

**CHARLES  
KINGSLEY**

DISCIPLINE AND  
OTHER  
SERMONS

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**Discipline and Other Sermons**

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**Kingsley C.**

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# Charles Kingsley

## Discipline and Other Sermons

### SERMON I

### DISCIPLINE

*(Preached at the Volunteer Camp, Wimbledon, July 14, 1867.)*

#### Numbers xxiv. 9

He couched, he lay down as a lion; and as a great lion.  
Who dare rouse him up?

These were the words of the Eastern sage, as he looked down from the mountain height upon the camp of Israel, abiding among the groves of the lowland, according to their tribes, in order, discipline, and unity. Before a people so organized, he saw well, none of the nations round could stand. Israel would burst through them, with the strength of the wild bull crashing through the forest.

He would couch as a lion, and as a great lion. Who dare rouse him up?

But such a people, the wise Balaam saw, would not be mere conquerors, like those savage hordes, or plundering armies, which have so often swept over the earth before and since, leaving no trace behind save blood and ashes. Israel would be not only a conqueror, but a colonist and a civilizer.

And as the sage looked down on that well-ordered camp, he seems to have forgotten for a moment that every man therein was a stern and practised warrior. 'How goodly,' he cries, 'are thy tents, oh Jacob, and thy camp, oh Israel.' He likens them, not to the locust swarm, the sea flood, nor the forest fire, but to the most peaceful, and most fruitful sights in nature or in art. They are spread forth like the water-courses, which carry verdure and fertility as they flow. They are planted like the hanging gardens beside his own river Euphrates, with their aromatic shrubs and wide-spreading cedars. Their God-given mission may be stern, but it will be beneficent. They will be terrible in war; but they will be wealthy, prosperous, civilized and civilizing, in peace.

Many of you must have seen—all may see—that noble picture of Israel in Egypt which now hangs in the Royal Academy; in which the Hebrews, harnessed like beasts of burden, writhing under the whips of their taskmasters, are dragging to its place some huge Egyptian statue.

Compare the degradation portrayed in that picture with this prophecy of Balaam's, and then consider—What, in less than two generations, had so transformed those wretched slaves?

Compare, too, with Balaam's prophecy the hints of their moral degradation which Scripture gives;—the helplessness, the hopelessness, the cowardice, the sensuality, which cried, 'Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians. Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou brought us forth to die in the wilderness?' 'Whose highest wish on earth was to sit by the fleshpots of Egypt, where they did eat bread to the full.' What had transformed that race into a lion, whom none dare rouse up?

Plainly, those forty years of freedom. But of freedom under a stern military education: of freedom chastened by discipline, and organized by law.

I say, of freedom. No nation of those days, we have reason to believe, enjoyed a freedom comparable to that of the old Jews. They were, to use our modern phrase, the only constitutional

people of the East. The burdensomeness of Moses' law, ere it was overlaid, in later days, by Rabbinical scrupulosity, has been much exaggerated. In its simpler form, in those early times, it left every man free to do, as we are expressly told, that which was right in his own eyes, in many most important matters. Little seems to have been demanded of the Jews, save those simple ten commandments, which we still hold to be necessary for all civilized society.

And their obedience was, after all, a moral obedience; the obedience of free hearts and wills. The law could threaten to slay them for wronging each other; but they themselves had to enforce the law against themselves. They were always physically strong enough to defy it, if they chose. They did not defy it, because they believed in it, and felt that in obedience and loyalty lay the salvation of themselves and of their race.

It was not, understand me, the mere physical training of these forty years which had thus made them men indeed. Whatever they may have gained by that—the younger generation at least—of hardihood, endurance, and self-help, was a small matter compared with the moral training which they had gained—a small matter, compared with the habits of obedience, self-restraint, self-sacrifice, mutual trust, and mutual help; the inspiration of a common patriotism, of a common national destiny.

Without that moral discipline, they would have failed each other in need; have broken up, scattered, or perished, or at least remained as settlers or as slaves among the Arab tribes. With that moral discipline, they held together, and continued one people till the last, till they couched, they lay down as a lion, and as a great lion, and none dare rouse them up.

You who are here to-day—I speak to those in uniform—are the representatives of more than one great body of your countrymen, who have determined to teach themselves something of that lesson which Israel learnt in the wilderness; not indeed by actual danger and actual need, but by preparation for dangers and for needs, which are only too possible as long as there is sin upon this earth.

I believe—I have already seen enough to be sure—that your labour and that of your comrades will not be in vain; that you will be, as you surely may be, the better men for that discipline to which you have subjected yourselves.

You must never forget that there are two sides, a softer and a sterner side, to the character of the good man; that he, the perfect Christ, who is the Lion of Judah, taking vengeance, in every age, on all who wrong their fellow men, is also the Lamb of God, who shed his own blood for those who rebelled against him. You must recollect that there are virtues—graces we call them rather—which you may learn elsewhere better than in the camp or on the drilling ground; graces of character more devout, more pure, more tender, more humane, yet necessary for the perfect man, which you will learn rather in your own homes, from the innocence of your own children, from the counsels and examples of your mothers and your wives.

But there are virtues—graces we must call them too—just as necessary for the perfect man, which your present training ought to foster as (for most of you) no other training can; virtues which the old monk tried to teach by the stern education of the cloister; which are still taught, thank God, by the stern education of our public schools; which you and your comrades may learn by the best of all methods, by teaching them to yourselves.

For here, and wherever military training goes on, must be kept in check those sins of self-will, conceit, self-indulgence, which beset all free and prosperous men. Here must be practised virtues which (if not the very highest) are yet virtues still, and will be such to all eternity.

For the moral discipline which goes to make a good soldier or a successful competitor on this ground,—the self-restraint, the obedience, the diligence, the punctuality, the patience, the courtesy, the forbearance, the justice, the temperance,—these virtues, needful for those who compete in a struggle in which the idler and the debauchee can take no share, all these go equally toward the making of a good man.

The germs of these virtues you must bring hither with you. And none can give them to you save the Spirit of God, the giver of all good. But here you may have them, I trust, quickened into more active life, strengthened into more settled habits, to stand you in good stead in all places, all circumstances, all callings; whether you shall go to serve your country and your family, in trade or agriculture, at home; or whether you shall go forth, as many of you will, as soldiers, colonists, or merchants, to carry English speech and English civilization to the ends of all the earth.

For then, if you learn to endure hardness—in plain English, to exercise obedience and self-restraint—will you be (whether regulars or civilians) alike the soldiers of Christ, able and willing to fight in that war of which He is the Supreme Commander, and which will endure as long as there is darkness and misery upon the earth; even the battle of the living God against the baser instincts of our nature, against ignorance and folly, against lawlessness and tyranny, against brutality and sloth.

