline, and He will go over all our work and try how it is done, and whether it is upright and likely to stand.

II. S. Paul gives another help to us to understand the parable of the wall. He says that we are building the wall of our salvation on the cornerstone of Christ, and he goes on to say, "Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward." S. Paul, you see, says that the wall will be proved with fire, that is, that God will try all men's work and see of what sort it is -- good, moderate, or worthless. The worthless will disappear in the judgment, the moderate will be seen in its faulty condition, but the good will last for ever.

CONCLUSION. -- Try, then, to look upon your life as a time of building up the work of your salvation, and at every day as contributing something towards it. Ask yourself each day, What have I done to-day towards this work set me? And if I have done anything towards it, how has it been done? Moreover, try to do all things well, to be zealous and thorough in every thing you undertake. Also, offer all you do to God, and ask Him to prove it, and to cut off from it all that is faulty, and to enable you to do better in time to come.

When Nehemiah had rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem, and restored much that was cast down, and put right many abuses, he prayed, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done." Let this also be your prayer, that He may look on all you do for Him and bless it, and remember it for good, in the day when He tries every man's work of what sort it is.

L. ZEAL.

13th Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke x., 23. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" INTRODUCTION.

-- The Kingdom of Heaven, said our Lord, is like unto a treasure hid in a field. One day a man is turning over the stones which lie in a heap in a corner of the field, and he finds under them an iron chest, and this chest he believes to be full of gold. Then he carefully covers it up again with stones and earth, and goes off in the greatest excitement to the owner of the field, and offers him a price, and when that is refused he sells his house, and garden, and everything he can turn into money, and gives that to the owner in exchange for the field. I fear this is rather a picture of what ought to be than what is. No doubt whatever that we ought to show just as great eagerness to gain the Kingdom of Heaven, as did that man to buy the field. No doubt we ought to be just as eager to cast away everything that stands in the way, to divest ourselves of every thing we have, in order that we may gain the Kingdom of Heaven, -- but, as a matter of fact, we show very little eagerness about it, and we are very indifferent whether we gain it or lose it. SUBJECT. -- What we need is more zeal, more enthusiasm, more earnestness in our quest. I. King Solomon built the Temple at Jerusalem. He was engaged on it seven years, and after that, he built his own house, and on that he spent thirteen years. He therefore spent very nearly twice as much time and labour, and I doubt not, money over his own house than he did over the work of God's house; he was wise and good, and he did a great deal for God, but he did more for himself, and not only for himself, but for his wives, since he built for them as well. It is just so with us, we are ready to do something of God's work, to seek a little the Kingdom of Heaven, but we do not put our heart in that work, all our heart and zeal is reserved for our own worldly affairs and our temporal interests. One day a heathen maiden came to the princess Pulcheria, sister of the Emperor Theodosius, to complain to her that she was an orphan, and that her two brothers had turned her out of the house on her father's death, and had taken all his inheritance to themselves. Now the Emperor Theodosius, brother of Pulcheria, a young man, was behind a curtain, and heard the girl pleading her cause with many tears, and he saw how beautiful she was, and he loved her, and resolved to make her his wife and exalt her to be Empress of the East. Pulcheria bade her come another day, and then she told the maiden what was intended. After that she was taught the faith of Christ, and was baptized, and is known in history as the Empress Eudoxia. Now when she came from her baptism, Pulcheria noticed that she was crying, and she went to her lovingly and said, "Why are you bathed in tears, Eudoxia?" And then the young girl answered, "When you told me that I was to become the wife of Theodosius, and Empress of the East, my heart was like to burst with joy, but now that I have been made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, I feel no such exceeding joy, but take it all without any emotion, -- and I am grieved at my coldness and want of faith. That is why I am crying." Is it not very much the same with us? Anything that concerns our earthly welfare fills us with excitement, but we trouble ourselves very little about our spiritual concerns. If we have a chance of getting 50 pounds a-year, we are full of delight, but we receive the precious gift of God without even gratefulness. If we knew that an inheritance of a thousand pounds was ours if we applied for it, should we not apply? But when it comes to our approaching the altar of God to receive the Bread of Heaven, the priceless gift of the Body of our

Lord, which will infuse into our mortal flesh the germ of immortality, we turn listlessly away. If we had an acquaintance who, we thought, could put us into a good way of making our fortune, we would be always at his heels, but we are cold and careless about seeking God in His house, and in prayer, and yet our eternal welfare depends on our retaining His favour. II. Now, this is not a satisfactory condition to be in. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by storm," said our Lord, and He meant that if Heaven is to be won, it must be won by those who are in earnest, and vehement in their desire to get it. Half-hearted soldiers are not good soldiers. Half-hearted servants are poor servants, half-hearted workers are unsatisfactory workers, and the battle we have to fight is a hard one, it is a battle against flesh and blood, against Satan and all his host, against the world, and against our own wills. Is such a battle to be won when we go into it without any desire to be conquerors? We are servants of God, and given a work in this world to do. Are we likely to do it if half-hearted? Are we likely to keep His commandments, if we care just a little to please Him, but only a little? Are we likely to win our wage, Eternal Life, if we do not work zealously, but waste the time of work in half-hearted trifling with our task? No, we must be in earnest. We want zeal. How are we to acquire this? This is what the Holy Ghost gives. Before Pentecost the disciples were half-hearted, and when temptation and trial came, they fell away and did not follow their Master. But after the Holy Ghost came down, then they were of one heart and mind, and their souls were inflamed with zeal, they cared nothing what became of them, so long as they won the Kingdom of Heaven. "I count all things as dung," said S. Paul, "if so be I may win Christ." III. The Holy Ghost is still in the Church, and still His mission is to impart zeal. He will come to you, if you pray, and will inflame you with that fire which will make your hearts burn within you, and give you no rest till you have set about the work appointed you by God. "I am come," said Christ, "to send fire on the earth: and what will I, if it be already kindled?" That fire is the fire of zeal; and it is for that fire we pray in the Whitsuntide hymn, "Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire, And lighten with celestial fire."

LI. GRATITUDE.

14th Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke xvii.18. "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." INTRODUCTION, -- There is nothing that the merciful God desires more from man than thanks, and there is nothing of which He receives less. In the Gospel for to-day we have an example. Christ performs a notable miracle. He heals ten lepers, and only one returns to thank Him. The disease from which He delivered them was disgusting, and it was one which cut the sufferers off from association with other men. They might not approach, under penalty of death, a man who was sound. All at once they are healed. The disgusting disease is removed, and they are restored to the society of their fellow-men. Yet nine out of the ten are ungrateful, they do not take the trouble to give thanks to Him who had healed them. SUBJECT. -- That story is repeated over and over again. We are incessantly receiving blessings from God, and nine to one, but we do not thank Him: we take them as a matter of course. However, God expects thanks. S. Paul exhorts us, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." And again, "Give thanks always, for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." And again, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." I. When the children of Israel reached the river Jordan, on their way into the Promised Land, out of the wilderness in which they had wandered forty years, Joshua bade the priests that bare the ark go down into the river. And as soon as their feet were dipped in the water, the river was divided, "The waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap; and those that came down towards the sea of the plain failed, and were cut off, and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." Now when this had taken place, Joshua ordered twelve men, one out of every tribe, to go down into the river, and each bring up a large stone out of the bed of the river, from the place where the priests had stood, and plant them in the earth, on the bank, at the place where they lodged that night. But this was not all. They were to carry as huge stones as they could manage down into the bed of the river, and set them up also there, so big and strong as to stand above the surface of the stream, and resist the force of the current. This seems a curious proceeding, does it not? to take twelve stones out of the bed of the river and plant them on the ground, and roll twelve great stones off the bank into the river, and set them up there. What was the purpose of this? Listen to what Joshua says: "This shall be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, when it passed over Jordan; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." In one word, they were to be perpetual reminders to the Israelites to be grateful to God for having brought them into the land promised to their fathers, the land flowing with milk and honey. Very well! how many times has God sent you great deliverances, and brought great blessings upon you: has carried you through great dangers: has brought you out of the depths of sickness? Over and over again has He done this. He blesses you every day. Look around -- you, too, have got your tokens set up as a memorial unto you for ever. Look at your

houses, they are memorials to you of what God has brought you into. Look at your children, every one of them is a little mark-stone or memorial of God's goodness to you. Look at your health, your good strong arms. They should be to you memorials for ever of God's loving protection extended towards you. Look at your conscience, which stings you when you do wrong, which approves when you do right. What is that but a mark-stone or memorial that God's Good Spirit has been given you to be a guide? Look at this church, it is a mark-stone or memorial to you that God's word sounds in your ears, and God's Sacraments are celebrated for your benefit. Look at that altar, it is a memorial for ever that Christ died for you, and gives His Body and Blood for the strengthening and refreshing of your souls. Verily, you have only to look into your homes, and look through your lives, and you will find many and many a memorial set up to remind you of, the love of God, and also -- mark this! -- to be thankful. II. When Jacob was dying, he said to Joseph, "Behold, I die, but God shall be with you. I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren." Now, my brethren, there are diversities of gifts, you have all received of God many gifts, some of one sort, some of another. I turn to the rich. You have been given wealth, whilst so many are poor. "God hath given to thee one portion above thy brethren." What use do you make of it? Are you thankful? I turn to those with talents. "God hath given to thee one portion above thy brethren." What use do you make of the talent committed you? Are you thankful? I look at you who are so healthy and robust. There are numbers infirm and ailing. "God hath given to thee one portion above thy brethren." How do you show your thankfulness? You, tradesmen! On all sides I see men failing in business, but to you work comes, as much as you can execute. Well, "God hath given to thee one portion above thy brethren." Are you grateful? And you, good house-wife! You have got a steady, affectionate husband, and, alas! so many have drunken or unthrifty mates, or husbands with bad tempers. Verily, "God hath given to thee one portion above thy sisters." Thank Him, thank Him on your knees. CONCLUSION. -- "In everything give thanks," says S. Paul. Remember, Adam and Eve were in Paradise surrounded by every blessing, but we do not hear that they thanked God for them, and they lost them. Beware lest a thankless spirit forfeit those good things which you now enjoy. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits! Who forgiveth all thy sin: and healeth all thine infirmities: Who saveth thy life from destruction; and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness."

