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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DISCIPLINE OF WAR ***

THE DISCIPLINE OF WAR

Nine Addresses on the Lessons of the War in Connection with Lent
FROM
ASH WEDNESDAY to EASTER SUNDAY

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING
SUGGESTED SUBJECT FOR MEDITATION, AND SUITABLE PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE,
FOR EACH DAY IN LENT

BY THE REV.
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The war has introduced into countless lives new conditions, and has strangely modified, or emphasised, those already existing. These Addresses, prepared under much stress of other work, are intended to supply, in very simple fashion, hints for conduct and points for thought along the lines of our fresh or deepened responsibilities. An Appendix gives a suggested subject and a passage of Scripture for each day during Lent. May God the Holy Ghost, without Whom man's best labours are in vain, bless this little book to its purpose. Please say a prayer for the writer, who, as much as any, needs grace that he may try to practise what he preaches.

J. HASLOCH POTTER.

Surbiton.

FOREWORD

KINGSTON HOUSE,
CLAPHAM COMMON.

January 19th, 1915.

MY DEAR CANON,—

You have invited me to say a few words introductory to the little book you are putting forth, and of which you have sent me the advance proofs.

From the great excellence of that which I have read, I am convinced that your Lenten meditations on the Discipline of War, will be of pre-eminently spiritual value in a time when publications on the subject are multiplied. That the war is to leave us on a higher plane of self-discipline, and with higher ideals of citizen life and responsibility, every Christian must acknowledge. Your little Lenten scheme is just that which is needed to give reality and action to what might otherwise be left in the realm of theory. May the Holy Spirit make use of your work to the benefit of us all and for the Glory of God.

Your sincere friend,
CECIL HOOK,
Bishop.

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THE DISCIPLINE OF WAR

I

The Discipline of the Will
ASH WEDNESDAY

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen?"

Discipline is the central idea of the observance of Lent. An opportunity, rich in its splendid possibilities, comes before us this year. Much of the discipline of this Lent is settled for us by those tragic circumstances in which we find ourselves placed.

God seems to be saying to us, in no uncertain tones, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen?"

Our amusements are already to a large extent curtailed, maybe by our own individual sorrows or anxieties; maybe by the feeling of the incongruity of enjoying ourselves while anguish and hardship reign supreme around us.

Our self-denials are already in operation, under the stress of straitened means, or the vital necessity of helping others less favoured than ourselves.

Our devotions have already been increased in frequency and in earnestness, for the call upon our prayers has come with an insistence and an imperiousness that brook no denial.

To this extent, and further in many directions, our Lent has been taken out of our own hands; ordered and pre-arranged by that inscrutable, yet loving, Providence which has permitted the War to come about.

Thus, at the very outset, we are brought into harmony with the central idea of discipline—not my will, but God's will.

Broadly, discipline is defined as "Mental and moral training, under one's own guidance or under that of another": the two necessarily overlap, and therefore we shall speak of God's discipline, acting upon us from outside, and of our own co-operation with divine purposes, which is our discipline of self from within.

In the forefront of the subject, and including every aspect of it upon which we shall touch, stands that tremendous word—*will*.

Have you ever attempted to gauge the mystery, to sound the depth of meaning implied in the simple sentence "I will"?

First of all what is the significance of "I"? You are the only one who can say it of yourself. Any other must speak of you as "he" or "she"; but "I" is your own inalienable possession.

This is the mystery of personality. That accumulation of experience, that consciousness of identity which you possess as absolutely, uniquely your own; which none other can share with you in the remotest degree. "A thing we consider to be unconscious, an animal to be conscious, a person to be self-conscious."

This leads on to a further mystery, alike concerned with so apparently simple a matter that its real complexity escapes us.

"I *will*": I, the self-conscious person, have made up my mind what I am going to do, and, physical obstacles excepted, I will do it.

The freedom of man's will has been the subject of endless dispute from every point of view, theistic, atheistic, Christian and non-Christian.

Merely as a philosophic controversy it has but little bearing upon daily life. The staunchest necessitarian, who argues *theoretically* that even when he says "I will" he is under the compulsion of external force, yet acts *practically* in exactly the same fashion as the rest of mankind.

When the freedom of the will is considered in relation to religion, then it bears a totally different aspect. If the will be not free, religion, as a personal matter, falls to the ground, for its very essence is man's voluntary choice of God.

Here too those who deny the freedom of man's will doctrinally yet accept it as a working fact. Calvin, whose theory of Predestination and Irresistible Grace seems to exclude man from any co-operation in his own salvation, yet preached a Gospel not to be distinguished from that of John Wesley!

For us Christians the freedom of the will is absolutely settled by Him Who says, "Whosoever will let him come."

If you are sometimes troubled by certain passages in Scripture which seem to imply that God's predestination overrides man's will, remember, that whenever we are considering any question which concerns both God's nature and man's nature, difficulty must arise, from the very fact that our finite mind can only comprehend, and that but imperfectly, man's side of the transaction. Things which now seem incompatible, such as prayer and law; miracle and, what we are pleased to call, nature; God's foreknowledge and man's free-will in the light of eternity will be seen as only complementary parts of one divine whole.

Remember too that you must take the general bearing of Scripture; not isolated passages in

which, for the necessity of the argument, one side is strongly emphasised. The Apostle who, thinking of the boundless power of God's grace, says, "So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. ix. 16) is the one who says "He willeth that all men should be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4).

The love by which the Father gave up His Son; the life and death of that Son; the ministry of God the Holy Ghost; the whole dispensation of the Catholic Church, form one great tender appeal to the free-will of man. Your free-will, my free-will, before which is placed the tremendous responsibility of choosing or rejecting.

And now from the broad thought of will, at its highest point, occupied with eternal choices and spiritual decisions, we turn to will as the governing power in our lives.

It is, to a certain extent, self in action, for before even the slightest movement of any part of the body, there must have gone, automatically and unconsciously, an act of will.

Before every deliberate action there takes place a discussion, which ultimately decides the attitude of the will, that is your final purpose. Put quite simply, the *motives* determine the *will*, and are themselves decided by the *principles* at the back of them.

Let us make this plain by an illustration. It is pouring with rain, you are sitting cosily over the fire with an interesting book. The thought comes into your mind, I ought to go and see my sick friend. Then follows the deliberation: the flesh says, "To-morrow will do just as well." The spirit says, "No, it won't; you may both be dead to-morrow." The flesh says, "Perhaps I shall catch a cold"; the spirit says, "That fear wouldn't keep you from going to a Picture Palace." The flesh says, "Perhaps he won't care to see me to-day"; the spirit replies, "It's a dull, wet afternoon, and he's very likely to be alone."

Now notice that at the back of each set of motives is a vital principle. In the one case the lower self, in the other the higher self, that is to say "I" and "God."

The purely natural, human side of even the greatest saint would prefer to sit over the fire; but then our nature is not left unassisted, and even in a simple thing like this God the Holy Ghost comes to our aid with His suggestions of the higher course, and illuminates the path of duty. That is one of the most blessed features of the ministry of the Spirit; He enlightens, He persuades, He never compels: if He did, your will would not be free.

This explains what the discipline of the will really means. It is just the laying of ourselves open to the voice of the living God, speaking within us.

As we do this, day by day, the will itself becomes braced and strengthened, so that the struggle against the lower nature grow less and less fierce, the power of choosing the higher course more and more easy.

Here is our first practical thought for this Lent.

Watch yourself and your life, especially in those particulars in which you know that you have been getting out of hand. The prayers omitted, curtailed, said carelessly, said or attempted in bed, instead of on your knees: what a grievous failure, isn't it?

The carelessness about preparation before and thanksgiving after Communion, the irregularity of your attendances; the habit of Self-Examination, or of Confession, dropped—why? The Bible neglected.

Then the self-indulgences in the matter of sleep, food, drink, and purely wasted hours.

All these things are sapping the manhood and dignity of the will. Sometimes even more dangerously and insidiously than open sins, because with regard to these conscience does speak; but when we are merely drifting down the stream of time, the pleasant lapping of the ripples on the side of the bark lulls conscience into fatal sleep.

Look at your life, ask yourself the question, boldly and honestly, what is the principle upon which it is being lived, God or self? When the answer comes you will see clearly the first steps to take in the disciplining of the will.

Glorious examples of what can be done abound around you. Think you there has been no struggle on the part of those tens of thousands who have given up comforts, home, prospects, harmless pleasures, in exchange for the ghastly miseries of the trenches, the appalling risks by land, on or beneath the sea, in the air, all at the call of a stern, compelling duty, which told them that the life really worth living was the one spent, laid down if need be, for King and country?

Think too of the heroism of the wives, the mothers, the sweethearts, on whose lips there must have trembled over and again, "I will not, I cannot let you go." Yet the will was disciplined, the words remained unspoken, the tears were shed in secret, and these brave hearts, even in breaking, shall find their reward.

It was at Waterloo one afternoon, a young officer was being seen off for the front by father, brother, and *fiancée*. The two former bravely and cheerily said their good-bye, and withdrew a little to leave the young couple for their farewell; a kiss, a close embrace, outward smiles, but tears very near the eyes; and then as the officer got into the carriage just this one remark: "It's precious hard upon the women." What a world of meaning there was in that.

Above all, as your pattern and your power, look to Him Who said, "I came down from Heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me."

For suggested meditations during the week, see Appendix.

II

The Discipline of the Body FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

1 COR. ix. 27

"I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage."

On Ash Wednesday we were considering some purely subjective realities, such as principles, motives, will—things we could not see. To-day we think about a very objective substance, ever present to our senses—our body. A man may deny point blank the existence of his soul—using the word in its ordinary acceptation—he cannot say, "I have not got a body." Even if he should conceive of that body as a mere bundle of ideas, an accumulation of sensations, yet there it is, making itself felt in countless ways.

So intimately bound up is it with every part of our life, apparently so infinitely the most real part of us, that we often think of it as being our true self. Yet every cell and fibre of it changes in the course of seven years. Therefore in itself it cannot maintain our identity. Have you ever pinched your nail, right down at its base, and watched the dark mass of congealed blood making its way to the tip of the finger, and then dispersing? This gives you some idea of the pace at which the body is being burned up and renewed.

All the while the personal "I" remains, deep-seated in the self-conscious intellect, memory, will.

Of course the body plays an immensely important part in the complex story of our existence. It is the machine by which the personal self acts, speaks, loves, hates, chooses, refuses; therefore we can neither ignore it nor despise it.

The popular notion concerning religion is that it is meant only for the salvation of the soul. If this were so, then the coming of the Holy Ghost would have sufficed for all needs.

One manifest purpose of the Incarnation was to give to the body the possibility of holiness here, resurrection hereafter.

Very marvellous is the dignity conferred upon the body by the fact the "Word was made flesh." From that flows forth the high position of the Christian, whose body is a "temple of the Holy Ghost."