Those, the deadly enemies of the human race, you are all bound to attack, if you be good men and true, wheresoever you shall meet them invading the kingdom of your Saviour and your God. But you can only conquer them in others in proportion as you have conquered them in yourselves.

May God give you grace to conquer them in yourselves more and more; to profit by the discipline which you may gain by this movement; and bequeath it, as a precious heirloom, to your children hereafter!

For so, whether at home or abroad, will you help to give your nation that moral strength, without which physical strength is mere violent weakness; and by the example and influence of your own discipline, obedience, and self-restraint, help to fulfil of your own nation the prophecy of the Seer—

‘He couched, he lay down as a lion; and as a great lion. Who dare rouse him up?’

## SERMON II

# THE TEMPLE OF WISDOM

*(Preached at Wellington College, All Saints' Day, 1866.)*

### Proverbs ix. 1–5

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and to him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.

This allegory has been a favourite one with many deep and lofty thinkers. They mixed it, now and then, with Greek fancies; and brought Phœbus, Apollo, and the Muses into the Temple of Wisdom. But whatever they added to the allegory, they always preserved the allegory itself. No words, they felt, could so well express what Wisdom was, and how it was to be obtained by man.

The stately Temple, built by mystic rules of art; the glorious Lady, at once its Architect, its Priestess, and its Queen; the feast spread within for all who felt in themselves divine aspirations after what is beautiful, and good, and true; the maidens fair and pure, sent forth throughout the city, among the millions intent only on selfish gain or selfish pleasure, to call in all who were not content to be only a more crafty kind of animal, that they might sit down at the feast among the noble company of guests,—those who have inclined their heart to wisdom, and sought for understanding as for hid treasures:—this is a picture which sages and poets felt was true; true for all men, and for all lands.

And it will be, perhaps, looked on as true once more, as natural, all but literally exact, when we who are now men are in our graves, and you who are now boys will be grown men; in the days when the present soulless mechanical notion of the world and of men shall have died out, and philosophers shall see once more that Wisdom is no discovery of their own, but the inspiration of the Almighty; and that this world is no dead and dark machine, but alight with the Glory, and alive with the Spirit, of God.

But what has this allegory, however true, to do with All Saints' Day?

My dear boys, on all days Wisdom calls you to her feast, by many weighty arguments, by many loving allurements, by many awful threats. But on this day, of all the year, she calls you by the memory of the example of those who sit already and for ever at her feast. By the memory and example of the wise of every age and every land, she bids you enter in and feast with them, on the wealth which she, and they, her faithful servants, have prepared for you. They have laboured; and they call you, in their mistress's name, to enter into their labours. She taught them wisdom, and she calls on you to learn wisdom of them in turn.

Remember, I say, this day, with humility and thankfulness of heart, the wise who are gone home to their rest.

There are many kinds of noble personages amid the blessed company of All Saints, whom I might bid you to remember this day. Some of you are the sons of statesmen or lawyers. I might call on you to thank God for your fathers, and for every man who has helped to make or execute wise laws. Some of you are the sons of soldiers. I might call on you to thank God for your fathers, and for all who have fought for duty and for their country's right. Some of you are the sons of clergymen.

I might call on you to thank God for your fathers, and for all who have preached the true God and

Jesus Christ His only-begotten Son, whether at home or abroad. All of you have mothers, whether on earth or in heaven; I might call on you to thank God for them, and for every good and true woman who, since the making of the world, has raised the coarseness and tamed the fierceness of men into gentleness and reverence, purity, and chivalry. I might do this: but to-day I will ask you to remember specially—The Wise.

For you are here as scholars; you are here to learn wisdom; you are here in what should be, and I believe surely is, one of the fore-courts of that mystic Temple into which Wisdom calls us all.

And therefore it is fit that you should this day remember the wise; for they have laboured, and you are entering into their labours. Every lesson which you learn in school, all knowledge which raises you above the savage or the profligate (who is but a savage dressed in civilized garments), has been made possible to you by the wise. Every doctrine of theology, every maxim of morals, every rule of grammar, every process of mathematics, every law of physical science, every fact of history or of geography, which you are taught here, is a voice from beyond the tomb. Either the knowledge itself, or other knowledge which led to it, is an heirloom to you from men whose bodies are now mouldering in the dust, but whose spirits live for ever before God, and whose works follow them, going on, generation after generation, upon the path which they trod while they were upon earth, the path of usefulness, as lights to the steps of youth and ignorance. They are the salt of the earth, which keeps the world of man from decaying back into barbarism. They are the children of light whom God has set for lights that cannot be hid. They are the aristocracy of God, into which not many noble, not many rich, not many mighty are called. Most of them were poor; many all but unknown in their own time; many died, and saw no fruit of their labours; some were persecuted, some were slain, even as Christ the Lord was slain, as heretics, innovators, and corruptors of youth. Of some, the very names are forgotten. But though their names be dead, their works live, and grow, and spread, over ever fresh generations of youth, showing them fresh steps toward that Temple of Wisdom, which is the knowledge of things as they are; the knowledge of those eternal laws by which God governs the heavens and the earth, things temporal and eternal, physical and spiritual, seen and unseen, from the rise and fall of mighty nations, to the growth and death of the moss on yonder moors.

They made their mistakes; they had their sins; for they were men of like passions with ourselves.

But this they did—They cried after Wisdom, and lifted up their voice for understanding; they sought for her as silver, and searched for her as hid treasure: and not in vain.

For them, as to every earnest seeker after wisdom, that Heavenly Lady showed herself and her exceeding beauty; and gave gifts to each according to his earnestness, his purity and his power of sight.

To some she taught moral wisdom—righteousness, and justice, and equity, yea, every good path.

To others she showed that political science, which—as Solomon tells you—is but another side of her beauty, and cannot be parted, however men may try, from moral wisdom—that Wisdom in whose right hand is length of days, and in her left hand riches and honour; whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

To others again she showed that physical science which—so Solomon tells us again—cannot be parted safely from the two others. For by the same wisdom, he says, which gives alike righteousness and equity, riches and long life—by that same wisdom, and no other, did the Lord found the heavens and establish the earth; by that same knowledge of his are the depths broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

And to some she showed herself, as she did to good Boethius in his dungeon, in the deepest vale of misery, and the hour of death; when all seemed to have deserted them, save Wisdom, and the God from whom she comes; and bade them be of good cheer still, and keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last.

And they beheld her, and loved her, and obeyed her, each according to his powers: and now they have their reward.

And what is their reward?

How can I tell, dear boys? This, at least can I say, for Scripture has said it already. That God is merciful in this; that he rewardeth every man according to his work. This, at least, I can say, for God incarnate himself has said it already—that to the good and faithful servant he will say,—‘Well done. Thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’

‘The joy of thy Lord.’ Think of these words a while. Perhaps they may teach us something of the meaning of All Saints’ Day.