LII. TRUST IN GOD.

15th Sunday after Trinity. S. Matt. vi.31. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." INTRODUCTION. -- We read in ancient Roman history that a general named Aemilius Paulus was appointed to the Roman army in a time of war and great apprehension. He found in the army a sad condition of affairs, there were more officers than fighting men, and all these officers wanted to have their advice taken, and the war conducted in accordance with their several opinions. Then Aemilius Paulus said to them, "Hold your tongues, and sharpen your swords, and leave the rest to me." It seems to me that our Lord's advice in this day's Gospel is of somewhat the same nature. He finds in the army of His Church everyone clamouring after his worldly affairs, wanting this, and objecting to that, all seeking their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ. Then He says, "Hold your tongues, and sharpen your swords, and leave the rest to Me. Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." SUBJECT. -- In our great solicitude after our temporal welfare, we do not seek first our spiritual welfare, but put that altogether in the background. In fact, we do not trust God, we trust ourselves chiefly. We fear if we do not devote our whole attention to our worldly prosperity, we shall not get on. And so we neither seek the kingdom of God, nor the righteousness of God; we seek only the world and the things that are in the world. If we had more trust in God, it would not be so. I. The Bible is made up of six classes of books. To the first class belong the historical books. To the second the book of Psalms. To the third class belong the books that deal with Wisdom. To the fourth the Prophets. To the fifth the Gospels, and to the sixth the canonical Epistles. Now in all these different classes of books we find the same assurance made by God, that if we will but attend to our spiritual concerns, He will see that our temporal affairs do not suffer. In one of the first historical books we have this promise (Levit. xxvi.3, 4, 5), "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely." In the book of Psalms David says (xxiv.9), "O fear the Lord, ye that are His saints: for they that fear Him lack nothing," and again (xlv.23), "O cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will nourish thee." In the books that deal with Wisdom we have (Proverbs x.3) "The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish." In the Prophets (Isai i.19), "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." In the Gospels (S. Matt. vi.33), "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." In the Epistles (Pet. v.7), "Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." We are generally perfectly satisfied when we have an agreement drawn out between man and man, -- one promise on one scrap of paper is enough, but here we have at least five, and I could produce you plenty of others, yet, because it is a bond signed by God, you mistrust it, O ye of little faith. You will take a bond signed by a Jew, but not one signed by God. II. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Is God not our Father? There is no Father like to Him, no Father loves us as He does. If He loves us, will He not care for us? What good father will neglect his child, and deny it those things that are

necessary for it? Ask any little boy whom you see in rags, 'My child, why are you in rags? What will you do to get a new suit? You have nothing of your own.' Certainly, his natural and proper answer should be, 'I will ask my father. He will supply me.' When a child is hungry, whither should it go? To whom should it apply? To its father. Why then do not we trust our Heavenly Father as any little child will trust its father on earth? Yet we know that He is our Father, and is, as S. Paul says, "rich in mercies" Our Lord bids us look at the birds of the air. Who feeds them? Their Creator. Will He not then care for us far more, who are His noblest creatures? III. A great poetical and satirical writer (Horace) says that this was the popular maxim of his day, "Seek money first, and be good afterwards." [1] What he had the boldness to say, a great people have the boldness to do. They leave the kingdom of Heaven to be sought, after they have spent their lives in seeking the things of this world. But the things of this world sought without God will not profit. When Isaac set his sons to bring him venison, that he might bless them and die, Jacob arrived first with the savoury meat; then Isaac lifted up his voice and blessed his son; "God give thee of the dew of Heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." Afterwards Esau came in with venison. And when he saw that his brother had received the first blessing, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father." Then Isaac said to him, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of Heaven from above." Each had the same, the richness of golden harvests, the abundance of fruit, and the soft dews and rains in their season. But there was a notable difference, adapted to the characters of the two brothers. Esau was a profane man, he disregarded divine things. He was ready to sell his birthright, his privilege to be the forefather of Messiah, for a mess of pottage. He cared not for God, neither was God in all his thoughts. It was otherwise with Jacob, he regarded God, he sought God, he saw God in the visions of the night, he strove with God in prayer. He had set God always before him. And thus these several blessings were apportioned to them. Esau had the fatness of the earth and the dew of Heaven, Jacob also had the fatness of the earth and the dew of Heaven, but Isaac said to Jacob alone "God give thee all these things." To Esau only "Thou shalt get for thyself all these things." God before all to Jacob, and all these things added unto him. All these things to Esau, and God nowhere. CONCLUSION. -- And now, my brethren, try to trust God more. Do not give up all thought to the concerns of this life, but leave them somewhat on the hands of God, whilst you consider the concerns of your soul. You will not suffer for it. "If ye be willing and obedient, and seek the kingdom of Heaven, He will nourish thee." [1] "Quaerenda pecunia primum, virtus post nummos."

LIII. THE CONTEMPLATION OF DEATH.

16th Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke vii.12. "Behold, there was a dead man carried out." INTRODUCTION. -- The name of the village where the miracle was wrought which is recorded in this day's Gospel, was Nain, and the meaning of the name is "Pleasant" or "Beautiful." A sweet little village, you can picture it to yourself where you like, in the East, anywhere in Europe, here in England, it is all the same, an "Auburn" among villages, with thatched cottages, and green pastures, and the cows coming home lowing in the evening, when the curfew tolls the knell of passing day. The grey church tower peeping above the lime trees, and the rooks cawing and wheeling above the old trees. The trim gardens blazing with hollyhocks and large white lilies, and the orchards with the apples shewing their rosy cheeks to the sun. The bell is slowly tolling -- "Behold, a dead man is carried out." Who is it? To-day a young man, the only son of his mother, and she a widow. To-morrow the old squire, who can no more mount his cob and go after the hounds, his whip and red coat are laid aside, and the bell is going. "Behold, a dead man is carried out." Again the Sexton is working in the church-yard, and turning up the fresh smelling earth. The bell is going. For what? Up the steps and along under the avenue come little girls about a tiny coffin, over which is cast a white pall, and on which lies a wreath of white hyacinths. "Behold, a dead child is carried out, the darling of its father." And now the yellow leaves are falling, and are heaped about the feet of the limes, and fall through the warm damp air, that smells of dying vegetation, and the priest stands in surplice waiting in the path, and the dead leaves drop on the coffin as it is borne along. Who is this? "Behold a dead woman is carried out, an aged mother, with her weeping grown up sons and daughters and grandchildren all in black following." SUBJECT. -- It is not a pleasant thing to think of, and yet it is well for you to contemplate, that some day the same question will be asked as the church bell tolls, Who is this? Who is dead? And the same answer will come, "Behold, a dead man is carried out," and that will be you. Nothing is more commonplace than to say that we must all die, and nothing is less realised and taken to heart and acted upon. I. That procession the Saviour met, was coming out of Nain, the "Pleasant," the "Beautiful." And so, every dead man is carried out of what is a Nain to him, a pleasant, beautiful world. It is a pleasant, beautiful world. We cannot deny it. God made it and pronounced it very good. It has in it many unpleasantnesses, it has in it much that is ugly, but there is pleasure and beauty in it still, the traces of its own loveliness before sin drew furrows in its face and saddened its heart. A very Nain it is. We are now in Autumn, and the leaves are turning fast. The dogwood leaves are bright carmine, and the maple yellow as sulphur, the last flowers are out in the hedges, the pink cranesbill and the blue ox-tongue which will hang on till after Christmas. The elder which was so white and fragrant in May, is covered now with purple berries, and the ash is hung with scarlet beads, so bright, so many, and so beautiful, that the swallows are hovering round them all day impatient to begin, and improvident of the future. Nature even in its decay is beautiful, and what was it in spring? Remember the primroses out on every bank, and the anemones in the wood, and the blue flush of wild hyacinths in the coppice! Verily, we are in Nain, a pleasant and beautiful place. Alas! alas! my brother! my sister! Behold there will be a dead man, a dead woman carried out from it, to see it no more, and that will be one of us. Is it sad? Yes, no doubt it is. II. But

though sad, the thought of it must not be put away. S. Paul says, "We have the sentence of death in ourselves." We carry about in us ever the doom -- we are sentenced men -- and the sword will fall on us some day. The story is told of a Norwegian king that he promised to give a young nobleman any reward he chose to ask for, because of something he had done for him. Then the young man boldly asked for the hand of the princess, the only child and heiress to the kingdom. The king answered him, "Yes! I have promised. You shall have her hand, and lose your head, the same day." Then a grand wedding was prepared. And a stately procession moved to the church, of the bride in white, and the bridegroom in his most gallant apparel, but as he went along, he heard a sound of a file from the executioner's room, who was sharpening his axe. And he stood before the altar with his bride, and the priest joined their hands, -- but all the while the executioner was sharpening his axe. Then the bells of the city pealed, and the heralds blew their trumpets, and the people shouted, and girls strewed flowers in the path, and their way went by the executioner's lodging where he was still engaged on his axe. Then there was a great feast, and wine flowed, and the most dainty meats were put on table; it was a hot day, and the windows were open, and above the din of tongues and laughter, came the thud of a hammer. In the courtyard of the palace the executioner was setting up the scaffold. And after the banquet came a grand ball, and the rooms were lighted up, and the ball-room was hung with festoons of flowers, and the bride and bridegroom led the dance, but ever as they danced they turned their heads and looked out of the window, and saw the scaffold, which was being draped in black. At length, in the midst of all the merriment, the bell began to toll, and the door flew open, and before all the dancers stood the executioner with his axe in hand and a black mask over his face, and he beckoned to the bridegroom to come. "And behold a living man was carried out -- to die." My Brethren, it is not so very different with us. We carry about the sentence of death in ourselves. Whatever we do, wherever we go, the sentence of death is in us. You do your work. You are ploughing the field and whistling, and you carry, as you make the furrow, the sentence of death in yourself. You are busy about your house-work, good-wife, sweeping, dusting, mending, scouring, cooking, -- and all the while you have the sentence of death in yourself. You have a holiday, and go on a pic-nic, and laugh, and are merry, and come back under the evening sky singing and making jokes -- but you carry with you to your pic-nic and back again the sentence of death in yourselves. III. Now if this be so, how ought we to live? Ought we to thrust the thought away from us as horrible? Ought it to mar our happiness? Ought it to disquiet us in our work? Far from it. Nain is a pleasant and beautiful place, but there is one more pleasant and more beautiful, where the leaves do not fall, nor the flowers wither, where no sickness comes, and where no dead men are carried out. Let us look to that, the new Jerusalem, the Heavenly City, the vision of peace, and that will banish our sadness, we shall not be downcast at leaving so much that is pleasant behind, but rejoice that we pass on from things temporal to things eternal. No! we shall not be saddened by the contemplation of death, but we shall be made more earnest to use this world without abusing it, to make the most of our opportunities, to redeem the time because the days are evil, to run our race temperately, and not uncertainly, and so to run that we may obtain the incorruptible crown, that we may attain to the goal, the prize of our high calling.