It is through the body that we receive the Sacraments, which are means of grace to the soul.

Did time permit, it would be deeply interesting to trace out the use of the word body in this connection—the natural body of our Lord, His spiritual body after the Resurrection, His mystical body, the Church, in which sense He Himself is called "the Saviour of the body" (Eph. v. 23), His Sacramental Body, of which He says, "This is my body."

The discipline of the body.

The thought is prominently before us at the present moment, and first let us look at it from its purely material side. Thousands of youths who a few months ago were slouching, narrow-chested, feeble specimens of underbred humanity, have now-expanded into well set up, hardened men. The body has been disciplined by drill, exercises, route-marching, and the like. Those who return from the war uninjured will, we may hope, be in such improved condition as may somewhat compensate for the terrible loss of vigorous life which is taking place.

Had there been universal military training of the youth of our land for the past few generations, either the present war would never have taken place; or the results of the first three weeks of it would have been vastly different from what they were.

Now take another significant fact: letter after letter from the front says, "We are all very fit." The average "fitness" in the trenches is, broadly speaking, higher than that of training camps at home, especially of those where little or no supervision is exercised as to strong drink. How plainly this shows that hardness, even of an extreme character, braces up the body; softness and self-indulgence enfeeble it.

S. Paul affords a wonderful illustration of this; obviously a man of very delicate health, frequently ill (probably this was the thorn in the flesh), yet accomplishing vast labours, and, in addition, buffeting his own flesh lest it should get the upper hand.

Here, then, we reach the first great principle in the discipline of the body. It must not have its own way, or it will infallibly assert its sway over the man's real self.

That is what happens in the case of the habitual drunkard or the slave of lust. That which at first is a temptation, perfectly capable of being resisted, becomes at last what the doctors call a "physical" craving that, humanly speaking, cannot be overcome. By constant yielding the will has been weakened to such an extent that the personal "I" no longer reigns; the usurping body has taken its place and rules supreme.

Let us take the main thought of self-control, which is the true rendering of the word temperance, the state in which, as S. James says, the man is "able to bridle the whole body" (S. James iii. 2), and test ourselves by it this Lent. Am I retaining my dominion over my body, or is it gradually pushing itself into my place?

Self-examination, honestly performed, will reveal this at once, for conscience, unless blunted by neglect, will speak infallibly.

For instance, when you find some indulgence of the flesh concerning which you say "I can't help it," there your body has vanquished you. It is absorbing your personality, robbing you of your divine birthright, in which you say, "I will," "I will not."

And now to go a step further—the disciplining of the body, care in regard to eating, drinking, amusements, and the like; strictness as to luxuries and things which, though lawful, may not be expedient, not only tend to bodily strength and mere physical well-being, but brace up the will power, because they entail the constant exercise of it.

Here is where the practical wisdom of the Church comes in as regards fasting. One day in every week is set apart, beside other days and seasons, as a reminder of the fact that fasting is a duty of the Christian life, just as much as almsgiving and prayer—a duty sanctified by the example enjoined by the precept of our Lord Himself.

True, no hard and fast rules are laid down, but a little sanctified common sense will dictate to us how to make fast-days a reality, by some simple acts of self-denial.

Our last thought is one of intense practical importance—our attitude at the present moment towards strong drink.

Lord Kitchener and the Archbishop of Canterbury have both on several occasions called the attention of the nation to the terrible evils arising from the unhappy custom of treating soldiers to strong drink.

Punch, always on the side of morality and rightness, has dealt with it in the following trenchant fashion:—

TO A FALSE PATRIOT

He came obedient to the Call;
He might have shirked, like half his mates
Who, while their comrades fight and fall,
Still go to swell the football gates.

And you, a patriot in your prime,
You waved a flag above his head,
And hoped he'd have a high old time,
And slapped him on the back, and said:

"You'll show 'em what we British are!
Give us your hand, old pal, to shake";
And took him round from bar to bar
And made him drunk—for England's sake.

That's how you helped him. Yesterday
Clear-eyed and earnest, keen and hard,
He held himself the soldier's way—
And now they've got him under guard.

That doesn't hurt you; you're all right;
Your easy conscience takes no blame;
But he, poor boy, with morning's light,
He eats his heart out, sick with shame.

What's that to you? You understand
Nothing of all his bitter pain;
You have no regiment to brand;
You have no uniform to stain;

No vow of service to abuse;
No pledge to King and country due;
But he has something dear to lose,

And he has lost it—thanks to you.¹

A man who had so distinguished himself at the front as to be mentioned in a despatch came home slightly wounded. In less than twenty-four hours he was in a cell at a police station, and the next day fined forty shillings. Oh! the pathetic pity of it. That man got into trouble through the exhibition of one of the purest and best features of our human nature, the desire to show kindness. In their well-intentioned ignorance this man's friends—yes, they were real friends—knew of only one way of displaying friendliness—they gave him liquor.

I am not going to blame them, nor him entirely; I am going to lay some of the fault upon ourselves.

Since the beginning of the last century the habits of the upper classes, to use a generic though unpleasant term, have improved immeasurably. Then excess was more or less the rule among men of good position, was to a certain extent expected and provided for; witness *The School for Scandal*, or the leading novels of the period. Now, the man who disgraces himself at a dinner-table is never invited again.

And even as we go down in the social scale much improvement is apparent. Those who remember Bank Holidays on their first introduction will recollect that the excess of the working classes was quite open and shameless; but to-day some effort is generally made by the victims, or their friends, to hide the disgrace, because Public Opinion is improving. That is where we come in.

Many causes of intemperance in strong drink are matters for legislative or municipal action; for example, overcrowding, insanitary dwellings or surroundings, sweating, excessive hours of labour, adulteration of liquors. But there are two factors upon which we can exercise direct influence, because they are connected with that great corporate entity called Public Opinion.

First let us take the one upon which we have already touched—the notion that friendliness and good fellowship are essentially connected with strong drink. This is at the bottom of those terrible scenes when troops are leaving our great London railway stations. Scenes so inexpressibly sad to all thinking people.

Everyone who abstains entirely, or who takes the khaki button—a pledge not to treat nor be treated to strong drink during the continuance of the war—is helping to knock a nail into the coffin of one of the silliest and most fatal delusions that has ever wrought havoc to body, soul, and spirit.

And then there is that other weird notion that you cannot be really strong and healthy without stimulant. For you the glass of beer or wine may be a mere harmless luxury, in the way in which you take it. I purposely exclude spirits, which I am fanatic enough to think should only be used medicinally. But every individual total abstainer helps to swell the testimony not only to the non-necessity of alcohol, but to the fact that, according to the view of a large part of the medical profession, the human frame is better without it.

You may say, "What good will my abstinence do to people with whom I never come in contact?" Tell me what influence really is; how it spreads, by what unseen modes it ramifies and extends.

Tell me the real significance, the true spiritual value, of the fact that "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: if one member rejoice, all the members rejoice with it."

Then perhaps you can explain in some way, how your abstinence shall spread to desolated homes, to stricken lives, in crowded slums or quiet villages, in fire-raked trenches or storm-tossed ships.

No act of self-sacrifice for His sake, Who though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor, ever went without its rich reward.

No tiny wave of influence ever yet sped forth from a Christian heart, but what reached its mark and wrought its work of beneficent power.

For suggested meditations during the week, see Appendix.

III

The Discipline of the Soul SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

ST. JOHN vi. 38

"For I am come down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

To-day we are going to speak of the soul not in its popular sense, as set over against the body, but in the scriptural meaning of the word as the broad equivalent of life.

To enter upon a philosophical discussion might prove interesting from a merely academic point of view, but would be eminently unpractical. Suffice it to say that when S. Paul speaks of the "body, soul and spirit" (1 Thess. v. 23), he takes the two latter as different faculties of the invisible part of man.

Soul (**ψυχή**) is the lower attribute which man has in common with the animals; spirit (**πνεῦμα**) the higher one which they do not possess, and which makes man capable of religion.

In this sense, then, the soul would mean the life the man or woman is leading, in the home, the business, the pleasures, the relaxations, as distinct from the definite exercise of devotion or worship.

Of course it is absolutely impossible to draw a hard and fast line between sacred and secular. All secular affairs, rightly conducted, have their sacred side; and conversely all sacred matters have their secular side, for they form part of the life the man is living "in the age."

It is the neglect of this truth which is responsible for much of the moral and religious failure of the day.

Business is secular, prayer is sacred, and so they have no practical connection each with other.

Amusement is secular (often vastly too much so, in the very lowest sense of the word); Holy Communion is sacred; therefore there is no link between them. Whereas the prayer and the Communion should be the ennobling and sanctifying power alike of work and play.

Bearing this caution in mind, we shall to-day look at certain features of the so-called secular life of the day in which discipline needs to be strongly exercised.

No doubt about it, the soul of the nation has been growing sick, sick "nigh unto death."

Luxury has been increasing with giant strides; the mad race for pleasure has helped to empty our Churches, to rob our Charities, to diminish the number of our Candidates for Holy Orders, to make countless ears deaf to the call which the country, through that magnificent Christian soldier, Lord Roberts, and many others, has been making to manhood of the land. Week-ending, meals in restaurants, turning night into day, have robbed home-life of its grace and power, and produced a generation of young folk *blasé* and discontented before they are out of girlhood and boyhood.

With this has come, inevitably, the loss of sense of responsibility. So long as I can enjoy myself and get my own way, why should I vex myself with the outworn question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" No! That has gone into the limbo of effete superstition.

And further, loss of the sense of proportion. There are some to whom it causes no moral shock to wear a dress costing a hundred guineas, while a vast number of seamstresses, shirtmakers, artificial flower makers, boot-closers, and the like, are working seventy hours for 5s. to 8s. a week. One mantle-presser, in Dalston, receives $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per mantle; she is most respectable, has four children, and earns from 5s. 6d. to 7s. a week!

We do not grumble at the hundred guineas being spent upon the dress, or a thousand guineas even, if the money went in due proportion all round to supply the *full living wage to each one engaged in its production*: and if the wearer interested herself keenly in social problems, and used her means wisely and well to afford relief where it was needed. This, alas! does not happen when the sense of proportion is lacking.

Take another case—alas! a fearfully common one. Men and women will gamble recklessly at Bridge, lose heavily, pay up, at whatever cost, because it is *a debt of honour*. All the while a hard-pressed tailor, a famished dressmaker and her children are kept out of their money, because it is only *a debt of commerce*. Could there be a more ghastly parody on the word honour?

Yet once more—the lack of seriousness. By seriousness we do not mean gloominess, nor withdrawal from society, or anything of the kind. We mean the flippant attitude towards life, the lack of serious, sustained interest in literature, in music, in art, in the legitimate drama; witness the theatres being turned into cinema shows, and the terrible paucity of sound, strong plays. Everything must be scrappy, light, and if a little (or more than a little) risky, so much the better.