For, if Jesus Christ be—as he is—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, then his joy now must be the same as his joy was when he was here on earth,—to do good, and to behold the fruit of his own goodness; to see—as Isaiah prophesied of him—to see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

And so it may be; so it surely is—with them; if blessed spirits (as I believe) have knowledge of what goes on on earth. They enter into the joy of their Lord. Therefore they enter into the joy of doing good. They see of the travail of their soul, and are satisfied that they have not lived in vain.

They see that their work is going on still on earth; that they, being dead, yet speak, and call ever fresh generations into the Temple of Wisdom.

My dear boys, take this one thought away with you from this chapel to-day. Believe that the wise and good of every age and clime are looking down on you, to see what use you will make of the knowledge which they have won for you. Whether they laboured, like Kepler in his garret, or like Galileo in his dungeon, hid in God’s tabernacle from the strife of tongues; or, like Socrates and Plato, in the whirl and noise—far more wearying and saddening than any loneliness—of the foolish crowd, they all have laboured for you. Let them rejoice, when they see you enter into their labours with heart and soul. Let them rejoice, when they see in each one of you one of the fairest sights on earth, before men and before God; a docile and innocent boy striving to become a wise and virtuous man.

And whenever you are tempted to idleness and frivolity; whenever you are tempted to profligacy and low-mindedness; whenever you are tempted—as you will be too often in these mean days—to join the scorers and the fools whom Solomon denounced; tempted to sneering unbelief in what is great and good, what is laborious and self-sacrificing, and to the fancy that you were sent into this world merely to get through it agreeably;—then fortify and ennoble your hearts by Solomon’s vision.

Remember who you are, and where you are—that you stand before the Temple of Wisdom, of the science of things as God has made them; wherein alone is health and wealth for body and for soul; that from within the Heavenly Lady calls to you, sending forth her handmaidens in every art and science which has ever ministered to the good of man; and that within there await you all the wise and good who have ever taught on earth, that you may enter in and partake of the feast which their mistress taught them to prepare. Remember, I say, who you are—even the sons of God; and remember where you are—for ever upon sacred ground; and listen with joy and hope to the voice of the Heavenly Wisdom, as she calls—‘Whoso is simple, let him come in hither; and him that wanteth understanding, let him come and eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled.’

Listen with joy and hope: and yet with fear and trembling, as of Moses when he hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. For the voice of Wisdom is none other than the voice of The Spirit of God, in whom you live, and move, and have your being.

## SERMON III

### PRAYER AND SCIENCE

*(Preached at St. Olave's Church, Hart Street, before the Honourable Corporation of the Trinity House, 1866.)*

#### Psalm cvii. 23, 24, 28

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

These are days in which there is much dispute about religion and science—how far they agree with each other; whether they contradict or interfere with each other. Especially there is dispute about Providence. Men say, and truly, that the more we look into the world, the more we find everything governed by fixed and regular laws; that man is bound to find out those laws, and save himself from danger by science and experience. But they go on to say,—‘And therefore there is no use in prayer.

You cannot expect God to alter the laws of His universe because you ask Him: the world will go on, and ought to go on, its own way; and the man who prays against danger, by sea or land, is asking vainly for that which will not be granted him.’

Now I cannot see why we should not allow,—what is certainly true,—that the world moves by fixed and regular laws: and yet allow at the same time,—what I believe is just as true,—that God's special providence watches over all our actions, and that, to use our Lord's example, not a sparrow falls to the ground without some special reason why that particular sparrow should fall at that particular moment and in that particular place. I cannot see why all things should not move in a divine and wonderful order, and yet why they should not all work together for good to those who love God.

The Psalmist of old finds no contradiction between the two thoughts. Rather does the one of them seem to him to explain the other. ‘All things,’ says he, ‘continue this day as at the beginning. For all things serve Thee.’

Still it is not to be denied, that this question has been a difficult one to men in all ages, and that it is so to many now.

But be that as it may, this I say, that, of all men, seafaring men are the most likely to solve this great puzzle about the limits of science and of religion, of law and of providence; for, of all callings, theirs needs at once most science and most religion; theirs is most subject to laws, and yet most at the mercy of Providence. And I say that many seafaring men have solved the puzzle for themselves in a very rational and sound way, though they may not be able to put thoughts into words; and that they do show, by their daily conduct, that a man may be at once thoroughly scientific and thoroughly religious. And I say that this Ancient and Honourable Corporation of the Trinity House is a proof thereof unto this day; a proof that sound science need not make us neglect sound religion, nor sound religion make us neglect sound science.

No man ought to say that seamen have neglected science. It is the fashion among some to talk of sailors as superstitious. They must know very little about sailors, and must be very blind to broad facts, who speak thus of them as a class. Many sailors, doubtless, are superstitious. But I appeal to every master mariner here, whether the superstitious men are generally the religious and godly men; whether it is not generally the most reckless and profligate men of the crew who are most afraid of

sailing on a Friday, and who give way to other silly fancies which I shall not mention in this sacred place. And I appeal, too, to public experience, whether many, I may say most, of those to whom seamanship and sea-science owes most, have not been God-fearing Christian men?

Be sure of this, that if seamen, as a class, had been superstitious, they would never have done for science what they have done. And what they have done, all the world knows. To seamen, and to men connected with the sea, what do we not owe, in geography, hydrography, meteorology, astronomy, natural history? At the present moment, the world owes them large improvements in dynamics, and in the new uses of steam and iron. It may be fairly said that the mariner has done more toward the knowledge of Nature than any other personage in the world, save the physician.

For seamen have been forced, by the nature of their calling, to be scientific men. From the very earliest ages in which the first canoe put out to sea, the mariner has been educated by the most practical of all schoolmasters, namely, danger. He has carried his life in his hand day and night; he has had to battle with the most formidable and the most seemingly capricious of the brute powers of nature; with storms, with ice, with currents, with unknown rocks and shoals, with the vicissitudes of climate, and the terrible and seemingly miraculous diseases which change of climate engenders. He has had to fight Nature; and to conquer her, if he could, by understanding her; by observing facts, and by facing facts. He dared not, like a scholar in his study, indulge in theories and fancies about how things ought to be. He had to find out how they really were. He dared not say, According to my theory of the universe this current ought to run in such a direction; he had to find out which way it did actually run, according to God's method of the universe, lest it should run him ashore. Everywhere, I say, and all day long, the seaman has to observe facts and to use facts, unless he intends to be drowned; and therefore, so far from being a superstitious man, who refuses to inquire into facts, but puts vain dreams in their stead, the sailor is for the most part a very scientific-minded man: observant, patient, accurate, truthful; conquering Nature, as the great saying is, because he obeys her.

But if seamen have been forced to be scientific, they have been equally forced to be religious.