LIV. HUMILITY.

17th Sunday after Trinity. S. Luke, xiv.2. "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." INTRODUCTION. -- Both Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the apostle John saw in vision the glory of Heaven and the throne of God, and near it four beasts, "full of eyes, within and without." That is to say the beasts saw all that was within them as well as all that was outside them. Most of us here on earth are very different. We are full of eyes without, we see everything that is going on among our neighbours, and a great deal which is not there also, but we have no eyes for seeing anything within, and we know nothing of ourselves, our own faults, and our own errors. We see every wrong thing done by a neighbour, we have eyes for this, but we see no wrong done by ourselves, we have no eyes for that. We see all the weakness of others, we have eyes for this, but we see none of our own weakness, we have no eyes for that. We see all the folly of others, we have eyes for this, but for our own stupid acts and words we are blind, we have no eyes for that. It would be better if we were well supplied with eyes within, instead of so many eyes without. It would be better for our neighbours, and it would be better for ourselves. In to-day's Gospel we hear of the chief Pharisees watching Christ. They had eyes for that. They watched Him to find occasion against Him. But that they were hypocrites and perverters of the law, they knew not. They had no eyes for this. SUBJECT. -- The first shall be last, and the last first, says our Lord. That is, those who have eyes without only, for the rest of the world, who see themselves as perfect, and have no eyes for their own defects, shall find themselves hereafter at the foot of the ladder, and those who have eyes within, seeing their own weakness, shortcomings, falls, who have therefore been humble, and esteemed others more highly than themselves, these will be exalted to the top of the ladder. I. Most men value themselves more highly than they have any right, and value themselves very often for those things which are not their own, they take the honour paid to their possessions, as though due to themselves. This fable is related by an ancient writer. An ass once had the golden image of the Goddess Isis set on his back, and he was led through the streets of a city in Egypt. Then the Egyptians fell down on their faces and worshipped, and raised their hands in supplication. The ass was puffed up with pride, and began to prick up his ears and prance. Then the driver brought down his stick upon his back, and said, "You ass! the honour is given not to you, but to what you bear." There is many a man who is no less elated by his position, or by some good fortune that falls to him, than this ass. The man of wealth holds up his head and expects every one to bow to him; he thinks a great deal of himself, and he finds that a great many persons cringe to him and flatter him. "Man! the honour is given, not to you, but to the gold you carry." It may be the same with office, or title; respect is given to the magistrate, or the nobleman, or the general, or the captain, or the poor-law officer, or the policeman, and he thinks much of himself accordingly. "Man! the honour is given not to you, but to the title or office, or authority you carry." And there is many a woman who puts on new and gay clothes, a new bonnet, or a new gown, in the highest fashion, and she sails into church with her chin in the air, and a flutter in her heart, knowing that all eyes are upon her. "Woman! all are admiring -- not you, -- but the clothes you carry." Whatever it be that we have, which others have not, it should not elate, but humble us, for a talent entails a responsibility. He that has gold has to answer to God what use he

makes of it. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of Heaven." He that has office and authority is under great responsibility to discharge his duties in his office, and exercise the authority entrusted to him well. It was the fact that he was a man in authority which made the Centurion humble, and brought on him the commendation of Christ. "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof; neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee, for I am a man set under authority, having under me, soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." He that has intellectual gifts must be humble, not proud, because of them, for he is answerable for the use he makes of them. II. God is very likely to humble those who set too high a price on themselves; and better that He should bring them down to a just appreciation of their own selves, in this world, than hereafter. King Nebuchadnezzar had a vision. He saw a great image, the head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet of clay. He called Daniel to interpret his dream to him, and Daniel said, "Thou, O King, art a King of kings, for the God of Heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory -- thou art this head of gold." Then the prophet went on to speak of other great nations, and how that all would be involved in a common ruin, a little stone out of the mountain would roll down on the feet of clay and break them, and then the great image, golden head, and silver breast, and brazen body, and iron legs, would all go to pieces -- they rested on an infirm footing, fragile clay. King Nebuchadnezzar, however, thought only of himself as the golden head. Golden head must have golden breast, and a golden breast must have a golden trunk, and golden trunk golden legs, and golden legs must rest on feet of gold. That will stand, and that will represent me better than this patchwork affair of which I dreamed. So he set him up the golden image in the plain of Dura. That represented himself as he regarded himself, the image seen in vision represented him as he was in reality, as God saw him. What followed? God smote him and he went mad. He was driven out as a wild beast into the fields, as a raving madman, and thus he remained till his senses returned, and he acknowledged with humility, that his prosperity did rest on a fragile footing, and that God knew better what he was worth than did he himself. Now apply this to yourselves. No doubt that each of you has his excellence. One has got a head of gold, another a heart of gold. One has the strength and endurance of iron, another has means, plenty of silver, each has something of which he can boast; but take care not to make golden images of yourselves and set them up, and expect every one to bow down before them and take you at your own estimation. God will humble you. The feet are of clay, and the proud statues will fall some day. Therefore try to see yourselves as you really are, "Let him that exalteth himself take heed lest he fall." "Be clothed with humility," is the exhortation of S. Peter, "for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." And S. James says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

LV. PROFESSION AND PRACTICE.

18th Sunday after Trinity. S. Matt. xxii.42. "What think ye of Christ?" INTRODUCTION. -- Many men are Christians neither in understanding nor in heart. Some are Christians in heart, and not in understanding. Some in understanding, and not in heart, and some are Christians in both. If I were to go into a Temple of the Hindoos, or into a Synagogue of the Jews, and were to ask, "What think ye of Christ?" the people there would shake their heads and deny that He is God, and reject His teaching. The heathens and Jews are Christians neither in understanding nor affection. But there are, and always have been pious men who have not known Christ, but have lived good self-denying lives, lived a great deal better than most Christians, and have died, yearning to see God, whom they groped after, but did not find. I should say these were Christians in heart, though not in understanding. If I were to put the question to you, "What think ye of Christ?" you would answer at once that He is very God, of one substance with the Father, and also very Man, of the substance of His Mother, the God-Man, your Redeemer, and Saviour, and Lord. When I hear the answer, I say -- Well! here we have indeed Christians in their understanding. Now I want to know further, are you Christians in heart and affection? S. Paul says that in his time there were some who were Christians in profession, that is, in understanding, and there their Christianity came to an end. "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Is it in any degree so with you? SUBJECT. -- The true Christian is he who is such in understanding and in affection, or, in other words, in profession and in practice. I. It is very necessary to have a good understanding of Christ and His truth. "Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." There are certain truths, the knowledge of which we believe are necessary to salvation. That is, without an understanding of certain definite revealed truths, there is not much chance of salvation, for the ignorance of these truths is proper in a Christian, and without a knowledge of them, a Christian is not able to live a spiritual and a Christian life. These truths are contained in the Creed, and are taught to every child. It is not enough to repeat the Creed like a parrot, but the meaning of the truths contained in it must be grasped by the mind and understood. This is the advantage of Christian instruction, and I think it would be well if we Clergy, instead of so generally appealing to your consciences to lead good lives, were more frequently to refresh your minds with the truths which you must embrace with your understandings. I believe one great reason why you make so little advance in the spiritual life is, that you so little understand what God requires of you to believe. After the Children of Israel had been carried into captivity by the Assyrian king Shalmanezar, a number of persons were sent from Babylon to inhabit Samaria, the capital, and other cities of Israel. They settled there, but did not thrive, for this reason, the land was overrun with lions. You will find the story in 2 Kings xvii. A great many of the colonists were killed by the lions. "Therefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, have lions among them, and behold, they slay them." What course did Shalmanezar adopt, on hearing this? Did he send them hunters, expert in killing lions? No. Or dogs to drive them? Did he supply them with snares, and teach them how to make pitfalls for the lions? No! -- listen to what he did. "Then

the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land." This succeeded, for we learn that the lions ceased to trouble the colonists when they had learned to know and fear the God of Israel. What a lesson this heathen king sets us! "The devil walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, whom resist, steadfast in the faith." Do you notice the words of S. Peter? The lion who seeks to devour you, who lays waste the land, who destroys so many souls, can be mastered and expelled, but only if you are steadfast in the faith, only if, like these settlers in Samaria, you have been taught the manner of the God of our land. Evil of all sort, temptations and snares, evil spirits and seductions will draw you into destruction, and you will be quite powerless to escape or resist, unless you know the manner of the God of our land, or -- in S. Peter's words -- are steadfast in the faith. II. It is not enough to understand, you must also love and follow the law of your God with all your hearts. You must not only know God, but you must obey Him. You must not only be instructed in the manner of the God of our land, but you must also observe it. Now there are a great many who are Christians in profession only, they draw near to God with their lips, and say Lord! Lord! but with their hearts they are far from Him. One day a philosopher came before king Herod Atticus, and when the king asked him what profession he was of, what office he held, the philosopher answered, "Look at my robe and you will see what I am." For the philosophers affected a certain sort of garment. Then Herod answered, "Pardon me, I see the habit, but not the philosopher." That is to say -- "I see what you call yourself, and pretend to be, but I do not know whether you are the wise and learned man for which you give yourself out." "I fear that if I were to follow and watch you during the week, I should be obliged to say -- "I see the habit, but not the Christian." It is true there is the profession. You say you are a Christian, you assure me you believe in God, you undertake to live a sober and godly life, to resist evil, and cleave to what is good. All this is the outside habit, the mere name and profession, I see the habit, -- but in your acts I do not see the Christian. No! there is not the Christian in you when you tell lies. Not the Christian when you slander your neighbour. Not the Christian when you deal dishonestly with your masters. Not the Christian when you fly into a passion and swear and curse. Not the Christian when you use foul words. On Sundays you have on your Sunday coat, or your Sunday gown, and you are as demure as Saints, and attend Church regularly. There is the habit. I see the habit. But where is your Christianity in the week? How much prayer? How much thought of God? How much self-restraint? I see the habit, but not the Christian. CONCLUSION. -- Remember then that it is not enough to know Christ, and to believe. You must also love Christ and obey. Only by acting up to your profession, by walking worthy of the vocation whereby you are called, can you be regarded as a true disciple of Christ. He is not the true soldier who is enrolled, and deserts; he is not the good servant who says to his master, I go, and goeth not. If you know of Christ, you have a greater obligation laid on you to follow Him in love and obedience, than if you knew Him not. "What think ye of Christ?" That is not enough. "How live ye as Christians?" is needed as well.

