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**TWO SERMONS  
PREACHED IN THE  
PARISH CHURCH OF NONINGTON, KENT,**

**JANUARY 17, 1864.**

Being the Sunday following the Funeral of

**JOHN PEMBERTON PLUMPTRE, ESQ.,**

*OF FREDVILLE, IN THE SAME PARISH.*

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BY THE

**REV. HERBERT JAMES,**

*Perpetual Curate of Goodnestone, Kent,*

AND THE

**REV. EDWARD HOARE,**

*Incumbent of Trinity Church, Tunbridge Wells.*

DOVER: BATCHELLER.

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**SERMON,  
BY THE REV. HERBERT JAMES.**

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“Remember them which have the rule over you (are the guides), who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”—  
Heb. xiii. 7.

God's gifts to His Church are manifold. He has given Christ and eternal life in Him. He has given the Word of Christ, the precious casket which enshrines Him and His salvation. He has given the Holy Ghost to lead us by the Word Inspired to the Word Incarnate. And He has given Christians indeed—men and women saved by Christ—living embodiments of a living Saviour and

a living Word, through the living Spirit.

In all these gifts He has a special purpose in view. They are not thrown at random into the world. God does nothing aimlessly.

When He called this world of ours into being, and gave it its proper place in the universe as the habitation for man,—when He gathered up the light into the light-bearers, and commanded them to be for signs, and for seasons, for days, and years,—when He put the topstone to creation, and set man upon the earth to be His representative,—in all this there was nothing without design. “He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered.”

And so, brethren, has He dealt in things of higher moment. When He gave His Son, His Word, His Spirit, His people, there was a meaning in each of these gifts. They are no accidents. His choosing is for our using. His mercies are for our minding. His gifts are for our gain, as well as for the glory of His own grace.

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Now, this is specially true of that great, but often little-regarded, gift—a *Christian indeed*. It is a mistake to suppose that such an one is here merely to work out his own salvation, and heap up treasure for himself in the world to come.

He is *not* here *for himself*. As an unconverted man an end is to be served by his being. As a converted man a far higher end is to be served by his being in Christ. He is God’s workmanship, God’s appointment *for others*;—a privilege for those amongst whom he is placed; a light to see by; salt to be savoured by; a leader to be marked; a guide to be followed.

The apostle recognises this truth in the scripture before us. He is writing to a people whom he wishes to establish in the faith. For this he plies them with motives, and suggests means. In so doing he comes to set before them those who were their guides in the faith. He urges them to follow their example whilst living, to treasure their memory when dead. They would find this a mighty help towards standing fast.

Brethren, *we* are called to a like duty this day. We are met together, the poorer, most of us, by a friend; the richer, all of us, by a memory and an example. We have had—we still have—a gift of God, in the person of His sainted servant. We have had a real Christian to look upon and live by.

Let us listen, then, to these words of earnest exhortation, and “remember those who are the guides—following their faith, and considering the end (the termination), of their conversation.” Will you not pray that God the Holy Ghost may clothe His Word with new power, and enable me to speak so as to glorify God—to quicken, to comfort, to edify souls?

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I propose more especially to take up the latter half of the verse, and to mark—

- I. What God would have us *to follow*;
- II. What God would have us *to consider*.

I. *What is it, then, which God would have us to follow?* The faith of those who are “guides.”

This leads me to observe *one view which every Christian ought to take of his position*. He is called to be a guide in the faith—by his life, if not by his words.

Now, brethren, I am aware that this is held to be almost exclusively the duty of ministers. The text is usually so applied. I have no wish to shift off the responsibility from them. They, if any, ought to go before the flock. Nor do I wish to put young Christians out of their proper place.

But I do hold very strongly that this responsibility of ministers is shared by all the servants of Christ. Whatever their position—whatever their measure of grace or gifts, they are called of God to lead on others in the faith, *in some measure*. One star may differ from another star in glory, or degree of brightness. One member of the body may differ from another in size and shape. But the least star has its place and power, and the least member its work and fitness for that work (1 Cor. xii. 21, 22). And so of each Christian. “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” Your standing as a Christian may not be advanced. Your measure of grace, to your own thinking, may be somewhat scant—but your working and example *up to the extent of that grace*, are necessary for the well-being of the whole body. To you, as well as to others, is this word spoken “Ye are my witnesses,” and by you, as well as by others, may comfort be afforded to some soul not yet gathered, some sheep yet straying upon the dark mountains. None are too small in God’s sight to be useful. None are so low down but they may help to lift up others. Every atom has a shadow. Every Christian has an influence. Believe me there is no such thing as an idle life—you are either a blight or a blessing.

