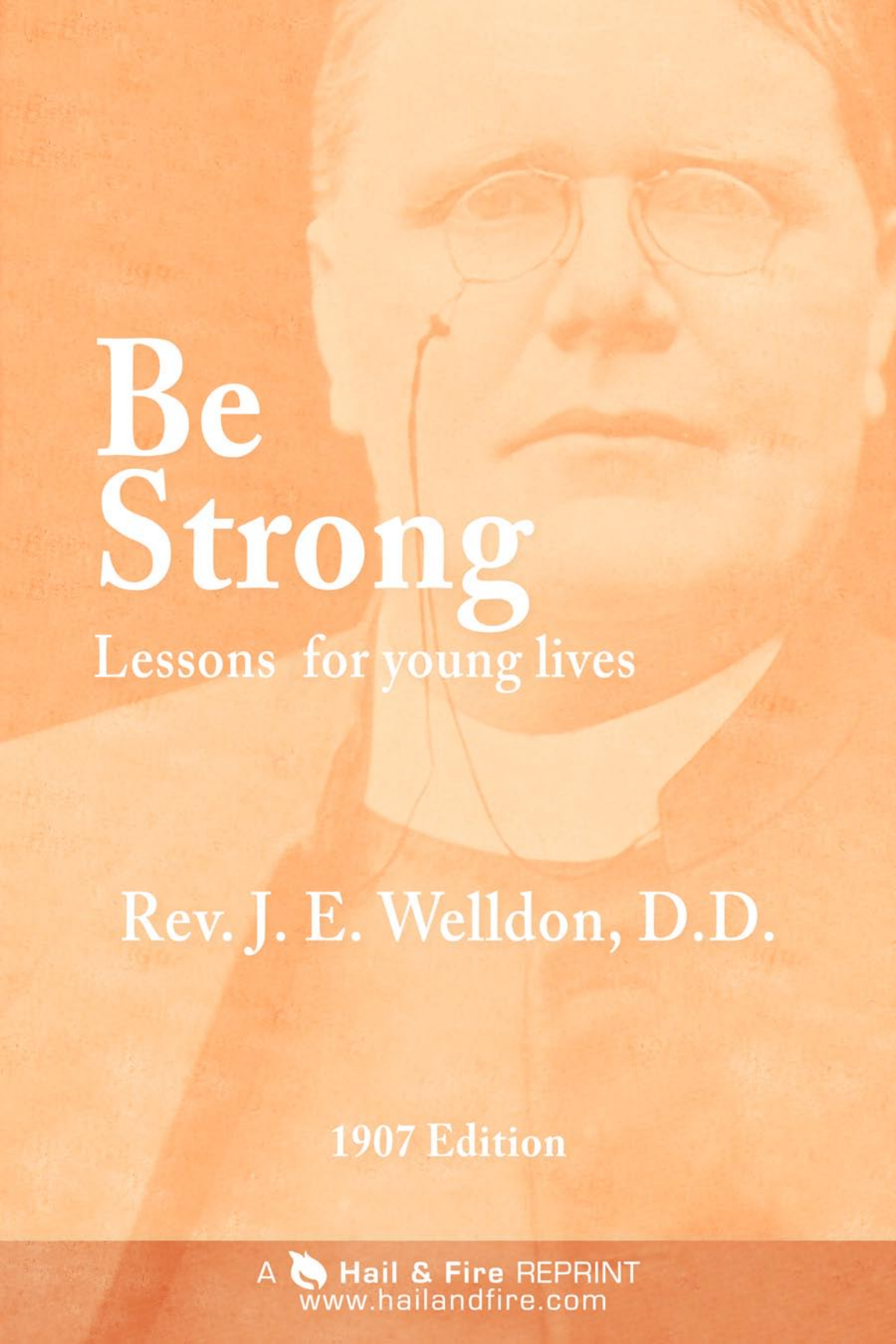

Be Strong

Lessons for young lives

Rev. J. E. Welldon, D.D.

1907 Edition

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PREFACE

to the Protestant Reprint of

"Be Strong, Lessons for Young Lives" by J. E. Welldon
(1907 Edition)

by Hail & Fire

PROTESTANT SERMONS & EXHORTATIONS

In this age of ecumenism, when the lines have been blurred between the two major denominations and the world itself speaks of the Pope as head of all Christians, we join with so many to call to remembrance the truth of the Gospel and of those who, in times past, both well-known and unknown, answered a good answer for a pure and Gospel faith against the traditions of men. The intention of Hail & Fire is to make available Gospel and Reformed Theology in the works, sermons, exhortations, prayers, and apologetics of those who have maintained the Gospel and expounded upon the Scripture as the Eternal Word of God and the sole authority in Christian doctrine.

BE STRONG

LESSONS FOR YOUNG LIVES

BY

THE RIGHT REV. J. E. C. WELLDON, D.D.

DEAN OF MANCHESTER; SOMETIME BISHOP OF CALCUTTA, AND FORMERLY HEAD-MASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL

LONDON

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

4 BOUVERIE STREET, AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD

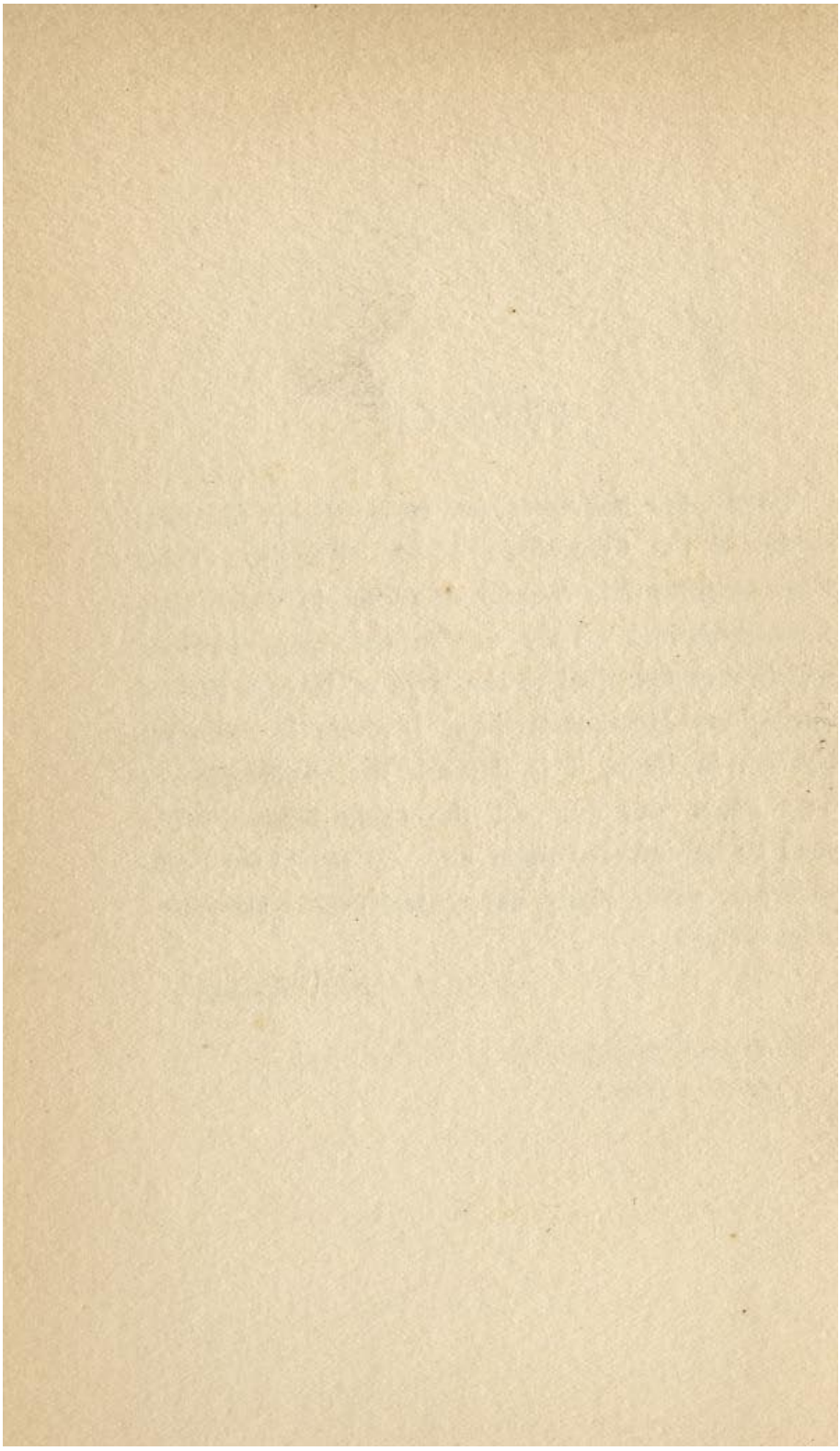
1907

PREFACE

THESE few addresses are reprinted, at the kind desire of the Committee of the Religious Tract Society, from *The Sunday at Home*, in which they were published. They are in the main sermons which were preached to the boys of Harrow School during my Headmastership. If there is some repetition in them, it is because the generations of boys come and go, and the same lessons often need to be enforced upon all. To me at least the addresses recall many happy and sacred memories of past days.

J. E. C. WELLDON.

The Deanery, Manchester.
January 3, 1907.



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BE STRONG

I

JUDAS ISCARIOT

'And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.'—MATT. x. 4.

YOU will, I think, remember my telling you that it would be my wish on certain Sundays of this Term to lay before you some few thoughts affecting the characters of the persons who may be said to play the principal parts in the Divine Tragedy. Holy Scripture is rich in characters, some good, some evil; and nowhere are the characters more striking than in the narrative of the Passion. In looking at them, we shall perhaps be able to learn some lessons for our own warning and instruction in life. We will not shrink from asking ourselves, Who were these persons? and why did they act so? and must we altogether condemn them for their action?

And if I take the name of the traitor Judas

first, it is because his part—the betrayal of our Lord—is a prelude to the Passion, and without him, as it seems, the Passion would not have happened as it did.

One thing, I am sure, must impress your minds, and that is that the Evangelists, although they tell the tale of Judas' treachery with awful directness, pass over the traitor himself without any bitter word. It is the most remarkable instance of that self-repression which marks the Gospels from the first page to the last. We can hardly think of him without a curse—the poet Dante places him alone in the ninth circle of Hell—but the Evangelists in speaking of him say only, 'And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed' Jesus. It is so during his life; it is so when he 'went and hanged himself' in remorse.

Our Lord Himself, who 'knew what was in man,' read the heart of Judas; it is clear that He did not trust him; but He never addressed one unkind word to him. He only gave him the sop at the Last Supper, saying, 'That thou doest, do quickly.' Nay, if I may use the language of a living poet,[1] He washed—

[1] The lines are those of Sir E. Arnold.

'the feet of all the twelve—even his
Who must betray Him—his stained with new dust
Of coming from the house of Caiaphas
And counting out the shekels.'

If there was any feeling in the traitor at all, he must have felt the silence of Christ.

But what name is there in all the world so black and base as 'traitor'? Some of us could bear to be called many bad names, I think, but not that. If any one were to use that name of us, we would give him the lie. We could commit—we are only too likely to commit—many offences; but we know in our hearts that we would not and could not betray our country or our cause. At Venice, in the palace where the portraits of the Doges—the representatives, as they were the authors, of the city's greatness—hang in a stately series, one space is empty, and in lieu of a portrait there is only the semblance of a black curtain that meets the eye. That curtain is a sign and record of a forfeited glorious name. One of the Doges, one alone—Marino Faliero—was found guilty of high treason against the State; he was beheaded, and his image and his memory were blotted out, as far as might be, from the minds of men.

But never is treachery so black a thing as

when the traitor has been the friend of him whom he betrays, and has received benefits, and those of the highest nature, from him, and has used the confidence reposed in him to achieve the traitorous deed. The words of the Psalmist, to which our Lord referred at the Last Supper, emphasise this fact. 'Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me.' The form of the betrayal—its secrecy, its hypocrisy, the profanation of the right of friendship—is as horrible as the traitor's act itself: 'Forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and kissed Him.'

There is not a boy who does not entirely loathe the Iscariot. And yet I wonder how many boys have ever asked themselves, What was his motive in betraying our Lord to death? He did it: he has earned himself eternal infamy by doing it; but why did he betray Him?

In my opinion, the character of Judas, or, as I will put it, the motive of Judas in betraying our Lord is one of the most difficult questions in all the strange and pathetic story of the Passion. It is so difficult that some high authorities, of whom I will mention Archbishop Whately as the most conspicuous, have held

that Judas did not intend to commit any very wicked action at all. But surely this view runs counter to the whole tone and tenour of the Sacred Story. Judas Iscariot stands out, not in the Creed of the Church only, but in the Gospels, as the arch-sinner, the very type and consummation of human wickedness. Of him our Lord employed those awful words which have never been used, nor ever may be used, of any one else: 'The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! *It had been good for that man if he had not been born.*' Is it conceivable that such words could apply to one who was not at heart a deep-dyed sinner, who was trying to do what he thought right, and only made a mistake as regards the time or manner of doing it, and who, as soon as he discovered his mistake, was overwhelmed with remorse for having made it? I cannot think so; I put the idea aside as incredible; I am convinced that he who betrayed the world's Saviour deserved the full measure of the condemnation passed upon him.

But let it be granted that the motive of Judas Iscariot in the betrayal of our Lord was, and could not but be, vile; it still remains

to ask what that motive was, and how it can be explained by the record of the Divine Life in the Gospels.

So far as I know, the motive of Judas in betraying our Lord has been generally interpreted by those who take a sinister view of it in one of two ways. It is sometimes said that he was ambitious, and that his *ambition* had been disappointed by the Person and Life of Christ. He had joined Him, believing that He would set up an earthly kingdom; he had hoped, when that kingdom was set up, to be one of its princes, and he was enraged by the thought that his portion in life was humility, poverty, contempt. It may have been so; he may have acted in revenge, but I will own I can hardly bring myself to believe that Judas, in becoming a disciple of the lowly Galilean Teacher, can have looked for a great position among men.

More often it is said that the cause of his treachery was *avarice*. I will admit that I think that is a truer view. I do not wish at all to put it aside. There are not wanting in the Gospels indications that the soul of Judas was cankered by that love of money which has been said to be, as indeed it is, 'a root of all

evil.' And may I pause here to say to you solemnly that, as I grow older, and as I see more of human beings, I feel ever more keenly the terribly demoralising power of avarice? I beg you, I beg you to fight against it when you possess property; and believe me that riches, unless you are watchful and conscientious in the use of them, tend infallibly to narrow and close the doors of the soul.

But to come back to Judas. It is curious to reflect what his thoughts must have been when he listened to our Lord's great words about the love of money. 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' 'The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches.' 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!' How these sayings must have burnt themselves into his dark soul! You will remember, too, the scene at Bethany, when Mary poured the box of ointment of spikenard upon Jesus' feet and Judas objected to the waste of it in the words: 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?' and St. John's comment that he so said, 'not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein'; you

cannot help feeling that his lust of money had made him a hypocrite and a thief. And, after all, did he not sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver, thirty shekels, less than £4? I do not deny that the soul of Judas was cankered with avarice. I only say that that is not in my opinion the full explanation of his treachery. I will try to set before you what I think it is. Only you will understand that I do not speak of it dogmatically; I do not wish you to take what I say without any question; I would much rather that you should read the story of the Gospels anew and judge it for yourselves.

I start with the assumption that Judas Iscariot was a very bad man. It seems impossible, in the face of the story, to make any other assumption than that. I do not deny that he may have experienced at some time, especially in his earlier life, visions of better things. It may have been so when he was called to be a disciple, and obeyed the call. But the vision, if it came to him at all, was not for long.

As a disciple, he lived every day in the society of One who was the revelation of Holiness and Love. He—the wicked man—was thrown into contact with Perfect Virtue. What was the

effect upon his character? I put it to myself in this way.

It is sometimes assumed that virtue is always attractive everywhere. But is it so? Are there not minds so dark, so foul, that when they see goodness, they try to defile it, and, if they cannot succeed in defiling it, hate and persecute it? Does he love virtue—the boy, if such there were, who would deliberately set himself to corrupt boys younger and more innocent than himself? Does he love virtue—the man who makes his boast of betraying and ruining and consigning to destruction the pure souls and bodies of the maidens who trusted him? Nay, to him virtue is not lovely, it is a reproach and an offence to him, he delights in violating its sanctity.

Now look with me for a moment at the case of Judas Iscariot. I believe that from the time when he entered the society of the Lord's disciples he began to hate Him for His holiness. The divine words which awoke the consciences of others stirred in him only bitter malignant feelings. He could not bear to look upon His deeds of mercy. He could not sit by and see Him honoured by the loving gratitude of the souls which He had saved. He felt for the

Saviour that very loathing which none can feel but such as have seen the vision of purity, and have turned their backs upon it and have committed that 'sin against the Holy Ghost' which, if it be anything, can be nothing else than the hatred of goodness just because it is so good. If this is a right view of Judas' character, then it is easy to understand what is told about him in the Gospels. Thus it was not, I think, only avarice—it was wicked hate—that made him complain so fiercely of the offering which Mary at Bethany lavished on her Lord. It was the infinite condescension of Christ in washing the disciples' feet and Judas' own, especially when it led up to the words: 'Ye are not all clean,' that goaded him to fury; and when he saw the loved disciple leaning on Jesus' breast, then 'Satan entered into him,' and after receiving the sop he 'went immediately out: and it was night.' Nor is there any other manner, so simple, of explaining the utter malice of the form by which he betrayed his Master; for it is clear that all he needed to do was to point Him out, he had no occasion to offer Him an embrace, and yet 'he came to Jesus,' as you all know, 'and said, Hail Master, and kissed Him.'

For you must remember, in elucidation of Judas' action, that not only was he faithless to Christ from the first, but Christ penetrated the secret of his infidelity. St. John says expressly that 'Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray Him.' Nobody else, perhaps, understood the words: 'Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?'; but Judas understood them. Nobody else knew the meaning of the words, 'That thou doest, do quickly;' but he knew. Month after month the traitor moved in the presence of One who was kind to him and gracious, and whom he purposed to betray, and he felt in his soul that all his thoughts were open to the All-searching Eye which looked upon him with such an infinite pathos of pity.