LVI. EVIL THOUGHTS.

19th Sunday after Trinity. S. Matt. ix.4. "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" INTRODUCTION. -- Thoughts are only thoughts! who is to behold accountable for them? They are clouds blown about by fancy, taking various shapes. God is not so hard as to judge us for our thoughts; He will try us by what we have done, not by what we have dreamed. No garden is without weeds; there are tares in every cornfield. Who speak thus? Is it those who are conscientious and scrupulous to drive away evil thoughts? Or those who allow their heads and hearts to be hives in which they dwell? I allow that evil thoughts must enter the mind, and I add that they do no harm so long as they are not admitted into the heart. I allow that it is impossible to keep the mind so closed against evil that no bad thoughts find admission. There is no sin in the bad thoughts coming, but the sin begins when they are allowed to settle, and to fly-blow the heart. SUBJECT. -- I am not going to speak to-day anything that will distress those good souls who struggle with, and drive away, evil thoughts when they torment them; God has seen fit to try them with these, as He suffered the Israelites to lie tried by the remnants of the heathen nations which remained in the land, -- but I am going to speak to those who indulge in evil thoughts of all kinds, and make no effort to banish them. I tell them that this is a dangerous thing. If they rely on being safe so long as they keep their bodies from evil, and allow their minds and hearts to revel in evil thoughts, they are guilty of sin; they may not be staining their bodies, but they are corrupting their souls. I have lived for some weeks on the side of the Rhine where a bridge connected the German side of the river with the town on the other side, which is in Switzerland. When the market-women came over the bridge, the Custom-House officers made them open their baskets, and they looked in to see whether they brought over anything taxable. I would have you examine all the thoughts that come drifting through your head, and if they are bad, and not allowable, turn them back. I. "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Our Lord tells us that sin commences in the heart, and is as truly in the thought as in the act. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." S. John Chrysostom truly said, "Men's souls are not so greatly injured by the temptations which assail them from outside, as from those evil thoughts which poison them within." There may be evil thoughts of many kinds, envious thoughts, discontented thoughts, profane thoughts, unkind thoughts, angry thoughts, avaricious thoughts, impure thoughts. All these thoughts come buzzing about the head and heart, and will settle to do harm, unless driven away. They are only little thoughts. Each is very small, but altogether they are a great host. They are like flies. Pharaoh, King of Egypt, was plagued with flies. They came upon his servants, and the houses of the Egyptians were full of swarms of flies, "and the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies." The heads of a great many people are like the houses of the Egyptians -- full of swarms of evil thoughts thick as flies, and all as small, and in themselves as insignificant. The flies tormented the Egyptians when they sat in their chambers, flying round them, buzzing in their ears, lighting on their hands and faces; when they went to their meals the flies were there, all over the

meat and the bread, and falling into their cups, and defiling every thing. When they went to bed the flies were in their bedrooms, and all night long were racing over their faces, and driving away sleep. Now look at your evil thoughts, you who are plagued with a swarm of them. When you kneel down to say your prayers, they are there distracting your attention. When you are at table or with friends, they are there disturbing your thoughts, perhaps corrupting your conversation. When you are alone, they are there filling your mind with images and sounds. When you are in bed, they are there, keeping you awake. Your thoughts -- these evil thoughts, so numerous, in such swarms, never forsake you. In church they are present, disturbing you. When you walk, they surround you, when you work, they interrupt you. And, like the flies in Egypt, "the land is corrupted by reason of the swarm." Your hearts are corrupted by the bad thoughts always hovering over them, and settling down on them. Am I drawing a fanciful picture? Not at all. I know it is so with many, I do not say all, but with many. They disregard evil thoughts because they are such trifling things -- like flies, so easily brushed away; like flies, so light and volatile; like flies, so little. And yet they utterly degrade and corrupt the heart. "The land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies." II. When Abraham prepared a sacrifice to the Lord, there came down on it swarms of birds of carrion (Gen. xv.) And when they did so, we are told that Abraham "drove them away." The chief Baker of Pharaoh had meats in a basket on his head, and the birds came down on them, and carried them off. "The birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head" (Gen. xl.) To Abraham was given a promise of a great blessing and glorious future. To the Baker was given a warning that he should be hanged within three days. One drove the birds away, and the other did not. Now this applies to evil thoughts. If you will be like Abraham and be blessed, you will drive the evil thoughts away as fast as they come on. If you let them come, and make no effort to repel them, they will carry away from you all the graces wherewith you have been endowed at baptism, and they will corrupt your heart as well.

LVII. THE HEAVENLY BANQUET.

20th Sunday after Trinity. S. Matt. xxii.4. "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage." INTRODUCTION. -- The Kingdom of Heaven has two meanings in this parable. It means in the first place the Catholic Church. Into that the apostles and pastors of Christ invite men to enter, and many refuse. In the second place it means the Church Triumphant, -- eternal blessedness, and into that the pastors of Christ's Church invite you continually, Sunday after Sunday, and many refuse. SUBJECT. -- Our subject to-day shall be the Heavenly Banquet, and the invitation to it. I. When God created the world, He did so with a "Let be." He said, "Let there be light" -- and light was. "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," and it was so, at once. He said, "Let the waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear," and, immediately, it was so. And it was the same throughout the work of the Seven Days. He spake the word and the world was made, and all the host of heaven by the breath of His mouth. But when man's salvation was wrought it was otherwise. There was nothing instantaneous about that. Long ages passed before the time came for the Son of God to be born. The preparation was lengthy, there was delay. And when He came, there was no "Let there be," and it was done, but there were thirty-three years spent on earth, and there were the laborious ministry, the sufferings, and the death. That was not all. Still more was done. The Son of God ascended into Heaven after having spent forty days on earth after His resurrection, founding and framing His Church. Then He sent the Holy Ghost down on the Church He had made. Still all is not done. The Church has to battle with the world, to endure persecution, the blood of martyrs has to flow, and three hundred years to pass, before she emerges out of her hidden suffering life into light before the world. That is not all. Still the work goes on. The Sacraments are ministered, the word of God is preached. Invitation to the Banquet of Heaven is given. Salvation is not yet come; the work goes on, and goes on slowly. Look at yourselves, and see how slow the process is. You are baptized, and thereby made a member of Christ. Is all done? By no means, the work is only begun. You grow older, and your temptations grow stronger. Then comes Confirmation, the Holy Spirit is given to strengthen, the seal is put on the Baptismal Contract. Is all done? By no means, it is only progressing. The Holy Communion is given you. You partake of the sacred Body and Blood of Christ. Surely now all is complete, and salvation secured. No -- by no means, not yet. All through life the work goes on. It is not done at death. It will not be done till the Judgment Day. Why is this? Because man has Free Will, and can oppose and hinder the work of God. He can even bring it to naught. When God made the world it was done at His word, for there was no opposition, no independent free will had to be taken account of; but in the salvation of man it is otherwise, man has to be considered, he has a will which can turn all the good intentions of God from him, and make them of no avail. God cannot save man without his free consent. God's grace cannot sanctify him without his co-operation with it. God can invite and attract, He cannot force. In the parable, the king sends out to entreat his subjects to come, and when they refuse he punishes them, but he does not send his soldiers to drive them into his banqueting hall.II. All that God can do is to invite; but He invites most pressingly, and holds out every inducement that He possibly could. God desires all men to be saved, He willeth not the death

of a sinner. "Christ," says S. Paul, "died for all," -- to reconcile all men to God. He hung on the cross for all, to save all that will come to Him and be saved -- He died "for us men, and our salvation." The Amalekites attacked the city of Ziklag, and took it, and burned it with fire, and departed, carrying away with them the two wives of David, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, who had been the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. When David knew this, he fell into great distress, and he gathered an army and went to the place, and there he wept "till he had no more power to weep." And he pursued after the Amalekites with four hundred men, and he fell on them, and the battle raged four and twenty hours. "He smote them from twilight even unto the evening of the next day," and he recovered out of their hands his two wives. Now suppose that one of them, say Abigail, fell into low spirits, thinking that David did not love her, and would not bring her into his palace, and show her favour, one would say to her, What is the meaning of this? Your sad spirits and gloomy doubts are proof of an unthankful spirit. Look at David. See a clear evidence that you are wrong. Look! he is covered with dust from the battle, he is so exhausted that he can scarce breathe. For you he fought, for you he exposed himself to great risk, for you he conquered. He has redeemed you out of the power of the enemy. See! he extends to you his hand, red with his blood shed for you. He holds out his hand to invite you to follow him, that he may bring you home in safety. Away with these wicked doubts and this black mistrust!! may say exactly the same to you. Do you want any token of the love of Christ? Any assurance of His goodwill towards you? Look at Him! See what He has done and suffered for you! For you He spent thirty-three years in struggle, for you He was exposed to the scoffs of the Jews, for you He was scourged, for you He was crucified. To you He extends His hand, red with His blood, to beckon you to follow Him, that where He is there you may be also. He has shown you His love. What could He have done more? He has promised you Heaven. He has assured you that He is gone there to prepare a place for you, that He may receive you unto Himself. He tells you that there is the kingdom He has prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Could He make better promises? III. But He can do no more. He cannot drive you into Heaven. It is left to you, to your free will to decide. You can accept, or you can refuse. You can make use of the Sacraments, the means He has provided for enabling you to gain the Kingdom, or you may turn your backs on them. He will not drive you. All He will do is to invite, and say, "Come! for all things are now ready."

LVIII. EXAMPLE.

21st Sunday after Trinity. S. John iv.13. "And himself believed, and his whole house."

INTRODUCTION. -- As the tree so the fruit, as the parents so the children, as the master so his men, as the mistress so her household. This is not indeed a rule without exceptions, but as a general rule it holds. No man liveth and dieth to himself, we are all members one of another, and we all influence the conduct of others, and determine their careers, more than we ourselves imagine. It is not, indeed, always true that good parents have good children, but it is generally the case. It is not always that bad parents have bad children, but it is exceptional when it is otherwise. Indeed, the virtues of parents become in some way inherent in their offspring, and the vices of parents last in the blood of their children, and even descend to their children's children. How often is this the case with a tendency to drink! Although the child may have lost his parent young, and not seen his bad example, yet he has in him a yearning after stimulants, and very often becomes a drunkard like his father. SUBJECT. -- Let us, to-day, consider the effect of the example of parents on their children; and of teachers on their pupils. I. There is a striking passage in the fifth chapter of S. John which may not hitherto have attracted your attention. One Sabbath Day our Blessed Lord went to Bethesda, and there healed a man who had had an infirmity thirty and eight years. He healed him, and bade him take up his bed, and walk. The Jews were wroth, and said, "It is the Sabbath Day, it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." Then we are told the Jews did persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath Day. "But Jesus answered them: My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." That is to say -- My Father worketh on the Sabbath, He sends His rain, He makes the grass to grow, He feeds the young ravens, He causes the sun to rise and set, He works good to all creatures, feeds, and heals, and as I see my Father act, so, naturally, as a Son, I act also. Whatsoever the Son seeth the Father do, He doeth likewise. The argument of the Jews avails nothing, that as the man has lain infirm for thirty-eight years, he may lie another twelve hours. "My Father worketh hitherto good on the Sabbath, and therefore I work." It matters nothing what the Law may enjoin, nor how strict may be the tradition of the Pharisees, "My Father worketh good on the Sabbath, and therefore I work." Our Lord produces this as an argument against which there can be no resistance, to which there can be no reply, an argument commending itself to every man's understanding -- to universal experience -- As the father acts, so acts the son. The example of the father is the law of right and wrong to the child. Do you know the fable of the crab and his children? The crab was sore distressed to see his little ones run crookedly on the sand of the sea shore, so he said, "My sons, walk straight!" "Yes," answered the little crabs, "lead thou the way, father, and we will follow thy footsteps." Is it a wonder to you, a wonder and a distress, that your sons do not turn out well, that they go to the public-house too much, and that they are idle workmen, that they swear and use foul language? If you wish them to grow up differently, it is of no use saying to them, "My sons, walk straight!" you must lead the way, that they may follow. Is it a wonder and grief to a mother that her girls become giddy, frivolous, and unsteady, and perhaps cause her shame? Do you want them to be quiet, to stay at home, and be neat, modest, unselfish girls? then do not be giddy and a gadabout yourself. "Lead thou the way, mother, and they will follow." Do you, parents, find that