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This, then, I say, is one view which every Christian ought to take of his position. If he has faith, he has a faith to be followed. And this, too, is the view which others are to take of every such Christian. Wherever any such have realised their high calling, and risen to it, there would God have us remember them, and follow, or imitate, their faith.

But whilst I say this of all, it is emphatically true with respect to those who, by the grace of God, were, *in faith*, what they were.

Need I say that, until very lately, we had one in our midst who *did* take a right view of his position, and who has left a pattern of faith which we should be only too glad to follow.

Looking at him as a Christian, I might justly use the words in which his spiritual helper of former days (Bishop Wilson) described Mr. Cecil: "All the finer materials which distinguished him as a man, were wrought up, if I may so say, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost." But as it was more especially as a *man of faith* that he stood out before the world, it is in this character that I would ask you to look at him.

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And, here let me say once for all, that in speaking of him to-day, I desire to speak of him as *God's handywork*.

I have no wish to exalt the creature. You know how he would have loathed any approach to that. But I do wish, however faintly, to set forth what God's grace did for a poor, weak, sinful, erring man, of like passions with us. To that grace he owed all, and to the honour of that grace alone, I ascribe all his eminence as a guide in the faith.

*He believed through grace.* I am not aware of the exact time, or of the exact circumstances of his conversion, but I have reason to believe that for fifty years he had believed, and known Him in whom he believed.

The *ground* and warrant of his faith was the sure Word of God.

The *object* of it was *God in Christ*—a reconciling Father, a sufficient Saviour, an ever-present Counsellor and Comforter. He received that which was delivered to him—as it is also to us—that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." This all-perfect, all-satisfying substitution and atonement of the Lord Jesus was from the first, and to the last, the one foundation of his trust, the one source of his life and strength. He felt this, and nothing less than this, to be necessary. He found this, and this alone, to be sufficient. He realised it. He rested on it. He rejoiced in it.

For among the more leading features of his faith, these two stand out:—its *fixedness*, and its *joyousness*.

*It was a fixed faith.* Having received the Word of God, he dealt with it as the Word of God. He submitted himself to its declarations with the simplicity of a little child. Where it warned, he took heed. Where it led, he followed. Where it promised, he took hold. And so having found it written therein that "they who believe are justified," he believed, and was justified.

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His faith grew into a full assurance, for assurance is but faith intensified. As such it wrought wondrously. By it he became what he was. It helped him to choose for God, and to be decided for the right. It enabled him to confess Christ before man, and to be steadfast when others were wavering. By this he overcame the world when it bid fair and high for his service, and by this he attempted not a few things for God, in a day when there were but few to stand by him. From this came his calmness in the midst of trouble, and from this his confidence in the hour of death. For thus he could say whilst passing into eternity:—"Were it not for mercy I should be lost; but by the mercy of God in Christ *I am saved*. Wonderful!" And again, "What *should* I do without Christ. Such a poor sinner! but complete and accepted in the Beloved! Such a sure foundation. Such a great salvation!" "He will never leave me nor forsake me." "I am complete in Him!"

*It was a joyous faith.* He did not barely know and assent, and rely—he *delighted*. Christ was the joy of his soul as well as the soul of his joys. His heart ran over with gladness as he thought of the freeness and sufficiency of the great Salvation. The grace that brought it—the power that wrought it—the blood which bought him for it—and the love which taught him how to use it—were the subjects of his unceasing thankfulness and praise.

The result of all this was a very sunny Christianity. He was not without his trials—what Christian is? But, with all, he seemed to have real enjoyment of his religion. The good news was good news to him, and he shewed it. "He joyed in God."

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O for a few more Christians of the same sort—men and women who believe, and live as if they believed! What a reproach would be rolled from the faith if we could but hold up our heads a little more! We do not want any alteration of doctrine to make Christian truth more attractive, but we do want more attractive cheerfulness in those who believe and know that truth.

Such, then, brethren in outline at least, is the faith which you and I are to follow. God would have us remember this guide, who thus spoke to us His word, and imitate, or copy, his faith.

*Are you, at this present speaking, an unbeliever?* Solemnly and personally, God calls upon you to believe. Do not say that it is out of the question for such an one as you are. Here was one who, like yourself, was once a stranger to God. But he obtained mercy. "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant toward him in faith." That grace is offered to you—can work in you. Go to God for it as he went. You are invited to come. He is waiting to be gracious. He cannot deny you. Tell Him that you have come in Christ's name, for the blessedness of those who know the joyful sound, and you will go forth walking in the light of His countenance.