We do not for a moment say that these evils are universal, God forbid, but none can deny that they have eaten deep into a large part of society, using the word in its broadest, not in its technical sense.

The soul of the nation needed discipline, and it has come suddenly, sharply, but, who shall dare to say, not mercifully?

And even in its very coming it brought a tremendous opportunity, for we were not compelled to make war, notice that!

We had an option. The temptation was subtle. You have no concern with Servia, throw over Belgium, let France take care of itself.

For a time, probably a very short time, we should have avoided war and its horrors. The bait

was held out by some peddling politicians that we should have stood in a magnificent position to obtain trade, to control markets, to dictate prices to the rest of the world. Magnificent prospect! We went to war, and, by a strange paradox, secured peace with honour: peace of the national conscience. Had we forsaken Belgium we could never again have held up our heads among civilised honourable nations. Thus the very circumstances under which the War came about formed an appeal to the soul of the nation as embodied in its legislature; the Government rang true, and the nation, as one man, endorsed its decision.

And now the discipline has commenced.

Who can be flippant and careless with our coast towns liable to bombardment, and over a hundred lives already sacrificed in this little island, which we have always deemed to be the one absolutely secure spot in the whole world? Five months ago an earthquake in London would have seemed a far more likely event than the bombardment of Hartlepool, Scarborough, Whitby, and the dropping of shells on Yarmouth foreshore, or of bombs at Dover and Southend.

Who can be unconcerned when our ships are liable at any moment, and apparently in almost any place, to be sent headlong to the bottom of the sea by torpedoes or mines; possibly sometimes by those very mines we have been compelled to lay, and which happen to have broken loose?

This is one of the unavoidable hazards of war under modern conditions. It does not make us ignore the magnificent work of our Fleet, nor tremble for the ultimate issue.

Who can be giddy and careless with darkened streets, trains, trams, all telling of the awful possibilities of the new development of aerial warfare?

Who, even among those not directly touched by anxiety or bereavement, can go on just as usual in luxury, self-indulgence, and ease amid the crushing mass of suffering around them on all sides?

Thank God that, though we may have erred very grievously through softness of living, we are not a callous people, but we needed a strong, stern discipline of the national soul; some stirring and trumpet-tongued appeal to the national life, and in the righteous mercy of God it has come.

Some of the immediate effects are obvious; but what are the lasting results to be?

The *Guardian*, of a few weeks back, thus soundly comments upon the matter:—

"It is true that the outbreak of war put a sudden end to much that was thoughtless, stupid, and even base in contemporary life. 'Tango teas' and afternoon Bridge among women have receded almost as far into ancient history as dinners at Ranelagh or suppers at Cremorne. But human nature is easily frightened into propriety by a crisis; it is not so easy to maintain the new way of life when the fright is safely over. The things that are amiss in our national life, and above all that lack of seriousness which so many observers have lamented during the last few years, can be amended only by a clear conviction of the inherent unsoundness of our outlook, and a firm determination to rebuild it upon new and more stable foundations."

The soul of the nation needs discipline, and that can only come through the effort of the individual to discipline his own life.

There is a ceaseless temptation to echo the cry of the disciples in regard to the few loaves and fishes: "What are they among so many?"

Of what value or power is my feeble little life among the teeming millions that go to make up the nation?

Put away the thought, for it is a direct temptation of the Devil.

It was just when, in the very depths of his human despair, Elijah cried out, "I, I only am left," that God revealed to him the seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

It was because Athanasius was content to stand *contra mundum*, against the world, that the Catholic faith was preserved to the Church.

Let us very seriously examine ourselves as to the use we are making of our life with regard to other people.

We have considered that life, in various details, in respect to ourselves, and only incidentally as it affects others, but now let us put away all thought of self.

Take the one absolute standard of life as set in the text, "I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."

The result was a life entirely devoted, from the first moment to the last, to one stupendous cause: the lifting up of humanity to the very throne of God.

You and I cannot reach even a fraction of the way towards that perfect standard; but it is our pattern, our plummet, our measuring-line.

Very practically, then, we must ask ourselves such questions as these:

What proportion of my time is spent for others?

Have I any method of employing time or any stated hours that I give to philanthropic or religious work; or do I just, in a casual way, let other people have odd moments, when I happen to think of it?

Similar questions should be asked as to money. Many people, especially those who do not keep accounts (which everyone ought to do), would be shocked if at the end of a year they could see the enormous disproportion between the vast amount they have frittered away on self, and the pitiful little doles they have handed out in the cause of charity.

One man, who kept three cars for private use, reduced an already paltry allowance made to a dependent because the price of petrol had gone up!

It is not that people cannot give; it is often only that they do not think. Look at the vast sums being poured into the Relief Funds. Why has not some proportion of it gone long ago to Hospitals obliged to close their wards, Waifs and Strays Societies compelled to refuse poor little outcasts? The money was there; it could have been spared then as well as now, but it needed some great shock to wake its owners up to the sense of proportion, the realisation of responsibilities.

And so in regard to such gifts as music, painting, acting, mechanics, stitchery; even such simple things as reading and writing. Have you ever read a book to, or written a letter for, anyone else? We might multiply these questions indefinitely, but enough has been said to enable us seriously to take in hand the disciplining of the soul, remembering that this life of ours is a precious loan entrusted to us by God the Father, redeemed for us by God the Son, sanctified in us by God the Holy Ghost, to be used by us, in due proportion, for our neighbours and ourselves.

For suggested meditations during the week, see Appendix.

IV

The Discipline of the Spirit THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

ST. LUKE vi. 12.

"He continued all night in Prayer to God."

Last week we looked at the soul as that faculty of life which, to a certain extent, we share with animals; to-day we pass on to consider, under the title of spirit, the higher endowment by which man is enabled to look up and, in the fullest exercise of his whole being, to say "my God."

A man without religion is undeveloped in regard to the highest part of his complex nature. In attaining to self-consciousness, and the special powers it brings, he has gone one step further than the animal, but has utterly failed of his true purpose. The supreme object of the self-consciousness, which reveals to him his personality, is that it should disclose its own origin in the personality of God.

One very striking effect of the War has been to produce a vast amount of testimony to the fact that man is, broadly speaking, religious by nature.

The services in the places of worship all over the land have been multiplied, intercession is becoming a felt reality, congregations have grown.

It is asserted, by those who have the best means of knowing, that by far the majority of the letters from the front contain references to religion, such as acknowledgments of God's providence, prayer for His help, or requests for the prayers of others. Sometimes, in the strange double-sidedness of human nature, accompanied by expletives obviously profane. Mention is often made of the bowed heads, and the prayer, in which both sides join, at the time of a joint burial during a temporary truce.

All these things show that the deeps of the fountains of natural religion have been broken up in wondrous fashion.

Our question to-day is: How shall we discipline that spirit which enables us to realise religion as a fact?

Let us try to get to the root of the matter.

There are two chief derivations of the word religion. One comes from the verb which means "to go through, or over again, in reading, speech, or thought." Hence religion is the regular or constant habit of revering the gods, and would be represented by the word devotion—an aspect most important to bear in mind.

The other derivation, and the more usual, derives religion from the idea of binding together,

and tells of communion between man and God. For us Christians this thought finds its highest ideal and fulfilment in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The great characteristic action of religion is prayer; varying in its methods and degrees from merely mechanical performances, like the praying wheels of the Chinese up to the heart devotion of the Christian, poured out when commemorating, in the Holy Communion, the death and resurrection of His Lord.

The first essential of any prayer which is to be of value in the discipline of the spirit is regularity. No words can exaggerate the importance of morning prayer. Yet, alas! tens of thousands of professing Christians are content with evening prayer alone. The one who goes forth in the morning prayerless is just as ill-equipped to do his duty, and meet his temptations, as the foodless man is to perform physical work.

The whole story of the saintly life, alike in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Church, is that of diligence in prayer. It was to promote that spirit that the Church of Christ, following on the lines of the Jewish Church, from very early days adopted special hours for stated devotions, with the daily offering of the Holy Eucharist linking the whole system together.

The lowest standard to aim at is private prayer morning and evening, midday too if possible, and regular attendances at God's House on Sundays and Feast Days. The guiding principle, to be kept ever in mind, is not what my own inclinations suggest, but what the glory of God demands. Were this always the case, what magnificent congregations there would be.

Prayer represents a real business of the spirit into which we put the whole endowment of our being, intellect, memory, emotion, will.

Oh! those wandering thoughts, how they do distress us; and just in proportion as we wish to pray and are learning to pray, so we feel our deficiencies the more keenly.

A few moments before we commence our prayers spent in saying very quietly, "Thou God seest me," or "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," coupled with a simple yet earnest act of the realisation of God's presence, will be of infinite use.

The railway train coming into a station does not draw up with a jerk, but gradually slows down. So with us; we cannot come out of our rushing lives all in a moment into the quiet of God's presence; we need to slow down.

But much of the wandering in prayer is the direct result of the habit of wandering in life. Flitting from one subject, one book, one occupation to another; scrappy reading, talking, thinking; then, as a natural consequence, scrappy praying. A great master of the spiritual life used to say, "You will get far more help in your prayers by leading a more useful life, than by making tremendous efforts after concentration when you are actually at prayer."

The one who tries to keep alive the habitual sense of God's presence makes his whole life a prayer, of which the stated devotions only form a natural part. It is comparatively easy for such a one to concentrate his thought and to keep his attention fixed when engaged in his prayers.

Just a word or two about books of devotion. They serve a most useful purpose, especially in preparation and thanksgiving for Confession or Communion, but should never be allowed to take the entire place of the Christian's glorious privilege of pleading the "Abba Father," and speaking to God in his own words, day by day.

Be careful not to use prayers which are manifestly beyond your own standpoint or out of harmony with your own feeling. The mere repetition of phrases that do not represent your inner attitude towards truth only tends to formality; the effort to force a kind of artificial conformity, because you think you ought to feel this or that, invariably ends in unreality. Given these cautions, devotional books may be of great use, even for regular daily prayer, and often help to call back the thoughts which are flying off at a tangent.

To speak of discipline without touching upon Confession would be to omit one of its most essential features. Nightly self-examination must be performed, and that not perfunctorily, but with real intention of repentance and strictness of living. Self-examination is nothing more nor less than spiritual account-keeping; without it the man has no real idea of how the business of his soul stands.

When it reveals the fact that sin is making headway and the spirit losing ground, then the wise teaching of the Prayer Book should be followed; "the grief"—for such it ought to be—opened in Confession to God, before one of God's ministers, and the benefit of absolution secured.

Much of the terrible prejudice felt against this practice arises from the mistaken idea that the priest professes to forgive us our sins. The words of the Absolution in the Visitation of the Sick, in our own Prayer Book, put the matter on its true footing:—"Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath left power to His Church to absolve, ... *forgive* thee ... and by His authority ... I *absolve* thee." The source of all pardon and the right to exercise it rest in God alone, but the message declaring the fact is part of the "ministry of reconciliation," committed, in the infinite condescension of God, to the "earthen vessels." An illustration may be taken from the pardon of a criminal condemned to death; the Home Secretary recommends it, but the King, on his sole authority, grants it, and then the message, the *absolvo te*, which lets the man go free, is delivered by the governor of the gaol.