your children ramble about the lanes with idle companions instead of coming to Church on Sundays, that they do not love the worship of God, that they do not fear God, and reverence His sanctuary? Do you want them to be God-fearing, pious, consistent Christians? Then do you lead the way and they will follow. Do you want your boys and girls to hold a check on their tongues, and not to be always wrangling and snapping at one another, scolding, and finding fault, and quarrelling? Then do you lead the way, that they may follow. Lead the way by keeping a check on your tongues, by being gentle and forbearing -- you, husband and wife, one with another, not given to railing, but, contrariwise, to blessing.II. You may have observed how often in Holy Scripture the expression recurs, "The God of your Father," or "The God of your Fathers," "The God of my Father," or "of my Fathers." This is a remarkable expression. Is God short of Names that He should be thus designated? Might He not be better termed Almighty, Everlasting, Jehovah? The expression is of such frequent recurrence that it must have a meaning -- and this is what it means. There is such a thing as an hereditary religion. As a man regards God, so will his children regard Him. If a man is reverent and devout, and shows that he honours God, and regards Him as a just and righteous God, hating iniquity, and rewarding all those who keep His commandments, then his children will grow up regarding God as just and righteous; but if a man thinks of God as indifferent to righteousness, as so ready in His kindness to forgive everything, and let men do what they like, that He will pardon them for any and everything they do, then his sons will grow up looking on God as the great Author of moral disorder among men. If a man regards God as expecting worship and honour, then the sons will grow up with the same idea of God, and will worship and honour Him, and if a man has no God at all, then his sons will also have no God at all.III. In Exodus God threatens that He will "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generations." In like manner He blesses a whole posterity for the righteousness of their parents. You see now how and why this is. It is because when a father and mother are wicked, their children grow up wicked also, and their children's children, till the whole family dies out through its vicious habits, or there rises out of it some redeeming element of good. In the same way good parents have good children, and these good children marry, and have also good offspring, and so the goodness of one pious and righteous pair goes on descending and spreading like a fertilizing river, bearing blessings to all who are near it. What an encouragement this is to you parents to lead God-fearing lives! What a warning to those of you who are careless! The belief of the ruler brought belief to his whole house. The salvation of Zacchaeus brought salvation to his whole house also. Righteousness may bring a blessing to your children, and children's children, for many generations.

LIX. THE PREACHER AND HIS HEARERS.

22nd Sunday after Trinity. S. Matthew xviii.23. "The kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants." INTRODUCTION. -- I have been a good deal abroad, over the Continent of Europe, and whenever I am in a little country inn, I make a point of going into the room where the men are smoking and drinking wine or beer, and hearing their opinions on the politics of the day, and of their country. Now, my experience tells me that in country taverns in France, and Germany, and Belgium, and Switzerland, and Austria, the main topic of discussion is -- the Parsons. I have not been much about in this way in England, but I have an idea that it is pretty nearly the same here. What I have heard often said is this, "Nothing easier than to preach!" "Ah! they are always preaching at us, it is a pity that they do not preach to themselves." "Ah! if they would only practice what they preach, we would listen more readily." SUBJECT. -- To-day I am going to preach to the preacher, to myself, at least in the first part of my sermon, and you may sit and listen. After that, I will have a word with you. In to-day's Gospel we hear that the king will take account of his servants, that is, God will take account of all those who are His servants, first with those who are His special Ministers, the Clergy, and preachers of His Word, and secondly, of those who are the hearers. I. Now, let me see what God expects of a preacher, and what I ought to be and to do. S. Paul says: "We preach Christ crucified." That is the first thing I am bound to do. I must remember to do that. Then, S. Luke says that Jesus was "mighty in word and deed," and as Christ has sent us even as He was sent by the Father, so must we preachers be mighty, as far as we can, both in word and deed, we must speak boldly and vigorously, and we must act in the same way, we must practice what we preach. That is a great deal expected of us. If we were only to preach up to the level of our own lives, it would be easier. But the preaching goes first; we must preach the highest virtue, and then try to live up to that. S. John the Baptist was set before us as an example of a preacher, and "he was a burning and a shining light." We preachers must give you doctrine which not only shines but also burns, we must not only enlighten your minds by teaching, but also burn your consciences. We must instruct the intellect, and warm and fire the heart. That is requiring a great deal of us. "He maketh his ministers a burning fire," says David, and S. Paul quotes his words approvingly. It is a pleasant thing to enlighten, but to burn is not so pleasant. Yet that is what we preachers are bound to do, we must not speak to you smooth things, but those things which will sting you and make you arise and cry out. Not only what you like, but a great deal that you do not like. That is what is demanded of a preacher. Then again he must not "use the Word of God deceitfully," twisting it to enforce what is not God's truth, but his own fancy. We read that at the trial of Christ there were found two false witnesses who declared that Christ had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days will I build it up." Now when we look at S. John's Gospel we find that He did say this. How, then, were they false witnesses? They were false witnesses because they gave His words a meaning He never intended them to have. He spoke of the temple of His body; they made His words apply to the temple of Jerusalem. Moses desired that his preaching might be as the dew. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass" (Deut. xxxii.2.) Very pleasant it would be to speak so that one's

words came down like the dew, or even as the small rain on the tender grass. You would like that, and so would I. You would hold up your heads like the flowers, and drink the dewy doctrine in. But stay! "As the showers upon the grass" as well, says Moses. It will not do for the preacher to speak only gently; his words must come pattering about your heads like a driving April shower, when you will shrink from the rain and hide to get out of the way. The preacher must pour out on you a good strong shower of hard words. But that is not all. He must use the Word of the Lord as a sword. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and of spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." How will the hearers like that? The preacher must not ask that, he must use the Word as it is given him, whether his hearers like it or whether they do not. There was at one time at Coimbra two famous preachers, and all the town ran to hear them; but some thought A. was the best preacher, and some thought that B. was the best. It was discussed among the professors of the University, and then it was found that they were divided -- some liked A., and others preferred B.; then an old professor spoke, "I will tell you what I think. I have heard them both, and have formed my opinion. When I have listened to a sermon by A., I come away highly pleased with the preacher; when I come away from a sermon by B., I am heartily disgusted with myself." Then you see which was the true preacher. A. sought his own glory and to show his talent, B. only considered the souls of those he was speaking to. And now I have said what a preacher ought to speak, and also how he ought to act. I do not think it is so easy a matter, if he be a faithful preacher. II. Now then I turn to you, the hearers. Be ye not hearers of the Word, but doers. The word preached you will not profit unless you take hold of it. One day Agilmund, King of the Lombards, was riding past a river. At that time it was customary for heathen mothers to drown those of their children whom they did not care to rear. He saw floating down the rapid stream a number of little crying babes in baskets in which they had been cast in. The king's heart was touched, and he went to the edge of the river where there was a pool and an eddy, and he knelt down and held out his spear to the children; then one of them extended his little hands and clasped hold of the spear, and clung to it, and the king very gently and carefully drew the spear to him with the little fellow holding tight to it. But all the other babes merely cried and sank into the water. Then he carried home the child in his arms, adopted him as his son, and made him his heir to the kingdom. Now all the preacher can do for you, swimming down the great river of time, threatened with death, is to hold out the Word to you. He cannot save you. He cannot do more for you than that. You must lay hold and cling tight to the Word. But why do I say the preacher? It is Jesus Christ Himself who really extends the Word to you, and He will save you if you hold fast to it, and bring you through the waters, and land you in His country, and exalt you to His kingdom.

LX. THE IMAGE OF SELF.

23rd Sunday after Trinity. S. Matthew xxii., 20. "Whose is this image?" INTRODUCTION. -- Some people are very fond of contemplating their own excellencies, of admiring their good qualities, or their success in life; they will talk to you of what they have done, how they made this lucky hit, how they outwitted so-and-so, how they escaped such a danger by their foresight. But they are not fond of considering their imperfections, of lamenting their faults, of confessing their failures, their lost opportunities, their neglected duties, their grave transgressions. No, no! they do not see them, they see only their own good qualities and none of their blemishes, they extol their successes, and hold their tongues over their failures. SUBJECT. -- But it would be well for us to contemplate ourselves as we really are, and see ourselves in the light in which we are seen by God, for the Apostle says: "If we would judge ourselves, we shall not be judged," that is, if we would only see ourselves with all our defects, and repent our faults here, and judge ourselves and go and amend, then we should escape the judgment hereafter. I. King David says, in the 51st Psalm, "I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me." Now, think of this! If any man had occasion to boast it was King David. He had been a poor sheep-boy attending the flocks of his father, a farmer at Bethlehem, and he was taken from the sheepfolds and exalted to be king. What an exaltation for him from a humble origin to the highest place! He might well look back on that with exultation; but no, a shadow steps between and clouds the view, "My sin is ever before me." I daresay his palace walls were hung with tapestry, or painted in colours with pictures representing his deeds. There he was shewn fighting the bear, there taking the lamb from the lion's mouth, and smiting him. There he was pictured with his sling going against the giant Goliath. There he was represented standing over the fallen Philistine and hewing off his head. Look! another picture! his marriage with Michal, the daughter of King Saul. "Whose is this image?" It is that of the conqueror over Amalek. "Whose is this image?" It is David crowned king of Judah in Hebron. And here is a goodly picture; of whom is it? This is David anointed King over all Israel. There is another! David defeating the Philistines in the battle under the mulberry trees. There is one more! "Whose is this image?" It is that of David bringing the ark from Kirjath-jearim, and playing his harp and dancing before it. What a goodly array of pictures! All -- all about the glories and successes of David. David paces idly through the halls, he sees the tapestries and paintings, but he regards them not, "My sin is ever before me." He sees only one picture, which is not upon the wall, which the flattering painter has omitted, his guilt with Bathsheba. He goes to war in his armour, and takes the city of Rabbah. He carries off the crown of the king and puts it on his own head. The spoil of the city is great. In the turmoil of battle, in the flush of victory, "My sin is ever before me." He flees before his enemies, before his rebellious son, and is in hiding in the wilderness with a few faithful friends, and then there rises up before him the remembrance of his great transgression, and weighs down his heart. "My sin is ever before me." In joy, in sorrow, in prosperity and in distress it is always the same. "Whose is this image?" It is that of a great king, a mighty warrior, a sweet poet, -- "No, no!" says David, "It is the image of a grievous sinner. My sin is ever before me. Let no man call me a good king, I gave over the innocent Uriah to the sword, and took from him his beloved wife. Let no man call me a just man, I divided the land of Mephibosheth with his false, lying slave Ziba,

because it went against my pride to go back from what I had said. Let no man call me merciful, when I tortured the Ammonites cruelly, putting them under saws, and under harrows and axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln. Let no man speak of me as a conqueror, when I was miserably conquered by my wicked passions." My brethren! I wish that you would see yourselves in the way in which David did. I wish that instead of turning away your eyes from those pictures in your life which do you no honour, you would look at them with shame. I wish that instead of boasting yourselves as the image of all perfections, you would see yourselves as sinners.