*Are you weak in faith?* Be encouraged by this example, to believe more fixedly, more confidently. You have the same warrant, the same ground for your faith to rest upon—the word of truth, the Gospel of your Salvation. That assures you that all is done for you,—that a double punishment has been laid for you upon the Surety,—a double satisfaction rendered on your behalf by Him (Isaiah xl., 2), "Look at Christ set before you in the Gospel, and faith will come into exercise." Then you will come to rest where our departed friend rested. It is no impossible attainment, no act of presumption. When the Lord is saying "Eat, O friends, yea drink—drink

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abundantly, O beloved," surely we ought not to reply to His large-hearted offers with any other response than a large-hearted confidence.

And you, brethren, *who are walking in the steps of this faith*, set it still before you. Be not slothful. Follow on. Carry out this principle of foundation-faith which I have been illustrating.

*You have still much to gain.* You can never sit down like the conqueror in old day who wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. There remaineth yet much land to be possessed. There are many enemies to be overcome. There is much grace to be attained to. There is a closer intimacy and fellowship with the Lord Jesus to be won. For all this faith must be in action.

*You have still much to meet.* Duties—decisions—disappointments—cares—troubles. The pressure will be great both from within and from without. You have to learn better how to refer all things to a spiritual standard—how to commit everything to the guidance of a faithful and present God—how to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. For all this faith must be increased. It is the only secret of power.

If you aim at this, suffer me to remind you of that in our departed friend which tended to make his faith what it was.

No plant of righteousness can grow without being nourished in secret. No Christian soul can thrive unless it be fed from hidden sources. Our friend knew this, and therefore largely used those "nether springs" of the Word of God and prayer. He loved both. With both his hand was diligent, and by this diligence he was made rich.

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But it is of his *habit of prayer* that I would more particularly speak. The flame of his faith was fed by the oil of prayer. He had "the gift of the knees."

Of him it might be truly said that he gave himself unto prayer. Late at night and early in the morning was he known to be pleading before the Throne. His voice was indeed that of Jacob, and so the faith and the walk were those of Enoch.

Oh, brethren—one great spring of sure and successful believing lies in sustained secret prayer. When the one wanes, the other withers. When the hands droop Amalek prevails. Many a lost jewel of assurance—of comfort—of usefulness, must be looked for in the place where you dropped it—your place of prayer. If, then, you would believe more, pray more. Gird yourselves afresh to His work. Open your mouth wide and God will fill it. Why remain poor with a boundless treasury to draw upon?

II. I pass now from what God would have us follow, to *what He would have us to consider, viz.:*—

I. *The conversation* of those who are guides.

II. *The end of that conversation.*

If the faith of God's people is to be marked, so also is the fruit of it. We have seen the principle. We have now to see the practice which followed from it.

I. Let me notice however that the word "conversation" does not mean merely "speech" or "talk." It refers to the whole character, life, and walk: to the 'ins' and 'outs;' the turnings and windings of the life. So that in these words we are called upon to act as if we had to survey a country from a height—to trace a line of coast, and to mark it until it passes off, and is lost to sight in the distance.

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Now I am bold to say that, through God's abounding grace and power, the conversation we are this day called to consider is a fair prospect indeed.

Taking a rapid general view of his character, I would say, that *to him to live was Christ*. Christ was the principle, the power, the pattern, of his life.

Entering more into detail, I would say that the character has been sketched out for us by a master-hand. If you look at the epistle for the day (Romans xii., 6-16) you will see what I mean.

Look where you will, you can but say that God did all things well in him—the Holy Ghost filled him with His fruit.

You know full well what his purpose and manner of life was. As a representative—a magistrate—a landlord—a master—a neighbour—there was always the same Christian consistency—the same unworldliness of spirit. Well did he carry out the injunction of a dying father—"See, my son, that you render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Of his more private life I will only say that he was taught of God to fill up every relationship, and in each one to show whose beauty and comeliness were put upon him.

If however, I am still to select those features of character which were most prominently marked—the jutting headlands (so to speak) of that fair line of coast, his life—I would name these two: 1, *Meekness of humility*; 2, *Tenderness of unselfish love*. As to both of these, he had drunk deeply into the spirit of his Master.

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1. Well was the mind of the meek and lowly Jesus reflected in the life of His meekly humble servant.

Humility was his clothing—no mere ornament on him—he was clothed with it, and oh how real and deep it was! To the eye of others there was much in which he might have gloried. Glory he did, but only as a Christian—only in the Lord—only in the Lord's Cross.

Throughout life there was the most utter self-abasement. Never was he unwilling to be nothing that Christ might be all. Never was he unmindful of the Rock from which he had been hewn. Never could any complain of him that they could not see Christ over his head.

But most strikingly did his deep self-abasement come out at the close of life.

When asked if prayer should be offered for him, his words were: "Say nothing in my praise, all to the grace of God." "People may say that I have been a good man. I have been but a poor sinner. I have left undone much that I ought to have done. O Lord! my goodness extendeth not to Thee. Even if I could say, 'I have walked in my integrity,' nothing but free redemption *has* saved me, and *could* save me." "I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all; Jesus Christ is my all in all." "A poor sinner in myself, but pardoned and accepted in the Beloved Son of God. Amen. Amen."