Penitents, especially after a first confession at some crisis in mature life, often bear witness to the fact that it seemed to bring them straight into the presence of Jesus Christ; to make them feel the reality of His pardoning blood in a way they never could have believed possible. How strange that the very thing which by so many pious and thoroughly honest souls is dreaded because it is supposed to bring a man in between God and the soul, should yet so often be used by the Holy Spirit to give a wondrous and precious vision of Christ the Saviour.

Thus far we have spoken only of that kind of occasional Confession which is obviously contemplated by the Prayer Book; we have no time to dwell on its habitual use.

Suffice it to quote some words from the first English Prayer Book:—

"Requiring such as shall be satisfied with a general confession, not to be offended with them that do use, to their further satisfying, the auricular and secret confession to the priest; nor those which think needful or convenient to open their sins to the priest to be offended with them that are satisfied with their humble confession to God, and the general confession to the Church."

That staunch Evangelical Churchman, Bishop Thorold, who was strongly opposed to habitual Confession in our Communion, once said, "We cannot ignore the fact that the giants of old owed much of that saintliness, which we of the present day can only wonder at but cannot reproduce, to the practice of Confession."

If you should be in doubt about it for yourself, consult some spiritually-minded person who possesses experience in the matter. Not, on the one hand, the man who will tell you that it is the greatest curse the Church has ever known; nor, on the other, the one who would have it practised by everybody.

Surely for us sober Church folk there must be a loyal middle course, which leaves absolute freedom, so long as the individual "follows and keeps the rule of charity, and is satisfied with his own conscience."

Last, but most important of all, in the discipline of the spirit comes the Holy Communion, about which we shall speak next week.

As our closing thought, let us go back to what we said just now. The object of religion is God's glory, not man's enjoyment. See how this puts feelings down into their right, and subordinate, place. They are sometimes very delightful, sometimes very depressing, but always liable to be misleading. A great saint of old used to say:—"If God never gave me another moment of sensible devotion in prayer, I would go on praying, because His glory demands it."

Religion has to do with facts: the facts of what God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost have done, and are doing, for us; the facts of what we have to do, to make the finished work of Christ our own.

Here, as always, our Lord Himself gives us the highest illustration. Neither as God, nor yet as perfect Man, was there an actual need for Him to pray; yet His whole life was punctuated with prayer: first because the glory of the Father required it, and next because His chosen Apostles must be taught by example as well as precept.

Let the same mind dwell in us. It is for the glory of God that I should have salvation; therefore by the help of God I will discipline my spirit.

For suggested Meditations during the week see Appendix.

V

Discipline through Obedience FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

ST. LUKE xxii. 19

"This do in remembrance of Me."

Our subject of to-day flows quite naturally out of what we said last week. Religion rests on facts, and its object is God's glory, not merely our profit. Our duty, therefore, is an absolute submission to those facts—in other words, implicit obedience.

This is being illustrated on all sides in regard to the War.

The facts are indisputable. Lord Selborne put the matter in a nutshell when he said: "The task in front of us is colossal. We are fighting for nothing less than our lives, in circumstances which make it the duty of every Englishman to put everything in the world he possesses, everything that he values, into the scale to ensure success, and I am sure there is not one of us, whatever his

position, who would flinch in the slightest from the duty he owes to his country and to his deepest self."

The response to the facts has been obedience, immediate and unquestioning, on the part of a vast number. True, not all have yet been reached who ought to come forward, and some are even now crying out for that compulsory service which may yet prove inevitable. They forget that the obedience of one free man is worth more than the forced submission of many. Let us wait hopefully, energetically; losing no opportunity of pressing the stern logic of facts wherever we may.

And those who have joined the services have come at once under a discipline totally different from that of the sternest school or the strictest house of business. The surrender has been made voluntarily, and it has placed the whole life in each detail under the claim of an absolute obedience.

The disposal of every moment of time belongs to the authorities. The private in high social position must obey the orders of a young lance-corporal just as exactly as he expected his own commands to be carried out in his business or his household.

Who can estimate the immense development of moral fibre that surely must take place in succeeding generations from the fact that so vast a number, in all ranks of society, are now under obedience? Not because they were driven to it, but because they embraced it by an initial act of obedience.

—Thus they answered,—hoping, fearing,
Some in faith, and doubting some,
Till a trumpet-voice proclaiming,
Said, "My chosen people, come!"
Then the drum,
Lo! was dumb,
For the great heart of the nation throbbing,
Answered, "Lord we come."²

Let us apply this thought to the command in our text, "Do this in remembrance of Me." The facts are undisputed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the tenderness of His compassion, instituted an ordinance by which we might remember Him and feed upon Him.

Further than this we cannot go on the ground of universal consent. Strangely enough, that rite which is the same in its central act, whether celebrated by the nonconformist in his ordinary dress, or the priest clad in costly vestments, whether in the humble room or the stately cathedral, which is, on the one hand, the well-nigh universal mark of all who profess and call themselves Christians, is yet the battle-ground of fierce dispute and bitter disagreement.

The present crisis is undoubtedly deepening in our minds the exceeding value of this blessed gift of Christ to His Church.

It is deeply suggestive of the spirit of our young officers that a group of old public-school boys, just about to leave for the front, should have begged their late schoolmaster—now a Bishop—to give them a Celebration of Holy Communion in his own private Chapel on their last Sunday in England. What a beautiful send-off!

Then, turning to the scene of operations itself, we find a touching witness in the simple record sent by Admiral Sir John Jellicoe to his brother at Southampton. "We spent our Christmas Day waiting for the Germans, who did not appear. But we managed to find time for church and for three celebrations of Holy Communion, although the whole time we were cleared for action and the men were at their guns."

Who can contemplate unmoved that spectacle of the men, not gathered in the peaceful security of the House of God, but out upon the ocean, expecting attack, realising the possible nearness of the end, leaving their guns but for the moment, then back again, strengthened for life or death by the sacred Body and Blood.

Or take the witness of Rev. E.R. Day, one of our Senior Army Chaplains serving with the Expeditionary Force. While home on a few days' leave he preached at Lichfield Cathedral, and, touching upon the efficacy of prayer, testified how enormously it was valued by our soldiers now serving at the front. The Holy Communion was especially appreciated. On Christmas Day there were no fewer than seven hundred communicants from one regiment and four hundred from another, and the service was held in a ploughed field with a packing-case for an altar. He had conducted these services sometimes in the back-parlour of a public-house, in a stable, in a loft, in a lean-to shed, and in the open; anywhere, in fact, where room could be found. Out on the battlefield there was hardly any need for a compulsory parade service; the men had only to hear that a service was to be held and they would crowd to it.

Most of the reasons given by those who stop away from Communion centre in self.

"I am not worthy." Of course not, nor is the priest who celebrates, nor is any member of the congregation. We sadly misread that caution of S. Paul about receiving "unworthily."

Let us take a homely illustration. Our good Queen Victoria was very fond of visiting cottagers in the Highlands and reading the Scriptures to them. You can imagine how one of them might say,

"I am not worthy of such an honour; this little place is so poor and mean." Quite true, yet she could tidy up the home, mend her frock, make everything neat and clean, so as to receive the Queen "worthily." Until you realise the fact—

"I am not worthy, gracious Lord,"

you will never receive Him worthily. No one who examines himself, confesses his sins, and firmly purposes to amend, ever yet came to Communion unworthily.

"I don't feel inclined to come." Because you have not realised in its full meaning two facts: yourself as a great sinner, Christ as a great Saviour. Feelings have nothing to do with duty. If they had, our army would be about half the size it is. Do you suppose that all those who are joining the Services like leaving home, wife, friends, comforts? Feelings have been sacrificed to facts.

"I'm too great a sinner." Then you are not fit to die. Repent, turn to the Saviour, and then in His holy ordinance you will find the very strength you need to keep you from falling back.

"I have such terrible temptations." So we all have, priest and people alike. Temptations are not sins; they are the enemies on the battlefield, and if you never meet them, you—the Christian soldier enlisted at your Baptism—will never have the chance of winning a victory. The one who stays away from Communion because of temptations or sins, which he is really trying to resist, is like the sick man who looks at the bottle of medicine and says, "I will take it when I get well."

"So many communicants are hypocrites." That shows that you know enough about the Christian life to be able to judge your fellow creatures. Are you making things any better by neglecting your duty?

"I have got an enemy." Have you honestly tried to be reconciled; are you willing to forgive and bury the past? "Yes, but he is not." All the more need then for you to come to the Communion and pray for his heart to be changed.

It was said of one great saint that some people might never have had the blessing of his prayers for them but that they were his enemies.

All these excuses centre in self. They could not do otherwise, for no one has ever yet found in Christ any reason why they should stay away from Him.

Obedience forms so large a part of discipline—nay, is almost identical with discipline—because it takes us out of self.

Our Lord Who has bidden us "do this" knows exactly what is best for us. In putting aside feelings, fancies, unworthy scruples, and casting ourselves unreservedly upon His boundless mercy, we shall taste of the treasures of His grace and be satisfied.

One important part of the discipline of this obedience is making a special and very careful preparation before, and thanksgiving after, each Communion.

Preparation which consists first of all of real self-examination and repentance, using fearlessly the "ministry of reconciliation" when necessary, and then of special prayers which help to put us into the attitude of hopeful, grateful anticipation.

Thanksgiving; definite prayers and praises, continued for a day or two, unless we are very frequent communicants, so that we may lose none of the preciousness of the blessing by our own forgetfulness or ingratitude.

In this, as we said last week, books can *help*, but that is all; they cannot make the preparation or the thanksgiving for us.

Early Communion, quite apart from the doctrinal question of fasting reception, is a useful feature of the discipline of obedience. It is a custom which comes from primitive times, and is universal in the greater part of the Catholic Church.

To give the early hours of the day to our Blessed Lord is surely more in accordance with what His great love requires than to choose our own time and come when it suits us best: that is when it requires less effort and self-denial, and when our minds have been distracted by the cares of the advancing day.

The coming on of old age or sickness may necessarily debar us from the privilege and joy of early Communion, but, while we can, let us make the most of the blessed morning hours, when in all the freshness of our newly awakened life we draw near to Him Who ceaselessly watches over us.

The question is often asked: "How often ought I to receive the Holy Communion?" The answer depends upon so large a number of considerations that no general rules can possibly be given. Spiritual capacities vary infinitely.

One broad principle we can lay down: Do not receive so often that you begin to neglect preparation and thanksgiving. Better by far six Communions a year, which have meant real, living intercourse between yourself and your Saviour, than a weekly one which has degenerated into a perfunctory form.