II. There was a painter called Bonamico, who was engaged by Cardinal Aretino to paint a series of pictures in his chapel. He began with a beautiful fresco of Jesus Christ. A day or two afterwards, when he came to his work in the morning, he found his picture smeared all over with dabs of colour, red, and black, and blue, and yellow, and utterly defaced and spoiled. The painter was so angry that he refused to go on with his work till the culprit was found. A watch was set, and then it was discovered who had done it. When the painter had left the chapel, a pet ape of Aretino's came in, and having during the day seen the artist at work, he took up brush and colours, and began, in mischief or in imitation, to daub over what the painter had executed. "Whose is this image?" You were made in the image of God, and redeemed by Christ. Whose is the image? You are expected to grow to the stature of the fulness of Christ, to be like Christ, but alas! the Devil, or your evil passions, deface the image, and obliterate the likeness. Can I see anything like Christ in you? Where are the traces of the divine image? I know what Christ is. "I am meek and lowly of heart." Where is your meekness? Some ape has daubed self-conceit over it, and I see nothing else but his bold colours. "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the street." Where is this quietness and unobtrusiveness in you? Do I not hear angry words and quarrelling? Some ape has daubed out this feature of the Saviour. "I am come not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Where is this readiness to submit to the will of God? Do I not see an eager following of your own wills? Surely also this characteristic of the Son of God is effaced.

CONCLUSION. -- My brethren, one chief reason why we should see ourselves as we really are is, that we might be able by penitence to wipe out the ugly smears that deface the divine image, and that we might go on to perfection, becoming daily more like unto Him who is our pattern, so that at the Last Day, when we wake up, it will be with the likeness complete, for "we shall be like Him."

LXI. DREAD OF RIDICULE.

24th Sunday after Trinity. S. Matt. ix.24. "And they laughed Him to scorn." INTRODUCTION. -- "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii.12.) This is what S. Paul says. This is what everyone of you must make up your mind to, if you intend to live godly lives, and, moreover, to live in Christ. Do you know what that meant to the early Christians? It meant that if they were going to be firm in their faith, live up to their profession, and eschew evil, they should be dragged before governors, and hung on what was called the "little horse," and their flesh torn with redhot pincers. It meant that they should be scourged to death, or that they should be roasted alive over slow fires, or that they should be gored in the amphitheatre by a bull, or torn to pieces by a lion, or that they should have their skin taken off, or that their heads should be struck off, or that they should be crucified. So when they were baptized and professed the Creed, and were signed with the cross, they knew that they were enlisted to suffer persecution if they acted up to their profession, and were worthy of the cross on their brows. But this is not the sort of persecution you will be subjected to. The time of such cruel torture is over. The world has become Christian in name, but in heart it is pagan still. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." S. Paul does not limit this to his day. It is not only all in the first century, but all in the nineteenth century as well. Only this is altered -- the mode of persecution. SUBJECT. -- The persecution you will be subjected to, if you live godly in Jesus Christ is -- Ridicule. No one will make you suffer in the body. No pincers and knives will be brought against you, -- only Tongues. I. Noah was ordered by God to build an ark on dry ground. Imagine the ridicule he met with! How the people would flock out of an evening, to see how he was getting on. What jibes! How he was tormented with questions, When was the great boat to be launched? How was he to bring the sea up to it? Was he with his three sons to put their shoulders to it, and push it down to the seashore? But Noah did not heed them, he went on with his building. It was very unpleasant to bear. It made him very red with shame and annoyance sometimes. But he did not give up. If he had done so, he would have been drowned. And one day the flood came. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven opened, and then the water overflowed the land. Then! -- how was it with those men and women who had made fun of Noah? On whose side was the laugh now? The Israelites were ordered by God to camp against Jericho. They were to march round the city once a day, with the priests going before, blowing their trumpets; this was to be done six days in succession, but on the seventh day they were to march seven times round the city, with the priests leading the way, blowing the rams' horns. The first day the inhabitants of Jericho rushed to their walls, and watched, and wondered. The second day they saw the same procession go round the town. It had ended in nothing on Sunday, so they laughed and pointed at them. What a ludicrous sight! All those men armed with swords and spears, who do not use them, those priests blowing the horns as to encourage the Israelites to battle, and not one rushing forward to scale the walls. The third day all the women and children were on the walls, marching round and mimicking them, blowing toy trumpets. What jokes! What jeers shouted from the walls! So on to the Friday. On the Sabbath the people got rather tired of this same scene. It was growing monotonous; so they did not come in such numbers. However, after the Israelites had marched round once, they began to

march round a second time. Here was something new! Something still more nonsensical; and the people of Jericho came out on their walls again to flout them, and pass their jokes. When the Israelites had been round twice, they started to go round a third time, then a fourth, then a fifth, then a sixth. The mocking grew more excessive, the ridicule more keen. But, when the circuit of the city was made the seventh time, then, the walls of the city fell down, and the Israelites rushed in over the ruins, and killed all they came across. On whose side was the laugh then? II. As I told you at the beginning of my sermon, if you will live godly in Christ Jesus, you must expect persecution, and the only sort of persecution you will get is Ridicule. Therefore, if you will live godly in Christ Jesus, you must be prepared to be taunted, and made fun of, and teased. The tongues will wag and say all sort of hard things about you; You are a hypocrite, or you are going too far, or you are a fine person to set up to be a saint! but be of good cheer, do not mind the laughter, it is only for a while, and then the tables will be turned, and the laugh will be on your side. It is very unpleasant to be made a butt for ridicule. Of course it is, but it is not so unpleasant as to have your flesh torn off with red-hot pincers. The early Christians who would live godly in Christ Jesus had to expect that. It is very galling to have bitter things said of you, often unjust and untrue, only because you have begun to serve God, and lead a better life. Of course it is, but it is not so bitter to bear as a cruel death, and that is what the early Christians had to expect if they would live godly in Christ Jesus. Then again. As the Master was used, so the servant must expect to be treated. Jesus Christ had not only to endure the cruelty of wicked men, but their ridicule as well, "They laughed Him to scorn." CONCLUSION. -- Pluck up a little courage, my brethren, and do not be such cowards. If you lack courage, ask of God, and He will give it you. The Spirit of Fortitude is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. He gave it to the martyrs to strengthen them under torment, and they were able to endure and not forsake their Lord. Then surely He will give to you that measure of fortitude which will enable you to stand up against Ridicule.

LXII. WHAT LASTS, AND WHAT PASSES AWAY.

25th Sunday after Trinity. S. Matthew xxiv., 35. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." INTRODUCTION. -- Yes! all will pass away! This beautiful world and all that is on it. Our houses, our churches, our cities, will crumble away; the very earth with its mountains and rivers, and plains, and seas, will pass away. The stars will fall from heaven, the sun will have exhausted its fires, the moon will sink into night. But the words of Christ will last. SUBJECT. -- Incessant is the change. Ever are things present passing away, but there is still something that remains. Things pass in their present fashion, but in substance remain. I. S. Paul, in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, says (vii.31): "The fashion of this world passeth away." It is as though this world were a theatre, on which pass many scenes. The curtain rises, and we see first Eden, all beautiful; there is no sin, no death; how lovely is the world in its maiden freshness and innocence, the flowers are blooming, and the birds are singing, and Adam and Eve stand surrounded by the beasts, which fawn on them, and fear them not. O that this lovely scene might remain! But no! "The fashion of this world passeth away." Another scene. The Angel armed with the flaming sword drives our parents forth, the earth brings forth thorns and briars. Man slays the beasts to provide him with food and clothing. The earth is full of violence, Cain raises his hand against Abel. All flesh is corrupt before God. "The fashion of this world passeth away." The flood has purified earth, but now men are scattered through the confusion of tongues, and go over all the world colonising, cutting down trees, planting corn, hunting wild beasts, pasturing cattle, and having flocks of sheep. "The fashion of this world passeth away." Great empires arise, the Chaldean or Assyrian, the Persian, the Greek, these three. Do they last? "The fashion of this world passeth away." A fourth arises; the mighty Roman Empire, extending over the whole known world. The Roman poet wrote of it in the name of his false god, Jupiter, "I put no bounds to this empire, neither of space nor of time, I give it a kingdom without end." Was it so? We find scattered almost everywhere in the old world where we travel traces of this mighty empire, its roads, its castles, its palaces, its coins, but it is gone, gone utterly away, swept away by the hordes of Gothic barbarians. "The fashion of this world passeth away." If we look back at the past times of our own country, what changes do we see! the fashion ever changing, the fashion of government, the fashion of religion, the fashion of dress, the fashion of architecture, all is change, change, and change. Have you ever seen fireworks? Have you seen the rockets rush up into the air, casting a golden light, pouring forth sparks, and then bursting, this one into a silvery globe of light, that one into a thousand stars, crimson, blue, green, yellow, that again into sparks of curling fire-dust? What became of them? Down they fall, and all that remains is a stick and a bit of smouldering brown paper. The fashion has wondrously changed. Are not these rockets figures of the life of man? Up we rush in the eagerness of youth, and cast a light about us, up, up, growing brighter, throwing out our stars and globes of light, and then, "the fashion changeth," and we come down and are laid in our graves, a little ash. Here is the man who was full of wealth and honour, how he blazed as a sun, how he scattered his gold. "The fashion changeth." He is now a crumbling bit of clay. Here is the man who made such a noise in the parish, such a boaster, so quarrelsome, so litigious, no one could come near him. "The fashion changeth." He lies still as a mouse now, and can resent no injury done to

his dust. Here is the active housewife, whose hand was always busily employed sewing, darning, scouring, never idle for one minute, keeping her house clean, and her children tidy. "The fashion changeth." She can stir no hand, can think for no one any more. II. Evilmerodach, king of Babylon, was wroth with Daniel, because he denied that Bel was a god. Meats were placed on the altar before the idol every night, and before morning they had vanished. "Therefore," said the king, "Bel must be a god." But Daniel got fine ashes and strewed the temple floor, and locked the doors. Next morning he came with the king to the temple, and when the doors were opened, the king saw that all the meat was gone, then he cried out that Bel was a god. But Daniel pointed to the floor, and there, in the ashes, were the prints of many feet, for the priests had a secret door under the altar, and in the night they came out with their wives and children, and ate what had been offered to the idol. Then Evilmerodach had them all slain. Now, my brethren! Job says of God: "Thou lookest narrowly unto all my paths," or, as it might be better rendered, "my footprints." That is, Thou, O God, seest my traces where I have been, and Thou wilt take account of what I have done. Mark this! -- The steps pass away, but the footprints do not pass away. The steps go on into Endless Life or Eternal Death, but the footprints remain to shew where you have walked. Your fashion in this world may pass away, but your footprints remain to tell tales of you; they pass not away. You house-father! You house-mother! you will go your way, but your traces will remain in your family, the good you have done, or the bad, these cannot be wiped out. You who have done any dishonest act, spoken falsehood, dealt deceitfully, all your dishonest acts, and false words, and deceitful dealings, will pass away, but the traces will remain, and God will look narrowly at them. You have been given talents, intelligence, physical strength, spiritual opportunities; these pass away, but not their traces. You have been a boy, a youth, a man, and are now old. Each age has passed away, but not the footsteps, they shall not pass away. What you did when first you got your reason, your childish acts, are passed away, but not the results. Your actions when young, -- did you yield to your passions or conquer them? those acts are passed away, but not the results. In your manhood, what have you done in your family, what example have you set? You are now old and white-headed. Vigorous manhood is over, passed away, but the footsteps, the tell-tale footsteps remain. CONCLUSION. -- Now then, considering this, I urge you sincerely to live each day as if the last, to live so that you may not be afraid of your footsteps that will betray of what sort your life has been.