That is the view which I take of the traitor and of his treachery. There are no words for it better than these: 'Satan entered into him.' And I believe that, when his awful work had been done, the revelation of his sin, his shame and his failure, flashed upon his soul, and he 'departed and went and hanged himself.'

Has this black story no solemn lesson for us? It is the story of a traitor's doom. It

fills the spirit of every one of us with a passionate loathing of treachery.

I will not say that any boy is a traitor. I will not suppose that any boy is a traitor. But this I will say, that, if a boy should ever live constantly and consciously a double life, if he should pretend to be one thing and in heart should be another, if he should hide a guilty soul behind a virtuous face, if he should associate with his companions here and betray their confidences, if he should accept from masters and boys praises, honours, thanks, which, if they knew the truth about him, would be turned into reproaches and rebukes, then that boy, whoever he may be, would in his measure be imitating the example of him who betrayed the Lord of Mercy to His death.

And that boy, whoever he may be, will in the sad Scriptural words, 'go to his own place.' He will injure the school, but from that injury the school will recover. But *he* will not recover. His name will be blotted out of the book of remembrance. Another shall do what he might have done. Another shall be what he ought to have been. And though he repent, he shall be impotent to undo the evil of a fatal treacherous life. He shall fall by his transgression.

He shall forfeit his high privilege. Another—a better boy—shall succeed to it. 'And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.'

II

PONTIUS PILATE

'And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. —LUKE xxiii. 24.

IN my last sermon I was speaking about a very bad man—Judas Iscariot. If I was right in my interpretation of his treachery, then it may be said of him that he committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, which they alone commit who look upon the face of goodness and turn away from it and call it a vile thing. 'It had been good for that man if he had not been born.'

And yet the strange thing in the Passion of the Lord is that the man who was directly responsible for it was not that very bad man. Judas Iscariot could be false to the trust reposed in him. He could hate the Holy and Pure One. He could guide the priests and elders to arrest Him in the night as He knelt among the olives. He could give Him the poisoned kiss. But that was all;

there his power ceased; he could do no more; you hear no more of Judas, except that he repented and cast down the money in the temple and went and hanged himself.

But you hear that the Lord 'suffered under Pontius Pilate.' Week after week, year after year, the Church connects the name of Pilate with the deed from which the heaven hid its face. If the traitor passes into the darkness, the judge stands ever in the light of infamy. It is Pilate who questioned the Divine Prisoner about His kingdom. It is Pilate who confessed His innocence and pronounced Him guilty. It is Pilate who stood out for a while, but only for a while, against the clamorous voices of an angry virulent mob. And it was Pilate who at the last 'gave sentence that it should be as they required.'

What kind of man was Pontius Pilate?

Not a bad man, I say, yet he did what was infinitely bad. The worst deeds on earth, alas! have frequently been wrought by those who are not the worst men.

I am going to speak to you concerning Pontius Pilate. He was in no sense, so far as I can see, an exceptional man. Nor was his position in any sense exceptional. He was

procurator or lieutenant-governor of Judæa. There had been five such procurators before him. He was the sixth. To any one of them might have happened what happened to him. Any one of them might have been called, in the course of his duty, to try a prisoner accused of treasonable conduct. Pilate *was* called. He is the perpetual witness that every one of us who are here to-day may be placed—I do not say he will be, but he may—in such a position as tests and proves what stuff he is made of, and stamps him once and for ever with a symbol of honour or else with a brand of infamy. Pilate might have so acted that his name would have been the treasured heirloom of humanity. How different was his action! how different his fate! And yet he was not a pre-eminently bad man.

Between Judas and Pilate, as I think, 'a great gulf' yawns. Our Lord Himself perhaps distinguishes them, when He says, 'He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.'

It seems to me, then, that the character of Pilate, if considered in the light of profane as well as sacred history, exhibits three special features which account for his conduct.

He was a *worldly* man. He was a man

of the world, and like all such men, he made the mistake of neglecting or disparaging other people's religious sentiments. He was always doing things—the Jewish historian Josephus gives an account of them—which roused the Jews, whom he was set to govern, to exasperation; then he made fun of their spirit, then he thought to put it down by a display of force, then he failed, and at last he gave way. That was Pilate's mistake, and it is the mistake of every worldly man, who, as he is devoid of strong religious feeling himself, cannot realise that for them in whom it exists it is the supreme overpowering motive in life.

Pilate, again, was a *selfish* man. He thought of himself—of his own position, his own profit. He had no thought of principle. He saw what was right, and he was not unwilling to do it. But if to do right was to lose his office, then he would do wrong. He would sacrifice conscience for convenience. His cunning persecutors knew his weak place and touched it mercilessly when they said: 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.' What a strange satire it is upon human ambition that this very man, not

so long after the Lord's death, should have forfeited the imperial favour and have been banished to Vienne in France and there have made an end of himself, as Eusebius tells, 'worn out with calamities'!

And, lastly, Pilate was a *weak* man. His every act, his every word is a sign of weakness. A strong man, when an important case comes before him, weighs it deliberately, makes up his mind upon it, says what he will do —and never changes. Pilate changed from minute to minute, wishing to save Jesus, wishing to satisfy the mob that clamoured for His death, wishing to do right yet shrinking from the cost of doing it, hating himself for what he did and doing it all the same. I know no such pitiable instance of weakness in all human history as Pontius Pilate.

Does somebody say a man like Pilate—worldly, selfish, weak as he was—was a pre-eminently bad man?

I am not so sure.

Are we all so unworldly? Is it so clear that we are all superior to the temptations and attractions of the world?

Are we all so unselfish? Do we never think of our own interests when we ought to think

of God? Have we never made a sacrifice of principle for some passing earthly good?

Are we all so strong? Are there no weak boys here? It is not long since a boy, who had got into some trouble, said to me, 'Please, sir, I am so weak.' And, if we do not all say that, have we not all good cause to say it?

And yet are we all bad boys or men—bad as Judas was bad? God forbid; oh! God forbid!

We will look a little further into the character of Pontius Pilate. He was procurator, I have said, of Judæa. It was his duty to keep order. In the religious beliefs or divisions of the Jews he felt no concern. But as a Roman governor he would not countenance a breach of the peace. He was in the habit, therefore, as other procurators had been before him, of leaving his habitual place of residence—Cæsarea Philippi—at the seasons of the great Jewish festivals and living in Jerusalem until they were over. It was in the spring of the year 30 A.D. that he drove from Cæsarea to Jerusalem to be present at the annual Passover. He would have been surprised if any one had told him on the drive that he was going to any special or permanent experience. At Jeru-

salem he took up his abode in the palace of Herod—his official residence. He meant to stay there a few days. He thought the Passover would soon expire and he would go back to Cæsarea.

You will not be far wrong if you imagine that Pontius Pilate was aroused, perhaps from sleep, about five o'clock one spring morning, by the news that a great crowd of Jews had congregated outside the palace and were clamouring loudly, calling for his presence. They would not come into the palace, but remained outside it; for if they had entered a house containing any leaven, they would have been ceremonially defiled, and it would have been impossible for them to eat the Passover. So Pilate was obliged to 'go out,' *i. e.* outside the palace, to see them.

What did he see? A crowd of priests and members of the Sanhedrin, and the mob at their heels, perhaps a guard of Roman soldiers, and in the midst a prisoner, clad in a seamless robe, with the fetters on his hands. He was probably in a bitter mood; at all events he addressed them in the few formal words: 'What is the charge you bring against this man?' The question took them by surprise.

They had not expected the procurator to ask what wrong the prisoner had done. They were disappointed that he did not condemn him at once. All they could do was to mutter, 'He is a malefactor; if he were not, we would not have delivered him to thee.' Pilate saw his chance of getting quit of responsibility; he said, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your own law.' But there was a difficulty. For the Jews wanted sentence of death, and that was a sentence which they could not pronounce, but the procurator could. Pilate must have known it; perhaps he chose to humiliate the Jews by reminding them that it was so. Anyhow their answer was, 'It is not lawful for us to put any one to death.'

The scene is changed; it is now the inside of the palace; Pilate and his prisoner are standing face to face. The feeling which rises in Pilate's mind is one of surprise; he looks at the prisoner; he cannot believe that this is the man who claims a kingdom. '*Thou*,' he says, 'art *thou* the King of the Jews?—a man like thee, poor, helpless and forlorn, dost thou presume to call thyself a king?'

It is not my purpose to enter into the Lord's confession touching His kingdom, or even into

Pilate's question—cynical as I conceive it to be. 'Don't talk to me about truth. What is truth?' What I want you to see is that Pilate after this private examination of our Lord, believed in His innocence. His language is this: 'I find no fault in Him at all.' He was, as Tertullian says, *iam pro conscientia sua Christianus.* That belief was his to the end, but he was not true to it.

He went outside the palace again. The crowd was still there, clamouring for blood. He tried to pacify them by giving them something that they did not want. It was the Passover, and there was an old custom that the Roman governor should celebrate it by setting some prisoner free. What a happy thought if the prisoner should be Jesus! 'Is it your pleasure,' he says, 'that I should release unto you the King of the Jews—your own King?' Then cried they all again, saying, 'Not this man, but Barabbas'—Jesus Barabbas, if that was his real name—Barabbas, the robber.

I still follow the narrative of St. John.

Pilate had failed in his cunning appeal to the religious sentiment of the Passover.

He tried something else.

He had not the courage to say *No* to the

no one here who, in doing wrong, has said the same?—'I did not do it; I am not to blame for it; it was somebody else.' 'Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.' What an excuse! 'You may kill Him, for I think Him innocent.'

Look at him now running back again into the prætorium, struck with terror at the thought that his prisoner might be Divine, asking, 'Whence art thou?' threatening, cajoling Him, trying more than ever to release Him, but baulked by the fear of losing the imperial favour which was the breath of his life. 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend.'

At last he took his seat on the judicial bench. It was about half-past six o'clock. Then, perhaps, if not earlier, came the message of his wife bidding him have nothing to do with the Just One, for she had 'suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.' Still he hesitated. He was torn asunder. You see him taking water and washing his hands in the sight of the crowd, to show his innocence of the deed that was being done. What was the good of his washing his hands, if he could not wash his heart? He listened to the

cry that arose, 'Crucify.' He looked upon the raging mob before him. He knew that their demand was wicked. Yet he yielded to it. 'And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.' 'Then delivered he Him unto them to be crucified.'

My boys, I have told you the story. And now I draw from it this lesson:

Weakness is fatal. Don't be weak. The weak may do worse things than the wicked. When evil offers itself to you, say *No*—say it and stick to it. It is the first concession that is so serious. So long as you are on the level ground, it is well with you; but if once you begin to slip, it is terribly hard to stop yourself.

And weakness is never so fatal as when it is shown in obedience to a popular clamour. This is the age of democracy. It is the fashion to make a conscience of the popular will. I do not disparage the voice of the people. I believe in it. But the need of the people is not that men should obey their will, it is rather that men should tell them where their will is wrong.

And because that is so, I leave with you the thought that the greatest crime in history—the

crime at which the heaven grew pale—was wrought by one who knew the right and had not the courage to do it, and who 'gave sentence' against his own conscience, 'that it should be as the people required.'

That man was Pontius Pilate.

III

'THE SON OF GOD'

'And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.'—MARK xv. 39.

THE Crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the central fact of human history. At the foot of the Cross are gathered all the hopes and awes, the prophecies and realisations, the yearnings, agonies, and satisfactions of Humanity. There is no Saviour of the world —or it is He, the 'nailed, thorn-crownèd Man' who hangs thereon.

In speaking of Him, my boys, I beg you to understand that no doubt exists—not the slightest, as to the charge on which He was put to death. His persecutors were the Jews —not the Romans, but the Jews and especially the chief priests and the elders, and the members of the Sanhedrin, who were Sadducees. They persecuted Him because He claimed to be the Messiah and, as such, to be a Divine

it may be untrue, but there is not the shadow of a doubt that He made it and that the consequence of His making it was His death. What then was His answer?

I give it you in His own words. The high priest had asked Him with the most terrible solemnity, 'adjuring Him by the living God,' to say whether He was 'the Christ, the Son of God.' And this is what He replies: 'Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said,' *i.e.* 'Yes, I am' (according to the Hebrew idiom), 'nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' It is an answer as clear as the day; the high priest understood it for he 'rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy;' the people understood it, for 'they said, He is guilty of death.' It was for that answer, for that assertion of Divine Messiahship—for that, and for nothing but that—that Jesus Christ went to His Cross upon Calvary.

My boys, Jesus Christ was the author of the most exalted morality that the world has ever seen or can ever see. Of that morality the greatest writer[1] in the past century—himself

[1] Goethe.

in no strict sense a Christian—said, 'Let mental culture go on advancing, let science go on gaining in depth and breadth, and the human intellect expand as it may, it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity as it shines forth in the Gospels.' And of this morality the special feature is that it was exemplified, not in a code or sermon only, but in a life. Christianity is Christ. It is the supreme religion because He is the Supreme Man. It can never die because He is in His Nature immortal.

If there was one virtue which Jesus Christ in His life emphasised, it was truth. He said of Himself, as you remember, 'I am the Truth.' He came to create, and in fact He has created, a new conception of veracity in men's minds. Truth was the essence of His character, the seal of His doctrine. 'To this end was I born,' He said to Pilate in the Trial Scene which I tried to depict in my last sermon, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.'

Jesus Christ then, being the Truth and speaking the truth, in the hour when the

shadow of death solemnises and sanctifies the hearts even of flippant men, claimed expressly to be Himself the Son of God.

There is, I say, no doubt that He made that claim. I have not a shadow of doubt that He made it. For the whole story of His life—His unique Personality, His Divine Mission, His self-assertion, the hostility of the Jews to Him, His sacrifice upon Calvary—becomes unintelligible unless He was good and put forward His goodness as a proof of His Divinity, and was rejected by those who sinned against the light; and in making that claim He did but repeat the august testimony which He bore to Himself in the memorable scene at Cæsarea Philippi, when He asked His disciples whom they believed Him to be, and Peter answered, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' and He not only accepted that belief, but pronounced upon it the emphatic benediction of the words, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven.'

My boys, in the world into which you will pass in a few years, the question which you will be asked, or it will be necessary for you to

ask yourselves, is this—Did Jesus Christ, when He so spake of Himself, speak the truth? I do not know what your answer will be. I pray with all my heart that you may believe His word. I do not think He could have told a lie. I would rather trust Him than any one else. If there is one man whom it were well to follow in life and in death—one man among the whole wide human family—it is He.

But you must answer that question for yourselves. All that I can do, speaking as His minister in His Name, is to try to make your answer a little easier.

And after all, what help can any one give to young eager souls better than in telling them what he himself believes? I do not ask you to follow my belief. I hope you will not follow it in after-days unless your intelligence and your conscience approve it. But it is my right —it is my privilege—it is my duty to lay it before you.

I believe then that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. I do not greatly concern myself with questions relating to His essential Nature. Such questions when debated by theologians, seem to me to result in a controversy in which the zeal is too often only proportionate to the

ignorance — what the ecclesiastical historian Socrates, if I remember, calls a νυκτομαχία or 'a battle in the night.' For as soon as you come to terms like 'substance,' 'person,' 'generation,' 'procession,' you are moving in an elevated region where the mind of man does not breathe freely; you are trying to express in human language what in its nature is inexpressible, as being transcendent, superhuman, Divine. History, I sometimes say, is a warning against definitions, and of all definitions none are so inadequate as those which touch the being of the Infinite. The creed which I put before you as necessary is simple.

I believe that it was the merciful will of God to teach man, in the fulness of time, truths unattainable by the common human faculties. I believe that for that purpose He sent into the world One for whose Advent all human history had been a preparation — One who stood in a more intimate relation to Himself than any child of earth has ever stood, One who is most properly designated the Messiah. I believe that it is impossible to interpret the Life and Person of Jesus Christ within the narrow limitations of humanity. I have read, I think, almost every biography of Christ

which shows Him as a man, like you, my boys, and like me, and I say emphatically that every one of them is a failure. The words of the Gospel are still true as ever they were: 'Never man spake like this man.' And believing Jesus Christ to have been in His Nature higher than man, I believe—or it seems to me not improbable—that in His manner of entering the world, and in His manner of departing from it, He was distinguished from men. For if it is natural to men when they are buried to lie in the grave, it may be not less natural for One who is higher than man to rise into life.

It seems to me, further, that Jesus Christ was destined in the order of Providence to appeal to the conscience of Humanity by awakening the sentiments of mercy, gratitude, compassion, and repentance. He could do so no otherwise than as a Sufferer. It was His will—His election—to suffer. All the pathos, all the impressiveness of His sufferings disappear if He could not help the fate which fell upon Him; it is turned into farce, or worse than a farce, if He suffered, and deserved to suffer, for a lie. It was because He might have avoided suffering and choose rather

to endure it—because He might have employed for Himself the miraculous powers which He employed so freely for others—because the legions of angels would have come at His call, and He did not call them, that His suffering 'for us and for our salvation' has enthralled the world.

In the hour of His Passion, and of His death, He stood unmoved. He faltered not in His assertion of His Divine Nature. He claimed to be the Judge of quick and dead. If for one moment a passing despondency veiled His soul, it was but as the cloud that flits across the face of the sun; then the sun shone out in its strength. Of the sayings from the Cross there are two which, if they be rightly recorded, evidence the perfection of His moral Being and His complete and righteous harmony with the Will of God. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' Such He was, and I believe that from this earth He ascended to heaven and sits on the right hand of God. And I believe that that

> 'one far-off divine event
> To which the whole Creation moves'

is none other than His Advent in glory the consummation of His divine and eternal kingdom.

That is my faith; and can I hold it, my boys, and count it more precious even than life, and not desire with an exceeding desire that you should believe it too?

Oh! that we may be one—if in nought else, yet in divine faith. Oh! that we may agree in looking up to Him—the Crucified on Calvary—as our Master, our Redeemer, our Lord. And oh! that as we look, like the centurion of old, upon His Cross, as we see Him yielding up His pure soul to His heavenly Father, it may by the divine grace be given us to say from our hearts, 'Truly this man was the Son of God.'

IV

THE ENEMIES OF THE LORD

'Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death.'—JOHN xi. 53.