Truly brethren, here was the humility which, whilst it disowns and discrowns self, puts the crown fully on the head which is worthy to wear it. There is no affection. Nothing but the outpouring of the sincerest convictions of the soul, telling us on the one hand that no flesh shall glory in His presence—on the other that the soul shall make her boast in the Lord.

2. Nor was the *tender unselfish love* less remarkable than the humility.

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He realised in an uncommon degree the love shown in the coming and death of the Lord Jesus. The thought of it would often melt his soul and overpower him for the time.

Now, *such* love, *so* realised, will always produce the reality of love. No doubt there was much of tender feeling and deep affection in the natural character. But these were increased a thousand fold by Grace. You could not look at him without being struck by this. His heart looked out at his eyes, and that look was a whole sermon upon love.

Nor was it a mere sentiment. Love, to be love, must act, and you know the forms which that action took in his case.

He loved and cared much for the bodies of men. Many of you now present can testify to this. Many hereafter will rise up and call him blessed.

But he loved and cared for *souls* more. Nothing could exceed the affectionate desirousness or the overflowing tenderness of his love for sinners. By every means in his power he would labour to bring Christ to them, or them to Christ. I cannot dwell upon all the means he used. His care to appoint godly ministers over the churches for which he was a trustee—his open-handed support of every society which put Christ in His right place—these are as well known to you as to me.

I would rather recall his personal efforts to make known the Gospel which was his own life.

Many of you, brethren, can bear me witness that by the space of many years he did not shun to declare by lip and life, by word and walk, the whole counsel of God.

He was emphatically one of that class who, to use the words of a poor man in London, "carry their religion to other people's houses." You know how he exhorted, and comforted, and taught; and that nothing made him as happy as the telling out the story of the Cross, or seeing the change which it could work upon the soul.

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What a striking instance of the activity of his love was given in one of his dying testimonies:—"Whilst I have power to speak it must be of Salvation for ever and ever!"

And this life was as unselfish as it was active. As Christ pleaded not Himself, so did His servant strive to act. There was no living to self. As Jesus was the spring, so Jesus was the aim of the whole life. It was ever, "Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do?"—ever—"Lord, not my will but *thine* be done!"

Brethren, *consider this conversation*—so humble, so loving, to unselfish. Look at it. Lay your own lives down by the side of it. Test them—not by what there was of the man, but by what there was of the Master. See what the testing says; and then rise up, sadder possibly by the comparison, yet wiser—humbled, but yet hopeful. For He who wrought here, works still, and loves to work, for all who seek it at His hand.

II. Yet one point remains. "*Consider the end of their conversation.*"

I know it has been said—"Don't tell me how men died, tell me how they lived." But where the death is but the proper fruiting-out of the life it is right that we should mark it. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," and precious should they be in our sight.

The 'end' of our departed friend's conversation was one to be considered. It was just what might have been expected. It *was* perfect peace; it *is* present rest; it *will be* perfect glory.

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The Lord was faithful and loving to His servant, and sustained him to the last. "Grace" and "Christ" were the two words oftenest on his lips—testifying at once to the source of his hope, and the security of his standing.

It was an end which left nothing to be desired, as the end of a saint of God.

Calm, settled, unbroken confidence; devout prayerfulness; holy self-abasement; loving consideration for and remembrance of others; loving messages to you, his poorer brethren, loving words for you the children in the school—of whom he said, “I love them all”—these things and more than these marked that end.

“He was happy,” he said, “happy, but only in Christ; not in myself, nor from myself, but only in *Jesus Christ*.”

And so he passed away. “Being (to use the descriptive words of a writer of old day) high in his communion with God, holy and unblameable in his walkings with God—it was still day with his soul. He lived and died in the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost. And now that his sun is set, his glass out, his work, done, his race over, he rests in the everlasting arms of Divine love.”

And now, brethren, what remains for us? What for me but to speak home to your consciences? What for you but to act upon what may be spoken to the point?

I say then—Remember the charge here given, and consider the life of God’s servant and its end.

He has been God’s gift to His church—God’s gift to us in this neighbourhood, that through him our souls might be helped on to salvation—God’s name become more abundantly honoured.

Shall we not take this view of him? Consider this, *you that are Christless*—consciously without Christ—without a well-grounded hope—what effect should this life and death have on you?

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You have watched the one, you have heard of the other. You know in your heart of hearts that there has been no sham, not a shadow of unreality. If ever a real Christian was to be seen, you have seen one in him. There is no doubt in your minds that he believed no lie, followed no shadow. You *know* that he has found all, and more than all, that he expected to find in Christ.