It is to be remembered that there is nothing to prevent your attending the service whenever you wish, joining in the praises and prayers, even though for some good reason you are not going to receive.

But, whatever your custom may be, have a rule about your times of receiving, and keep to it strictly.

Aim at regularity for your own sake. One of the greatest causes of many of the obscure modern complaints is the irregularity of meals, consequent upon the exacting conditions of life. Precisely so, much sickness of spirit springs from the careless way in which the chief spiritual food is treated. People go to the Holy Communion when they feel inclined, instead of according to a fixed rule, modifying the rule, just as they would in the case of their meals, by circumstances which may arise; spiritual sickness might dictate abstention from Communion for a while, just as bodily disease might require a period of fasting.

Be regular for others' sake. The consistent example of the communicant who lets neither weather nor inclination interfere with duty exercises an influence far wider than he could imagine possible.

Be regular for Christ's sake, in grateful recognition of that tender love which has given us the highest privilege of the Christian life. Surely never is our Lord more satisfied in seeing of the travail of His soul than when His faithful ones are gathered before His Holy Table, worshipping Him in the tremendous reality of His spiritual presence, feeding upon Him in the mystery of His Body and His Blood.

Thus out of our obedience to the great "Do this" comes discipline of the highest kind. That discipline which is ever putting self in the background, ever exalting the person and the work of Christ.

Then follows the reward, never attained by those who in self-interest seek it, only poured forth upon such as are content to lose their life in finding it, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

For suggested Meditations during the week see Appendix.

VI

The Discipline of Sorrow FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

REVELATIONS vii. 14

"These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Two considerations only can throw any light on the dark mystery of suffering, the problem which has baffled the intellect, the perplexity which has torn the heart of mankind from the dawn of conscious life—"I believe that Jesus Christ was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man"; "I believe in the life of the world to come."

The two thoughts blend in our text with a harmony of illumination which, though it does not solve the problem, renders it less dark.

Only in the light of another world, where the seed sown here shall bear wondrous fruit, can we even begin to reconcile the existence of suffering with the goodness of Almighty God. If there be no hereafter, then indeed suffering must be the work of a vengeful tyrant rejoicing in cruelty, or of a fatalistic machine grinding out its foreordained consequences.

What we require is some comprehensive plan which will knit together past, present, future in one great purpose of progress towards ultimate perfection, which will guarantee not only *an* existence hereafter, but will render that existence personal, conscious, capable of the highest development.

We find this in the Incarnation, the eternal purpose of God the Father, formed in the eternity of *the past*, that His Son should take our human flesh.

This plan is working itself out in *the present* by the power of God the Holy Ghost, through the life of the great Church of Christ, militant and expectant.

It stretches forth into the future, with regard to which we have parables, promises, visions, warnings, all pointing to a continuously progressive growth till the perfect manifestation of the Kingdom of Christ be reached.

Thus the Incarnation supplies the unifying principle, and in its light we catch some ray of hope on the dark problem of suffering.

In consequence of sin our Lord was a sufferer, even in some mysterious sense was "made perfect through suffering" (Heb. ii. 10).

The climax came in the "full, perfect, and complete sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world" made upon the Cross.

It is suggestive that these words should occur in the Consecration Prayer of the Holy Communion Service, as if to remind us that our true spiritual and commemorative sacrifice draws all its validity, power, and preciousness from the one offering of Christ made by Himself in His death.

Thus we see that most essential act for our salvation was not one of victory, triumph, or glory, as the world reckons these things. Oh, no! It was one of absolute self-surrender, involving untold anguish of soul and body. The results of the sufferings of our Lord have justified their tremendous cost.

Its efficacy consisted not in the physical pains, but in the entire yielding up of the will. Thus it represents for us that victory over self which is the only path to eternal life.

But this victory, even now in these emphatically feather-bed days, is always more or less painful. In the early times it meant persecution, poverty, isolation, death, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

It is always so; the greatest deeds the world has ever known, nationally, or individually, have been wrought out by suffering; because suffering, more than any other agent, deepens character.

Look around among your friends and acquaintances. Who are the morally strongest? To whom do you turn in your times of difficulty, doubt, trouble? Not to those whose lives have been easy, to whom the lines have fallen in pleasant places, to whom success has come without effort! No! You turn to the one who has fought his way through the doubt, the difficulty, the trouble, and you find a tower of strength. There is the secret of Charles Kingsley's power as a counsellor; once he did not believe that there was a God; he went through the agonies of doubt.

There is the secret of the wondrous force of Archbishop Temple. Rough, rugged, almost discourteous at times; hating shams and penetrating them with an unerring instinct, but tenderness itself to the really distressed. He knew what it was as a lad to do field labour in poor clothes and with insufficient food. In later years, when up at College, he was wont to study by the light in the passage, because he could not afford oil for his own lamp.

Yet another illustration, showing the directly spiritual influence of suffering—those countless cases of bed-ridden invalids, often in intense pain, who develop an intense, fervent, yet restful piety, seldom attained even by the most devout in active life.

Those who have had experience in missions or dealing with individual souls know how constantly suffering—especially in middle life—lays the foundations of conversion. Ay, and lays them strong and deep. The soul in trouble feels its need of God, turns to Him, and then gets to know the fulness of His mercy, even in and through the affliction.

And now, how stands it in regard to the War? We need not repeat in detail those various points on which we have already dwelt. Spite of all the ghastly sufferings the War is bringing in its train, nay, in a sense, because of them, it has linked together the Empire in the closest bonds, allayed political and polemical strife, evoked a wealth of heroism, self-sacrifice, prayer, and benevolence, and braced up the moral fibre of countless lives.

Yet all this does not explain the existence of suffering, the why and the wherefore still lie hidden in that region of the infinite which we, finite beings, cannot penetrate. We can see, from its results, that suffering is no more incompatible with the eternal love of God, than the surgeon's knife is inconsistent with the tenderness of his heart. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," "God dealeth with you as with sons" (Heb. xii., 6, etc.). Our great mistake is to look upon trouble as punishment, inflicted by an angry God, and to rebel under the chastening hand. When God sees that His child, whether the nation or the individual, needs discipline He sends it, and there is no more lack of love than there is on the part of the wise earthly parent, when he corrects his child and makes him suffer pain. Nay, it is the very love that prompts the discipline.

Once more, let us look at suffering in its power of producing sympathy.

The Incarnation was the greatest act of sympathy the world has ever known. The Word made flesh, our Saviour born as a babe, that He might enter into all the experiences of our human nature; that He might not simply feel *for* us, but feel *with* us.

Here is the essence of the word; take it in Latin, compassion; take it in Greek, sympathy—alike it means feeling with. And in the wondrous mystery of the Church, the spiritual body of Christ, the same great principle is still working itself out.

Very strange, very mysterious, yet real with the essence of reality, is the connection between the suffering Christ and the suffering Church, "inasmuch as ye have ministered to one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." And yet it is the Christ Who helps and sustains us from on high. The same Christ Who was here upon earth, suffering in His martyr Stephen was

yet standing at the Father's right hand to succour him.

The same Christ Who flashed the wondrous vision of Himself on the eyes of S. Paul, was yet so intimately present in and with His infant Church that he "thundered" forth the question, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

It is just this thought of Christ still present in the person of His suffering children, that gives the glow of enthusiasm to philanthropic work of a definitely Christian character. But may we not go a step further and try to see Christ, in a measure, in all suffering, even that of the animals? He came to redeem the world, and we in our little view are apt to narrow down the purposes, and limit the possibilities within very contracted lines.

The War is opening up to us opportunities boundless in their character and scope. Probably to-day tens of thousands who have hitherto spent aimless lives; whose time, means, gifts have gone in the shallow channel of self, now know something at least of the joy of launching out on to the broad stream of living, loving sympathy. This has been because, though in some instances unconsciously to themselves, Christ, in the power of His Holy Spirit, has touched their lives.

If anguish has come to our hearts let it work its discipline upon us in and through Christ, by the opening out of ourselves to Him, that we may take in the full measure of His priceless sympathy. Let us try to lose ourselves in ministering to others, one of the surest anodynes for grief and pain.

But if we have, as yet, passed unscathed, let us be all the more diligent, tender, and loving in our care for others.

There is no need to go into details. Wherever your lot be cast you have only just to look around and you will find there are individuals, wives at home, soldiers at the front, whose lot you can brighten in very simple yet very real ways; perhaps institutions, such as Red Cross Homes, Hospitals, Belgian Hostels, to which you can render practical service; Funds to which you can send your money; all these are means through which you may enter into the glorious discipline of opportunity that comes through suffering.

Have you ever thought how infinitely poorer the world would be in all that is highest and purest in its life, were there no suffering to call forth the tender ministry of sympathy?

And now let us summarise what we have been saying. Suffering is a great mystery, but two facts throw light upon it—the hereafter, the Incarnation; suffering does discipline character, therefore, judging by results, it is not incompatible with the love of God, even though its existence be still a problem; suffering presents us with the splendid possibility of sympathy, to be exercised in the power of the loving Christ.

Can we close better than with the thought of the saints in Paradise?

On earth they lived in the always realised consciousness of a personal Christ. When the Apostles were persecuted and beaten, they departed from the Council "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." So it has been all down the long story of the ages. And the saints are those "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"; their sufferings sanctified by, and borne in, the power of Him Who was made perfect by the things which He endured. Their "light affliction, which was but for a moment, has worked out for them the exceeding abundant and eternal weight of glory."

Thus the Incarnation, the eternal counsel of the past, that embraced them while they were on earth, is still enfolding them, while they, with us, wait and pray for its final consummation, in the coming of the Kingdom.

Let us so use our opportunities for discipline now, that the uplifting of character shall be permanent; not a mere spasm of passing enthusiasm, but a real growth into the character and likeness of Him Who suffered death upon the Cross, that all might live unto Him.

For suggested Meditations during the week see Appendix.

VII

Discipline through Bereavement SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT

1 THESS. iv. 13

"We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope."

Of all kinds of sorrow, bereavement is in some senses the sternest, the most irrevocable, and

the one in which human compassion is of least avail.

All that we said last week on the discipline of suffering applies here, but with enhanced force. If suffering generally cannot be rationally contemplated outside of the doctrine of a future existence, still less can death be tolerated unless it lead to further life. If sorrow in the bulk needs the Incarnation to throw upon it the light of God's love, still more does this particular grief require the assurance that the finished work of Christ operates within, as well as without, the veil.

Broadly speaking, all over the world there are torn and bleeding hearts mourning the nearest, the dearest; in the vast majority of instances, from the circumstances of the case, men in the beginning or the very prime of life.

The heroism of the women has been as magnificent as that of the men—nay, in a sense, more so. For those who go forth there is the novelty, the excitement, the nerving sense of duty. Their time is so ceaselessly occupied that but little space remains for brooding or for anxious thought, on behalf of themselves or those at home. The men who remain behind, the fathers, brothers, friends, have the priceless boon of daily occupation, often vastly increased in amount. There is no such infallible anodyne of care as plenty of honest work.