THE death of Jesus Christ presents two aspects. It was the consummation of God's purpose for the redemption of the whole human family. But it was also an event in human history; and, like every other such event, it had its causes and consequences, and can be traced from its beginning to its end. We believe that, when the Saviour hung on Calvary, the angels of God bowed their heads in adoration. But we believe that the world of men went on its way, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, as though that were only a common day like other days. The historian Tacitus, being led to speak of Christianity, in his account of the fire at Rome in Nero's reign, uses just these casual words, as some of you know: 'The Christians derived their name from a certain Christus who was

put to death in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius by order of the procurator, Pontius Pilate.' It would have seemed incredible to Tacitus, could any one have told him that these would one day be the most interesting words in his history.

Apart, then, from any theological view of Christ's death, it is possible to ask, Why did He die? How did His death come to pass? If He was a good man, and did good to others, and revealed the love of God for human souls, why was He crucified? Why did men hate Him so? Why did not they let Him live out His days and die peacefully? These are the questions which I will try to answer in this sermon.

Perhaps the answer will show us something of human nature. For I dare say the thought occurs to us all at some time, 'Oh, if we could have lived when the Lord Jesus Christ was living on the earth; could we have seen Him, could we have hung upon His words, could we have been with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Holy City, and amidst the olives of Gethsemane, then how easy had been our faith, and how delightful!'

But will you suffer me to tell you once for

all that this is not so? If you do not love Him now, you would not have loved Him then. A miracle has no intrinsic power to work conversion; it is almost always easy to explain away a miracle. Christ Himself said of His contemporaries in the parable, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' To live with the Holy One is not itself a surety for holiness. The manifestation of the Divine Life does not win all men; it rather distinguishes them and shows them in their true colours; it makes the good better, but it makes the bad worse. This is the lesson which I find on every page of the Gospels, and nowhere so clearly as at the end. For as that Divine Life in its last scenes shows more Divinely, so the powers of evil deepen and darken around it. The setting sun looms larger and more lustrous, but the storm-clouds are gathered about it. He says Himself, as you remember, to His enemies: 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.'

Let me show you how truly this is the case. You know that in the tragedy of Christ's Passion a good many different actors played their parts. There was the Roman procurator

who by his conduct that day has earned an immortality of shame; for we never come into Church and repeat the Creed, but we say that He 'suffered under Pontius Pilate.' There was Judas Iscariot 'who also was the traitor,' as the Evangelists all say with such deep meaning, and he, too, is pre-eminent in his shame; for when Dante, in the imagination of his great poem went down into Hell, he saw there in the ring of the last circle the company of those who had been guilty of betraying their benefactors and, in the midst of them, in the most bitter suffering, him who had betrayed the greatest Benefactor of all, the traitor Judas.

But it is clear, I think, that the real authors of Christ's death were not Pilate nor Judas, but other people. It was the chief priests and the Pharisees, as St. John says in the text, who 'took counsel together for to put Him to death.' Like so many other people who do wrong they tried to justify themselves to their own consciences; they assumed a political, and, indeed, a patriotic tone; they said: 'If we let Him thus alone, the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.' That is not a very good reason for

have called the Prince of Life a liar. But I cannot read the story of these Pharisees without seeing that it is possible to get into a state in which you do not love virtue when you see it, but only hate it, in which you may call good evil and evil good and in which, when the Saviour casts out the devils from human souls, you may say of Him, 'He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.' This is the state to which any one of us may come; and I think it is the one unpardonable sin—to look upon holiness, whoever displays it, and then to declare that the holiness is the work of the Evil One.

It is the peculiar interest of St. John's Gospel that it discloses the steps by which the enemies of Christ came to that state. Time would fail me to examine them completely; but I choose three scenes which will be striking, and you will see how they illustrate my meaning.

The first occurs in the eighth chapter, and I do not for a moment doubt that it is true, although the authority of the best manuscripts is wanting to it. Jesus is standing in the temple in the early morning. The scribes and Pharisees come hurrying into His presence a sinful woman who has been captured in her

sin. What should they do with her? Should they stone her, as Moses commanded, or should they not? You know the story. 'Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.' I cannot tell you why; a modern writer[1] thinks that He was 'seized with an intolerable sense of shame;' but I would rather say that He meant to show he would not pay any heed to such a question so put to Him.

Then at last, as they kept questioning Him, He raised Himself up and said: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.' 'And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last.' Jesus and the woman were left alone. *Relicti sunt duo*, says St. Augustine, *misera et misericordia*. 'Two persons were left; that pitiable woman and that Incarnate Pity.' Then He raised Himself again. He said: 'Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.' But now think; Jesus had revealed to the Pharisees a holy compassion of which until then they had never

[1] The author of *Ecce Homo*.

the Son of Man'). He answered, 'Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?' 'And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.' It was worth while methinks to be excommunicated by the Pharisees for that one sentence of the Lord.

But I want you to notice in all this story how hard their hearts were, how resolutely they set themselves against the truth, how their hatred of Christ swelled and festered in the presence of the loving power which they could not deny. It is an awful testimony to the wickedness of human nature; and there is none of us who does not need to pray that he may be ever kept in the love of goodness wherever he sees it. For it was because man did not love goodness that the Saviour died on Calvary. For 'this is the condemnation, that light is come unto the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'

So the storm draws nearer and nearer.

There remains but one scene more, and with it I close. The story of the raising of Lazarus is so pathetic that it is difficult to read it now without tears.

We seem to stand so close to the after-world.

The human pity and the Divine Power blend so tenderly. What would we not (as the poet[1] says) give for an hour of converse with the risen Lazarus? But it might not be.

'Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not, or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.'

But what was the part of the Pharisees in view of that miracle? They did not deny it. They did not dispute it. But 'from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death.' I can add nothing to the awful purport of these words. There must be others, as I said, who should bear a part in that tragedy. There must be the false disciple who would betray his Lord for money. There must be the unjust judge who, for fear of a popular clamour, would pronounce sentence of death upon the innocent. There must be the unhappy ignorant people who would cry, 'Not this man, but Barabbas.' But from the moment when the chief priests and Pharisees took that counsel the death of Christ was doomed. It was the work of a religious faction hiding its face from the revelation of a new and sacred truth.

[1] Tennyson.

What is the lesson of it all for you and for me? Is it not this, that above all other duties is the duty which we owe to the truth? Is it not this, that there is no sin so great as that of seeing the Divine Light and turning away from it?

I know not what the future may have in store for you. We live in difficult days. The faith of ages is fading away in many hearts. It is my deep desire that you should be Christ's disciples. If any word of mine should ever help you to trust in Him, it would be an intense joy to me to have spoken it. But looking into the days which yet shall be, and deeply feeling that God has ever new revelations for human souls, I dare not give you other counsel than this: 'Whatever it is that He shows you to be true, follow that.' Only be careful that you seek the truth earnestly, so earnestly that, if the need were, you would die for it. For then, I think—I humbly hope—that above the stress of life's difficulties and contradictions and despairs, you shall hear, and hearing shall obey, the voice which says not only, 'I am the way or 'the life,' but 'I am the truth.'

V

THE FRIENDSHIP OF PILATE AND HEROD

'And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.' —LUKE xxiii. 12.

WHEN we read in this passage of 'the same day,' or, as it is in the Revised Version, 'that very day,' it is natural to ask what the day was. It was a day unlike all other days in the world's history. For on that day the Son of God was crucified. The sun was darkened on that day, and the earth quaked, and the veil in the temple before the Holy of Holies was rent in two parts, and the Roman centurion, standing by the Cross, said, in his awe, 'Truly this was the Son of God.' But amidst it all the Evangelist is careful to tell that, 'the same day,' 'that very day,' two men became friends.

You know, I dare say—you have just heard —who those two men were.

One of them, Pontius Pilate, was a coward, I do not say he was a pre-eminently bad man. It is difficult, I think, to read the story of the Passion and not feel some sympathy with Pilate. He believed in our Lord's innocence. He would have liked to save Him if he could. He did not want to put Him to death. He wanted to save Him, to let Him be insulted, scourged, kept in prison, but not put to death, if the priests and the people would be content with anything short of that. Only he was a man who could not say *No*, or could not say it as if he meant it and would rather lose all than not say it when he knew it to be right. And so at last he said *Yes;* he 'gave sentence that it should be as they required.' He ought to have said *No*, but he said *Yes*. Oh! how many, many of us are like Pilate! I cannot hear the words, so often recited in church, 'Jesus Christ . . . who suffered under Pontius Pilate,' but I think of the boys who cannot and do not say *No*.

That was one man; and the other—Herod Antipas—was a scoffer. He was a wicked man, living in sin. He had no thought for our Lord, except to make fun of Him. He laughed at His goodness, His innocence. It is written

that 'he set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate.'

Is there any one—any man, any boy—who has been, I will not say weak and sinful perhaps himself—for we are all weak and the best of us may fall into sin, and it is not so much a question about us all whether we sin as whether our hearts are sorry and penitent, when we have sinned—but is there any one who makes fun of goodness and sneers at it and tries to defame it, to whom it is an object not of admiration but of low and ribald mockery? Then he is like Herod; upon him lies the guilt of the evil which follows.

Yet 'the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together.' They stand out in the Bible as the typical pair of bad friends, and I am going to take the instance of their friendship as a means of warning you with all my heart against bad friends.

This is a deeply important subject. For the good or evil of your lives, those lives which God has willed to be so bright, is dependent chiefly, not upon the games you play or the lessons you do, or even the solemn services held in the School Chapel, though I hope you

value them and the words there spoken to you; it depends above all, I think, on the friendships you make.

Just think what happens when a boy begins his life at School. He feels strange, perhaps, and lonely; he was never there before; it is all unknown to him; the faces of masters and boys pass before him and he cannot tell one of them; he does not know where to go or what to do; he has nobody to speak to. But after a little while his loneliness ceases; there is somebody whom he gets to know in his room or his form—another boy who is not new, as he is, but has been here before and can tell him what is the order of daily life here. You are not unaware what an advantage the experience of even one term gives you over a new boy and how you can help him, if you will, and save him from mistakes. So it comes about that the two boys make friends; they ripen in intimacy, and ripen almost without their knowing it, and they have hardly realised how much they are one to another before somebody says of them, 'They are always together; they are inseparable.' But, perhaps, as the years proceed the friendship continues, until it becomes that most beautiful thing, a friendship

for life, with deep roots in early boyhood and fair flowers opening in the sunlight of after-years to heaven. Or they make other friends as true and as precious as these, and they too are dear to them and raise and purify their lives and render them holy.

Who is there that does not know he is the better for such a friendship as this? It is a priceless blessing; it is a boon—like beauty, like music—which God reserves, as it were, in His own keeping and does not let men gain by industry or effort. May He vouchsafe it to you, my boys, and make you worthy of it!

But, suppose the friendship you form is of another kind. Suppose the boy who seeks you as a friend asks you to do evil, and you do not refuse it; or first refuse and then consent, as happens so often; and the tie which unites you is not then open or honourable any more, but is a secret of which you would not like to tell your father or mother or even the boys whom you respect most in the school. Suppose he wants you to do what you have never done before and know you ought not to do and you do it—it is the first time, but alas! it is not the last—and at night, when all is still, you say your prayers, not quite so happily

as of old, or lie awake and wish you had been stronger than you were and had said *No*, and pray that to-morrow may not find you weaker still. Ah! my boys, do not forget the sacred words, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.'

For bad boys may, in a sense, be friends as well as good. There is a sense in which virtue is attractive to virtue and vice to vice. You know quite well that, if you are sinning, I mean sinning wilfully, you do not feel happy in the presence of the good; you would rather get rid of them; you are conscious of a certain hypocrisy in talking to them, as if you cared for what they cared for, when all the while you are just undoing the work that they are trying to do, and so your one sin soon drives you into the company of the sinners. Heaven is heaven because it is the home of the heavenly-minded, and hell is hell because they who are found in it have hearts as dark as the grave. We like what we are ourselves like; we cannot like what is alien from ourselves. And so it is that I have sometimes said to boys as a test of sincerity

or virtue, Ask yourselves the simple question, If Jesus Christ were to come into your house, into your own room, where you are sitting, and if He were to say to you, 'It is I,' would you be glad? For a bad friendship is quite a different thing from a good one. 'Pilate and Herod were made friends together' on the day of Christ's crucifixion; but they were not such friends as you, I hope, will be one to another.

It seems to me from the story of their sudden friendship that, when two people become friends, and one of them is worse than the other, the other does not make him better, but he makes the other worse. Pilate was not, I think, so bad a man as Herod. But it was Pilate who gave the order for our Lord's death. When Pilate sent Him to Herod, he said to the chief priests and to the people, 'I find no fault in this man.' He seems to have caught at the chance of sending Him to Herod, as if he would be himself relieved from the responsibility of speaking the irrevocable word which his conscience forebade. But Herod 'sent Him again to Pilate,' and then Pilate was ready to chastise Him and put Him to death.

Is there a boy who is thinking that he need not be careful about the friends he makes at school? Does any one think he can live on good terms with the wicked and not be wicked himself, and that it does not matter if he sits by while virtue is laughed at, and words that should not be said are spoken and deeds that should not so much as be thought of are done? Will he not remember that the cost of friendship between Pilate and Herod was the blood-shedding of the Son of God on Calvary? Will he not say within his heart that, come what may, he will not be guilty of 'crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame'? For bad friends are the foes of Jesus Christ. When they consent together to do evil, they wound His sacred heart anew. Oh! if Pilate had had the courage to say to Herod, or Herod to Pilate, 'We will not do wrong, we will not slay the Holy One,' then the deed of shame might have been stayed; but they said it not, and the Son of God was crucified.

It was that deed of shame which made the bad men friends. But the bad are not friends truly; they do not know what friendship is. If you have a good friend, he will 'stick closer

than a brother.' But if you have a bad friend, he will betray you when you need him most. Have you not seen how they who have been partners in evil, as soon as it is found out and they stand face to face with the consequences of it, are apt to turn informers one against another?

And why is it so? Because they do not respect each other. Their friendship is not strengthened and certified by the bonds of loving trust. You have seen a boy do—shall I say?—what is shabby and base. You have seen him act a false part behind the back of a boy or a master. It may be you have consented or aided in his so acting. But how do you know he would not play you false?—how does he know you would not play him false—in after-time? He who has done one shabby act will do another. If he has deceived somebody else, he will deceive you. I know that boys will now and then admire and applaud sharp conduct though it be dishonourable, and call it fine and wish they could emulate it. But I like the story of Phocion who would not smile, when king Antipater essayed to please him by telling him of some unworthy action that he had

done, but showed his dislike of it, saying, 'I cannot be your flatterer and your *friend.*'

And may I not say to you, The text suggests to me that in making bad friends there is always one price you pay, whether you think of it or not, and that is the sacrifice of Christ Himself?

In doing wrong to yourselves—wrong to one another—you are injuring Him. For when you do wrong, you become, or tend to become—what is so terrible—'enemies of the Cross of Christ.' And when you do good, and try to do it with all your hearts, then He says, 'I have called you friends.'

It often seems to me that the only way in which we can be true friends one of another is to be friends of Jesus Christ. Shall I tell you how in my own mind I imagine such a friendship sanctified, as it may be, by His blessing?

I think of two boys who were strangers until yesterday, and now are drawn together by the sympathy of love; they are not distant or reserved any more, but they talk freely—more and more freely as the weeks pass—about their homes and families, and the special interests of their lives; they go out for walks together in the summer evenings, which are so

beautiful, and discuss the events of the School, or perhaps anticipate what they will be when they are grown up. I would even hope that they form a resolve, and pledge each other, to do some good in the world, if God shall spare them to be men; they read books together sometimes, and talk about them, and most of all the best of books—the Bible. Sometimes, too, they kneel together at yonder Table in the divine memorial of the Saviour's death; and each of them, as he kneels, will pray for his own soul, and also for the other's. They are keenly interested in all that makes the life of the School, in its games and lessons, but especially in its fair repute and success; and if ever one of them seems to sink below the level of duty which they have set for themselves, the other rebukes him, saying kindly, 'Do not you think we might do more for the good of the School?' They are not uncharitable—God forbid!—but where they are, it is known by other boys that evil will not be allowed. They are fond of each other, and no rivalry of work or play has power to weaken the happy bonds of that harmonious friendship; but each of them, if he wins, rejoices for his own sake, and, if he is beaten, rejoices hardly

less warmly for his friend's. So shall they 'walk in the house of God as friends.' And so as year succeeds to year, and the friendship of school-life passes into the mature and perfect friendship of manhood, as they are tried and tested together in the battle of life, it seems as though each were more sure of the other's goodness than of his own, and nothing can part them until the angel of death summons one away from the other. And then at last it is written of them as of the two friends who are such noble figures in the Hebrew story: They 'were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. . . . Very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.'

VI

THE ATTRACTIVE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST

'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.'—JOHN xii. 32.

ONCE again, let us look with reverent eyes upon the Cross of Calvary and the sacred Form that hangs there. We will look upon the Cross—not upon its mystery or its majesty, not upon its reconciling power between God and men, but upon its attractiveness, upon the spell of which the Saviour-Victim said: 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.'

There is no doubt what the lifting up was of which He spake; for the Evangelist adds explicitly: 'This He said, signifying what death He should die.' It was the lifting up upon the Cross, the lifting up in the agony of death. Yet another—a very different 'lifting up'—might have been meant. It is a striking fact that the Greek verb, here translated 'to lift up,' is the same as is used in the New

Testament of Christ's exaltation to heaven. Thus, in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter said, on the day of Pentecost, that Jesus Christ, after His Resurrection was 'exalted,' *i. e.* lifted up 'by' (or perhaps 'at') the right hand of God, and again in a later speech: 'Him hath God exalted,' *i. e.* Him God lifted up, 'with (or 'at') His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.'

I cannot help realising that in the Divine View the exaltation to the right hand of God, and the exaltation (for such it was) upon the Cross, are parts of one event; they are, as it were, two sides or faces of the same shield; the Ascension is an element of the condescension, the Cross is an aspect of the glory.

Nothing in the Divine Life of Jesus Christ is more remarkable than His anticipation of His own manner of death, and of its sure consequences. When He said, 'He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me,' what did He mean but that He should die the death of crucifixion? When He said, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,' what did He mean but that He

would hang upon the Cross? So, too, the words, 'When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He,' point to the Cross as the revelation of His Nature. And the words of the text, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me,' indicate the Cross as the secret of His magnetic influence upon Humanity.

I desire to ask for myself and for you, my boys, the question: Is it true, and, if so, in what sense is it true, that Jesus Christ by the spell of the Cross has drawn and is drawing the world unto Himself?