They that go down to the sea in ships see both the works of the Lord, and also His wonders in the deep. They see God's works, regular, orderly, the same year by year, voyage by voyage, and tide by tide; and they learn the laws of them, and are so far safe. But they also see God's wonders—strange, sudden, astonishing dangers, which have, no doubt, their laws, but none which man has found out as yet. Over them they cannot reason and foretell; they can only pray and trust. With all their knowledge, they have still plenty of ignorance; and therefore, with all their science, they have still room for religion. Is there an old man in this church who has sailed the seas for many a year, who does not know that I speak truth? Are there not men here who have had things happen to them, for good and for evil, beyond all calculation? who have had good fortune of which they could only say, The glory be to God, for I had no share therein? or who have been saved, as by miracle, from dangers of which they could only say, It was of the Lord's mercies that we were not swallowed up? who must, if they be honest men, as they are, say with the Psalmist, We cried unto the Lord in our trouble, and he delivered us out of our distress?

And this it is that I said at first, that no men were so fit as seamen to solve the question, where science ends and where religion begins; because no men's calling depends so much on science and reason, and so much, at the same time, on Providence and God's merciful will.

Therefore, when men say, as they will,—If this world is governed by fixed laws, and if we have no right to ask God to alter his laws for our sakes, then what use in prayer? I will answer,—Go to the seaman, and ask him what he thinks. The puzzle may seem very great to a comfortable landsman, sitting safe in his study at home; but it ought to be no puzzle at all to the master mariner in his cabin, with his chart and his Bible open before him, side by side. He ought to know well enough where reason stops and religion begins. He ought to know when to work, and when to pray. He ought to know the laws of the sea and of the sky. But he ought to know too how to pray, without asking God to alter those laws, as presumptuous and superstitious men are wont to do.

Take as an instance the commonest of all—a storm. We know that storms are not caused (as folk believed in old time) by evil spirits; that they are natural phenomena, obeying certain fixed laws; that they are necessary from time to time; that they are probably, on the whole, useful.

And we know two ways of facing a storm, one of which you may see too often among the boatmen of the Mediterranean—How a man shall say, I know nothing as to how, or why, or when, a storm should come; and I care not to know. If one falls on me, I will cry for help to the Panagia, or St. Nicholas, or some other saint, and perhaps they will still the storm by miracle. That is superstition, the child of ignorance and fear.

And you may have seen what comes of that temper of mind. How, when the storm comes, instead of order, you have confusion; instead of courage, cowardice; instead of a calm and manly faith, a miserable crying of every man to his own saint, while the vessel is left to herself to sink or swim.

But what is the temper of true religion, and of true science likewise? The seaman will say, I dare not pray that there may be no storm. I cannot presume to interfere with God's government. If there ought to be a storm, there will be one: if not, there will be none. But I can forecast the signs of the weather; I can consult my barometer; I can judge, by the new lights of science, what course the storm will probably take; and I can do my best to avoid it.

But does that make religion needless? Does that make prayer useless? How so? The seaman may say, I dare not pray that the storm may not come. But there is no necessity that I should be found in its path. And I may pray, and I will pray, that God may so guide and govern my voyage, and all its little accidents, that I may pass it by. I know that I can forecast the storm somewhat; and if I do not try to do that, I am tempting God: but I may pray, I will pray, that my forecast may be correct.

I will pray the Spirit of God, who gives man understanding, to give me a right judgment, a sound mind, and a calm heart, that I may make no mistake and neglect no precaution; and if I fail, and sink—God's will be done. It is a good will to me and all my crew; and into the hands of the good God who has redeemed me, I commend my spirit, and their spirits likewise.

This much, therefore, we may say of prayer. We may always pray to be made better men. We may always pray to be made wiser men. These prayers will always be answered; for they are prayers for the very Spirit of God himself, from whom comes all goodness and all wisdom, and it can never be wrong to ask to be made right.

There are surely, too, evils so terrible, that when they threaten us—if God being our Father means anything,—if Christ being our example means anything—then we have a right to cry, like our Lord himself, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:' if we only add, like our Lord, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

And of dangers in general this we may say—that if we pray against known dangers which we can avoid, we do nothing but tempt God: but that against unknown and unseen dangers we may always pray. For instance, if a sailor needlessly lodges over a foul, tideless harbour, or sleeps in a tropical mangrove swamp, he has no right to pray against cholera and fever; for he has done his best to give himself cholera and fever, and has thereby tempted God. But if he goes into a new land, of whose climate, diseases, dangers, he is utterly ignorant, then he has surely a right to pray God to deliver him from those dangers; and if not,—if he is doomed to suffer from them,—to pray God that he may discover and understand the new dangers of that new land, in order to warn future travellers against them, and so make his private suffering a benefit to mankind.

This, then, is our duty as to known dangers,—to guard ourselves against them by science, and the reason which God has given us; and as to unknown dangers, to pray to God to deliver us from them, if it seem good to him: but above all, to pray to him to deliver us from them in the best way, the surest way, the most lasting way, the way in which we may not only preserve ourselves, but our fellow-men and generations yet unborn; namely, by giving us wisdom and understanding to discover the dangers, to comprehend them, and to conquer them, by reason and by science.

This is the spirit of sound science and of sound religion. And it was in this spirit, and for this very end, that this Ancient and Honourable Corporation of the Trinity House was founded more than three hundred years ago. Not merely to pray to God and to the saints, after the ancient fashion, to deliver all poor mariners from dangers of the seas. That was a natural prayer, and a pious one, as far as it went: but it did not go far enough. For, as a fact, God did not always answer it: he did not always see fit to deliver those who called upon him. Gallant ships went down with all their crews. It was plain that God would not always deliver poor mariners, even though they cried to him in their distress.

Then, in the sixteenth century, when men's minds were freed from many old superstitions, by a better understanding both of Holy Scripture and of the laws of nature, the master mariners of England took a wiser course.

They said, God will not always help poor mariners: but he will always teach them to deliver themselves. And so they built this House, not in the name of the Virgin Mary or any saints in heaven, but, with a deep understanding of what was needed, in the most awful name of God himself. Thereby they went to the root and ground of this matter, and of all matters. They went to the source of all law and order; to the source of all force and life; and to the source, likewise, of all love and mercy; when they founded their House in the name of the Father of Lights, in whom men live and move and have their being; from whom comes every good and perfect gift, and without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground; in the name of the Son, who was born on earth a man, and tasted sorrow, and trial, and death for every man; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who inspires man with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and gives him a right judgment in all things, putting into his heart good desires, and enabling him to bring them to good effect. And so, believing that the ever-blessed Trinity would teach them to help themselves and their fellow-mariners, they set to work, like truly God-fearing men, not to hire monks to sing and say masses for them, but to set up for themselves lights and sea-marks, and to take order for the safe navigation of these seas, like men who believed indeed that they were the children of God, and that God would prosper his children in as far as they used that reason which he himself had bestowed upon them.