But the women—theirs is the harder task, the fiercer trial, of keeping up the brave appearance, the show of cheerfulness, whilst all the time the load of apprehension and fear lies heavy on their hearts. None will ever know the crushing reality of the offering the women are making to their country, in one great stream of self-sacrifice.

Nor can we forecast the end, nor estimate the claims that are yet to be made in the cause of patriotism. The nations engaged, at least the chief of them, are fixed irrevocably in their determination that peace, when it comes, shall be no temporary patching up of hostilities and arranging of indemnities, but a solid, lasting settlement, which shall, as far as possible, place another vast European war out of the range of practical politics.

To tens of thousands there has come the ceaseless yearning for

The touch of a vanished hand,
The sound of a voice that is still.

Now notice how S. Paul deals with the matter. "That ye sorrow not as others which have no hope." There is no injunction here not to sorrow at all; that would be contrary to human nature, and would bespeak callousness rather than resignation. Our Blessed Lord wept at the grave of Lazarus, and in so doing sanctified human grief. The keenest faith, to which the other world is an absolute reality; the fullest hope of the sure and certain resurrection for the dear one; the most disciplined and submissive will which accepts unquestioningly the dispensations of the Father; all these are not proof against the natural grief at the removal of a loved one from this sphere of tender intimacies, into another, where we can only commune with him in thought and prayer.

How often this is illustrated at the death of a chronic invalid who has suffered much. With tears streaming down the cheeks, the mourner will say, "I am so thankful he is at rest." No selfish, rebellious side of grief is exhibited by those tears; only human sorrow, blending in loving harmony with perfect resignation.

Now notice carefully the ground on which S. Paul bases the Christian's hope for the departed; first, faith in the death and resurrection of Christ; "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again." It is a mere platitude to say that the whole of S. Paul's teaching is founded on the actuality of the resurrection. "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 17). Then out of this fact of the resurrection flows a consequence: the dead, as we call them, "sleep in Jesus," and will be His immediate companions at the last day. We cannot enter into a discussion as to the exact conditions of what is called "Hades" or the "intermediate state"; suffice it to say that one great feature of it is nearness to Jesus, "having a desire to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23); "absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). Herein consists the blessed hope set before us in regard to the faithful departed; the crucified, risen, ascended Jesus has them in His keeping; we and they alike are parts of the one great Church, knit into the "Communion of Saints" by the mystic bond of the sacred bread, linked each to the other by mutual prayer; they for us and we for them.

Very beautifully and tenderly does the Archbishop of Canterbury deal with this thought in one of his late sermons:—

"As with bowed head and quivering lip we commend their souls into the hands of a faithful Creator and most merciful Saviour we feel how the very passing of those brave and buoyant lives into the world beyond pierces the flimsy barrier between the things which are seen and temporal and the things which are unseen and eternal, and again we can and do give thanks. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living:—

"Nor dare to sorrow with increase of grief
When they who go before
Go furnished, or because their span was brief.
For doubt not but that in the worlds above
There must be other offices of love,

That other tasks and ministries there are,
Since it is promised that His servants there
Shall serve him still. Therefore be strong, be strong,
Ye that remain, nor fruitlessly revolve,
Darkling, the riddles which ye cannot solve,
But do the works that unto you belong."

Here is the magnificent prospect of hope for those who mourn: that the Incarnation of our Lord is still working itself out in all its beneficent purposes. By the power of the Holy Ghost, in the Church expectant as in the Church militant, the answer to the constant prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," is being ceaselessly given; and the fulness thereof will be realised in the Church triumphant. The saints on earth and those in Paradise are equally in the hands of the Lord, though the latter have clearer vision and nearer sense of the fact than the former. By some this is used as an argument against the practice of prayer for the departed, but surely this thought of the unity of the whole body leads in exactly the opposite direction. No argument can be adduced against this most ancient and primitive custom, observed by the Jews long before the coming of Christ, but what equally applies to any petition for an absent friend still on earth. In each case they are in the keeping of Him Who knows best and will do right, yet for those still here we pray, believing that in His own way God will take account of our prayers and knit them up into His own dealings, so that they become part of His eternal purposes. When commending the departed to Him, naturally our words will be chastened and restrained because we know somewhat less of the conditions of the "intermediate state" than we do of those of our own dispensation. Somewhat less; for how little do we really understand of the circumstances around us now in all their bearings as they lie open beneath the eye of God. Therefore it is that whenever we pray we must ask in full submission to our own limitations and in the spirit of the Master, "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done."

Thank God this matter is not one of argument; no, it lies in another plane: the innate feeling of one who really knows what prayer means and who has grasped in some degree the doctrine of the "Communion of Saints."

A pious evangelical, well fortified with arguments against prayer for the departed, had been nursing her sick sister and taking care of the little daughter of the house. The sister died, and the same evening the motherless girl knelt down at her aunt's side to say her prayers. "Auntie, may I say God bless dear mother?" The whole drift of the aunt's training and theology would have led her to say "No" point blank. There was no time for argument or explanation, for facing the inevitable "If not, why not?" The instincts of natural religion prevailed; the aunt replied, "Yes, dear"; and from that day onward never failed herself to say, when remembering her dear ones, "God bless my sister."

Whatever the effect of such prayers in the other world, there is no shade of doubt that to the bereaved they bring an infinite sense of nearness to their beloved, and of the reality of the life of the world to come.

Thus far we have been speaking of those who may fairly be called the faithful departed, the cases in which hope may be reasonable and assured almost to certainty.

Now let us go a step further. The mind staggers as it contemplates the tens of thousands being hurried into eternity who, either according to the teaching of the Catholic Church or the notions of popular theology, would be deemed unprepared.

We trust, in a dim sort of way, that the all-embracing mercy of God will accept their sacrifice of themselves for their country, and in some fashion place it to the credit side of their account. No doubt He will. But can we not get a more evangelical, and at the same time more catholic, view of the matter? We find it in an extension of our conception of the possibilities of the intermediate state, the condition of souls between death and judgment. Evangelical to the backbone, because it is the work of Christ which we conceive of as being there carried on. Catholic, because the Church from very early times has recognised the idea of the discipline of souls as being a process continued after death. The authority of S. Paul has been appealed to on account of his words to the Philippians (i. 6), "being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ"; and to the Corinthians in that mysterious passage concerning "the fire which shall try every man's work" (1 Cor. iii. 13). The doctrine was developed and materialised till it resulted in those corruptions which were so largely responsible for the Reformation. In their zeal to root out error, the Reformers fell into the opposite extreme and abolished the idea of the intermediate state altogether. Hence arose the popular notion, unknown to the Catholic Church till then, of Heaven or Hell as the immediate issue of death.

Of course, the Church's teaching had regard to the condition of its own members after death, and we cannot press it into an argument as to those not dying, technically, in a state of grace; but at least this much we may say: Surely no intelligent person can contemplate the thought of these vast hosts being hurried off into eternal perdition, and at the same time retain his reason or his faith in a God of love. Whatever the possibilities of the world to come, they are but the extension of the boundless love of God in Christ, and hold out no promise for us if we wilfully neglect our day of grace.

But now to pass on to one further source of consolation which comes in its measure to all the bereaved alike; the chastened joy from the thought of the splendid sacrifice the dear one has been privileged to make.

Take an illustration—a letter from Major-General Allenby to Lady de Crespigny on the death of her son:—

"DEAR LADY DE CRESPIGNY,—I and the whole of the Cavalry Division sympathise with you, and we feel deeply for Norman's loss. But I must tell you that he died a hero's death. The brigade was hotly engaged, and on the Bays fell the brunt of the fighting on September 1st. Norman, with a few men, was holding an important tactical point, and he held it till every man was killed or wounded. No man could have done more, few would have done so much.

"With deepest sympathy, yours sincerely,

"E.H.H. ALLENBY."

How the bereaved hearts in the midst of crushing grief must have lit up with gladness at such a record as that!

But to close. The discipline of bereavement consists essentially in the trial of faith, yet at the same time brings with it the power of faith. In bereavement, above all other forms of sorrow, comes the felt need of God; it has been so with countless souls. The answer to the need is the revelation that God makes of Himself in Christ; then comes the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, which dries the tears and heals the broken heart.

Note.—The question of prayer in connection with God's foreknowledge is so admirably treated in "Some Elements of Religion" (Liddon) that we append an extract:—

"What if prayers and actions, to us at the moment perfectly spontaneous, are eternally foreseen and included within the all-embracing Predestination of God, as factors and causes, working out that final result which, beyond all dispute, is the product of His Good Pleasure?

"Whether I open my mouth or lift my hand is, before my doing it, strictly within the jurisdiction and power of my personal will: but however I may decide, my decision, so absolutely free to me, will have been already incorporated by the All-seeing, All-controlling Being as an integral part, however insignificant, of His one all-embracing purpose, leading on to effects and causes beyond itself. Prayer, too, is only a foreseen action of man which, together with its results, is embraced in the eternal Predestination of God. To us this or that blessing may be strictly contingent on our praying for it; but our prayer is nevertheless so far from necessarily introducing change into the purpose of the Unchangeable, that it has been all along taken, so to speak, into account by Him. If, then, with 'the Father of Lights' there is in this sense 'no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' it is not therefore irrational to pray for specific blessings, as we do in the Litany, because God works out His plans not merely in us but by us; and we may dare to say that that which is to us a free self-determination, may be not other than a foreseen element of His work."

For suggested Meditations during the week see Appendix.

VIII

Discipline through Self-sacrifice GOOD FRIDAY

1 TIM. ii. 6

"Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all."

To-day we reach the solemn climax which embraces in itself the whole idea of discipline under each of those aspects upon which we have touched. Will, body, soul, spirit, obedience, suffering, death, all summed up in the tremendous self-sacrifice declared by the Cross of Christ.

The principle of sacrifice is one of those deep mysteries which seem, as it were, to be rooted in the very nature of our being. It begins in the initial fact by which man's existence is maintained upon earth—motherhood, a vast vicarious sacrifice. Yet borne with gratitude, readiness, ay, even with joy because of the dignity, the love, the delights it brings with it. One of the surest signs of the decadence of a nation is when its women, through desire of merely living for themselves, begin to rebel against the high privilege of motherhood, or to neglect the duties it should entail. This attitude of mind poisons life at its fountain-head.

Time would fail us, nor indeed would it be profitable, to enter upon a discussion as to the exact theological bearing of the death of Christ upon the forgiveness of sins. This is a matter which may rightly occupy the attention of theologians and scholars who endeavour, so far as infinite verities can be expressed in finite language, to give a reason for the hope that is in them. Such books as Liddon's Bampton Lectures, Dale on the Atonement, or Illingworth on Personality, will be found most valuable by those who have the time and the capacity for studying them. It is a good thing, especially in these days, that the intellect of the Christian should be well-equipped, so that he may silence the taunts of those who say Christianity is purely a matter of emotion.