LXIII. THANKFULNESS TO GOD.

Harvest S. Matthew xxii., 21. "Render -- unto God, the things that are God's." INTRODUCTION. -- David says in the 8th Psalm, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him: and the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou makest him to have dominion of the works of Thy hands; and Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet, all sheep and oxen; yea, and the beast of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea." I. The mastery of man is even more extensive than this; he controls the elements. The earth he tills and makes it bring forth fruit and corn, as he wills. He will not suffer it to run wild, but schools and disciplines it. He hedges it about, and ploughs, and sows, and reaps. He burrows into it for fuel and for metals, he cuts roads over its face. The air he makes use of also, it is his servant to turn the sails of his wind-mills, to grind his corn, it fills out the sails of his ships to carry his merchandise from one land to another. Fire, that most terrible of elements, he dominates and makes into a slave, it smelts the ore for him, it raises the steam that drives the engines, it heats his house, it lights it, it cooks his food. Water is also under control, he leads it where he will in canals and pipes, he makes it turn the wheels of water-mills, it is used for drinking, and for washing. And yet even that is not all. Man controls the lightning, he makes of that a slave to carry messages round the world, and he carries it into globes, and lights streets and railway stations, and shop windows with it. When man was innocent in Eden, the beast and birds were his familiar friends, but when he sinned they fled from him. God said to Noah, "The fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered." See how the animals have been subjected to man; the horse, the useful cow, the dog, and the sheep have been tamed, the horse which once roved wild submits to have a saddle on his back, and a bit in his mouth. The cow gives her milk and her meat, and the sheep both wool and meat, for the nourishment and the clothing of man; the dog, which, when wild, was fierce as his brother the wolf, has become the friend and companion of man; even the gigantic elephant has become docile, and the Indian mother leaves her babe under its charge, that the monster may brush away the flies from the sleeping infant with a branch. We have dominion over the birds in the air, we have tamed the domestic fowls and make them yield us their eggs, and we keep the pigeons about our homes that we may kill their young; we snare and shoot them as we will, their high flight and rapid wings are no protection for them. We have dominion over the fishes of the sea, we strew the net and bring them in for our food; we hunt the whale for his oil and for the fringe of bone in his mouth; we dive into the sea after the oyster that we may extract from it the pearl, and we strip the shell of its rainbow-coloured scales to inlay therewith our furniture. II. What follows from all this? Is not this enough to make man proud, to exalt him in his own conceit? unfortunately it would seem so, but the lesson I would draw from all this is, Render unto God that service which is due to God, as all inferior creatures render unto you the service you demand of them. An old writer (Hugo Victorinus) beautifully says -- "It is as though the earth appealed to man, and said to him, See how He loved thee who made me for thee. I serve thee because I was made for thee, and do thou serve Him who made thee and me." Suppose a king were to take you by the hand and lead you into a beautiful estate, and say to you, "Here, I give you this mansion, with the park and

the fields, and the woods and the river, you may do what you will with it, hunt, and shoot, and fish, and till the soil, and pasture sheep, and cattle, I give it you all freely and entirely, I ask of you nothing but that you will recognise me as your king and not join my enemies in fighting against me." Then, I think, you would embrace the offer with the greatest eagerness. Now this is just what God has done to you; He has brought you into the world, and has given you power over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, He has given you the earth to grow your corn, and on which to pasture your cattle, He has given you dominion over the elements, and all He asks in return is that you will recognise Him as the Giver, and not join His enemies. "Render unto God that honour and homage that be God's."III. Balaam, the prophet and seer, rode on his ass to go to Balak, king of Moab. God had forbidden him to go and curse the chosen people of God, but Balaam, moved by covetousness, and eager for honours from the king, started on his way to go. Then an angel stood in the way with a drawn sword to stop him. Balaam did not see the angel, but the ass did, and fell down under Balaam. Then he cried out in a rage, "I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee," and he beat the ass savagely with his stick. Do you see! Balaam expects the ass to obey him blindly, to go where he chooses; but he himself will not obey God, and refrain from going whither he is forbidden. How is it with you? Is it not with you as with Balaam? You expect the earth to yield you what you choose, and are wroth if it withholds the crop; but you do not yield to God what He desires, and show a harvest of good fruit unto life everlasting from the seed of Grace He has sown in you. You expect your sheep to give their wool, and your cows their milk, and to obey you, and come into the fold, or go out into the pasture, docile to your will. But do you act thus to God? Are you docile to His will? Do you eat that heavenly food He has prepared for you in the pastures of his Church? You expect your orchard to yield you apples. Do you show any fruit of the Spirit? When Christ comes and searches among the leaves of your profession, does He find any fruit of good works there?CONCLUSION. -- Then, Brethren, in your farm-work, bear this ever in mind, that as you expect the fields and the cattle to yield to you what is your due, so render also yourselves unto God that honour, that worship, that gratitude, which are God's.

LXIV. THE FORMATION OF HABITS.

School Sermon. Proverbs xxii.6. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." INTRODUCTION. -- There is a district, high up in the Black Forest, where the ground is full of springs. It is a plain some nine hundred feet above the sea. Thousands upon thousands of little springs gush out of the soil; you seem to be on the rose of a vast watering-can. Now, from this great source flow a good many rivers, and they flow in very different, nay, opposite directions. There rises the Danube, which runs East and dies in the Black Sea, and also the Neckar and a hundred other tributaries of the Rhine, which flows West, and falls into the North Sea. A very little thing on that plain -- a slight rise or fall in the ground, this way or that -- decides the direction in which a river shall run. You can easily make a little stream run this way and feed the Rhine, or that way and swell the Danube; but after a few miles all control over the stream is gone. It runs on, and will run on to the end in the direction you have given it, or which it took by chance when it started. It is the same with children. All these little springs of vigorous life are bubbling up round us, and whither shall they flow? To the right or to the left? To Life or to Death? We can give them their direction now. A few years hence, and all power over them will be gone. SUBJECT. -- As a habit is formed in early youth, so it remains to old years. I. We take our children and we train them for God. God has given them to us for this, to train them as citizens of His kingdom. We neglect our duty if we neglect this. He placed the flexible little characters in our hands to bend this way or that, expecting us to make them grow upright and not crooked, to look to Heaven, instead of trailing on earth. They are a solemn trust for which we must give account. It would have been one of the chief woes of Hell to Dives, if he had his five brethren there to reproach him for having set them a bad, selfish, luxurious example. Think how bitter your future state would be, if your children in the outer darkness were to be for ever reproaching you, "You brought us up to the world and not to God, you fed our bodies but not our souls, you set before us the transitory life as the one thing to care for, and did not teach us to lay up treasure and toil for the life eternal!" Think, also, how it will increase your happiness to have your children in Life Eternal, and to receive their blessing, and experience their gratitude for having so taught them, by word and example, that they have through life walked in the narrow path that leads to the gates of Heaven. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." You teach your children obedience, in order that when young they may form the habit of submitting to rule. When they are old they will not depart from it. God has His laws. God exacts their obedience. They learn now to bow to the commands of a teacher whom they can see, they will obey afterwards the invisible Divine Teacher. You teach your children order and method when young, that they may live an orderly life when they grow older. You teach them self-control now, that they may be able to exercise it in greater matters hereafter. II. Habits of obedience, and order, and self-control, acquired in childhood will be confirmed in manhood, and will remain to the end of life. A man of business, who has spent his youth and manhood in looking after his shop, or attending to his office, is miserable in old age when he gives up his business and retires; he misses the old routine, he would be happier if he could go on in the accustomed round till he drops. The days hang heavy on his hands. The relaxation to which he had looked forward, and for

which he had worked, palls on him. And these are habits of industry. Bad habits retain a stronger hold on man. A bad youth and a bad manhood make a vicious old age. Many an old man who had led a disorderly life retains his wicked habits, though they afford him no pleasure. He goes on in vice merely because vice has become habitual, not because it is pleasurable. Eli, as we read in the 4th chap. I Sam., when aged ninety and eight years, and his eyes were dim, that he could not see, "sat upon a seat by the wayside watching." What is the meaning of this? The old man of nearly a hundred has his chair brought outside the temple, and sits there looking up the street, and that although his eyes are so covered with a mist that he can see nothing. The sacred writer does not say that Eli sat on the seat by the wayside seeing what went on, but only straining his sightless eyeballs up the street. If we turn back to the first chapter, we shall see that this was a habit with Eli. When he was many years younger, some thirty years before, when Hannah came up to Shiloh to entreat the Lord to have mercy on her and take away her reproach, we read "Now Eli, the priest, sat upon a seat by the post of the temple of the Lord." And his eyes, then sharp and clear, were peering about and watching all that was going on, and examining the faces of the people who were coming in and going out, and were engaged in prayer. One would have thought that common decency would have kept him from watching the face of the poor woman who was engaged in prayer, but Eli had not acquired control over his eyes -- indeed, his great amusement was peering into people's faces and guessing what was going on in their minds. Hannah wept as she prayed, "And it came to pass, as she continued praying to the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard," -- then with that want of charity, and tendency to think evil which so commonly goes with peeping and prying -- "Eli thought she had been drunk." He saw what was not -- drunkenness -- in the weeping, sorrowful-hearted woman, but he saw not the wickedness which was in his disorderly sons. Here is an illustration of how habits last. Eli had acquired this habit of sitting in the gate and watching what went on, when he was a man in the vigour of his days, and when he was a very old man and blind, the habit continued. He had his chair brought out into the street that he might look up and down it, though his eyes were dim and he could see nought.III. Now the great advantage of a school to a child is that therein the child is taught good habits. The child has got certain talents, but cannot turn these talents to any good account without application. In school he is given the habit of application; that is, of keeping his attention fixed on one subject. But application is not all; to that must be added perseverance. No advance will be made in anything, unless a man first applies his mind to his task, and then perseveres in it till he has fulfilled what he undertook. Nothing is more common than to begin a thing and to be disheartened at the first difficulty, and to throw it up. At school the child is given the habit of perseverance. That is not all. No work will be carried out thoroughly without order and system. You see people who work all day and work hard, but never make any way, because they work in a muddle, and with no regular plan. At school the child is given the habit of orderliness. I have instanced only a few of those necessary habits which we try to impress on children at school. We endeavour to impress them on the young, because then they are open to instruction, their characters are soft and take impressions, as warm wax does from a seal. We train them up in the way in which they should go, trusting that when they are old they will not depart from it. We teach what is good, that good may become a habit with them, and when anything has become a habit, it sticks. It is not shaken off.