It is for these men's sakes, as well as for our own, that we are met together here this day. We are met to commemorate the noble dead; not in any Popish or superstitious fashion, as if they needed our prayers, or we needed their miraculous assistance: but in the good old Protestant scriptural sense—to thank God for all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear, and to pray that God may give us grace to follow their good examples; and especially to thank him for the founders of this ancient Trinity House, which stands here as a token to all generations of Britons, that science and religion are not contrary to each other, but twin sisters, meant to aid each other and mankind in the battle with the brute forces of this universe.

We are met together here to thank God for all gallant mariners, and for all who have helped mariners toward safety and success; for all who have made discoveries in hydrography or meteorology, in navigation, or in commerce, adding to the safety of seamen, and to the health and wealth of the human race; for all who have set noble examples to their crews, facing danger manfully and dying at their posts, as many a man has died, a martyr to his duty; for all who, living active, and useful, and virtuous lives in their sea calling, have ended as they lived, God-fearing Christian men.

To thank God for all these we are met together here; and to pray to God likewise that he would send his Spirit into the hearts of seamen, and of those who deal with seamen; and specially into the hearts of the Royal the Master and the Worshipful the Elder Brethren of this Ancient and Honourable House; that they may be true, and loyal, and obedient to that divine name in which they are met together here this day—the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the ever-blessed Trinity, the giver of all good gifts, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; always keeping God's commandments and looking for God's guidance, and setting to those beneath them an example of sound reason, virtue, and religion; that so there may never be wanting to this land a race of seamen who shall trust in God to teach them all they need to know, and to dispose of their bodies and souls

as seemeth best to his most holy will; who, fearing God, shall fear nought else, but shall defy the dangers of the seas, and all the brute forces of climates and of storms; who shall set in foreign lands an example of justice and mercy, of true civilization and true religion; and so shall still maintain the marine of Great Britain, as it has been for now three hundred years, a safeguard and a glory to these islands, and a blessing to the coasts of all the world.

## SERMON IV GOD'S TRAINING

### Deuteronomy viii. 2–5

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

This is the lesson of our lives. This is training, not only for the old Jews, but for us. What was true of them, is more or less true of us. And we read these verses to teach us that God's ways with man do not change; that his fatherly hand is over us, as well as over the people of Israel; that we are in God's schoolhouse, as they were; that their blessings are our blessings, their dangers are our dangers; that, as St. Paul says, all these things are written for our example.

'And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger.' How true to life that is! How often there comes to a man, at his setting out in life, a time which humbles him; a time of disappointment, when he finds that he is not so clever as he thought, as able to help himself as he thought; when his fine plans fail him; when he does not know how to settle in life, how to marry, how to provide for a family.

Perhaps the man actually does hunger, and go through a time of want and struggle. Then, it may be, he cries in his heart—How hard it is for me! How hard that the golden days of youth should be all dark and clouded over! How hard to have to suffer anxiety and weary hard work, just when I am able to enjoy myself most!

It is hard: but worse things than hard things may happen to a man. Far worse is it to grow up, as some men do, in wealth, and ease, and luxury, with all the pleasures of this life found ready to their hands. Some men, says the proverb, are 'born with a golden spoon in their mouth.' God help them if they are! Idleness, profligacy, luxury, self-conceit, no care for their duty, no care for God, no feeling that they are in God's school-house—these are too often the fruits of that breeding up.

How hardly will they learn that man doth not live by bread alone, or by money alone, or by comfort alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Truly, said our Lord, 'how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Not those who earn riches by manful and honest labour; not those who come to wealth after long training to make them fit to use wealth: but those who have wealth; who are born amid luxury and pomp; who have never known want, and the golden lessons which want brings.—God help them, for they need his help even more than the poor young man who is at his wit's end how to live. For him God is helping. His very want, and struggles, and anxiety may be God's help to him. They help him to control himself, and do with a little; they help him to strengthen his character, and to bring out all the powers of mind that God has given him. God is humbling him, that he may know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. God, too, if he trusts in God, will feed him with manna—spiritual manna, not bodily. He fed the Jews in the wilderness with manna, to show them that his power was indeed almighty—that if he did not see fit to help his people in one way, he

could help them just as easily in another. And so with every man who trusts in God. In unforeseen ways, he is helped. In unforeseen ways, he prospers; his life, as he goes on, becomes very different from what he expected, from what he would have liked; his fine dreams fade away, as he finds the world quite another place from what he fancied it: but still he prospers. If he be earnest and honest, patient and God-fearing, he prospers; God brings him through. His raiment doth not wax old, neither doth his foot swell, through all his forty years' wandering in the wilderness. He is not tired out, he does not break down, though he may have to work long and hard. As his day is, so his strength shall be. God holds him up, strengthens and refreshes him, and brings him through years of labour from the thought of which he shrank when he was young.

And so the man learns that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; that not in the abundance of things which he possesses, not in money; not in pleasure, not even in comforts, does the life of man consist: but in this—to learn his duty, and to have strength from God to do it. Truly said the prophet—'It is good for a man to learn to bear the yoke in his youth.'

After that sharp training a man will prosper; because he is fit to prosper. He has learnt the golden lesson. He can be trusted with comforts, wealth, honour. Let him have them, if God so will, and use them well.

Only, only, when a time of ease and peace comes to him in his middle age, let him not forget the warning of the latter part of the chapter.

For there is another danger awaiting him, as it awaited those old Jews; the danger of prosperity in old age. Ah my friends, that is a sore temptation—the sorest, perhaps, which can meet a man in the long struggle of life, the temptation which success brings. In middle age, when he has learnt his business, and succeeded in it; when he has fought his battle with the world, and conquered more or less; when he has made his way up, and seems to himself safe, and comfortable, and thriving; when he feels that he is a shrewd, thrifty, experienced man, who knows the world and how to prosper in it—Then how easy it is for him to say in his heart—as Moses feared that those old Jews would say—'My might and the power of my wit has gotten me this wealth,' and to forget the Lord his God, who guided him and trained him through all the struggles and storms of early life; and so to become vainly confident, worldly and hard-hearted: undevout and ungodly, even though he may keep himself respectable enough, and fall into no open sin.

Therefore it is, I think, that while we see so many lives which have been sad lives of poverty, and labour, and struggle, end peacefully and cheerfully, in a sunshiny old age, like a still bright evening after a day of storm and rain; so on the other hand we see lives which have been prosperous and happy ones for many years, end sadly in bereavement, poverty, or disappointment, as did the life of David, the man after God's own heart. God guided him through all the dangers and temptations of youth, and through them all he trusted God. God brought him safely to success, honour, a royal crown; and he thanked God, and acknowledged his goodness. And yet after a while his heart was puffed up, and he forgot God, and all he owed to God, and became a tyrant, an adulterer, a murderer. He repented of his sin: but he could not escape the punishment of it. His children were a curse to him; the sword never departed from his house; and his last years were sad enough, and too sad.