The personal acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour rests, not so much on arguments, as on a sense of need; when this is accompanied by strong intellectual grip of truth then the influence of the Christian upon others becomes a great missionary factor. The beauty of the Gospel story lies in its wonderful adaptability. It is the same in its power to a Pascal, a Butler, a Liddon, as it is to the unlettered peasant, who can neither read nor write.

Scripture declares quite plainly that the death of Christ was "for us"; how far this may be pressed to mean "instead of us" is a very grave question. The words will bear that interpretation, no doubt, but we must remember that they do not necessarily involve any more than "in our behalf," that is, for our benefit.

It has been the forcing of the words into an unnatural and immoral theory of substitution, the notion of an angry God claiming a victim, that has done such terrible harm to the cause of Christianity, and has led many thoughtful minds to give it up in disgust or despair. Probably in a wise commingling of the two lines of thought we shall arrive most nearly at the truth. We all agree that our Blessed Lord's death was "in behalf of us"; that is for our everlasting welfare; in a very real sense this was "instead of us," since His sufferings were endured so that we might not lose the blessing of salvation.

Very beautifully is the matter summed up by a modern writer: "In the death of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Sacrifice and Propitiation for the sins of the world, the moral perfections of God find their highest expression, and the deepest necessities of man's moral and spiritual life their only complete satisfaction."³

The death of Christ was not only typically but, in a certain sense, actually the offering up of our bodies on the Cross. Notice very carefully the words of St. Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii., 20 R.V.). Not simply, as in the old Authorised Version, "I am crucified with Christ," but something much more definite and exact. When Christ ascended the Cross He took up with Him our human nature collectively, as bound up in Himself by virtue of His Incarnation. Hence it follows that you, the individual, have been crucified with Him; just as you, the individual, have been buried with Him, and raised with Him in your Baptism (Rom. vi., 4). How completely this takes the sting out of the reproach brought against Christianity, on the ground of the immorality of the Crucifixion! It is no longer the Innocent one suffering instead of the guilty, but it is the sinless One taking upon Himself human nature, with all its guilt and consequent punishment, and "in His own body on the tree," offering that human nature up to God. He in us, we in Him, that the redemption of human nature may be complete. Canon Liddon thus puts it in one of his University sermons, "The substitution of the suffering Christ arose directly out of the terms of the Incarnation. The human nature which our Lord assumed was none other than the very nature of the sinner, only without its sin. Therefore He becomes the Redeemer of our several persons, because He is already the Redeemer of this our common nature, which He has made for ever His own."

We have already noticed that it was not the sufferings of Christ which were acceptable to God the Father. To think this would be to fall back into the very crudest and most repulsive idea of substitution. No, it was the offering up of the will of Christ that formed the essence of the sacrifice. If we may presume to attempt a mere earthly illustration of so tremendous a matter, let us take the case of a General whose son meets with a terrible death while leading a forlorn hope. The father's heart is torn with anguish both for the death and the circumstances of it; but at the same time the father's heart swells with pride, ay, even with joy, that his son should have been true to the highest thing in the world—duty.

He Who said, "I come not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me," also said, "I lay My life down of Myself, no man taketh it from Me." Herein is the discipline of sacrifice complete by the using of one's own will to surrender it absolutely to the will of another.

We have spoken so fully of the surrenders of will being made on all sides that we need say no more now on that point, but for further illustration let us turn our thoughts in a somewhat fresh direction.

The example of Belgium is a living witness of the power of self-sacrifice.

G.K. Chesterton has put forth a striking pamphlet entitled "The Martyrdom of Belgium"; in it he says:

"There are certain quite unique and arresting features about the case of Belgium. To begin with, it cannot be too much considered what a daring stroke of statesmanship—far-sighted, perhaps, but of frightful courage—the King of the Belgians ventured in resisting at all. Of that statesmanship we had the whole advantage, and Belgium the whole disadvantage: she saved France, she saved England—herself she could not save."

Had Belgium yielded instead of standing out, then, humanly speaking, nothing could have averted the immediate success of the German dash for Paris.

Now think for one moment of the solemn obligation this lays upon us in regard to that gallant, struggling, yet temporarily dismembered little nation. We must look after the refugees. There are those who say, "The Government have brought the Belgians over here, let the Government make their support a State matter."

One almost blushes to have to deal with such a sentiment. Could 1s. in the £ income-tax take the place, morally, spiritually, or ethically, of the rich profusion of voluntary aid now being

poured forth? The loss to the nation, of that which is purest and noblest in its life, would be simply unspeakable. It is suffering that provides opportunity for the exercise of the highest duty known to man, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." Try to picture to yourself, quietly yet resolutely, what it would mean to you to-morrow morning, to find suddenly that you had to leave your house, not in a motor-car for a railway train; no! but to turn out at once, without time to put together any belongings; to tramp, perhaps in pouring rain, along miles of road, foodless, cold, exhausted; seeing those around you dropping out to faint or die by the wayside; not knowing where or how the journey should end. This is what has happened to tens of thousands of Belgians; many, cultured and refined, coming forth penniless from homes of comfort and plenty!

In ministering to the needs of the Belgians you find a glorious privilege, a priceless opportunity. Again, to quote G.K. Chesterton:

"In a sense Belgium could still have saved her face; but she preferred to save Europe. This, it seems to me, gives her a claim on something beyond pity or even gratitude—a claim on our intellectual honour beyond anything that even suffering could extort."

Our Lent is nearly over. With all its opportunities, its calls, its privileges, it is now behind us. Some perhaps began it with high resolves and brave hopes, and are disappointed at the apparently small results. None, we trust, are wholly satisfied with themselves, for that would point to a condition far worse than despair. There is such a thing as divine discontent, and every true Christian should know something of it. For all the conscious failures ask pardon, but do not give up striving.

Standing under the Cross of Christ, as we do to-day, we have a standard for the measuring of ourselves which makes our little efforts at discipline look very poor indeed. Yet He remembers our frame, He knows whereof we are made; He can and will accept the feeblest struggles of our will towards His. Perhaps some progress in the life of grace may have been made, then thank Him and take courage.

Let us just cast our minds back. The discipline of the will means, laying ourselves open to listen to the voice of the living God. The discipline of the body means, never letting it get the upper hand of the real self. The discipline of the soul means the taking a very serious view of the responsibility of life. The discipline of the spirit means, a close approach to God by every channel of worship. The discipline of obedience means, that we put self in the background, so that we may exalt the person of Christ. The discipline of sorrow means, that Christ is still present in His suffering ones, and there is our opportunity. The discipline of bereavement means, the trial of our faith that it may enter into the realities of the spiritual kingdom.

Then comes the crown and climax, the discipline of self-sacrifice. Place steadily before you the thought of Christ crucified, see there the culmination of all possibility of the offering up of self for others. No element of completeness was wanting. The sacrifice was voluntary, was made for enemies, brought no return to self.

Strong in His strength go forth ready to spend and be spent, if only by the discipline of self-sacrifice you can lighten the load borne by any one of your fellow-creatures.

What hast Thou done for me, O
Mighty Friend,
Who lovest to the end?
Reveal Thyself that I may now behold
Thy love unknown, untold,
Bearing the curse and made a curse for me
That blessed and made a blessing I might be.

Wounded for my transgressions, stricken sore,
That I might sin no more,
Weak, that I might be always strong in Thee:
Bound, that I might be free;
Acquaint with grief that I might only know
Fulness of joy, in everlasting flow.

For suggested Meditations during the week see Appendix.

IX

Discipline through Victory EASTER DAY

"Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more."

To couple the word discipline with victory may seem incongruous almost to the point of impossibility. Yet, if we look below the surface, we shall see that never is the connection more strong and the need for realising it more urgent.

Lent is over, its special discipline has passed, and now the danger begins. The danger is lest any progress made, any victory won, should lead to that self-confidence which can only end in disaster. Success is often a discipline far more fatal in its results than failure.

We celebrate to-day the grandest victory the world has ever known: a victory which sprang out of the depths of an apparently complete defeat. "We trusted that it was He which should have redeemed Israel." Vain confidence, for how could One Who had died as a malefactor, Who could not save Himself, rescue His nation from the tyranny of the Roman power? And then He, this stranger Whom they knew not, opened to them the Scriptures; showed them the necessity of the sufferings, and the great climax, in the Resurrection. The ears were dull, the hearts unconvinced, as they generally are by mere argument, till he revealed Himself in "the breaking of bread." The eyes of love could not be deceived and sorrow gave place to joy.

Some dispute has arisen as to whether we ought to pray for victory in this War. The matter is well put by an anonymous writer: "If we are only to pray in matters wherein there is no difference of opinion our prayers will be few, and if we cannot pray for the triumph of honour over falsehood, of respect for treaties over unscrupulousness, of order over cruelty and outrage, for what are we ever to pray? We must pray according to the light we have. And if we end our prayers with the truly Christian supplement 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt,' we cannot be doing anything contrary to the principles of the highest religion. Surely prayer is, or should be, merely the expression of our best hopes and wishes submitted to a Divine tribunal."

Putting aside the question of prayer, let us consider for a moment what should be our attitude as we look into the future. First and foremost one of confidence and hopefulness. Without arrogance we can say that we believe firmly and strongly in the absolute righteousness of our cause. In violating the neutrality of Belgium, Germany itself confesses that a wrong was done. A wrong which necessity compelled, as they say. What necessity? That of getting to Paris at the earliest possible moment. And so when Germany prays for victory, as of course it does, and ought, at the same time it has to confess to an initial wrong, which was certainly not made right by the fact that it was the quickest way of accomplishing an end.

We have purposely abstained in these Addresses from fanning flames, or appealing to passions. But here is a broad ground upon which, by the very confession of our enemies, we stand on a higher platform. We went to war because we would not break a treaty, nor forsake a friend too weak for self-defence; Germany commenced the war by a treacherous act. Therefore, strong in the belief that the God of righteousness will cause the right to triumph, we can calmly look forward to ultimate victory,

To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.

Much more might be said in the same direction, but let the broad thought suffice.

The war has produced a type of pessimism which, in some instances, runs almost to disturbance of mental balance. Every reverse is exaggerated, and accepted with a kind of confident despondency; every success discounted and treated with half-hearted incredulity: "The Germans have destroyed another ship; what is our Navy doing?" "Oh, but that's only one little hill; the Germans will have it back soon enough." Surely this kind of pessimism, except where the victim of it is not really responsible, must be as offensive to God as it is exasperating to man.