It is evident that He did not mean to say that all men would profess themselves believers in His Gospel. For in all His teachings—in His discourses and His parables—He spoke of doubt and dispute, sin and suffering, as elements in life, of the good and the evil, the faithful and the faithless, the wheat and the tares as living together 'until the harvest.' The true conception of His Kingdom is that it should be as a leaven working in the world; the true conception of His Royalty, that He should be a King, ruling, but 'in the midst of His enemies.'

And yet I believe it is just and true to assert, on a survey of history, that Jesus Christ has in

a marvellous manner drawn all men unto Himself.

He has drawn them by the supremacy of His moral teaching. You have read the Gospels of the New Testament. You have read that centre and heart of the Gospels—the Sermon on the Mount. You have listened to His gracious benediction of the poor in spirit, the lovers of righteousness, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers, the pure in heart. You have heard such words as these, 'I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of,' *i.e.* that ye may be like, 'your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' Did you ever reflect what the world would be if all men and nations should adopt the morality of Jesus Christ? It would be as heaven. It would be exempt from the meanness, selfishness and wickedness which now disgrace and defile it. It would be illumined with the radiant sunlight of holy and spiritual lives. For all moral progress in the world lies in an approximation to the law of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the Supreme Master of the moral law, and He has exercised, as masters will, a fascinating and inspiring influence upon the generations that have sat, as pupils, at His feet.

Yet again He has drawn all men unto Himself by the revelation of the Nature and Will of God His Father in heaven.

My boys, you are young now. You are happy and light-hearted. Your days are full of interest, humour, and energy. You do not realise all that religion may be to human hearts. But to one who looks upon you with older eyes the thought comes home, 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the light of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.'

There will come a time—if, indeed, you live so long—when your hair will be white as snow, and your steps will be faltering, and your memory dim, when the friends and comrades of youth will have passed before you into the dark, invisible world, and you shall be alone with the angel of death. Then shall the fear, the hope, the necessity of God become real to you.

Some boys, it may be, can recall that striking passage of Plato's *Republic*. 'Let me tell you, Socrates,' says the aged Cephalus, 'that, when a man thinks himself to be near death, fears and evils enter into his mind which he never had before. The tales of a world below, and the punishment which is exacted there of deeds done here were once a laughing matter to him, but now he is tormented with the thought that they may be true: either from the weakness of age, or because he is now drawing nearer to that other place, he has a clearer view of these things.'

Yes, he who would abolish religion must begin by abolishing death.

But what is that the spirit of man requires in the dark and lonesome hour?

He needs the assurance that God the Almighty is his Father—not an enemy nor a stranger, but a Father, benevolent as He is omnipotent, who loves His children with a pure intensity of affection. He needs such a doctrine as this: 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. . . . Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.' 'If ye then, being evil,

know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?' 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

This is the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is the climax and crown of all religion. To it all the religious thoughts and devotions of men incessantly tend. Among much that is doubtful and dark, this one truth stands clear, that, if any religion shall possess the hearts and intellects of mankind in the years of the future, it will be the religion of Christ. And leaning upon this religion, so simple, so sacred, so sublime, the poorest as the noblest of men may freely descend into the valley of the dark shadow and not be afraid.

Once more, Jesus Christ has drawn all men unto Himself by His manifestation of a Divine Personality.

It has been the will of God to redeem mankind not by reason so much, nor by rhetoric, as by the exhibition of a character. There is no better, or more sacred, way than this. For what is in human hearts the strongest motive

to do things or not to do them? It is that we love and trust a person.

Jesus Christ appeals to that deep personal feeling. He ask you, He implores you, to love good and to hate evil, because you love what He loves and hate what He hates. He says—in the most solemn and touching of words—'Do this or do it not, for My sake.'

And human hearts have responded to His appeal. They have borne and forborne much for Him. It is told that Savonarola, when a cardinal's red hat was offered him as the price of submission to the Papacy, replied that he would take no such hat unless it was dyed red in the blood of his own martyrdom for the Lord. And ever the spectacle of the Cross has possessed and dominated men's souls, as when the men who acknowledge not the Lord's Divinity pointed, in the great trial at Paris, to the Crucifix suspended over the judge's seat in the Court of Law.

But what is the secret of the spell that Jesus Christ by His Passion exercises over the hearts of men? What is it that enables Him to draw them all to Himself?

Is it not this, that He made a sacrifice 'for us men and for our salvation,' He came down

from heaven, He was rich and He chose to become poor, He was exalted and He willed to suffer abasement, He was the Son of God and He died by the hands of wicked men? Is it not this, that He might have summoned more than twelve legions of angels to dissipate and destroy the army of His enemies, and they would have sped in obedience to His summons, and yet He summoned them not? Is it not this, that He would work miracles for others and not for Himself; that it was in His power to lay down His life or to take it again, and that He chose to die in most bitter pain that we might live?

My boys, this is the attraction—the unique and paramount attraction—of the Cross of Jesus Christ. All — all depends upon His character.

He was so good a Friend to man, because He was greater than man. Had He been but as you and I, there would not have been the same majesty in His demeanour, the same sanctity in His character, the same power in His personality.

But great as is His Divinity, so great is His condescension and His love.

I do not burden you with hard words or

harder thoughts. I do not seek to define the Indefinable, or to limit the Illimitable. But I say that in the dark and sombre days of life you will act wisely if you cling to the foot of the Cross.

In that sublime and solemn sacrifice—in that alone—lies the key to the mysteries of life and death.

In it, too, lies the enchaining, entrancing spell of Divine Love.

For of Him who died there is it true, as He said of Himself, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.'

VII

THE PASSION: A PROTEST AGAINST SIN

'But last of all He sent unto them His Son.'—MATT. xxi. 37.

THE Christian religion, if it be rightly estimated, will be found to possess two distinct claims upon mankind. It is a sanction of duty, as helping us, by motives of fear and motives of love, to do what is right in the face of difficulty and temptation. But it is also a revelation of truth; it tells us facts—divine facts—of God and man which are as real (though we could not have learnt them for ourselves) as any discovery of science or politics. Hence the duty of the Christian preacher, as it is his privilege, is to insist from time to time with all the force at his command upon the profoundly vital significance of the Christian Creed. In this view I will ask you to contemplate with me, under God's blessing, that sublime article of all Christian teaching—the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is my purpose to exhibit the Passion in

three different lights. There are other lights in which it may be regarded, and I do not forget them. But I have always thought that it appeals with peculiar power to the spirits and consciences of men in these three ways, as being, firstly, a protest against sin ; secondly, a witness of Divine Love ; and thirdly, a sacrifice of reconciliation between man and his Maker. But before I come to speak of the death of Jesus Christ in its theological import, it is necessary for me to show you how great an event that death was, considered in itself.

For you must feel it to be strange, as you read the New Testament, that the persons who speak or write there, and especially St. Paul, should be always alluding to a death. We say as little as we can about people's deaths. It is a subject which we try to forget. Death comes to all, as we have so often reason to know, not to the aged only, but to the strong man in his prime, and to the child in the dawning of his life ; and we bury death as soon as we can out of our sight ; we dwell upon our friends' lives, upon their tenderness and kindness, upon their good deeds, their words, their very looks and

gestures: we do not speak, except incidentally, of their deaths. It is not so with the death of Jesus Christ. The Apostles are full of it. They rest their hopes upon it. They draw encouragement and consolation from it. They make it the motive of their warnings and appeals. It is the standing object-lesson in human sinfulness. Dear as the life of Jesus Christ is to every Christian soul, it is not so dear or precious as His death.

The perpetual symbol of that death, as you know, is the Cross. The Cross is everywhere. You have all heard, perhaps, the pithy answer of the Puritan, when he was asked the way to heaven: 'Take the first turning to the right by the Cross, and keep straight on.' But everywhere, in poetry, in architecture, in philosophy, in the very ornaments of our rooms and of our persons, the Cross is a favourite emblem. Everywhere it teaches faithful hearts, with a silent eloquence, that He who, 'for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven,' He in whom we place our trust for life and for eternity, could not or did not accomplish His mission except by suffering. To every race, to every generation, to every individual soul, it proclaims how

the Living One was bound to die on Calvary, that we who were dead in sin might live to Him. 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission.'

May I relate a circumstance which will illustrate this truth? When the famous Biblical scholar, Dr. Bengel, was lying at death's door, he sent for one of his theological students and begged him to say a word of spiritual comfort. The student came to his bedside, but hesitated and faltered, and at last said: 'Sir, I am only a pupil, only a mere learner; I don't know what I can say to a great and learned man like you.' 'What!' said Bengel, 'you a student of divinity, and you know not how to give comfort to a departing Christian!' The student managed at last to whisper the text: 'The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin.' Bengel stretched out his hand to him with a smile of thanks: 'That is the very word I want to hear,' he said. 'God bless you for it.'

We, too, will think for a little time of that Divine Blood shed on the Cross. It is, I say, first of all, a protest against sin—a ceaseless, emphatic condemnation of the sins of all men.

Let me try to show you how it is so. There is sin in the world. We are all sinners. If we were not sinful, we should not be human. He who says, 'I have not sinned,' sins in so saying. But the difficulty is to make people realise how bad a thing sin is. Nothing on earth, perhaps, is so difficult as that. Men live in the world, they spend their days in the broad light of experience, they know, they cannot help admitting, if they are asked, that certain wrong actions will do injury to themselves and injury to others who ought to be dearer to them than themselves; and yet, if they be men, they do them. Boys, too, come to a Public School: they meet Sunday by Sunday in the sanctuary of God, they listen to passionate appeals, they are entreated with affectionate earnestness to 'keep innocency,' and to 'do the thing that is right,' that they may not bring disgrace on honoured English names—and sometimes, alas! they bring the disgrace all the same. They do not realise how bad a thing sin is. You need only to glance at the newspapers of the day to see how bitterly true this is.

Well, then, suppose it was the will of God to make men feel, in the best way, or the only

possible way in which they could be made to feel, the exceeding sinfulness of sin—suppose it was His will to make men say—not, of course, all men, but a great number of men, 'This thing is hateful, it is horrible, I will not consent to it'—how was He to bring about this result? I answer unhesitatingly, By the Cross. The Passion of Christ upon the Cross is like a sudden flash of light upon the dark mystery of sin. It reveals the nature of sin by showing the consequences of sin. Sometimes the only way of realising what an action is is to see what results it brings. Let me take the case which will illustrate my meaning; it is such a case as has happened before now.

A boy goes wrong. He is the only son of his mother, and she is a widow. She is slow to believe that he can be a wicked boy—he who is her one hope in the world. But the truth is forced upon her. She cannot help believing it. So when the holidays come she speaks to him in solitude about his life, asks him not to do evil any more, perhaps reminds him that his father, from heaven, looks upon him, and, before she bids him good-bye kneels down and prays with him.

It is no good. His heart is not touched. He never thinks of her words. He goes on, at school and afterwards, in his shameful career. He adds sin to sin, dishonour to dishonour. At last she dies. He goes home then. He is her heir. He searches her papers; and among them he finds, written in a faint hand, these words: 'My boy has killed me; he has broken my heart.' Do not you think he must be a very bad man if he is not broken down then? For when at last he sees his sin in its consequences, when he sees what it has cost one who loves him, when he knows that it has been his mother's death, then, I say, he understands how bad his sin is. I can well believe that the floodgates of his tears will be opened then, and he will cry in the bitterness of his soul, 'O God, forgive!'

It is so with the death of Jesus Christ. Men went on sinning, and sinning again. It seemed as if nothing could touch the heart of the hard world. Nothing could have touched it —nothing has touched it—save the Cross. Historically, it is true that the Divine Passion has awakened in men's souls a shame of sin; it has made them feel that if sin was so bad a thing as to grieve the heart and cost the

life of the very Son of God Himself, then woe be to him who willingly consents to sin and does not try to drive it out from his own life. That is why the Cross has proved such a power in the world. Men have looked at it and at Him who hung upon it, and they have said with tears that they would not be guilty of the sin of 'crucifying the Son of God afresh.' That is what I want you to say—every one of you.

Colonel Gardiner had been a great sinner; he was actually waiting to commit a dreadful sin, when he saw what he ever afterwards described as a vision of the Crucified Christ, and in a moment he felt how vile it was to sin, and his life was changed to virtue.

Before your eyes, too, I hold the vision of the Crucified; I bid you look on that Divine and suffering Man; I tell you His sufferings are the measure and condemnation of the wickedness of the sin that we may do; and I ask you to say in your hearts: 'We will not love sin any more.'

That is the first of the three lessons which it is possible to draw from the Passion of Jesus Christ.

VIII

THE PASSION: A WITNESS OF DIVINE LOVE

'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'—ROM. v. 7, 8.

THE Cross of Jesus Christ as a witness of the love of God for all souls of men—that is my subject.

The Cross is a means of making men feel as they had never felt before then how dreadful a thing sin is. It is, so to say, a perpetual object-lesson in the sinfulness of sin. It proves the nature of sin by proving the consequences of sin, and those consequences as touching not ourselves but the Son of God. When we look at the Cross and at Him who hangs upon it, and recall that it is our own personal sins for which He died, then we say in our hearts, 'Oh! that we could sin no more.'

But, after all, there is not much gain in merely leading people to feel and confess that

they are wicked. Nobody was ever yet made good by being told that he was bad. You may talk to one who has done wrong; you may convince him that it is wrong; it may even happen that he will break into tears as he acknowledges it; but, if that is all, it may be worse for him than before, as he will, perhaps, despair of ever living a better life. Bunyan, at the opening of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, describes a man clothed in rags, with his face turned away from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great bundle upon his back. 'And as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he broke out with a lamentable cry, saying, 'What shall I do?' I daresay you remember that afterwards, when he came to the Cross, the great burden fell off his back and rolled away.

The question is, then, How does the Cross of Jesus Christ show that God loves man—loves every one of us? I will answer it by asking another question · How do you know that anybody loves you, let me say, your father, or your mother, or one of your friends? You will say, Because they do something or give up something for you. There is no other way of

proving affection than that. A person may be as kind as he will in words, he may make a loud profession of caring for you, and in the hour of trouble he may give you what is so singularly valueless then—his mere words of blessing; but if he does not do something for you, if he does not make a sacrifice or surrender for your sake, you will not look upon him as a real friend. May I not add that if you have yourself treated him badly, and have done all you could to pain him, and have well-nigh broken his heart, then the love which he shows you, being so unexpected and undeserved, is all the more moving and seems as if it were an irresistible claim to your love? And suppose that the supreme exercise of his love comes at the very time when you find yourself in most sore and dreadful need; suppose that he whom you have deeply injured is the very man who saves your life at the peril of his own, I say, if that be so, you may well prostrate yourself at his feet and cry, 'Oh! forgive me; I am not worthy to be called your friend.'

My boys, the history of the world is replete with glorious instances of self-sacrificing virtue and love. We should all be the poorer in the true riches of humanity but for the golden

deeds of men and women who have counted their own joys and interests as nothingness if only they might serve and save their brethren. And perhaps among instances of devotion there is none more tender or precious or divine than when a man, of his own free will, consents to bear another's burden and to put himself, as it were, in his place and to take his lot of suffering upon himself.

I do not know if you are familiar with the life of that most saintly character, Vincent de Paul. He lived in the first half of the seventeenth century; I think his death occurred in 1660. When living as tutor in the family of the Comte de Joigni, the inspector-general of the hulks or galleys in the French harbours, where the convicts, chained together, were kept at hard labour, and made to toil at the oar like African slaves, got him appointed their chaplain-general. His heart was so touched by the misery of one convict that he asked him for the story of his life, and found he had been unjustly sentenced for no fault of his own, and had left a wife and children in penury. Then with the jailor's consent, St. Vincent, it is said, took that convict's place and let him go home; he lived on convicts' fare, and did the convicts'

work ; and, worst of all, spent his days among convicts, and none but them, until at last he was sought out and set free. But the weight of the convict's chain had done him an injury which lasted to the end of his life. That was devotion ; and do not you feel that that poor convict and all his fellows, when they saw it, must have realised the greatness of such human love ?

But it is possible to go even a step further. For there is one devotion—the highest of all—which, so far as I know, has been rare, exceedingly rare, in human history. It is when a man deliberately chooses to lay down his life for another. I am not speaking now of such death as one may meet for king and country upon the battlefield : there are plenty of gallant men who will meet that. I am not speaking of such a death as one may meet at the call of duty, like a physician or a clergyman in visiting sick persons whose very breath perhaps is poison. I am not speaking even of the case where a man takes the chance but not the certainty of death for another, although this has been always regarded as a sublime act of self-sacrifice, *e.g.* in the story of Damon and Pythias. But I take a case

where a man walks up to the scaffold upon which another man is bound ready for death and says, 'I will take his death upon me; I will die for him.'

There is a famous novel of Dickens'—*A Tale of Two Cities*—which turns upon a sacrifice like this; and the last pages of it are as touching, I think, and subduing as any passage in literature. 'Are you dying for him?' whispered the poor seamstress, who was going herself to the guillotine, when she discovered the wonderful secret. 'And his wife and child. Hush! Yes.' 'Oh! you will let me hold your brave hand, stranger?' 'Hush! Yes, my poor sister; to the last!'

But if he for whom one should die were a foe, and the worst of foes, and had done him the cruellest of wrongs, that were the most wonderful there, of all. 'For scarcely for a righteous man,' says the text, 'will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His Love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'

Let us look at His Passion a little in this light. It is, I say, the supreme revelation of God's Love. You will not take me to say that

God could not have revealed His Love in any other way than this. Of course He could. But is it any good to ask if He could have done otherwise? I only want you to see that what He did was supremely calculated to produce this effect.

God is far off. He is in heaven, and we upon earth. We have never seen Him. He has never spoken to us as a man speaks to his friends. How is He to make us know that He cares for us? Even an earthly father, if he be absent for long years in a foreign land and never sees his boy, must find it hard, I do not say to love that boy, but to make that boy feel that he loves him. Such a father will perhaps write letters to his son, telling him that it is his one joy, in labour and loneliness, to hear from time to time of his industry and success; he may even add that he never lays his head on his pillow without commending him to the Providence of God. And not only so, but he may make sacrifices for him; I need not say how; perhaps by saving up money and sending it home, or denying himself the rest he has so well deserved, and may do all this though the boy be ungrateful and undutiful. I think I have known such cases; ah! more than one.