Perhaps that was God's mercy to him; God's way of remembering him again, and bringing him back to him. Perhaps too that same is God's way of bringing back many a man in our own days who has wandered from him in success and prosperity.

God grant that we may never need that terrible chastisement. God grant that we, if success and comfort come to us, may never wander so far from God, but that we may be brought back to him by the mere humbling of old age itself, without needing affliction over and above.

Yes, by old age alone. Old age, it seems to me, is a most wholesome and blessed medicine for the soul of man. Good it is to find that we can work no longer, and rejoice no more in our own strength and cunning. Good it is to feel our mortal bodies decay, and to learn that we are but dust,

and that when we turn again to our dust, all our thoughts will perish. Good it is to see the world changing round us, going ahead of us, leaving us and our opinions behind. Good perhaps for us—though not for them—to see the young who are growing up around us looking down on our old-fashioned notions. Good for us: because anything is good which humbles us, makes us feel our own ignorance, weakness, nothingness, and cast ourselves utterly on that God in whom we live, and move, and have our being; and on the mercy of that Saviour who died for us on the Cross; and on that Spirit of God from whose holy inspiration alone all good desires and good actions come.

God grant that that may be our end. That old age, when it comes, may chasten us, humble us, soften us; and that our second childhood may be a second childhood indeed, purged from the conceit, the scheming, the fierceness, the covetousness which so easily beset us in our youth and manhood; and tempered down to gentleness, patience, humility, and faith. God grant that instead of clinging greedily to life, and money, and power, and fame, we may cling only to God, and have one only wish as we draw near our end.—‘From my youth up hast thou taught me, Oh God, and hitherto I have declared thy wondrous works. Now also that I am old and grey-headed, Oh Lord, forsake me not, till I have showed thy goodness to this generation, and thy power to those who are yet to come.

## SERMON V GOOD FRIDAY

Hebrews ix. 13, 14

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The three collects for Good Friday are very grand and very remarkable. In the first we pray:—  
‘Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever one God, world without end. Amen.’

In the second we pray:—

‘Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.’

In the third we pray:—

‘O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live: Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.’

Now these collects give us the keynote of Good Friday; they tell us what the Church wishes us to think of on Good Friday.

We are to think of Christ’s death and passion. Of that there is no doubt.

But we need not on Good Friday, or perhaps at any other time, trouble our minds with the unfathomable questions, How did Christ’s sacrifice take away our sins? How does Christ’s blood purge our conscience?

Mere ‘theories of the Atonement,’ as they are called, have very little teaching in them, and still less comfort. Wise and good men have tried their minds upon them in all ages; they have done their best to explain Christ’s sacrifice, and the atonement which he worked out on the cross on Good Friday: but it does not seem to me that they have succeeded. I never read yet any explanation which I could fully understand; which fully satisfied my conscience, or my reason either; or which seemed to me fully to agree with and explain all the texts of Scripture bearing on this great subject.

But is it possible to explain the matter? Is it not too deep for mortal man? Is it not one of the deep things of God, and of God alone, before which we must worship and believe? As for explaining or understanding it, must not that be impossible, from its very nature?

For, consider the first root and beginning of the whole question. Put it in the simplest shape, to which all Christians will agree. The Father sent the Son to die for the world. Most true: but who can explain those words? We are stopped at the very first step by an abyss. Who can tell us what is meant by the Father sending the Son? What is the relation, the connexion, between the Father and

the Son? If we do not know that, we can know nothing about the matter, about the very root and ground thereof. And we do know little or nothing. The Bible only gives us scattered hints here and there. It is one of the things of which we may say, with St. Paul, that we know in part, and see through a glass darkly. How, then, dare we talk as if we knew all, as if we saw clearly? The atonement is a blessed and awful mystery hidden in God: ordained by and between God the Father and God the Son. And who can search out that? Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Did we sit by, and were we taken into his counsels, when he made the world? Not we.

Neither were we when he redeemed the world. He did it. Let that be enough for us. And he did it in love. Let that be enough for us.

God the Father so loved the world, that he sent his Son into the world, that the world by him might be saved. God the Son so loved the world, that he came to do his Father's will, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. That is enough for us. Let it be enough; and let us take simply, honestly, literally, and humbly, like little children, everything which the Bible says about it, without trying or pretending to understand, but only to believe.

We can believe that Christ's blood can purge our conscience, though we cannot explain in any words of our own how it can do so. We can believe that God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, though we not only cannot but dare not try to explain so awful a mystery. We can believe that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was a propitiation for sin, though neither we, nor (as I hold) any man on earth, can tell exactly what the words sacrifice and propitiation mean. And so with all the texts which speak of Christ's death and passion, and that atonement for sin which he, in his boundless mercy, worked out this day. Let us not torment our minds with arguments in which there are a hundred words of man's invention to one word of Holy Scripture, while the one word of Scripture has more in it than the hundred words of man can explain. But let us have faith in Christ. I mean, let us trust him that he has done all that can or need be done; that whatsoever was needed to reconcile God to man, he has done, for he is perfect God; that whatever was needed to reconcile man to God, he has done, for he is perfect man.

Let us, instead of puzzling ourselves as to how the Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world, believe that he knows, and that he lives, and cry to him as to the living God,—Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, and take our sins away.

And let us beseech God this day, graciously to behold his family, the nations of Christendom, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed into the hands of wicked men, and suffer death upon the cross. Let us ask this, even though we do not fully understand what Christ's death on the cross did for mankind. That was the humble, childlike, really believing spirit of the early Christians. God grant us the same spirit; we need it much in these very times.

For if we are of that spirit, my friends, then, instead of tormenting our minds as to the how and why of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, we shall turn our hearts, and not merely our minds, to the practical question—What shall we do? If Christ died for us, what shall we do? What shall we ask God to help us to do? To that the second collect gives a clear answer at once—Serve the living God.

And how? By dead works? By mere outward forms and ceremonies, church-goings, psalm-singsings, sermon-hearings? Not so. These are right and good; but they are dead works, which cannot take away sin, any more than could the gifts and sacrifices, the meats and drinks of the old Jewish law. Those, says St. Paul, could not make him that did the sacrifice perfect as pertaining to the conscience. They could not give him a clear conscience; they could not make him sure that God had forgiven him; they could not give him spirit and comfort to say—Now I can leave the church a forgiven man, a new man, and begin a fresh life; and go about my daily business in joyfulness and peace of mind, sure that God will help me, and bless me, and enable me to serve him in my calling.

No, says St. Paul. More than dead works are wanted to purge a man's conscience. Nothing will do that but the blood of Christ. And that will do it. He, the spotless Lamb, has offered himself to God, as a full and perfect and sufficient sacrifice, offering, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole

world; and therefore for thy sins, whoever thou art, be thy sins many or few. Believe that; for thou art a man for whom Christ died. Claim thy share in Christ's blood. Believe that he has died for thee; that he has blotted out thy sins in the blood of his cross; that thou needest not try to blot them out by any dead works, forms, or ceremonies whatsoever; for Christ has done and suffered already all for thee. Thou art forgiven. Put away thy sins, for God has put them away; rise, and be a new man. Thou art one of God's holy Church. God has justified thee. Let him sanctify thee likewise.