You feel convinced that he chose wisely when he chose for God—because he chose a *certainty*. With some here this is no new conviction. As friend, or neighbour, or tenant, or servant, or labourer, you have felt him to be in the right, and have wished to be as he was.

I would to God, brethren, that you felt equally convinced that hitherto all has been *uncertainty* with you. Think for one moment. Are not your fears more than your hopes? Do you not feel sometimes that the end of your mirth may be heaviness, the end of your pleasure pain? Does your name to live give you any real satisfaction? Will a gained world outweigh a lost soul? Have you any real settled peace? Is not all vague, dark, cheerless, uncertain.

O that these convictions might sink down deeply into your hearts, and bring you to the desire to be found of God in peace, and to put aside everything that now stands in your way.

Only begin where he began—where he, if he were now in my place, would urge me to begin—*with Christ*. Go to the Lord Jesus this very day. He who received and taught his servant, will receive and teach you, for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. “This man receiveth sinners. None teacheth like him.”

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Consider, *you that are in Christ*. You have in this bright example a solemn but very helpful reminder. You are called to aim at a higher style of Christianity—do not despise the summons. You are offered the power of the Holy Ghost—do not despond.

Take your stand where he took his. Learn to see things as he saw them, and to hold what he held.

Believe more. Cultivate a more vigorous faith. Add to your faith courage. Be less ashamed of Christ.

Be satisfied with nothing short of the manifestation of God to your soul, and the manifestation of God by you to the world. This makes life happiness, and death a joy.

Live so as to be missed. Seek to have behind you that good name which is better than precious ointment. Hold forth the word of life. Try to lay aside every hindrance of selfishness, indolence, love of ease, half-heartedness.

Let it be said of you, as it may fitly be said of him:—He *was* what God made him. He *worked* where God placed him. He *went* where God called him. He *is* where God in Christ is with him—a sinner, saved by grace, through faith, in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation.

## SERMON,

BY THE REV. EDWARD HOARE.

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“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.”—Rev. xiv. 4, 5.

It must have been a wonderful moment to Stephen, when he suddenly saw the Heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and it must be equally wonderful to any departing child of God, when the veil is drawn aside, and he finds himself suddenly in the visible presence of that blessed Saviour whom, though unseen, he has long since loved and trusted. What a moment must it have been to our dearly beloved friend when his eyes opened in the presence of God! I can imagine the profound humiliation at the sight of Jehovah; the fervent utterances of overpowering love, when he suddenly beheld the Lord Jesus, as the Lamb that had been slain; and the joyful fulness of heart in the three loved and loving brethren, when they found themselves once more together, all brought safe home, by the rich grace of their blessed Saviour, there to wait together for his kingdom, and while waiting, to rejoice together in the fulness of his love. Happy, indeed, are those brotherhoods on earth, that prepare they way for such a brotherhood as, there is I am persuaded, is in Heaven.

But we have no account in the Scriptures of the first entrance of the individual believer, and therefore we must forbear from giving too much liberty to the imagination. We have however in this passage a description of something in many respects corresponding to it. In the 7th chapter, we read of the servants of God as represented by the 144,000 sealed ones. The seal was placed on their foreheads just before the four angels loosed the winds that were to desolate the earth. Storm and tempest were about to burst upon the world; and this little company were sealed beforehand by their God in order that, as marked men, they might be kept safe throughout the danger. Accordingly in the desolation produced by the locust woe, when men were hurt all around them, the sealed ones remained untouched. There was woe on every side, but in the midst of it all they were kept safe by their seal. But in this chapter the whole scene is changed. They are no longer in the midst of a world swept by a succession of desolating woes; no longer a bidden people struggling with difficulties on earth; they are now taken up to Mount Zion, and this Mount Zion must be the Heavenly Jerusalem, for, in verse 2 their voice is said to come from Heaven, and in verse 3 they are described as before the throne of God. The Saviour whom, though unseen, they have loved and followed, is now standing conspicuous in the midst of them. The seal is no longer a secret thing, but its true character is brought to light, and the Father's name is seen written on their foreheads. So they come before God no longer with strong crying and tears, in the midst of strong temptations and overwhelming woes, but now they burst forth in the new song of the new Jerusalem. Nor are they alone in singing it, for the twenty-four elders and four living ones are described as their companions; for when the time comes for this prophecy to be fulfilled, the family on earth will be united to that in Heaven. The separation will be over. There will be a blessed meeting between the sealed on earth and the living ones in Heaven. Their new song will be quickened by the joys of reunion, for, according to verse 3, "they sang the new song not merely before the throne, but before the four living ones and the elders." Ye, therefore, that mourn your separation from those you dearly love, picture to yourself that joyful gathering. Look on from the parting day to the meeting day: when your wilderness journey will be over, when you shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, when those that are gone will have the joy of welcoming those that remain, and when those that remain are taken up to enjoy their welcome, that so both they and we may rejoice together before the throne of the Lamb.