Well, but God, too, wishing to convince His sinful children of the exceeding love He bore them, sent them an emissary, and sent such an emissary as it cost Him much to send. In so doing He made a sacrifice for them—the only sacrifice, perhaps, that He could make for them. Had he not made it we might have said, How can we tell that God loves us? What has He done for us that is painful and precious to Himself? How has He ever shown that He is capable of exercising that most Divine of human prerogatives—the power of forgiveness? But if, to use human words, the sacrifice of Christ was a sacrifice which rent the heart of God, then not a shadow of doubt remains about God's Love.

How absurd it is then to speak as if God's love were the consequence, and not the cause of Christ's Passion! The Scripture says, not that Christ's death extorted and enforced God's love, but 'God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

But it must be noticed as a characteristic of the Christian doctrine (although this is a mysterious subject) that not only did God

will to send Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ Himself willed to come and to die. He has all the claim which issues from self-sacrifice —from simple, absolute, voluntary, deliberate self-sacrifice. And the thought arises that the mighty love of God for man ought to evoke a mighty love of man for God. 'God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'

John Wesley, when he lay dying, begged the friends who stood round his bedside to pray and give praise. Then he tried to speak, but in vain. Finding that his friends could not understand what he said, he paused, and with all his remaining strength cried out, 'The best of all is, God is with us.' There was again a pause. Then, so his biographer relates, 'lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, "The best of all is, God is with us."'

Yes, God had indeed been with them. He had been with them in that extraordinary movement which was, as it were, the new birth of religion in England, and of which a great secular historian[1] has said that it was

[1] Lecky.

superior in real importance to the career of Pitt and the splendid victories by land and sea that were won during his ministry. God has been with them in the quickening and sustaining of the spiritual life among the many millions of Christians who call themselves and their religious connexion by Wesley's name. He has been with them in the multifarious influences of the Methodist Revival, for piety, for devotion, for self-sacrificing labours among the poor, upon all Christian churches within the land, and not least upon the church of which John Wesley was himself an ordained minister. And if John Wesley could be asked the secret of religion, he would, I think, make the same answer as he once made to William Law, 'Religion is a very simple thing. It is just this: "We love Him because He first loved us."'

IX

THE PASSION: A SACRIFICE OF RECONCILIATION

'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'—1 TIM. ii. 5.

IT is my wish to set before you the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ as a propitiation for the sins of all the world. Only let me ask you not to misconceive the necessary limitation of this sermon. I am not discussing what God in His Providence might have done for the salvation of mankind, if He had so willed it. No doubt He might have saved the world by some other means than the Cross. He might have exhibited the shamefulness of human sin and the pitifulness of Divine Love in some other way. It is enough for me to show that this was one way—nay, the best way—of exciting in human hearts the three great sentiments which are indispensable to a true and vital religion: penitence, gratitude, security.

I said that, if sin could be seen to cause an

infinite suffering to one whom we ought to love with a deep and pure affection, then we should understand how dreadful a thing it is. You remember, perhaps, that I supposed as an example the case of a boy who should go on sinning against the wishes and prayers of his mother, until she died, and then should learn that it was his sin which had broken her heart. It is curious that in the last few days I have received a letter touching the death of one who was known to me, and in it occur these words: 'It is a miserable thing to think and feel that her boy's life and ways have practically broken her down.' Oh! let not any one of you be like him.

I said, too, that God, if it were His merciful will to give men a proof or criterion of His Love, could not give it better than by making, and being known to make, a great personal sacrifice for human good. And I said that of all possible or conceivable sacrifices death voluntarily incurred, in the circumstances of extreme agony, for bitter enemies who have done us the cruellest wrong, is the most impressive, the most convincing, the most compelling. Yes, and such according to Christian theology was the death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross.

But one point remains. Suppose men have been taught by His death to hate their sin, and to wish with all their hearts to get rid of it; suppose, too, they have been taught by it to put their trust in the Divine Love which encompasses the world, how can His death be said to act as a propitiation between God and men?

I put it to myself in this way. I do not speak of the Cross as being a cause, but rather as being a proof, of reconciliation. What I mean is, that God did not say: 'I will forgive the world, if Jesus Christ will die,' but, rather, 'I will show that I forgive the world by the death of Jesus Christ.'

For when two parties have been estranged and opposed for a time, then, if they make friends again, it is customary and even necessary for them, as things go, to ratify and approve their reconciliation by some sort of formality. They have been separated, and they become united; they have walked by different roads, and they now walk by the same road; they have been two, and henceforth they will be one. This is what is called, in theological language, *atonement*, which is defined in the most recent English dictionary as 'reconcilia-

tion,' or 'restoration of friendly relations.' It is, literally, setting people at one. It is so used by Shakespeare in the line of *King Richard III.*, where it is said of the dying king—

'he desires to make atonement
Betwixt the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers'—

i. e. to make a reconciliation.

But, as I have said, when a reconciliation takes place, there must be some legal or formal evidence of it. We want something which we can point and appeal to, some decisive event or instrument or bond, something which lies beyond the reach of controversy or dispute. If such evidence does not exist, if there is no evidence of reconciliation, except perhaps some unattested phrase or memory, it is pretty certain that, as the years roll on, somebody will say: 'It never took place at all; it is a dream.'

Two nations, let me suppose, have been at war; they afflict one another; the struggle may last seven, thirty, a hundred years; but, when it comes to an end, the solemn peace concluding it is embodied in the instrument known as a treaty. The signing of the treaty may be attended by more or less of ceremonial; but, when it is signed, it is a standing memorial

of the peace. Or again, two citizens may quarrel, and may carry their quarrel into the courts of law; but, as before, the decision takes permanent shape in a record against which no appeal can lie. And even in private life among men, yes, and among boys, if they have been enemies—I do not mean enemies for an hour or two, but long-standing enemies—there must be and generally is, some proof or symbol, a letter, perhaps, or a covenant or a pledge, something at least which testifies that they are friends again.

Now, the most ancient and venerable form of propitiation is sacrifice. It can be traced back to the very childhood of the human family. It is mentioned again and again in the Book of Genesis. You will remember that in the narrative of the Flood, when the patriarch Noah emerges from the ark upon dry ground, he builds an altar unto the Lord, and offers burnt offerings; and God is represented as saying in His Heart: 'I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.' I do not care now to multiply instances. I only say that, as sacrifice in the Old Testament was a means or sign of reconciliation, so also it was in the New. Sin had made a

breach between man and his Maker. From age to age that breach had widened and deepened. It was healed, as Christians believe, by the life and death of Jesus Christ. There has been 'one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.' He stands, as it were, holding out one hand towards earth, and one towards heaven, and as in the prophetic words it may be said of Him: 'Thou shalt be called the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in.' And the one perpetual sign of His mediatorial agency is the sacrifice effected on Calvary.

Yet it would be wrong to think of that sacrifice as an arbitrary event which may be said to prove the divine reconciliation because God so willed it, but still not to possess in itself any aptitude or character for proving it. The Christian heart feels instinctively that the death of Christ contains some essential element of a harmonising or propitiatory character. There must be something in it which qualifies it to be what in the Christian Church it has always been held to be. Was it not this? When two people who have been at variance become united, the frequent method of uniting them is mediation. Somebody comes who

is connected with them both and, as it were, joins their hands together. He is, and acts as, a mediator. He explains away difficulties. He removes misunderstandings. He gives hope perhaps to the one side, and wins forgiveness from the other. His is the blessing of the peacemaker, that divine blessing which God vouchsafes to men.

But what is the kind of mediator to touch the heart most deeply? I think if you were in disgrace, if you were hated and despised, if nobody in the world had a good word for you, then, if some generous man should come up to you, and take you by the hand and say: 'I believe in you; I will be your friend,' not only would your heart be filled with gratitude towards him, not only would you think better of yourself and have a new faith in your own life, but other people also would think better of you, because you had found a friend to feel and care for you.

I have read somewhere that in a Western city of America, when an angry mob was pursuing with threats and imprecations a poor desolate man, who was suspected of having perpetrated some crime, beating down by their violence all authority, and demanding to lynch

him, a single noble citizen, meeting him as he fled, just went up to him, put his hand upon his shoulder, and kissed him; and the mob was so profoundly moved by this simple action, as showing the power of human pity for human misery, that they stood arrested in silence, and at last broke into a cheer. But 'there is one God, and one Mediator, between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.' He took our nature upon Him. He treated us, sinners as we are, with affection and sympathy. And I say that His affection and His sympathy is the indisputable proof of the love of God for all the souls of men.

The thought, then, which I would leave with you is this:—

Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man. He is the Agent in reconciling not God to man, but man to God. God was in Him, reconciling the world to Himself. And the method of reconciliation was sacrifice. Jesus Christ achieved the greatest of all results by the means which alone is potent to produce any sublime result upon earth, *i. e.* by the sacrifice of Himself. He died that we might live.

X

THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST—I

'When the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. And He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'—MATT. iv. 3, 4.

TEMPTATION is a great fact in the life of every one of us. But if it is so, and if our duty is to resist it and overcome it, then it must be well to observe how He, whose human life is the inimitable model of all our lives met and conquered temptation when it came to Him.

I need not discuss the exact nature of our Lord's temptation. It is enough to say that the temptation, however it happened, was a severe and crucial test. It cost our Lord a painful effort. He had hard work to win the victory. He 'suffered,' as the writer to the Hebrews says, 'being tempted'; the temptation lasted long, longer than ours last; according to

St. Luke, He was 'forty days tempted of the devil.' It came upon Him, or the worst part came, at a time when He was not vigorous, but weary and worn out; for in all those forty days and nights He was fasting, like Moses upon Mount Sinai or Elijah in the wilderness of Horeb, 'and when they were ended, He was afterward an hungred.' And He was alone, too, in the desert; no friendly voice or eye could solace His loneliness; only God's dumb creatures were the witnesses of His suffering. 'He was with the wild beasts.'

Will you let me pause here to say, as a lesson of this story, *There is nothing wrong in being tempted?* There may be some boy who is the subject of a temptation; he cannot drive it away; it haunts him, it distresses him, by day and by night; he has prayed against it, he has fought against it ever so long, and it seems as strong as ever; and he thinks in his heart he must be wicked, or God would not suffer him to be so tried. Oh! take courage again; pray on, fight on: no one was ever so innocent and holy as Jesus Christ, and no one passed through such fierce fires of temptation. Your temptation has not lasted forty days. You have not felt hungry and weary as He was.

There is nothing wrong in being tempted. He was 'tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.' Nay, he was tempted just at the time when it might have been supposed that the Tempter would have been impotent to assail Him. For, if you look at the verses which immediately precede the story of the temptation, you will find that just before it He had received the unique consecration of His baptism.

Is there any one who has experienced temptation at some especially sacred moment of his life—perhaps after receiving the Holy Communion, or at night, when his prayers are finished, and he lies alone wakefully in his bed? Does it seem to him hard that he should be tempted, just when he has sought the sustaining grace of his Father in Heaven? Does he feel that he must be wicked above other boys because the temptation comes upon him then? Will he not remember, for his soul's comfort, the sacred story? 'Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him. And lo, a voice rom heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son,

in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.'

No, *there is nothing wrong in being tempted, it is only wrong to sin.* Our Lord was 'led up,' St. Mark says He was 'driven forth,' by the Spirit to His temptation. It was the will of God that He should be tempted. The Holy Spirit, as it were, escorted Him to the battle, strengthened Him for it, and, when it was over, crowned Him with victory.

Is it wonderful that this should have been so? What is temptation? It is simply trial. To be tempted is to be tested. It is the only possible way of learning what a person is worth.

You want to know if a man is brave. How shall you tell? Will you listen while he sits with his feet on the fender, and recounts the valorous deeds he has done or means to do? No; place him under fire, place him where the bullets are falling, thick as hailstones, about his head, and his comrades dropping dead at his side like swathes before the scythe, and see if his cheek blanches then, and his pulse beats high then; or he is collected, steadfast, and intrepid as though on parade! That is the

brave man. You want to know if a boy can bear pain. Who is such a boy? Is it he, who, while he lives a pleasant life without any suffering or distress, makes loud profession of endurance, and laughs at other boys if they wince or shudder at all in bearing the wounds of life? Or is it he who says not a word in praise of himself, but is humble and dutiful; and, if he is called to undergo a painful operation, says quietly, with compressed lips, 'I think I can go through it'? That is the boy who can bear pain.

It is so in the trials of men's souls. God Almighty longs to see what stuff is in you. He sets you in a world of sin. He gives you the choice of doing right or doing wrong. He exposes you—not unmercifully—to the fire of temptation; for 'with the temptation' He makes also 'a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' And He watches to see what is the result. He is watching now. This very term, this very week, this very day He can tell how every single boy acquits himself in duty. Believe me, you must not expect to escape temptation. I do not wish you to escape it. It is the law, the condition of Christian virtue. 'My son,' says the Son

of Sirach, 'if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation.' I do not wish you to escape it; I wish you to overcome it. I could say in the noble words of Milton's *Areopagitica:* 'Were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferr'd before many times as much forcible hindrance of evil-doing.' 'I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd virtue, unexercis'd and unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, notwithstanding dust and heat.' Jesus Christ then sets an example of overcoming temptation; not of avoiding, but of overcoming it.

Let us see what His temptation was, and how He met it. It was a subtle, strong temptation. It came to Him in the hour when He was weakest. It took the form which must have appealed to His consciousness of a Divine Mission. For the Voice from heaven had said, 'This is My beloved Son.' He could not have forgotten it, and now the Tempter came to him saying, 'If Thou be the Son of God, then do this thing.' And it would not have been unnatural for Him to do it. What wrong could it have been if He had

turned the hard stones of the wilderness into loaves? It would have proved His Divinity. He turned the water into wine to satisfy others; why should He not have made those hard stones loaves to satisfy Himself?

I do not say it would have been wrong. He might have done it; but if He had done it, He would have forfeited two lessons which it was His will, in coming upon earth, to teach.

The first is that *we may not use the highest powers which God has given us for ourselves.*

The life of Jesus Christ is our life made Divine. He was like us, only greater. We have high powers—powers of thought, of will, of action—but His were higher. And He would not use His powers for His own good. You must have noticed that this was so in reading the Gospels. I am sure that no one who wrote the Gospels would have thought of it if it had not been true. He used His powers exclusively for others. He worked many miracles for them; He never worked one for Himself. He does not say here, 'I cannot do this miracle'; He says, 'I will not.' It was His rule all through

His life, even to death. 'Thinkest thou,' He said at the last, 'that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently (immediately) give Me more than twelve legions of angels?' But He prayed not for one, or He prayed for that angel only, who comforted Him in Gethsemane. You and I, my boys, if we have special powers, may learn of Him, in His temptation, to think concerning them, not what we can get by these powers for ourselves, but what we can give of them to others.

But there is a second lesson lying in the words 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'—words quoted from the 8th chapter of Deuteronomy. It is that *the true life of man does not lie in the gratifications of the body.* We are tempted to expend our highest powers in comfort, self-indulgence, luxury—in anything which satisfies our material or bodily wants and appetites. That is not according to the example of Christ. In the hours of His extreme need, when He was hungry and weary, He would not apply His superhuman powers to gratify the most innocent of natural bodily desires; for He was

not—and man is not—body, but spirit, not flesh, but immortal soul, and it is the hunger and thirst after righteousness which draws human nature near to God. 'I have meat,' said the Saviour on another occasion, 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.'

So He foiled the Tempter by His word. It was a strong, courageous word. The Tempter had begun by suggesting a doubt; he said, 'If thou be the Son of God.' Jesus Christ does not say 'if.' He says, 'It is written.' That is what you must say if you would be like Him. Don't parley, don't palter with evil. For if you hesitate, you are lost. If you make a breach in the rampart of your soul, the citadel will be taken. Second thoughts are sometimes wisest in earthly things, but first thoughts are wisest in spiritual. There is only one safe rule. It is to take your stand, firmly and boldly, on what you know to be right. The words 'It is written,' 'It is God's will,' 'I cannot do otherwise,' are the anchors of your soul.

So shall you fight the battle of faith with good success. So shall you master those

physical appetites which are natural to man, and yet, if he becomes their slave, do work his very death. So shall luxury, greed, impurity, have no dominion over you. Yes, and so shall you be like Jesus Christ. That is the lesson of the first temptation in the wilderness.

XI

THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST—II

'Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'—MATT. iv. 5-7.

YOU have not, I hope, forgotten that I was speaking about the threefold temptation of our Lord. It was my wish to show you, firstly, that temptation, or testing, is necessary if there is a purpose of forming an opinion upon a man's character; it is the only possible way of seeing what stuff a man—or, indeed a boy—is made of; and secondly, that, if you will look at our Lord's temptations and the spirit in which He met them, when they occurred to Him, you will not be at a loss for the means of meeting—not, perhaps, always victoriously (for you and I are not in all respects like Him), but of meeting with strong and honourable resistance such temptations as may occur to yourselves.

Now you are probably aware—for you perceive at once if you read the Bible with your eyes open—that the two Evangelists, St. Matthew and St. Luke, who give detailed accounts of the three temptations, do not place them in the same order. Both put the suggestion of turning the hard stones into loaves of bread first. But St. Matthew puts the elevation to the pinnacle of the Temple second, and the vision of all the kingdoms of the world third. St. Luke puts the vision of the kingdoms second, and the elevation to the pinnacle third.

We naturally ask, which is the right order? Can we decide it? And here it will strike you, I think, if you look a little deeper, that St. Matthew's order is more likely to be right than St. Luke's. In fact, I may almost say that St. Matthew professes to give the right order, and St. Luke does not. For there are chronological marks—marks of time—in St. Matthew's Gospel. He describes the first temptation. He goes on with 'then' in beginning his description of the second; he adds 'again' in coming to the third. St. Luke has no such marks of time; he only says 'and.' Perhaps he had another view than the chronological. He may have

thought more of the spiritual meaning of the temptations than of their succession in time.

It is worth while to notice, too, that the third temptation of St. Matthew's order, the vision of the kingdoms, ends in St. Luke's Gospel as well as in his own, with the words 'Get thee hence, Satan,' or 'Get thee behind me, Satan;' and these look like the final or conclusive words; it would hardly be possible for a new temptation to come after them. And you must remember that St. Matthew had the privilege, which St. Luke had not, of being one of the Lord's own apostles; and, as nobody but our Lord can have told His experiences in temptation, it is only natural that the apostle who was constantly with Him should have had the best opportunity of hearing from His own lips what happened.