God's spirit is with thee to guide thee, to inspire thee, and make thee holy. Serve thy Father and thy Master, the Living God, sure that he is satisfied with thee for Christ's sake; that thou art in thy right state henceforward; in thy right place in this world; and that he blesses all thy efforts to live a right life, and to do thy duty.

But how to serve him, and where? By doing something strange and fantastic? By giving up thy business, money, time? Going to the ends of the earth? Making what some will call some great sacrifice for God?

Not so. All that may be, and generally is, the fruit of mere self-will and self-conceit. God has made a sacrifice for thee. Let that be enough. If he wants thee to make a sacrifice to him in return, he will compel thee to make it, doubt it not. But meanwhile abide in the calling wherein thou art called. Do the duty which lies nearest thee. Whether thou art squire or labourer, rich or poor; whether thy duty is to see after thy children, or to mind thy shop, do thy duty. For that is thy vocation and calling; that is the ministry in which thou canst serve God, by serving thy fellow-creatures for whom Christ died.

This day the grand prayer has gone up throughout Christ's Church—and thou hast joined in it—for all estates of men in his holy Church; for all estates, from kings and statesmen governing the nations, down to labouring men tilling in the field, and poor women washing and dressing their children at home, that each and all of them may do their work well, whatever it is, and thereby serve the Living God. For now their work, however humble, is God's work; Christ has bought it and redeemed it with his blood. When he redeemed human nature, he redeemed all that human nature can and ought to do, save sin. All human duties and occupations are purified by the blood of Christ's cross; and if we do our duty well, we do it to the Lord, and not to man; and the Lord blesses us therein, and will help us to fulfil our work like Christian men, by the help of his Holy Spirit.

And for those who know not Christ? For them, too, we can pray. For, for them too Christ died. They, too, belong to Christ, for he has bought them with his most precious blood. What will happen to them we know not: but this we know, that they are his sheep, lost sheep though they may be; and that we are bound to pray, that he would bring them home to his flock.

But how will he bring them back? That, again, we know not. But why need we know? If Christ knows how to do it, surely we need not. Let us trust him to do his own work in his own way.

But will he do it? My friends, if we wish for the salvation of all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, do you suppose that we are more compassionate to them than God who made them? Who is more likely to pity the heathen? We who send a few missionaries to teach them: or God who sent his own Son to die for them?

Oh trust God, and trust Christ; for this, as for all other things. Believe that for the heathen, as for us, he is able to do exceedingly and abundantly beyond all that we can ask or think; and believe too, that if we do ask, we do not ask in vain; that this collect which has gone up every Good Friday for centuries past, from millions of holy hearts throughout the world, has not gone up unheard; that it will be answered—we know not how—but answered still; and that to Jew and Turk, Heathen and Heretic, this day will prove hereafter to have been, what it is to us, Good Friday.

## SERMON VI

### FALSE CIVILIZATION

#### Jeremiah xxxv. 19

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.

Let us think a while this morning what this text has to do with us; and why this strange story of the Rechabites is written for our instruction, in the pages of Holy Scripture.

Let us take the story as it stands, and search the Scriptures simply for it. For the Bible will surely tell its own story best, and teach its own lesson best.

These Rechabites, who were they? Or, indeed we may ask—Who are they? For they are said to exist still.

They were not Israelites, but wild Arabs, a branch of the Kenite tribe, which claimed—at least its chiefs—to be descended from Abraham, by his wife Keturah. They joined the Israelites, and wandered with them into the land of Canaan.

But they never settled down, as the Israelites did, into farmers and townfolk. They never became what we call civilized: though they had a civilization of their own, which stood them in good stead, and kept them—and keeps them, it would seem, to this day,—strong and prosperous, while great cities and mighty nations have been destroyed round about them. They kept their old simple Arab customs, living in their great black camels' hair tents, feeding their flocks and herds, as they wandered from forest to forest and lawn to lawn, living on the milk of the flock, and it would seem, on locusts and wild honey, as did John the Baptist after them. They had (as many Arab tribes have still) neither corn, seed-field, nor vineyard. Wild men they were in their ways, yet living a simple wholesome life; till in the days of Ahab and Jehu there arose among them a chief called Jonadab the son of Rechab, of the house of Hammath. Why he was called the son of Rechab is not clearly known. 'The son of the rider,' or 'the son of the chariot,' seems to be the most probable meaning of the name. So that these Rechabites, at least, had horses—as many Arab tribes have now—and whether they rode them, or used them to draw their goods about in carts, like many other wild tribes, they seem to have gained from Jonadab the name of Rechabim, the sons of Rechab, the sons of the rider, or the sons of the chariot.

Of Jonadab the son of Rechab, you heard three Sundays since, in that noble passage of 2 Kings x. where Jehu, returning from the slaughter of the idolatrous kings, and going to slay the priests of Baal, meets Jonadab and asks him, Is thy heart right—that is, sound in the worship of God, and determined to put down idolatry—as my heart is with thy heart? We hear of him and his tribe no more till the days of Jeremiah, 250 years after, in the story from which my text is taken. What Jonadab's reasons may have been for commanding his tribe neither to settle in towns, nor till the ground, it is not difficult to guess. He may have dreaded lest his people, by settling in the towns, should learn the idolatry of the Israelites. He may have dreaded, likewise, lest they should give way to that same luxury and profligacy in which the Israelites indulged—and especially lest they should be demoralized by that drunkenness of which the prophets speak, as one of the crying sins of that age. He may have feared, too, lest their settling down as landholders or townsmen would cause them to be absorbed and lost among the nation of the Israelites, and probably involved in their ruin. Be that as it may, he laid his command upon his tribe, and his command was obeyed.

Of the after-history of these simple God-fearing folk we know very little. But what we do know is well worth remembering. They were, it seems, carried away captive to Babylon with the rest of the Jews; and with them they came back to Jerusalem. Meanwhile, they had intermarried with the priests of the tribe of Levi; and they assisted at the worship and sacrifices,—‘standing before the Lord’ (as Jeremiah had foretold) ‘in the temple,’ but living (as some say) outside the walls in their tents. And it is worth remembering, that we have one psalm in the Bible, which was probably written either by one of these Rechabites, or by Jeremiah for them to sing, and that a psalm which you all know well, the old man’s psalm, as it has well been called—the 71st Psalm, which is read in the visitation of the sick; which says, ‘O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.’

It was, moreover, a Rechabite priest, we are told—‘one of the sons of the Rechabim spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet’—who when the Jews were stoning St. James the Just, one of the twelve apostles, cried out against their wickedness.