But my object to-day is not so much to dwell on the meeting, as to study the character of the sealed servants of our God. We all desire, I trust, to be amongst them on the meeting day, and I see not, for my own part, how any wise man can rest till he has a well grounded hope given him by God, that he is one of the number now. It is most important then that we study well their character, and may God grant that the seal may be on our foreheads during our struggle upon earth, and the Father's name clearly seen there when the Lord comes to take the kingdom!

The character is given in the four descriptions of these two verses, and I have been led to them now, because they seem to give so faithful and true a portrait of our beloved and honoured friend—may I not say of the three dear brothers, for in Christian character they were one?

I. In the 1st clause there is some difficulty, because it seems at first sight to disparage the holy tie of matrimony—that sacred union which is a Scriptural type of the mystical oneness which is between Christ and His Church. But I am persuaded this is not the meaning of it. The whole of the Book of Revelation is full of symbol; and alliance with sin, worldliness, and popery is described in it, as in other Scriptures, under the figure of spiritual fornication. Thus the Church, the Bride of the Lord, is to be kept free from all such alliances and presented at last as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I will not dwell on this point any further than to remark how wonderfully it was illustrated in the case of our friend. There was no such thing as unhallowed alliance in his conduct; no pandering to the world; no dallying with popery; no attempt to win his objects by unfaithful compromises; no mixing up with that which he disapproved. He held on his way as one that was set apart unto God, as one betrothed wholly to the Lord. There was a wonderful consistency about his whole character, and he uniformly acted on the Apostolic maxim, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." He delighted in his fellowship with God, and he could have no alliance with anything contrary to God's will.

II. But, whatever we may think of the first description, there can be no doubt about the second. "These are they that follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth." There is no symbolical language here, but a plain, clear, unmistakeable, description of Christian character. Our Lord describes his own sheep by this invariable test, "They follow me." "I know them (He says) and *they follow me.*" He knows them. He knows each one by name, by disposition, by circumstance; knows who

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we are, where we are, what we are; knows all our wants, our cares, our joys, our sorrows, our temptations; and if we be His, *we follow Him*, seeking to know His will, watching for His beckoning hand, listening for His directing voice, and tracing His sacred footsteps.

But this text goes a step further than the words of our Lord, for it adds the words "whithersoever he goeth," shewing that there is no reserve and no qualification. Wherever the Lord leads the way, there the sealed servants are prepared to follow. They do not want to pick and choose for themselves, or merely to follow in pleasant paths; still less do they wish to be led by the leaders of the world, or guided by the motives of the world. To follow the Lord Jesus Christ is the great object of their life, to walk in His steps, to do His will, and to live to His glory. Now, perhaps, some might be disposed to say "Have you ever known any one that has thus followed Christ? Can you point to an example of such a character?" And, I believe I may safely say that I *can*. I point to our honoured friend (I might add, to all the brothers) and say, "These are they that followed the Lamb, whithersoever He led the way." I am not afraid of appealing to all that knew him, to all that were connected with him as servants in his house, or as dependants on his estate, to all that were acquainted with him as a magistrate and country gentleman, to all that observed him in that most difficult and testing place of character the House of Commons; I can appeal to all, and I am sure that when you look back on all your intercourse with him you must admit that you never found by ends governing the character; but you saw a man who, with a single and simple aim desired in everything, without reserve, to follow Christ. This was the secret of his whole life.

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Many look back on his gentleness and kind affections, many on his princely liberality so often and so generously helping in secret those whose wants were known only to himself, many on his holy fidelity to the truth of God; but all sprang from one principle, and that was "Follow me."

Whatever he had to do as a father, as a master, as a friend, as steward of an ample fortune, as a trustee for Church patronage, or as a member of Parliament, there was one single end before him, and that was to follow Christ. He could truly say as Standfast did in "Pilgrim's Progress," "I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of, and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there have I coveted to set my foot too." And this I believe to be the secret of his perfectly peaceful end. He had not lived for the world, so he was not disturbed when called to leave it. During *life* he had walked with God, so in death he was not afraid of meeting Him. For nearly fifty years he had followed the Lamb, and no wonder that there was not a shadow of fear when the message of love was sent to call him through the veil to see that Saviour face to face. And so, dear brethren, I am persuaded it must be with us. If we would die as he did, in perfect peace, we should seek to follow Christ as he did, whithersoever He goeth. God forbid that I should lead any one to suppose that peace either in living or dying is from any source but the free gift of God's grace; but as one that has witnessed hundreds of Christian death-beds, I bear my testimony that, as a general rule, inconsistent Christians very frequently have anxious death-beds: while, on the other hand, those who have walked nearest to the Lord in their life are the people who have found Him nearest to them in their death; and those who, like our dear friend, have set the Lord always before them, find, as he did, the Psalmist's words invariably true "Because he is on my right hand I shall never be moved."