But now to turn to our chief thought for the day, that is, the permanence of the victory of Easter Day, "Christ dieth no more." That is why He is called "The first fruits of them that are asleep." Several resurrections are recorded both in the Old and New Testaments, but these are cases of those who were raised by others, and then died again. Christ raised Himself and death hath no more dominion over Him. The resurrection is permanent and keeps on perpetuating and extending itself in the life of the whole universal Church. It was not an isolated act, but part of a wondrous plan. Not only does it possess doctrinal significance in that plan, but vital force for the carrying of it out. "He died for our sins," but "He was raised for our justification."

Yes, death's last hope, his strongest fort and prison,
Is shattered, never to be built again;
And He, the mighty Captive, He is risen,
Leaving behind the gate, the bar, the chain.

We are praying constantly, earnestly, that we "may be brought through strife to a lasting peace"; and that "the nations of the world may be united in a firmer fellowship for the promotion of Thy glory and the good of all mankind." No conditions of peace are worth accepting unless they will, humanly speaking, secure this result. Germany on the one side, and the Allies on the other, both realise that this is a "fight to a finish." Singularly enough the object of both sides is similar—to render another great European war impossible: but the ideals in respect to its attainment are by no means the same; one looks to the setting up of a world dominion; the other, to the establishment of a state of balanced power and mutual interests among European nations.

We are fighting essentially for the principle of "live and let live," and therefore have to face unflinchingly all the sacrifice that still lies before us. When peace is concluded it must be upon terms which will make results permanent! Should Germany, in the mysterious providence of God, be allowed to become supreme, there will be peace, but, alas! only the peace of desolation and the numbness of despair. But, as we have already said, it seems disloyal to all our deepest instincts, all our truest feelings, even to contemplate such a possibility.

But when the Allies triumph, what then?—the discipline of victory. Think for one moment of what the victory of Christ meant, as the ratification of the treaty signed upon the Cross, in the very hour of apparent defeat. It meant for you and me all that is included in the words "the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; the means of grace and the hope of glory." The resurrection puts the seal to the great charter, commenced at Bethlehem, indited page by page through the wondrous life of three and thirty years, closed, as to its earthly side, on Calvary, sealed, signed and delivered on Easter morning. In the power of that treaty of peace you and I live, day by day; secure except for our own carelessness; beyond all possibility of hurt from spiritual enemies, unless by our own traitorous dealings with them. The victory was complete! "He hath put all enemies under His feet"; the victory is permanent, for, "death hath no more dominion over Him."

In these Addresses we have said much about those large results which God is allowing us already to see as obviously coming out of the war; on our Day of "Humble Prayer to Almighty God" we solemnly thanked Him:

For the laying aside of controversies at home, and for the unity of the Nation and Empire;

For the loyal and loving response of our fellow-subjects beyond the seas;

For the full harmony between our Allies and ourselves, and for the success which has already been granted to our common efforts;

For the devotion of those who have laid down their lives for their country;

For the revelation in danger, in suffering, and in death, of the power of the Cross and the benefits of the Lord's Passion.

Now remains the question, Are the results to be permanent? That entirely depends upon our attitude towards the discipline of victory; or how we are going to behave ourselves in the hour of success. It is written concerning Israel, "The Lord saved them from the hand of them that hated them: and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. Then believed they His words, they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works: they waited not for His counsel." God willing we shall ere long be singing our Te Deum; oh! yes, we shall do it with all our heart and soul; but how are we to fix the emotions, to render permanent that thankfulness which we shall really feel. The Israelites "waited not for His counsel." They failed, that is, under the discipline of success. Victory is given that it may be used for good, just as much as failure is sent that we may rise on "stepping-stones of our dead-selves" to fresh endeavour.

As a nation we have been single-minded and honourable in our entry upon and our waging of the War; when it is over we are to be just the same in our use of the fruits of the War. Victory will not come to us simply for our own sakes and that it may be selfishly exploited for our own needs. No, assuredly not: it will come for the mutual benefit of all concerned, and unless the very first fruits of it be dedicated to the cause of heroic Belgium, to her re-instatement in something of her former condition, it will have come in vain. The time of distress and disaster has knit together the Empire in a wondrous unity of brotherhood. There will be debts to be repaid to India and our Colonies, debts which can never be discharged in money, but in those higher acts of fellowship, justice, endeavour, which will knit yet closer the bonds that have been formed. There will remain a large heritage of disablement and unemployment to cope with which will require wise counsel, comprehensive measures, real self-sacrifice. It is computed that should the war last another eighteen months there will be nearly a quarter of a million men more or less unfitted to resume their ordinary callings.

All this, you say, is the concern of the State; certainly, but what is the State? Only another term for you and me. Therefore the seriousness of attitude, the sense of proportion, the realisation of brotherhood, that by the mercy of God we have gained, must be retained for the facing of the new problems that will lie before us.

Turning to the more purely personal aspect of it, there will be the temptation to grow slack and cold in intercessions and communions, when the immediate occasion that prompted them has passed. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, let us look out for this, expect it, then we shall not be afraid to meet it. "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more"; think what the permanency of that victory has meant all down the ages of the past in the triumphs of the saints, in the deaths of the martyrs, in the splendid story of the Church of Christ. Think what it means to-day in the lives of millions of the faithful; in all the deeds of charity which are brightening homes, cheering hearts, giving hope to the hopeless, healing to the sick, and soundness to the maimed: think of all it means in rest and refreshment to the souls in Paradise; think of all it still will mean in the growth of the Church of Christ up to the fulness of its destined and glorious completion; think of all it may mean for you in your individual life, right up to the day when you shall be like Him, for you shall see Him as He is.

In the permanence of the victory of Christ, may we each one of us so use the discipline of victory that it may redound to the glory of Him, in Whom we live, and move, and have our being.

APPENDIX

GIVING A SPECIAL THOUGHT AND PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION FOR EACH DAY IN LENT SUGGESTED BY THE ADDRESSES.

APPENDIX

A SUGGESTED THOUGHT FOR DAILY MEDITATION

N.B.—You will find it useful to look up references in a reference Bible.

ASH WEDNESDAY: God wishes that we should be saved.—1 Tim. ii. 3, 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9.

THURSDAY: Our natural will is in conflict with God's will.—Rom. vii. 21-25.

FRIDAY: God the Holy Ghost assists us by illuminating the will.—S. John xvi. 13-15.

SATURDAY: What is the guiding principles of our lives?—Ps. xxxix. 7; S. Matt. vi. 19-24.

1ST SUNDAY IN LENT: The Incarnation the mission of Christ to the body.—S. John i. 1-14; Eph. v. 23.

MONDAY: The body in its physical aspect wonderfully suited to its purposes.—Gen. i. 26-28; ii., 7; Ps. cxxxix. 14.

TUESDAY: The body the external means by which we receive the Sacraments.—Heb. x. 22; Acts viii. 14-17; 1 Cor. xi. 26.

WEDNESDAY: The body in its ultimate destiny.—1 Cor. xv. 42-49; 1 John iii. 2, 3.

THURSDAY: Disciplining the body braces the will.—2 Tim. ii. 3; Heb. xi. 32-40.

FRIDAY: The corporate life of the Church in its bearing on influence and conduct.—1 Cor. xii. 12-27.

SATURDAY: The duty of example in respect of the temperance question.—1 Cor. viii. 7-13; 2 Cor. viii. 9.

2ND SUNDAY IN LENT: The inner value of our life.—S. Mark viii. 34-38.

MONDAY: The deadening effect of prosperity.—S. James v. 1-6.

TUESDAY: Our Lord's example of single-mindedness.—S. Mark vii. 37; S. Matt. xxvi. 39-44.

WEDNESDAY: The need for seriousness in thought.—S. Matt. xv. 10-20; Phil. iv. 8.

THURSDAY: The need for seriousness in word.—S. James iii. 1-11.

FRIDAY: The need for seriousness in deed.—S. James iii. 13-18; 1 Pet. v. 8.

SATURDAY: The need for perseverance, lest we forfeit our blessings.—Rom ii. 4-7; Rev. ii. 18-29.

3RD SUNDAY IN LENT: Man seeking after God.—Ps. xlii.

MONDAY: The Incarnation the means by which the union between God and man is brought about.—S. John xvii. 17-26.

TUESDAY: Prayer the characteristic act of religion.—S. Matt. vii. 7-12; Eph. vi. 18.

WEDNESDAY: The importance of self-examination as leading to self-knowledge.—Gal. vi. 3-5.

THURSDAY: Confession of sins to God the only condition of forgiveness.—1 John i. 5-10.

FRIDAY: Forgiveness of sins comes from God through the blood of Christ.—Eph. i. 3-12.

SATURDAY: The ministry of reconciliation committed to the ministers, as Christ's ambassadors.—2

4TH SUNDAY IN LENT: The natural body of Christ the source of healings.—S. Matt. xiv. 34-36.

MONDAY: The spiritual body of Christ found in His Church.—Eph. i. 18-23.

TUESDAY: The sacramental body of Christ, given to us in the Holy Communion.—1 Cor. x., 14-21.

WEDNESDAY: Obedience the test of religion.—Rom. vi. 16-23.

THURSDAY: Self-indulgence the great obstacle to obedience.—S. Luke xvi. 19-31.

FRIDAY: Self-renunciation the condition of service.—Acts xx. 17-24.

SATURDAY: Our Lord's example of obedience.—Phil. ii. 1-11; Heb. xii. 1-3.

5TH SUNDAY IN LENT: Suffering in the light of eternity.—Rev. vii. 9-17; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

MONDAY: Suffering in the light of the Incarnation.—S. Matt. viii. 16, 17; Heb. iv. 14-16.

TUESDAY: Christ still suffering in His people.—S. Matt. xxv. 34-46; Acts ix. 4.

WEDNESDAY: Devotion to Christ the power of endurance.—Acts v. 40-42; Rom. viii. 35-39.

THURSDAY: Christ succouring those who suffer for Him.—Acts vii. 54-60; xxvii. 21-26.

FRIDAY: Character disciplined by suffering.—Heb. x. 32-36; xii. 4-11.

SATURDAY: Suffering giving opportunity for sympathy.—Heb. xii. 12, 13; S. James i. 27; ii. 14-16.

6TH SUNDAY IN LENT: The resurrection of Christ, the basis of hope.—1 Thess. iv. 13-18.

MONDAY: The Holy Spirit the power of the risen life, here and hereafter.—Rom. viii. 5-11.

TUESDAY: The communion of Saints in the one body of Christ.—Heb. xii. 1, 2, and 22-24.

WEDNESDAY: The departed remembering us.—S. Luke xvi. 19-31; esp. v. 24; Rev. vi. 9.

THURSDAY: The glorious reward of faithful service.—S. Matt. xxv. 14-23.

GOOD FRIDAY: What does the death of Christ mean to me?—S. John xix. 23-30.

EASTER EVE: Am I showing the fruits of my Baptism by leading a risen life?—Rom. vi. 1-11.

Footnotes

[1 \(return\)](#)

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[2 \(return\)](#)

The Reveille, Bret Harte.

[3 \(return\)](#)

Dale on the Atonement.

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