It is to the temptation on the 'pinnacle of the Temple' that I invite your thoughts for a few minutes now. You will notice that I say '*the* pinnacle,' not '*a* pinnacle,' although it is so in the Authorised Version. For the Greek text has the article clearly describing some well-known pinnacle of the great Herodian Temple. Milton, in his *Paradise Regained*, describes that Temple in glowing words, where he says:

'The glorious Temple reared
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires,'

and adds :

'There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God.'

I cannot tell you what pinnacle it was ; it has often been thought to have been the summit of the Royal Porch, which looked sheer down, as Josephus says, into the valley of the Kidron from a height so dizzy that, if a man ventured to gaze downwards from it, his head would reel and swim at such immense profundity.

But it does not matter what the pinnacle was ; the temptation which there took place is our subject. Let me remind you of its nature in two or three sentences. It begins, like the first temptation, with the word '*if*.' Most temptations begin, I think, with that little word. Do you never hear of anybody saying or thinking 'If I do this thing, shall I be found out?' 'If I do it, will it be so very bad?' 'If I have this opportunity—which I never thought or tried to get—of gaining an advantage for myself by some selfishness, or meanness, or deceit, how can I help using it? Who will blame me so bitterly if I do use it?'

Ah, my boys, I think I have known such a

thought as that. I think you too have known it. It is very common, very sad. Does it not remind you of another temptation, many, many centuries old, when somebody used the words, 'Yea, hath God said, "Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden," '—what then? You know what then. There was the playing with sin. There was the trying to see if sin was really sinful, and the sinner 'took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.'

But in the story of the Lord's temptations observe another point. You remember how He overcame the first temptation. He said, 'It is written.' He would not act against the letter of the law. He took His stand, as I want you to take your stand, upon the right which He had learnt from the lips of God. I want you to say, if temptation comes to you, 'I have been told—told in the Bible—told by one who was speaking in the name of God—I have been told that I ought not to do it, and I will not.'

But the Tempter is not foiled in a moment. He does not shoot all his arrows at first. Nay, it is as if he took up the Victor's arrow and shot it back at Him. For the Lord had

said, 'It is written,' and now the Tempter too says, 'It is written.' 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written, "He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."'

I dare say you know who it is that says in Shakespeare—

> 'Mark my words, Bassanio,
> The devil can use Scripture for his purpose,'

and what it is that makes him say so. But have you never heard any one quote Scripture for a bad purpose? Has there never within your knowledge, been a case in which a boy has twisted sacred words to a ludicrous meaning, or quoted them profanely, it may be even impurely? And, if so, have you not found how this perversion of them has clung to your thoughts, even in holy, prayerful moments, and has refused to be shaken off, and has made you sink, as it were, in your own self-esteem? My boys, you will let me warn you, earnestly and affectionately, against making a light or wrong use of Scripture. Keep up your reverence for the Bible, honour it, study it, and, when evil comes in your way, resist it

with the strong emphatic words, 'It is written, Thou shalt not.'

For in every temptation, if you fall, it is you who are the author of your own fall. The Tempter cannot make you fall. He cannot make you sin. He may quote Scripture against you. He may quote it falsely, leaving out essential words, as he did in the text. He may carry you (let me say) to the pinnacle of the temple, may set you there in a place of imminent danger and trial; but when you are there, he must say, 'Cast *thyself* down.' There is no power in him to cast you down without your will. Yes, and he who sins does indeed 'cast himself down.' There is no such humiliation as sin. If any boy knows that he has been guilty of something that has not been found out, he is cast down; he cannot look up, cannot lift up his head to the free light of heaven, because there is a dark place in the corner of his soul. It is he, oh! it is he that has lost the glory, the beauty of boyhood, and I pray him to go, repent, confess, redeem his sin, and so rise anew to the manhood of Christ.

For sins may not be bad, and yet may show a bad spirit. Temptation may touch what is noblest in a man's nature. Our Lord's tempta-

tion touched His consciousness of Divinity. He was like us, only higher than we are. We are all God's sons, but He was *the* Son of God. So the Tempter comes to Him, saying, 'If Thou be the Son of God, then do something that will show Thee to be His Son, something that will mark Thee as distinct from common men, something that will win Thee a conspicuous honour and applause.'

Shall I tell you what that is like in your life, to compare small things with great, human things with Divine? A boy may be cleverer than other boys; he may do his lessons more easily, and he may make a boast of not learning them, but of wasting his evenings, when he ought to be at work, and yet of escaping, by his ability, without punishment, perhaps even of gaining an ill-deserved reward. Well, but if he is proud of his gifts—which, after all, have been 'given' him, not achieved by any merit or sacrifice of his own—if he makes a display of them, most of all if he uses them for the discouragement of other boys who are not so clever as he is, he may be standing on a pinnacle; but it is the Tempter who has set him there, and he is going in his pride to 'cast himself down' at the Tempter's command.

Or, again, a boy may be strong, vigorous, athletic; he may outstrip other boys in speed, although, I am afraid, if human nature were judged only by speed we should come a long way behind horses or steam-engines; but if the boy who is good at sports, or football, or cricket, assumes a swaggering air and thinks of nothing but of the praise and distinction—I will not say of the pecuniary prize that he may get—if he tries to make out that he can do without trouble things which other boys can only do by painful effort, then, I say, he is 'casting himself down' at the Tempter's command, he is playing a selfish, poor, ignoble part in the School.

What is his sin, then? It is pride. That is a very subtle sin. You may look upon the world, and you will find that nearly all its evils arise from two sins—pride and avarice, and they correspond to two of the temptations of Jesus Christ. Yes, it is pride. You may call it what you like. You may try to hide it under glowing names. But—

> 'Tis pride, rank pride, and haughtiness of soul;
> I think the Romans call it Stoicism.'

But now, see how Jesus Christ treats the temptation of pride. The Tempter says to

Him, 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down,' *i.e.* Show how great Thou art by a great display. He quotes Scripture; he says—what I dare say was true enough—that the angels of God would bear in their hands the Son of God. And the answer of Jesus Christ is sharp and clear, 'It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'

XII

THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST— II

'Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.'—MATT. iv. 8-11.

THERE is one more sermon which I have to preach for you on the Lord's temptation. You, too, will have your temptations. But there will be no temptation that you may not meet in the spirit of Christ; for if you will think about your temptations at all, you will probably see that every temptation you have ever known takes one of these forms.

It may come as a temptation of your body. You have all certain bodily appetites. You know what they are; they are lawful and right. It is only when they are gratified excessively

that they become wrong. But they are terribly wrong then ; the world is strewn with the ruins which they have wrought. Look around you ; see the effects of sensual indulgence, drink or impurity, and tell me, are not these effects the consequences of yielding to natural appetites which reside and rule in the body? Well, then, Jesus Christ in His first temptation, when He was tempted to convert the stones into loaves of bread, showed mankind that He, the Son of Man, would not gratify, even by an innocent action, if it were selfish, His bodily appetites.

But there are temptations without the body as well as within it. They have nothing to do with the constitution—so 'fearfully and wonderfully made'—of the body. I cannot speak of them now in detail. But it is my belief, as I have said, that, apart from sins of the body—fleshly or carnal sins as they are called—human sins all, or nearly all, arise from two master-motives in the human soul, pride and avarice. In other words, all the evil that men do, except, as I say, where it is a sin of the flesh, they do because they think well—too well—of themselves, or because they want to gain by some means or other an extravagant

power over others. That is my belief, my firm belief; I am more and more convinced of it every year.

Now in my last sermon I pointed out that the second temptation which occurred to our Lord, when He was elevated to the pinnacle of the Temple, was a temptation of His pride. He was tempted to show Himself off, just as any one of us who possesses singular physical or intellectual gifts may be tempted to show them off in the face of the world.

But there is yet a third temptation, and you will see that it touches His avarice or His ambition. The story represents Him as being taken to a mountain so high that it afforded a prospect of 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.' Beside Him on that mountain stood the Evil One, who is called in Scripture the 'prince of this world.' He says to Him, 'All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.' It was not much to ask—at least, it seemed not much—for it would all have taken place in a moment; and they were alone upon the mountain; who would know, who would tell what had been done? Is there any one of us who, if he were placed in such a position

as this, that he could gain 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them' by one momentary act of obeisance to the Evil One —is there any one who would stand and bow not down? I hope there is; but I dare not answer for myself, and, forgive my saying, it, I dare not answer even for you. I fear, I greatly fear, we should bow down. For we 'have fallen down and worshipped him'—some at least have—in bygone days, not for 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them'; we have acted against our conscience for much, much less than this—just for some prize, some praise, some place we wanted to get. O my boys, you are going into the world, all in a few brief months or years, if only you live, and at some time or other you will be tempted to win or try to win 'the kingdoms of the world' at the cost of worshipping Satan.

For you may be a statesman; you may embark, and many will, I know, embark on the wild inconstant sea of politics, where the only star that can guide your course aright will be the pole-star of duty. And you will be tempted to think, or to say you think, that it is right for you to do what your conscience —enlightened, as it is, by your religion—

forbids, because it is the people's will, as if the way to make the people of England better could ever lie in making yourself worse; you will be tempted, I say, to be mean, mercenary, or malicious, to sacrifice principle to place and honour to popularity or office; and the temptation will be all the more subtle, as it will seem perhaps to take the form of good — then remember the example of Christ.

Or you may be a clergyman; and the records of the Church are dark and sad with the names of noble men and patient women who have borne abuse and sometimes persecution for being true, as their Master Himself was ever true, to the truth. It may be that your chance of getting on will depend, or will seem to depend, upon your pretending to believe what your soul does not believe, or to deny what your soul does not deny; and you will hear a voice within your ears whispering, What matters it if one poor falsehood shall gain you the position you are fit for? Then remember the example of Christ.

Or, once more, you may be a merchant, a man of business, and I know no finer sphere for intelligence and industry, no wider

opportunity of good work than to be engaged in the commercial life of a great country. But then how vital is it that you should not assent to a code of morals which may be accepted among men who do not bring every action to the test of the Divine Law! I can well believe that in the rivalry of riches you will be tempted to tamper with your conscience, which is precious above rubies. But then remember the example of Christ. 'The devil saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'

It was a sharp and short reply. It was taken, like the other replies which we have studied, from the Bible. It is couched in the old form, 'It is written.'

But in bringing these sermons on the Lord's temptation to an end, let me suggest to you two or three thoughts.

Jesus Christ is living. He is not dead. His eye is upon you. It will animate you to effort and victory. It will inspire you with a strength greater than your own. At the battle of Preston

Pans, it is told, the chief of the clan McGregor was struck down. His clansmen, seeing him fall, began to give way. Then the old chief, raising himself upon his elbow, while the blood gushed from his wounds, cried aloud, 'I am not dead, my children; I am looking at you to see you do your duty.' That cry rallied the fugitives. They turned and fought anew. The eye of their chief was upon them.

So the eye of Christ is upon you. I want you, when temptation comes, to look to Christ. He was 'tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.' In the temptations I have considered with you, you do not see the slightest playing or parleying even for a moment with sin. Observe how long His temptation lasts.

'Forty days and forty nights
He was tempted in the wild.'

Your temptations will not last so long. But His, too, came to an end at last. It is written that 'when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him.' Herein lies the comfort that may be yours and mine. The battle may be fierce and long, it may be deadly with wounds, but it will not go on for ever. At last the victory will be won.

'Resist the devil,' says the apostle, 'and he will flee from you.' Stand up to him, and he will not stand up to you. Say to him, and say as if you meant it, 'Get thee hence, Satan,' and he will shrink abashed from your presence.

Besides, there is a Divine Help given in the hour of need. It was so in the experience of Our Lord. 'Angels ministered unto Him,' says St. Mark. It will not happen that angelic presences minister to you. But life has still its angelic ministration for them that love and seek the good. And sometimes—nay, not seldom — when the need is greatest, holy thoughts possess the mind; we know not how or why it is they come; like subtle influences they are, instinct with sacred energy, and we feel beyond all doubt that God is near us.

Yet it were wrong to think that temptation once conquered is temptation conquered for ever. Our Lord was not free from temptations after this first great victory over the Tempter —no, not even when His head drooped on the Cross. St. Luke ends his narrative of the temptation by saying that the devil 'departed from Him for a season,' or, more properly,

'until a season,' *i. e.* a season when he could tempt Him again.

Has any one of you conquered temptation when it came to him at some high crisis of his life? And has it afterwards come again? Let him not be disappointed and distressed. For Jesus Christ speaks of His 'temptations.' They were frequent; they were terrible and instant. But never once did He give in to them.

He speaks, too, of something more. He spoke of it at a very solemn moment, and I mention it now, for it has a lesson for us all. Pass with me from the beginning of His ministry, from the hour of His temptation in the wilderness, to the hour when He sat for the last time with His friends, His disciples, in the 'large upper room' where the Passover had been eaten. His voice is the voice of a dying man. He addresses those whom He will never so address again. What are His words? 'Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.' 'Many other were the occasions on which He endured temptation,' says St. Bonaventura. And being tempted, He had need of human sympathy. He could say, as if with a feeling of gratitude,

'Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations.'

Is there not somebody with whom you may 'continue in his temptations'? He may be one who is weak and wayward, or he may be strong and pure, like Christ. But, whoever he is, he needs your help; he needs it to-day. If you will only 'continue with him,' only stay at his side in the hour of his trial, only let him tell you in perfect confidence what his difficulty is, and tell him in perfect confidence something of your own, you may do him a service beyond all words of praise. For no help that masters can give, no help that parents can give, is like the help that boy may give to boy. And how I wish it came oftener to pass that one of us, living perhaps in the same great School, bound each to the other by the ties of ancient and hallowed association, could think more earnestly of keeping some other's soul from sin, or lifting some other's life to the ways of the eternal righteousness!

Yes, this is the spirit of all true life, of all such life as I pray that you may lead in the days of your boyhood and manhood. 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' Think not, what can I gain

for myself? but, what can I give to God? He is your Father and Saviour. In Him you live. All holiness, all goodness is His. May He bless you and sustain you in your hours of difficulty and trial, and bring you, each and all, to His heavenly kingdom!

XIII

JOSEPH, THE TEMPTED BOY

'How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'—GEN. xxxix. 9.

THERE is in the lives of most of us an element which we know only too well, only too painfully. It is called temptation. It comes often. It comes everywhere. It is very hard, very distressing, very harassing. Yet we may not and must not give in to it. If we are true, if we are noble, if we are Christians, we must fight against it to the end. That is the clear, positive duty of every one of us. You will see perhaps what it is, and how we ought to meet it, if you will let me lay before you the story of a boy who was tempted, and bravely and gallantly fought temptation, the boy Joseph.

I like to give each of the boys whom I choose out of the Bible a special description, as it will help you to bear him in mind, and

I will call Joseph the *tempted* boy. And, indeed, I know not what better instance I could give you of a spirit strong and constant in temptation than the noble answer which Joseph in the text made to his tempter: 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'

But what is temptation?

Some of us—some boys—think it a dreadful thing to be tempted. They find in temptation an excuse for folly or sin. They say: 'Oh, I did not want to do it; I did not mean to do it; but somebody came and told me to do it, and set me the example of doing it, and showed me how easily it could be done, though I knew it was wrong, and I said at first that I would not, but he said I must, and he called me a saint for not doing it, and—and—and at last I did it.'

Yes, I know you did it, and it is a great pity. You would have been a far nobler boy had you acted like Joseph.

For what is temptation?

Temptation is trying or testing; it is no more than that.

Temptation is the only possible way of seeing what any one of us—any man or boy—is worth. How am I to know if you are truthful, unless

you are placed in such a position that you would gain something—or think you would gain something—by telling a lie?

How am I to know that you are generous or self-sacrificing, if you are not called to do what you would rather not do, or refrain from doing what you would rather do, for the sake of another?

How am I to know if you are brave, if you are never under fire, if you sit at home and live a selfish, effeminate life, and when the call of duty comes never answer: 'I am here'?

How then is God—if I may say so—to know that you love virtue, and that you desire amidst many failings to do His will, unless you meet temptation and stand up against it like a true man, and when you are asked to commit sin, say: 'No; I will not'? That is what Joseph said and did, and because he did it, it is well to fix our eyes for a few minutes on his bright example.

I am going to speak to you not of the character of Joseph as a whole, but of this one incident in his life—his temptation. You will see that there are certain circumstances which made his temptation very trying—more trying,

I think, than many temptations, perhaps than all, which you endure.

For, in the first place, he had been cruelly treated. His brothers had been very unkind to him. They had stripped him of his coat, 'his coat of many colours that was on him,' his father's present. They had cast him into the deep waterless pit. They had sold him, though he was their brother, to the Ishmaelites 'for thirty pieces of silver.' They had looked on callously while he was carried off in the custody of his purchasers into a land of strangers. You know how the time came when in their own trouble they began to reflect upon the injury they had done long, long ago to that innocent boy, as any one of you who shall be cruel and unkind shall perchance reflect one day. And Reuben, the eldest of them, the one who had tried to save his brother from death, answered them, saying, 'Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear?' That was the fate in store for them, because they had been so cruel to Joseph years before.

And he was alone in the land of strangers. What a pathos there is in the words: 'And Joseph was brought down into Egypt'! He

knew nobody there. He had nobody to speak to. He was friendless and forlorn. He was even sold as a slave into the household of an Egyptian officer, the captain of Pharaoh's guard, named Potiphar.

Now I say that was a very trying position for a boy. It was a position in which the bravest of boys might lose heart. I dare say Joseph wept bitter tears, lying upon his bed in the long night-watches, as he thought of his father, and his home, and of his old dear life, and thought that it could never come again.

In a Public School, too, there are boys who are sometimes lonely. I do not say they are as lonely as Joseph was. But they are taken away from their homes. They may never have left their homes before. They are set down among strange boys. They cannot call any one their friend. The very language of the place is strange to them. They do not know what to say or what to do. And it may be that, when others are asleep, they are wakeful and unhappy. They sigh for home, and wish in their hearts they were not where they are, and feel that no happiness can come to them. But they are not so lonely as Joseph.

And now, to such a boy—even to Joseph—

what is the worst, the most subtle, temptation that can occur?