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Are we to suppose, then, that our dear and honoured friend saved his soul by his consistency in following the Lord? God forbid! I venture to say that there is nothing from which his whole soul would have recoiled more than from any such a thought, for he knew well enough that he could never save his soul by following Christ nor by any other act of his own. He never had the slightest hope of doing so, for he knew too much of the deep corruption of his own sinful heart. But to redemption and redemption alone he owed his life, as he said himself in his last illness "Even if I *could* say I have walked in my integrity nothing but *free redemption* saved me."

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

The salvation came first, and faithful following was the fruit of it. No one will ever really follow Christ, till he is first saved through His free grace. Thus in the text all is traced to Redeeming love, for observe the next clause:—

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III. "These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb."

Now let us carefully observe the language of this text. It clearly traces everything to atonement. They were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. "Not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." There is no explanation of such language except by atonement through the blood of the Lord Jesus, or the substitution, or vicarious sacrifice of the love of God. If any meaning is to be attached to words, it is impossible to believe that our Lord's death was nothing more than a noble example of devoted self sacrifice. It must have been the satisfaction of the law of God by the actual infliction on the Lord Jesus Christ of the whole penalty due to sin. So the great fact that our sin has been already fully punished in his person is the one fact on which we rest for present and everlasting acceptance with God. But there is more than that taught here, for redemption goes far beyond atonement, and includes the actual deliverance which is the result of that atonement, when applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is not merely the payment of the ransom, but the liberation of the ransomed slave. Thus the sealed servants are said to have been "redeemed *from among men*." Not merely was an atonement made for them, but, through the power of that atonement, they were delivered from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the children of God. An atonement was made on their behalf; but that was not all, for it was applied to their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and the result was that they were saved and separated unto



God. Thus they became first-fruits to God and the Lamb. The first-fruits are a small portion set apart unto God, the remainder being left in the possession of the original owner. So, God's people are separated and dedicated at the first-fruits unto Him, while the mass of men remain under the power of the god of this world. They are mixed up with other men in all the relationships of life; but in the midst of all they are distinct, for God has redeemed them, and put His seal on them, thereby to mark them as His own. Oh! holy calling of the child of God. Oh! sacred privilege, to be thus set apart unto the Lamb! How is it that any one thus sealed can be ashamed of it? How is it that any child of God can shrink from the confession of it? Of one thing I am sure, and that is, our dear friend did not. He was not ashamed of being a marked man for Christ! God had called him. God had saved him. God had settled him! God had placed him among the first-fruits of the harvest, and he was not ashamed of it. But, when we look at the character, let us never forget the ground work of all. I said a short time ago that the secret of his consistency was that he followed Christ; but there was a deeper secret still. There was the secret that lay at the foundation of his following Christ, and that was redemption. His own language was, "Oh, to grace how great a debtor. It was free redemption then, and is so now. Wonderful! It is so wonderful, such a poor sinner saved and loved!" He was one redeemed, delivered, set free, brought out, and for ever accepted through the blood-shedding of the Son of God. And so, brethren, must we be, if we are among the first-fruits unto God. Nothing, nothing, nothing but the atoning blood can ever blot out your guilt. As long as you are a stranger to atonement, so long you are a stranger to God. If any man ever felt this, it was our friend, our father I would rather say. He was a happy man, because he was an accepted man. "Happy, quite happy," he said, "but only in Christ, not by works of righteousness which I have done, but saved by the mercy of God in Christ. Such a great and blessed salvation—so glorious to the Giver, so gracious to the receiver." God had made atonement for him through the precious blood of the Son of His love, and called him out to enjoy a fellowship with Himself. So now, if you desire to walk with God during life, and meet Him in peace when He summons you; or to welcome the Lord Jesus with joy, should he come before you die; remember, and let your affectionate recollections of our dear friend stamp it for ever on your memory, that you must first know what it is to be reconciled to God through the blood of atonement before you can live near to Him, or be found among the first-fruits of His kingdom. Our Lord's own words are decisive on this point, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

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IV. But we must hasten to the last clause of the description. "In their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God." Here are two things mentioned—A guileless corruption before men, and a faultless standing before God.