What befell the Rechabites when Jerusalem was destroyed, we know not: but they seem to have returned to their old life, and wandered away into the far east; for in the twelfth century, more than one thousand years after, a Jewish traveller met with them 100,000 strong under a Jewish prince of the house of David; still abstaining from wine and flesh, and paying tithes to teachers who studied the law, and wept for the fall of Jerusalem. And even yet they are said to endure and prosper. For in our own time, a traveller met the Rechabites once more in the heart of Arabia, still living in their tents, still calling themselves the sons of Jonadab. With one of them, Mousa (*i.e.* Moses) by name, he talked, and Mousa said to him, ‘Come, and I will show you who we are;’ and from an Arabic bible he read the words of my text, and said, ‘You will find us 60,000 in number still. See, the words of the prophet have been fulfilled—“Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.”’

What lesson shall we learn from this story—so strange, and yet so beautiful? What lesson need we learn, save that which the Holy Scripture itself bids us learn? The blessing which comes upon reverence for our forefathers, and above all for God, our Father in Heaven.

Reverence for our forefathers. These are days in which we are too apt to sneer at those who have gone before us; to look back on our forefathers as very ignorant, prejudiced, old-fashioned people, whose opinions have been all set aside by the progress of knowledge.

Be sure that in this temper of mind lies a sin and a snare. If we wish to keep up true independence and true self-respect in ourselves and our children, we should be careful to keep up respect for our forefathers. A shallow, sneering generation, which laughs at those who have gone before it, is ripe for disaster and slavery. We are not bound, of course—as those old Rechabites considered themselves bound—to do in everything exactly what our forefathers did. For we are not under the law, but under grace; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty—liberty to change, improve, and develop as the world grows older, and (we may hope) wiser. But we are bound to do, not exactly what our forefathers did, but what we may reasonably suppose that they would have done, had they lived now, and were they in our places. We are to obey them, not in the letter, but in the spirit.

And whenever, in the prayer for the Church militant, we commemorate the faithful dead, and thank God for all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear, we should remember with honest pride that we are thanking God for our own mothers and fathers, and for those that went before them; ay, for every honest God-fearing man and woman, high or low, who ever did their duty by God and their neighbours, and left, when they died, a spot of this land somewhat better than they found it.

And for God; the Father of all fathers; our Father in heaven—Oh, my friends, God grant that it may never be said to any of us, Behold the words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his children, are performed: but ye have not hearkened unto me. I have sent also unto you, saith God, not merely my servants the prophets, but my only-begotten, Jesus Christ your Lord, saying, ‘Return

you now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers. But ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.’

God grant that that may never be said to any of us. And yet it is impossible to deny—impossible to shut our eyes to the plain fact—that Englishmen now-a-days are more and more forgetting that there are any commandments of God whatsoever; any everlasting laws laid down by their Heavenly Father, which, if they break, will avenge themselves by our utter ruin. We do not go after other gods, it is true, in the sense of worshipping idols. But there is another god, which we go after more and more; and that is money; gain; our interest (as we call it):—not knowing that the only true interest of any man is to fear God and keep his commandments. We hold more and more that a man can serve God and mammon; that a man must of course be religious, and belong to some special sect, or party, or denomination, and stand up for that fiercely enough: but we do not hold that there are commandments of God which say for ever to the sinner, ‘Do this and thou shalt live;’ ‘Do this or thou shalt die.’

We hold that because we are not under the law, but under grace, there is no condemnation for sin—at least for the special sort of sin which happens to be in fashion, which is now-a-days the sin of making money at all risks. We hold that there is one law of morality for the kingdom of heaven, and another for the kingdom of mammon. Therefore we hold, more and more, that when money is in question anything and everything is fair. There are—we have reason to know it just now but too well—thousands who will sell their honour, their honesty, yea, their own souls, for a few paltry pounds, and think no shame. And if any one says, with Jeremiah the prophet, ‘These are poor, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me to the great men, for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God:’—then will he find, as Jeremiah did, that too many of these great and wealthy worshippers of mammon have utterly broken the yoke, and burst the bonds, of all moral law of right and wrong: heaping up vast fortunes amid the ruin of those who have trusted them, and the tears of the widow and the orphan, by means now glossed over by fine new words, but called in plain honest old English by a very ugly name.

How many there are in England now, my friends, who would laugh in their hearts at those worthy Rechabites, and hold them to be ignorant, old-fashioned, bigoted people, for keeping up their poor, simple, temperate life, wandering to and fro with their tents and cattle, instead of dwelling in great cities, and making money, and becoming what is now-a-days called civilized, in luxury and covetousness. Surely according to the wisdom of this world, the Rechabites were foolish enough. But it is the wisdom of this world itself—not simplicity and loyalty like theirs—which is foolishness with God.

My friends, let us all take warning, each man for himself. When a nation corrupts itself—as we seem inclined to do now, by luxury and covetousness, selfishness and self-will, forgetting more and more loyalty and order, honesty and high principle—then some wholesome, but severe judgment of God, is sure to come upon that nation: a day in which all faces shall gather blackness: a day of gloominess and thick darkness, like the morning spread upon the mountains.

For the eternal laws of God’s providence are still at work, though we choose to forget them; and the Judge who administers them is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, even Jesus Christ the Lord, the everlasting Rock, on which all morality and all society is founded. Whosoever shall fall on that Rock in repentance and humility, confessing, bewailing, and forsaking his worldliness and sinfulness, he shall indeed be broken: but of him it is written, ‘The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.’ And he shall find that Rock, even Christ, a safe standing-ground amid the slippery mire of this world’s temptations, and the storms and floods of trouble which are coming—it may be in our children’s days—it may be in our own.

But he who hardens his heart: he who says proudly, ‘We are they that ought to speak; who is Lord over us?’—he who says carelessly, ‘Soul, take thine ease; thou hast much goods laid up for

many years'—he who halts between two opinions, and believes to the last that he can serve both God and mammon—he, especially, who fancies that falsehood, injustice, covetousness, and neglect of his fellow-men, can properly be his interest, or help his interest in any wise—of all such it is written, 'On whomsoever that Rock'—even the eternal laws of Christ the Judge—'On whomsoever that Rock shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.'

## **SERMON VII**

### **THE NAME OF GOD**

#### **Isaiah i. 10**

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

To some persons it may seem strange advice to tell them, that in the hour of darkness, doubt, and sorrow, they will find no comfort like that of meditating on the Name of the Ever-blessed Trinity.

Yet there is not a prophet or psalmist of the Old Testament who does not speak of 'The Name of the Lord,' as a kind of talisman against all the troubles which can befall the spirit of man. And we, as Christians, know, or ought to know, far more of God than did even prophets or psalmists. If they found comfort in the name of God, we ought to find far more.

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