LXV. RELIGIOUS ZEAL.

Dedication Festival Ps. lxi., 9. "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up." INTRODUCTION. -- David spoke the truth. The one great desire of his heart was the glorification of God by the erection of a temple befitting His worship at Jerusalem. Although he had plenty of cares to distract him, yet he never had this out of his heart. "I will not come within the tabernacle of mine house; nor climb up into my bed; I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eyelids to slumber; neither the temples of my head to take any rest; until I find out a place for the temple of the Lord; an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." One of the first things he did after he was anointed King over Israel, was to go to Kirjath-jearim, and bring up thence the ark of God from the house of Abinadab in which it had lodged. And David went before the ark playing his harp, and his heart was so full of joy that he danced before the ark, singing and striking the strings of his harp. Then Michal his wife, Saul's daughter, looked out of a window, and sneered at him, "and despised him in her heart." She was one of your cold-blooded people, with no enthusiasm in her, with no zeal for God, no heart for God's glory. Better David dancing for joy of heart, than captious Michal with a contemptuous curl of her lips. David collected great treasures to build the temple, and directly he was at peace, his heart began to yearn to be about the work, and build to the glory of God. "See now," he said, "I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." But the word of God came to him by Nathan the prophet, forbidding him to build, because he was a man of blood, the temple was to be erected by his son Solomon. Nevertheless, David collected for the temple, and above all, composed his beautiful psalms to be sung in it. The gold and the cedar that Solomon set up are gone, but the Psalms remain, and have passed over to be the heritage of the Church. SUBJECT. -- How striking is the zeal of David, and how little zeal have we for God's glory, and for the adornment of His house! Let us consider to-day this zeal for God's house, and for those things that appertain to the worship of God, and tend to His glory. I. Of all the pathetic stories in the Bible, there is one which has struck me for its singular pathos, yet it is one which I dare say has escaped your notice. You have heard of the zeal of David, how his enthusiasm carried him away, out of himself, so that he forgot his royal dignity, and danced before the ark. You have heard of his bitter disappointment, how when through many years he had longed and planned to build the temple of God, his desire was not allowed to be carried into effect, but the honour was reserved for his son. The zeal of God's house had eaten him up. This was very touching, I think, but I remember a still more touching story of zeal for God's house, and God's honour, and that, not in a great man, but in a humble woman. Eli, the priest and judge of Israel, had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, and they were priests in Shiloh. They were utterly bad, profligate men, utterly regardless of the honour of God, and they disgraced their sacred calling by their shameless lives. They snatched from the sacrifices the best portion of the meat, and kept it for themselves, and they dishonoured the tabernacle by their shameless immoralities committed with those women who came to Shiloh to worship. In a great battle fought between the Israelites and the Philistines, the ark of God was taken, and Hophni and Phinehas were both slain. Then the news was brought to Eli the priest, and the old man, when he heard it, fell back off his chair in a fit, and broke his neck and died. The news also reached the wife of Phinehas. We do not know her name. We only hear of her this once, but

by the one little incident recorded of her, we know what she was. "The daughter-in-law of Eli, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered, and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not, for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. . . And she said, The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken." Good, God-fearing, loving heart! Not a thought about herself. She is in great suffering; not a cry from her other than this, "The ark of God is taken!" They tell her that her father-in-law, old Eli, has fallen and broken his neck, "But she answered not, neither did she regard it" -- only she said, "The ark of God is taken." They tell her that her husband has been killed in the battle. "But she answered not, neither did she regard it" -- only she cried, "The ark of God is taken." They brought to her her new-born child, a son. What dearer to a mother than the little infant to whom she has given life? But no, even that does not move her mind from the one absorbing idea, "She answered not, neither did she regard the babe," only she cried, "The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken." Then the women who stood by said to her, "What shall the name of the child be, thy husband who should have named it is dead, thy father-in-law is dead, thou must name it." "But she answered not, neither did she regard it," -- only she cried, "The glory is departed from Israel." Then the women that stood by said, "So shall the name be," and they called the child Ichabod, which means, "Inglorious." A few minutes later, and she was dying, and the last murmur on her lips, and the last thought of her heart were, "The ark of God is taken." I say this is a singularly touching story, for it shows us a woman whose whole soul was imbued with zeal for the glory of God, and that woman was the wife of a man whose whole priestly career was one of dishonour to God. II. Now I have given you two striking instances of zeal for God's honour, one in a man, and one in a woman. Have you any such zeal in you? Are your thoughts at all taken up with God's church, God's altar, God's worship? Are you eager that all should be beautiful and seemly in the temple of God? Does it pain you above every other pain when you know of something which is to the dishonour of God and of His Church? Have you any zeal at all like that of David? Have you any self-forgetfulness in what concerns His honour, like that of the nameless wife of Phinehas? I think if there were a little of this zeal, so many of our churches would not be untidy, neglected, ruinous. There would not be moth-eaten altar-cloths, and worm-eaten altars. There would not be green mouldering walls, and broken pavements. There would not be a service slovenly, unmusical, irreverent, or if not irreverent, at least unworthy of the glory of God. In heaven flame the golden candles, and the censers fume with frankincense. In heaven the seven lamps ever burn, and the altar shines like the sun. In heaven the angels and the saints cease not day nor night in singing praises, and bowing in worship -- and we! how do we show that we love God's worship? The zeal of God's house does not eat us up, we do not even know what it is.

LXVI. THE MEETING HEREAFTER.

Funeral Service. Joshua iii.17. "And the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." INTRODUCTION. -- That must have been a striking sight! The whole of God's people passing over Jordan. On one side, on that of the Wilderness, a crowd pressing down, and going into the deep river bed, on the other, those who had traversed, rising out of it, and spreading out on the high bank, looking down and watching those who descend into the bed, and cross through it to rejoin them. They stand in a blaze of light. The sun is setting, and the whole sky behind them is flaming with golden clouds, the light strikes in the eyes of those on the further bank, and they look down into the dark channel and shrink, it is immersed in shadow, but then again, they look up, and see the glory, and the forms of their fathers, and brothers, and mothers, and sisters, and children standing there, steeped in light, and they pluck up courage and go down. They have no cause to fear. In the midst of Jordan stands the Ark of the Covenant, and it will not move from that place till the last has passed over. SUBJECT. -- That story may serve for our comfort. We, like the Israelites, are on our journey, and we have to pass through the dark bed of the stream of Death, before we can enter into the promised land. And we have two subjects of consolation. (a) We have the Ark of the Covenant standing in Jordan to secure the path. (b) We have our dear ones watching and waiting for us on the farther shore. I. We have the Ark of the Covenant standing in Jordan to secure the path. "Lo, I am with you always," said Christ, "even unto the end of the world." That Ark signifies His abiding presence in His Church, which stands between the living and the dead, a Church on this side, militant, on the other, triumphant, a Church on this side made up of good and bad, of tares and wheat, of sheep and goats, on that side, a Communion of Saints. The Ark and the priests stood in Jordan, so does God's Church and priesthood ever remain, so long as the world lasts, and that world will last till the number of the elect has been made up, till the last of the people of the Lord is passed over Jordan. The Ministry will remain to teach the way of the Lord, and point the path through the river bed, and to cheer those who are downhearted, to lift up the finger and bid them look to the further shore, and to the glory there, and to those who stand on it watching. The Sacrifice will remain, the atoning Blood for the remission of guilt, the altar will remain as well as the pulpit, the priest as well as the teacher, sacrifice as well as instruction. Ever throughout the year, the atoning Blood will be pleaded with the Father for the pardon of the sins of the people. The Bread of Heaven, the manna will remain, to be man's spiritual food and sustenance, and strengthen the heart for the passage of Jordan. The presence of Christ will remain, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the waves, they shall not overflow thee." Therefore, well says David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." II. Metabus, King of the Volsci, was pursued by his enemies. He carried in his arms a little babe, his niece Camilla. In his flight he came to the brink of a river, deep, troubled, and strong in current, and it arrested his flight. He would not have been afraid of the stream himself, had it not been for the little child. He hesitated. What should he do? He dare not enter with the babe, as he must use both arms to battle through so strong a stream. The enemy

were behind. He heard their shouts! From a distant hill-top they had spied him. He could not find it in his heart to desert the little one whom he loved so dearly. Then, what do you suppose Metabus resorted to? There were a great many reeds by the river side, with his dagger he reaped them down, and he wrapped the babe up in rushes and reeds thickly round it, and tied them together with his girdle, and then he raised the little bundle in both his hands, and flung it with all his might across the river. After that he sprang into the water and swam across to the other side. He picked up the dear little bundle, took the child out, found it quite unharmed, and escaped with it lying next his heart. My Brethren! Is not this something like us? -- we may have our little ones, and be called on to part with them. There lies the river, the dark rolling river of death. We must cross sometime ourselves. Safety is yonder. Danger, destruction, here. In God's name, trusting in Him when He wills it, we part with those so dear to us. We wrap them up in their white wraps, and close them from sight in their coffin, and cast them away. They are gone -- over the river, and then we are ready in our turn to plunge in and follow. Now it is a great encouragement to us to follow when we know that those we love are passed and are in safety. You parents who have parted with your darlings, you have wrapped them up and cast them away. Whither? They have only flown across the river, and when you leap in and swim through, you will find them there -- your Camillas, safe and smiling on you, on the other side. CONCLUSION. -- Ah! my brethren, what a happy meeting that will be! Father, mother, brothers, sisters, children, whole families gathered together. What embraces! What tears of joy! What stories to tell of past troubles! What gratitude to God for his mercies shown! What thankfulness for His Ark that rested in the midst of Jordan, that supplied direction, sustenance, propitiation, comfort, and nourishment for the journey.

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