On the first I need say but little. You have been so familiar with the practice, and beautiful exhibition of it in the character of the dear brothers that you do not require a description of it from me. Most truly we may say of them all "In their mouth was found no guile." There was a guileless transparency of character pervading them all. But we must not pass thus hastily by the remaining clause, "For they are without fault before the throne of God." Strictly speaking these words refer exclusively to the 144,000, when taking their place before the throne of God. But surely they give us an insight into the present standing of all those already there. They seem to teach us that spotless faultlessness is like the atmosphere of Heaven, and that all before that throne are faultless. We may think, then, of those we dearly love as now standing before yonder Throne, quite faultless. There is no sin reckoned to them, for it is all blotted out for ever; and no sin cleaving to them, for they are free from its corruption, being "made perfect" "as the spirits of the just." There is no sin there, for there are no tears; and where sin is there is always sorrow. Let us be cheered, then, by the happy thought that they are now without fault before the Throne of God. But must we wait till we reach the Throne before we can be without fault before it? Are we to toil on through the wilderness, and wait till the pilgrimage is over before we can go faultless into his presence? If so, the Christian's life would be indeed a dreary one. But, believers, ye are without fault before the Throne now, even now! I verily believe that when you saw our dear friend in the midst of you, in his farm, in his garden, in your cottages, he was at those very times without fault before God. How so? you may say. Did he not perpetually confess that he was a sinner? Did he not acknowledge his sin, and weep for it? How, then, could he be without fault? How could he be a guilty sinner, and yet faultless before God? Hear his own words in answer to it—"A poor sinner in myself, but pardoned and accepted in the beloved Son of God, and only so, only so, Amen, only so, only so, Amen, Amen." And, again, "What should I do without Christ? such a poor sinner, but complete and accepted in the Beloved. Such a good foundation! such a blessed salvation!" If all his faults were cast into the depth of the sea, and God's promises fulfilled which said "The iniquities of Israel shall be sought for and shall not be found;" then before that Throne he was faultless. And so, if we stand in the righteousness of God, nay! if in Christ we are made the righteousness of God, then in Him we are faultless, faultless even now, because Christ is faultless, and we stand in Him. In this connection observe the allusion to the 32nd Psalm. The Revelation is full of allusions to the Old Testament, and I cannot help thinking that here is one. The same two things are mentioned in this passage and in that psalm; the absence of guile, and the absence of all fault. Of the guile the Psalmist says, "In whose spirit there is no guile" and of the fault he says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," &c. Here, then, is the secret of being without fault before the Throne. Their transgression is forgiven, their sin covered, and their iniquity not imputed by God. Thus it is, that at the same time in the same person there may be the two apparent opposites; in yourself deep corruption, in the Lord Jesus Christ unblemished spotlessness. Before your own conscience you may be full of sin, and at the same time before the Throne of God perfectly faultless: in

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yourself humbled to the dust; in Christ Jesus reconciled, accepted, and beloved, and regarded as though you were absolutely spotless; for you are without fault in the righteousness of Christ.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? What is the lesson to be learnt from the text? and what from the whole history of our honoured friend? What is the lesson that he would have drawn from it himself had he been here to speak to us this day? I believe he would have summed it all up in one word, *i.e.*, CHRIST. This is what he taught in his family, and made the unceasing subject of his family worship. This is what he taught in the Sunday school, and pressed with a holy perseverance on the hearts and consciences of his class. This was the subject of his addresses in the schoolroom, as well as of all his visits in the cottages. In these visits he carried many a kind gift for the body, but he always remembered his one message, and was never silent on the free grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And do you think he would speak less of Him now? Now that he sees that blessed Saviour whom he so long believed, and has himself experienced the actual joy of his presence? No, if he now were to speak to us I am persuaded it would be all of Christ. If he could give one more lesson to his class it would be to assure them that the half had never yet been told them, and that there is a joy in Christ of which he had known here only just the small beginning. If he were to speak to you young men he would tell you there is nothing that can ever satisfy your soul but Christ. Life may now seem very bright to you; but there are days of mourning before you as well as days of rejoicing, and there is nothing but Christ then can either save or satisfy your soul. And so, if He were to speak to you mourners it would still be the same thing to you. How would he tell of the balm of Gilead for the wounded heart, and of the great purpose of God, surely doing all things well for the eternal life of His chosen people! and once more, if he were to speak to those amongst us who are still unchanged, still unconverted, still without the new birth, still without Christ, how would he press upon you the great atonement made on the Cross for every guilty sinner; and how would he weep over the hard impenitent hearts that remain unmoved, unsoftened, unsaved by His grace! But we cannot hear his voice: it is now silent upon earth, and must remain so till the Lord comes. His thanksgivings are now heard only in Heaven. But the unmistakable testimony remains, and may God so write it on our hearts, that when we are called, as he has been, to give up our great account, we may be found, as I am persuaded he is, without fault before the Throne of God.

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