Well, I think it is this—that somebody who has the power of helping or injuring them very much, some one whose favour or goodwill is all-important to them, should come to them and say, if not in so many words, yet, in effect: 'I see you are sad and bullied and cast down, and there is nobody who can do so much for you as I can; now I will be your friend, and will be kind to you, and give you a helping hand, and lift you over stiles, if you will do one thing for me—one thing that is wrong—and if you refuse to do it, then I will make your life miserable; you shall be disliked, despised, and ill treated; and every boy in the school shall be your enemy.'

That, I say, is the most subtle possible kind of temptation, for it appeals to two sentiments which are keen and quick in the solitary boy's soul—his need of sympathy and his fear of being oppressed. But that is exactly the temptation which Joseph had to meet. To him was given the choice of gaining place and power and privilege by doing wrong, or of doing right and being punished by his master and thrown into prison.

You know from the text what his choice was.

It would not have been surprising if he had yielded to the Evil One. Who would not have pleaded for him that he was so young and so lonely, and had so much to gain by breaking God's law, and that he sinned only once, and he could not help himself when the sin came to him, and he could not be expected to keep straight in a strange land all through life?

That, I say, is what one of us might have said about Joseph.

But it is not what Joseph said for himself. He thought not of the excuses which might be made for wrong-doing—it is always easy to make excuses, if one wants to make them—but he knew that the thing was wrong, and he would not do it.

Two motives there were, as you know, which influenced him, and of these the one may influence some of you or most, and the other all.

The first was the thought that his master had trusted him. 'My master,' he said, 'hath committed all that he hath to my hand . . . neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee.' And the feeling of being trusted

is strong and sublime in noble hearts. I hope it is powerful in you. I wish to trust you. We all wish to trust you. We will stake our hope and our confidence upon your honour. Only we ask you, and the elder of you especially, to say each within himself: 'I have been trusted; I will be worthy of trust; I will not betray the trust reposed in me; I will not do behind my master's back what I dare not do before his face. I will be upright; I will be faithful; I will be true."

And Joseph's second motive was the fear of God. In that holy fear he lived. He had written over the portal of his soul the motto which I would write upon every soul among you: 'Thou God seest me.' Thus in the hour of his temptation he was aware that, if no human eye could see him, the Divine Eye looked down upon his deed. As the sunlight penetrates and illumines every dark corner, so the Divine Eye sees through each subtle motive and imagination; for as to God all hearts are open, to Him all desires are known, and from Him no secrets are hid, He knows what every boy has done or thought of doing in the past week. He knows what thoughts are moving in your souls now. He knows

who is the boy that will say when temptation comes to him, and will say it in a way that cannot be misunderstood: 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Only you must say it as if you meant it, not slowly or feebly or apologetically; you must say it with all the force of your character and conscience, 'I will not do this great wickedness, and sin against God.' Then, if you say it so, then—but only then—will you be safe as Joseph was.

XIV

SAMUEL, THE RELIGIOUS BOY

'And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.'—1 SAM. iii. 20.

THERE is a difference which will strike you at once between the boys of the Bible and yourselves. It is this. The Bible does not care for many things for which you care, and it does care supremely for one thing for which you do not perhaps care quite so much as you should. The Bible when it speaks of a boy does not say, Was he clever or distinguished, or good at games, or popular in the School? All this it leaves out of sight as if it did not much matter, and it asks just this one question: Was he good? Did he fear God in all his ways? Did he live in the spirit of religion?

Some people think that boys cannot be religious. I do not think so. Of course I

dislike boys who pretend to be religious, and talk pious language, and make themselves out to be more virtuous than their neighbours. Religion, especially the religion of the young, if it be genuine, is as a rule humble, silent and profound. I know too that boys, as being young, may not be familiar with the experience of sorrow, suffering, disappointment and anguish which make religion ineffably dear to human hearts.

But I have seen boys—yes, and thank God I see them now—who are trying, as I believe, to do their duty in the fear of God, and for the love of Jesus Christ, and who are making their way, not without stumbling now and then, to the heavenly city of which the Lord Himself is the sun and shield.

Among the boys of the Bible, Samuel is, I think, pre-eminently the *religious* boy; the boy who lived the life of purest and brightest innocence. 'All Israel,' it is said, 'from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.'

Some of you, I hope very many, have the habit of reading the Bible before you go to bed in the evening. It is a good habit, and there is a blessing on it. If you like to begin

to-night at the first chapter of the First Book of Samuel, and read by degrees on successive nights the first four chapters, you will be able to see if you agree with me in my view which I am going to put before you of Samuel's history.

I say that Samuel stands in the Bible as the type of a *religious* boy.

You will notice that he had the blessing of good parents. His father, Elkanah, it is related, rarely failed to go up 'out of the city' every year 'to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh.' His mother Hannah dedicated him to God; he was in her eyes a child that God had given in answer to prayer; she said, 'for this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him; therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord;' and every year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice she brought him a little present made with her own hands.

I think I know that there are some boys who are the boys of many prayers. You have a mother, like Hannah, and she prays for you: she has prayed to-day; it is her deep desire

that you should be a good boy and true and pure at School; you cannot be so base as to live regardless of her prayers. I will not believe that you can think of her kneeling humbly to entreat God for you, and can then break her heart by doing evil.

But if you love your mother, as she loves you, there is one thing you must do which Samuel did. You must keep clear of bad company. You cannot help coming across bad boys, but you need not be friends with them. Even Samuel in the house of God found bad associates. 'The sons of Eli,' the old priest before whom he ministered, 'were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.' It would have been easy for Samuel to go with them. I dare say they asked him many times. But he went not. Perhaps the thought of his mother at home held him back. Anyhow he showed just that resolute innocency that I want you to show. And so while they were sinking deeper into sin, he was growing like another Child, of whom some among you will think, 'in favour both with the Lord and also with men.' For he learnt the meaning and value of the counsel which I would impress upon you with all my heart:

'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.'

It is right to say too that a part of the strength so greatly needed for resisting evil Samuel found, as it seems, in his love for the house of God. 'The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli.' He seems to have lived and even to have slept in the temple. He was a consecrated child. Like Ion in the beautiful play of Euripides, he spent all his life under the shadow of the sanctuary. It may be said of him that he had God for his father and his mother both; and, although none can now be just what Samuel was, yet there have been boys, and there are still, who have been true to the sacred promise of boyhood, who have loved Jesus Christ and His worship when they were at school, and have loved it all through life, and have been His servants, yes, and afterwards His saints.

May I not take him as the type of the boys who feel a pleasure—not a pain—in the services of God's house? Only you cannot care for the services if you do not take a personal part in them. Many boys do take such a part by singing and responding—many, yet not quite

all. What a grand and glorious thing it would be if no voice were silent in the worship of God! St. Jerome, if I remember, says that in the primitive Church the sound of the *Amen* was like a thunder-clap.

But let me come back to Samuel.

How great was his obedience to Eli! He did not complain of having to work for the old man. He did his duty willingly and cheerfully. In the middle of the night he thought he heard his master's voice, and he ran saying, 'Here am I; for thou didst call me.' There is no better road to God than such obedience. When we think we are obeying our master's voice, we hear His voice. He speaks to us in the solemn stillness as He spoke to Samuel. 'And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.'

God called Samuel by name: 'Samuel, Samuel.' He will not quite in that way call you. Yet He can say to you as to Moses of old: 'I know thee by name.' For yours too is a calling—a 'heavenly calling,' as the writer to the Hebrews says—a vocation, a special service appointed for you by God. And the great thing is that, when He speaks to you, you should not hesitate or dally, or think

of your own advantage or interest, but should say with Samuel: 'Speak; for Thy servant heareth.'

That is a time of testing, not for boys only but for masters too.

It is well that masters should be large-hearted and open-minded enough to see when it is that God is calling a boy. There are times in the history of many boys when sympathy is the thing most needful, and not severity, when to insist upon absolute rules is to mar the inspiration of a life. But, believe me, you will in general serve God best by doing your plain, simple, regular duty as well as you can.

Samuel's was a holy life, but he had his difficulties as we all have. For instance, he had to tell Eli a very unpleasant truth. I know no more disagreeable task than that of telling unpleasant truths. How many boys are there among you all who would dare to speak out, if they knew that their honest words might get them into trouble with masters or with boys bigger and stronger and more important than themselves? Eli said to Samuel, 'What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee?' It must have been a temptation to Samuel to tell him something that was not quite true, or to

keep something back and so make things easier for his master and for himself. But he did not so act. 'Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him.' There he showed what his religion was worth to him.

I could tell you more of Samuel's life, if time permitted me. I could tell you of his disappointment when he found that the people would not take his advice, though they were so foolish in rejecting it. I could tell you how he never gave up praying for them, when they were doing wrong, as you may pray for some foolish erring schoolfellow. I could tell you of that pathetic scene when he stood before them and asked them if he had ever treated them badly, and they gave him that noble testimony: 'Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.'

But all this lies beyond the boyish years of Samuel. I will say this only, that Samuel let his religion be known, not offensively or hypocritically, but quietly to all men. 'All Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.' That was his reputation, and it was the best reputation possible. There is a Jewish

tradition that Samuel was only twelve years old when he was called to the prophetical office. And surely it would be well if it could be said of one of you, even a small young boy who does his duty for Christ's sake, that the whole School from the highest to the lowest know him to be a prophet—a spokesman—of God.

For a life so begun may be a life unsullied to the end. It may be so; for such lives have been and such there are now. Blessed, thrice blessed are they. For though you may sin, and continue sinning for many years, yet shall the Lord have mercy upon you, even in your last hour if you repent, as He showed mercy to the dying thief upon the Cross. But you can never know the blessing of him who in boyhood and manhood and until hoar age has lived ever in the light and loveliness of religion. Such a one, like Samuel of old, lives a guileless life. He lives in innocence and sanctity. He does good of which he dreams not himself. His presence is a hallowing, purifying influence; wherever his shadow falls, men's lives are strong and true again. His example is the salt of the School. And when he dies—though he may at times have been misunderstood—yet all who knew him, his friends and

his foes alike, are saddened for the loss of him. For it is written: 'Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.'

XV

DAVID, THE MODEST BOY

'He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.'—PSALM lxxviii. 70, 71.

WE proceed, in considering the boys of Holy Scripture, to a third boy—very different from the other two—the boy David. It is my wish to speak of his early life, before the great change, of which the text speaks, occurred to him. I hardly know what epithet it would be right to give him, as Joseph was called 'the tempted boy,' and Samuel 'the religious boy': but I think perhaps I may call him distinctively 'the *modest* boy.'

Let me remind you how he comes upon the scene of the Biblical story. If you like to read the sixteenth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, you will find all about it. He was his father's youngest son. His brothers, it seems, were far more striking than he was. Nobody

thought much of him or cared much about him. He spent his days, and I dare say his nights too, feeding his father's flocks all alone. It may be noted that of all the household of his father Jesse he was the least important, the least conspicuous member—yet for him was reserved the most distinguished destiny.

The old theologian, Thomas Fuller, in his *Church History*, makes the following remark: 'God hath always been ambitious to preserve and prefer little things—the Jews, "the least" of all nations; David, their king, "least" in his father's family; "little" Benjamin, the ruler; "little" hill of Hermon; the Virgin Mary, "the lowliness of His hand-maiden." God's children severally are styled His "little ones," and collectively made up but a "little flock."' Certainly David was one of these little ones who are great in the sight of the Highest.

It happened once upon a time that the famous prophet Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the town where Jesse lived. There can be no doubt that his arrival created a great stir. We read that 'the elders of the town came to meet him,' in excitement and agitation, for they could not imagine what was the reason of his coming,

and they were half afraid that Saul, the king, would not approve it.

It is natural to suppose that all Bethlehem turned out of the houses to see the prophet. According to my experience of Bethlehem at the present day, it does not take much to get up a sensation there, and I expect it was the same long, long ago. And some people, as you know, are very curious and inquisitive; they are exceedingly anxious to learn what is going on, and not so scrupulous about the means that they take to learn it; and if an interesting event is happening, however painful or distressing it may be, or ought to be, to them, and though they might just as well keep away from it as not, you may be quite sure that they will be there. It would have been no surprise had David been found in the street or looking out of a window, with the crowd, to see and cheer the prophet. Nobody would have blamed him or thought of blaming him for being there. But curiosity was not, it seems, a part of his nature. He did not put himself forward; he waited to be called. So the prophet Samuel came into Bethlehem, the city of David; and David was tending the flocks.

I do not know if David heard that Samuel

had come with a mission to his own family; but so it was, and if David knew it, it is even more remarkable that he should have gone on quietly doing his duty in the fields. But anyhow it is clear that the thought in his mind was something like this: 'Here is the great prophet of God coming to the town; no doubt he is coming for some grave, important business; he has a message for somebody, but it cannot be for me; I am the last person with whom he would be likely to concern himself, and so I had better keep out of the way and look after my sheep.' For David, as I have said, was a *modest* boy.

And now what was it that took place when Samuel arrived at Bethlehem?

He went to the house of Jesse, David's father. He 'sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.' Then he made the sons of Jesse pass before him, one by one. If you will reflect a little, you can almost picture these sons of Jesse—seven in all, strong, stalwart, handsome men—presenting themselves before the prophet, looking him confidently in the face, blushing, it may be, with self-conscious pride, each of them assuming that he was the man upon whom the prophet's eye would rest

admiringly, and not one giving a thought to his youngest brother in the field with the flocks all grazing around him. They had no opinion of David, as Eliab, the eldest of them, showed afterwards when he said to David in the camp of the Israelites: 'Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?' He was angry and ashamed of his brother for venturing to show himself in the army among the officers who held command against the Philistines.

So these seven brothers passed before the prophet. One by one they advanced. The prophet looked at them. Then one by one they retired. 'And Samuel said unto Jesse'—what a mortification it must have been to them to hear the words!—'The Lord hath not chosen these.' Then occurred the most interesting part of the whole scene. Something, it seems, suggested suddenly to Samuel that, though he had seen as many as seven sons of Jesse, he might perhaps not have seen all. He said unto Jesse, 'Are here all thy children?' No doubt the question took Jesse by surprise. He had not thought of the young boy tending his flock away in the fields. And he said, 'There remaineth yet the youngest, and,

behold, he keepeth the sheep,' as if to say, 'He is only doing shepherd's duty; he is humble and obscure; it can hardly be necessary to send for him.' But the answer of the prophet was decisive: 'Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither.' And when he came—the young boy, healthy, modest, open and devout—an inspiration whispered to Samuel: 'Arise, anoint him: for this is he.'

Such was the beginning, as you know, of David's royal life. In the words of the text: God 'chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.'

From that day, I say, David was marked out for royal state. But his royalty came to him as he was watching his father's flocks in the lonely fields of Bethlehem. You will perhaps remember that there was another occasion when a great revelation came to men who were keeping watch over their flocks by night in the fields near Bethlehem.

There are two or three lessons which may be fitly drawn from this story.

And the first of all is the great charm of

modesty. David, as you know, was called the man after God's own heart. Yet he had many grievous faults. He was guilty of sensuality and cruelty. But in his boyhood he was modest. He did not think much of himself. He was not anxious to put himself forward. He was content to do his duty in a quiet way. Believe me, a conceited boy is a poor, sorry boy. A boy who is always eager to shine and to be admired and praised and to gain an advantage over others, a boy who loves himself, is not a boy whom others love. For if you think little of yourself, other boys will think much of you. But if you think yourself great, they will think you—will rightly think you—very little. And it always seems to me that they are modest, to whom the Lord at His coming shall say: 'Ye blessed of My Father,' for they did not know that they had done the service so dear to Him, and could only ask: 'When saw we Thee hungry, or thirsty, or naked, or in prison?'

Yet it is the modest boy who is called to be the king—not the strong, or clever, or prominent boy, but the youngest who kept his father's flock. In the doing of his simple duty greatness came to him. It may so come to

any one. There can be little doubt that to some one among the boys who now hear me the opportunity of great utility and great distinction will some day come. Be ready for it, but not eager for it. Neither seek responsibility nor shirk it. To be worthy of greatness, to be capable of greatness,—not to be great, is the aim which I would set before you. Only let your confidence, as David's was, be in God. He will help you; He will sustain you. He will lay upon you no burden that is heavier than He gives you grace to bear. Remember these words: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' For is it not written: 'He that is faithful in that which is least, the same is faithful also in much'?

The faith in God gives men and boys a wonderful strength. It nerved David—the boy—to fight against the Philistine. It has nerved many and many a one since then.

I do not bid you think of great place. But I bid you think of great service. You shall go your way quietly. You shall do your duty as in the sight of God. Then some day there shall come to you the call for courage. It shall come when you look for it not. You shall be called to face the enemy, not per-

chance in physical warfare, but some enemy of your souls, and the souls of other boys: you shall see others, it may be, hesitating and shrinking; you shall step forward from the ranks; you shall say as firmly and quietly as David: 'I will go and fight this Philistine.'

May God be with you in your sublime and holy enterprise!

XVI

JOSIAH, THE ROYAL BOY

'Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.'—2 CHRON. xxxiv. 1–3.

THERE is a peculiar interest belonging to the boy of whom I am going to speak to you. For he was a royal boy. He was not like David, taken from a humble sphere, from keeping his father's sheep, to be a king over God's people. He was by birth the heir to the throne. He was but a child when he became a king. And though he was so young when he was called to his great office, yet it is said of him in the noble words just read to you that 'he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David

his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.' Yet I dare say there are a good many boys who have often, it may be, thought of David, but have never thought of Josiah as a model at all.

To my mind it is one of the saddest facts of history that so few kings and queens have been really good. It would have seemed natural that they who were set upon a height, where their actions must be strongly influential upon human lives, and who, for no special merit of their own, were endowed with rich estates, honours and dignities, should have sought to set an example of high and holy living to the world. But the catalogue of sovereigns in ancient and modern times and all over the globe presents few instances, alas! of exalted virtue. Where are the imitators and successors of Alfred or St. Louis? Where are the kings and queens whose royalty of virtue has equalled or surpassed their royalty of state? It is a pity that they are so few.

But Josiah was a royal soul indeed. He 'did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,' he 'declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.' He was only a boy when he came to the throne, like King Edward VI.,

but he was one of those boys who know the right and do it. I suppose it sometimes happens that some boys make of their youth an excuse for doing wrong, or, at least, for not doing right, if it is unpleasant or difficult. I can almost hear a fourth-form boy saying, 'Oh, if only I were clever and high up in the school, or in the eleven, then it would be easy to set a good example; but what can I do? Who will listen to me? Must I not be like other boys in my place or my form?'

Well, I think I have known boys high in the School who have been weak, and I have known boys low down who have been strong. Josiah, at all events, in the days when the text speaks of him, was only eight years old, and he was the son of a very bad father, who 'trespassed more and more,' and was at last put to death by his own subjects. And yet Josiah, 'while he was yet young, began to seek after the God of David his father,' and I shall try in this sermon to show you what a splendid work he did, as a boy, for God.

Now why should not you be like him? There is no greater blessing in a Public School than good boys who are young and low down. For it is among the young that evil begins, or

is apt to begin. If I were to make an appeal for help to any boys among you, I would turn not to the sixth and fifth-form boys—for of them, I think I may say they will not disappoint me—I would turn to the boys in the lower forms, and I would say to them: 'You know better than the others what is going on in the school; you hear the talk which others do not hear; who is there among you that will do what is right in the sight of the Lord?'

Josiah began his virtuous life when he was eight years old. Will not you begin at thirteen, or fourteen, or fifteen? Will not you, like him, break down the altars of Baalim and the images that boys so often worship? After all, there is nothing like beginning young. You can be too young to be strong, too young to be powerful, too young to be influential, but never too young to be good. God reveals Himself to the young and tender soul. To seek Him early is the best—it may even be the only—way of finding Him.

But if the story of Josiah appeals to all boys and to young boys as much as to older, it appeals also to boys who may be said to occupy a leading or dominant position in the school. They are not kings perhaps as he was, though in a spiritual sense Christ has made us all 'kings

and priests unto God and His Father'; but to them and to all—for what they are, all may become, all in some sense must become—it will be useful to look a little at the secret of Josiah's holy life.

And first of all I notice that King Josiah found his strength in the study of the Bible. It is told in the end of the chapter from which my text is taken that he 'went up into the house of the Lord,' and read in the ears of all the people, 'great and small,' 'the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord.'

You are often asked to read the Bible regularly. I too ask you. I ask you earnestly. That there are difficulties many and painful in the study of the Bible I know well; who should feel them more than I? But putting aside what is petty or partial in criticism, this I know well, that where the Bible is read and loved, there virtue is sure—surer than it can ever be among men or boys who neglect or contemn or ridicule the Bible. And as one who has done noble work in London has said that whatever he and his colleagues had achieved for God or man began in a Bible class held at school, so if any boy high in place or in

influence should gather a small body of his schoolfellows together, simply and quietly, for the reading of the Bible, there, more than anywhere else, should I look for noble service and noble sacrifice in the future.

But Josiah was not content with reading 'the book of the covenant' to himself or even to 'all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.' He went on to make a covenant before the Lord, 'to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book,' and what is more he 'caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it.'

That is, I say, a splendid example of a royal resolve. But it is not beyond the reach of others than kings. In the backwoods of America a solitary pillar marks the spot where four young students parted for ever, having each vowed to the others that he would seek to spend his life in doing some good among men.

Besides, how great is the power of one strong sacred soul! Men talk of human wickedness as infectious—but is not virtue, is not sanctity infectious? Are there not men, yes, and boys in whose presence evil shrinks,

as though abashed, and around whom a serene immaculate atmosphere seems to breathe? I do not need a multitude of saints. I need but a few boys, strong, resolute, incorruptible, outspoken; and, whatever faults other boys may commit in holes and corners, the School, as a body, is safe.

Such was Josiah, and such was his influence upon his people that 'all their days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers.'

Thus I have set before you the life of the *royal* boy. It is a pure and beautiful life. All his actions—his destruction of idolatry, his restoration of God's house, his recitation of the Holy Scriptures, his covenant with God, his religious devotion—make up the picture of an ideal life.

Who can wonder that when he died, being still but a youth, 'all Judah and Jerusalem mourned' for him, and the prophet of God Jeremiah, made lamentation for him as for one whose reign had shed a lustre around his throne?

I hope you will read the two chapters of the Second Book of Chronicles—the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth—in which the story is related.

You will see there how a mere boy may purpose and effect, in God's Providence, a great moral reform. You will see how he may be kept, amidst manifold temptations, sincere, simple, reverent, devout. You will see that influence entails responsibility, and that it is a noble heart which rises to the height of the duties imposed by power or privilege or position. And it may be that, as you think of this young boy setting himself at fifteen years of age to regenerate his people, you will say to yourself—even the youngest will say: What can I do to cleanse and elevate my house, my school, and hereafter my country?

May God inspire that prayer, and nerve you to execute it, for He has need of every holy life on earth!

XVII

SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABED-NEGO, THE COURAGEOUS BOYS

'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But, if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.'—DAN. iii. 16–18.

I DO not know what you may have thought of the other boys whose names and stories I have laid before you. But I do know what you will think—what you must think—of these three *courageous* boys whose example is commorated in the text. For it is impossible to read their story without a glowing admiration. I should be ashamed of you and of myself if our hearts did not thrill at a courage so splendid as theirs.

'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.'

Let me try to show you the sublime dignity of the words.

Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. He was the most powerful and the most formidable of living men. He looked upon himself and his subjects looked upon him as Lord of the Universe. When he issued a proclamation it was addressed to 'all people, nations, and languages that dwelt in all the earth.' Nor was this all, for he had lately gone up against Jerusalem, he had made Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, his prisoner, and had carried him and his nobles and a great many of his people to Babylon. Among the captives were the boys Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—as they are called in the Hymn or *Song of the Three Holy Children* which is given in the Apocrypha, and appears in the Prayer Book just after the *Te Deum*, under the title *Benedicite Omnia Opera*—or, to call them by the Chaldean names imposed upon them by one of Nebuchadnezzar's chief officials, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

You may at some time of your lives have known what it is to feel lonely and strange, but you cannot have known such loneliness or strangeness as these three youths. What it was

you may learn from the beautiful 137th Psalm, where it is told how, by the waters of Babylon the captive Jews sat down and wept, and hung their harps upon the willows by the riverside, and could not sing the Lord's song in the land of the stranger. I think there is none of us who is not conscious of a sympathy or pity for these three friendless boys at Babylon in the king's palace. However, they got on pretty well after a time. It happened that King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a strange dream. His own wise men—the magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers of Babylon—could not interpret it; but Daniel, another Jewish captive, gave an interpretation of it, and the superstitious king, being overcome by Daniel's skill, not only appointed him governor of the whole province of Babylon, but at his request appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to administer the affairs of the province under him. So these boys, who had now grown to early manhood, found themselves lifted out of obscurity into a high place, and there seemed to be nothing that they might not hope for or aspire to, except, indeed, that they could not go home.

But now came their great and crucial trial,

Nebuchadnezzar's fancy indulged in a certain freak. It occurred to him to set up a gigantic image sixty cubits high, probably of his favourite deity Bel Merodach, in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon, and to issue an edict that at the blast of martial music every human being in Babylon should bow himself to the ground before the image, 'and whoso,' he added, 'falleth not down and worshippeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.'

Well, now, what would you have done, if you had been in the place of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? Would you have fallen down and worshipped, or not? Would you have said to yourselves: 'What is the harm of worshipping the image here in Babylon, where everybody worships it, just for once, to please the king, when there is the burning fiery furnace awaiting us if we refuse?' Or would you have said, 'I must never sin against God for any hope of reward or fear of penalty in the world?'

I dare not think what you or I would have done. I greatly fear that we should not have been so strong or so brave as were these three holy children in Babylon. But at least we can

admire and reverence their courage, we can humbly pray that it may be ours.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to bow down.

It was not long before 'certain Chaldeans,' who were jealous, I dare say, of the influence which these Jews had exercised on the king's mind, came and said to him: 'These men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' Nebuchadnezzar grew furious in a moment. As an Oriental potentate, he was not accustomed to see his edict disregarded or disobeyed. He summoned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to his presence, asked them if the report which had come to his ears was indeed true, bade them bow themselves before the golden image as soon as the blast of martial music should sound again, and ended his speech in words that must have seemed to shrivel the very marrow in their bones: 'If ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?' Now, my boys, I say again, What should we have done?

I am very much afraid we should have

said: 'O King Nebuchadnezzar, live for ever. Thou art the lord and we are thy subjects. Thou hast power to spare or to slay. We are in thy hands. We cannot fight against thy will. We will bow down and worship the image which thou hast set up.'

But now listen to the answer of the Three Holy Children. I read it to you as the text of my sermon: 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter'—*i. e.*, as the Hebrew means: 'We have no need to reflect what answer we shall give thee in this matter.' Is not that an anticipation of our Lord's promise that the Holy Spirit should teach His persecuted ones what they ought to say in that hour? But the answer proceeds: 'If it be so, our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.'

The Holy Children feel no doubt as to God's power. He was the Eternal, the Almighty. If His will were so, they would be delivered from the king's hand. Theirs was a strong, unassailable, paramount faith in Him.

But suppose they were not delivered. Suppose they should be taken by the king's

minister and flung into the burning fiery furnace, what then? This, indeed, is the most striking part of their answer: 'But, if not,'—even if we are not delivered—'if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' I call that a splendid answer. If you do not admire that, I know not what you will admire. It would seem a great thing to say: 'We will not do wrong; for we trust in God, and He will deliver us.' But how much greater is the word: 'Even if God does not deliver us, still we will not do wrong; we will not worship the golden image'! For that is heroism—the scorn of consequences; the absolute resolve to do the right, whatever the cost may be of doing it. You may look through the Bible, you may look through the books of secular history among men, and you will find no nobler, no sublimer spirit than that of the youths Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, when they stood before Nebuchadnezzar, and with the dread of instant terrible death staring them in the face, told him that the God whom they served was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace. 'But, if not, be it known unto

thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.'

You all know the sequel of the story. You know that King Nebuchadnezzar commanded the furnace to be heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. You know that he caused Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to be cast into the midst of the seven-times-heated furnace. You know that when he looked into the furnace, expecting to see his victims reduced to ashes, he saw not three men but four, and all were walking in the midst of the furnace, 'and the form of the fourth' was like the Son of God. And you know that when he called with a loud voice, saying, 'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither,' they came forth; and upon their bodies 'the fire had no power, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.' That is the story, and I will draw one lesson from it.

You are young now. You have not passed through the experience of which I am thinking, but it may be that my words will come home to you some day. In the bloody days of

Queen Mary a young Protestant martyr who was brought to the stake cried to the by-standers to pray for him. 'I will pray no more for thee,' answered one of them, 'than I will pray for a dog.' Then said he: 'Son of God, shine upon me'; and immediately the sun shone out of a dark cloud upon him so brilliantly that he turned his face away perforce, and the people marvelled.

There are trials in life which may be compared to the burning of a fiery furnace. Bereavement is such a trial; disappointment is such a trial; above all, temptation itself is such a trial. From these things no child of God may be exempt. He must consent to be cast into the flame. But if he is strong, if he is true, he will not be alone in the hour of his spiritual suffering; he shall be conscious of a more than human Presence consoling, inspiring him; the breath of fire shall not pass upon him to scathe him; for 'the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.'

XVIII

JESUS, THE DIVINE BOY

'The child Jesus' (A.V.); 'The boy Jesus' (R.V.).—LUKE ii. 43.

WHEN I name that holy Name you will all feel that it marks the climax of these sermons. We have thought of a good many boys and very different boys: Samuel, the religious boy; Joseph, the tempted boy; David, the modest boy; Josiah, the royal boy; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, the courageous boys. We will think to-day of the *Divine* Boy, Jesus Christ.

But, first, let me make these two remarks. It is touching to notice that the boys of the Bible are all good boys. Bad men there are in the Bible, and bad women, but not bad boys. How is it that the Bible depicts no wicked boys? I think it is partly that God, who inspired the Holy Scripture, would teach the eternal hopefulness of boyhood; He would not

let any boy be deemed corrupt or hopeless, but would show that all, whatever their faults may be or failings, are still endowed with the rich potency of a beneficent and sacred life. Nobody—no master, above all—has caught the spirit of the Bible if he does not cherish a great hope and a great faith in even the most troublesome and the most sinful boy of you all. And I would say to you yet again and again, in Christ's dear name: 'You may have fallen a hundred times, you may have fallen to-day, only do not despair; do not lose heart about yourselves, try once more; try yet more earnestly, and God will help you and bless you, and make you in His mercy a good man.' But is there not another reason why the boys of the Bible are shown to be good? Is it not that boys ought to be good and not bad? For you are so young, you know so little of life's evils; your souls are not yet smirched and stained with the guilt of the world; you, if any, ought to be innocent, upright and pure; oh! do not think it fine to be cunning or selfish; do not part with the sincerity which it is, alas! so easy to lose, and when it is lost, so infinitely difficult to restore. Thus it is that the boys of the Bible are good, and now I come to

speak of the best of them all—'the Child Jesus.'

You will have noticed that all the boys about whom I have spoken, excepting the Divine Boy, are taken from the Old Testament. It is sometimes asked: Why are there no boys in the New Testament? We read of young men like St. John or Timothy, but not, I think, of boys. I cannot tell you why it is so; but I have thought sometimes that the Old Testament prepares the way, by its various characters, for the one perfect Boy; He is seen in the beginning of the Gospels, and then, after the vision of His boyhood there is no more to be said. But whether this be so or not, it is well to meditate on the life of the Divine and holy Boy—'The Child Jesus.'

You will feel, first of all how little it is that is told of His boyhood. Holy Scripture is strangely reticent and reserved about the early years of the Divine Life. About them all there lies a veil, serene and sacred, scarce lifted, unless for a moment just now and then as in the story of the Finding in the Temple, to which the text belongs, when it is said that 'His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.'

I do not dare to ask why so little is told, when we should have been so glad to learn much more, about the Boyhood; but at least it cannot be wrong to infer that the life of a boy is not least beautiful or blessed in the sight of the Holy One when it is still and humble and makes no fuss or stir in the world. And this is the lesson so often forgotten in these days. Boys are eager perhaps to be forward or precocious: they want to know the world. How much better it were that they should know a little of themselves! They think themselves clever when they are very foolish. Sometimes when I meet them in the holidays they are quite like young men. They have the dress, the manner, the conversation of grown-up people. What a mistake it is! I hope you will not be guilty of it. For a boy is a finer creature in himself than a young man, and even if he were not, you may be good boys whom everybody will respect, but you will be very poor young men.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a simple boy. I like to dwell upon His humility, His obscurity. He was infinitely greater than you or I can be. Yet He lived quietly; He made no noise at all; He excited no attention. I remember

when I was at Nazareth, climbing the hill which overlooked the little town and thinking that He must have stood there as a boy and considered the lilies opening their petals around Him, and nobody knew or dreamed how great He was.

And if He was content to live so quietly and perhaps, as painters have fancied, to toil in his father's workshop, then surely the boy who is most like Him to-day is he who does his duty in the simplest, quietest way, and is not much talked of for good or evil, but is seen of the Omniscient Eye that seeth in secret. But to one especial point in His early life I may direct your thoughts. It is His obedience. Nothing in His life is more touching or beautiful than this.

Boys are not always so obedient as they might be. I do not speak of obedience at school; that can take care of itself, as it results from authority. But I have known or heard of boys who were disobedient in their homes, during the holidays, to their parents, and who gave a great deal of trouble and, instead of making the home-life delightful, made it miserable. Such boys think they know better than their betters. Do not suppose that

I find fault with these boys too hastily. It is not always easy to obey, and sometimes parents are unreasonable as well as boys, and make mistakes. But is not this true? If obedience is hard for you, must it not have been harder —ever so much harder—for the Child Jesus, when He was so vastly superior in knowledge and character to His earthly parents? Must He not have been often tempted and inclined to say: 'I know better than you: do not try to teach Me My duty. I will do as I choose: I will not follow the guidance of any one'? And yet He never said any such word. He was humble and docile, and even after the Finding in the Temple, of which I am coming now to speak to you, it is told that he went down to Nazareth again with his parents, 'and was subject unto them.'

And now it is time to touch upon the story to which the text belongs. Jesus was then twelve years old. At that age a Jewish boy ceased to be called a child and became a 'son of the Law.' Jesus went up with His father Joseph and His mother Mary to keep the Passover at Jerusalem. To do so was like being confirmed or coming to Holy Communion for the first time. After the Passover

He 'tarried behind,' and on the second day His parents missed Him, then they turned back again to Jerusalem, 'and after three days they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors.'

Will you let me suggest a reflection upon this scene? The contrast of the Rabbis, the aged representatives of the Law, and the Child who should be the Author of the Gospel is striking and very picturesque. He sat at their feet as St. Paul at Gamaliel's; such was the attitude of meekness or docility, and He acquiesced in it. And when it is told that He was found 'both hearing them, and asking them questions,' I cannot help thinking that is the true attitude of a pupil even now towards his teachers. He must hear them; the hearing must come first, If he is unwilling to hear and to learn, if he ever forgets that they who are older than he are wiser and know more, and that he ought to listen to them with a reverent attention, then he is foolish, he is vain, he is ignorant of the spirit which a boy ought to show.

But when he has heard—when he has shown the spirit of docility—it is his right, nay, his duty, to ask questions. No one who teaches can claim that his pupils should not try to learn

by questions, however searching, if the teaching that is given is true and can hold its ground against assaults. And if it is obscure, they are entitled to put questions about it and the teacher is bound to explain it. For nobody wishes to dictate to you what you shall believe or what you shall do in after life, but only to smooth the way for you and to guide you in it and to prevent your making the mistakes which cost so dear: the rest must be your part, yours and God's; for the best and highest teaching is found in the Temple—it was there that our Lord was sitting with the doctors.

It is good, indeed, that you should imbibe such teaching as strengthens the intellect and cultivates the tastes, and makes you in knowledge and tone and manner English gentlemen. It is still better that you should learn to be worthy and noble citizens of the greatest Empire that God has appointed among men. But best of all it shall be if while you are at school, and yet more when you go forth into the world, you represent, even in faint shadow, the spirit of Him, the Divine Boy who lived to do His Father's business, and who thought not of Himself but of His brethren, and became the Saviour of mankind.

So these sermons on The Boys of the Bible come to their end. In concluding them, what shall I say to you as my final word? What hope shall I express for you? What prayer shall I put up as the wish of any soul? shall it not be this, that you may be as that Divine Boy over whose boyhood we have lingered awhile, and, like Him may 'increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man'?

THE END.

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