



SUNDAY READING

MORNING SERVICE.

MORNING.

Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto us is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, rejoice.

This day is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it. Christ is risen: He is risen indeed. Because He lives, we shall live also. After two days will the Lord revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.

A Prayer.

O, God, who didst send Thy Word to speak in the prophets and live in Thy Son, and appoint Thy church to be witness of divine things in all the world: revive the purity and deepen the power of its testimony: and through the din of earthly interests and the storms of human passions, let it make the still small voice of Thy Spirit only felt. Nearer and nearer may Thy kingdom come from age to age: meeting the face of the young as a rising dawn, and brightening the song of the old. "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." Already let it abash our guilty negligence, and touch with hope each secret sorrow of the earth. By the cleansing spirit of Thy Son, make this world a fitting forecourt to that sanctuary not made with hands, where our life is hid with Christ in God. Amen.

HYMN.

It is Finished.

"It is finished," Man of sorrows,
From Thy Cross our frailty borrows
Strength to bear and conquer thus.

While extended there we view Thee,
Mighty Sufferer, draw us to Thee,
Sufferer victorious.

Not in vain for us uplifted,
Man of sorrows, wonder-gifted,
May that sacred emblem be.

Lifted high amid the ages,
Guide of heroes, saints, and sages,
May it guide us still to Thee.

Still to Thee, whose love unbounded,
Sorrow's depths for us have sounded,
Perfected by conflicts sore.

Honored be Thy Cross forever,
Star, that points our high endeavor,
Whither Thou hast gone before.
—F. H. Hodge.

SERMON.

Humanity At The Cross.

Preached in Westminster Chapel, London, England.
"If I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."—John xii 32.

It is in an Eastern land, in the capital city of the Jews. Men and women of picturesque costume, with swarthy features, flashing eye, eager and impetuous manner, are gathered about a speaker who addresses them under the open sky. He is their Messiah, the Son of God in the form of man. A sacred mission has brought Him to our earth. He has come to reveal God to men, and to effect salvation for mankind. Some few of those gathered around Him now, have received with deepest gratitude this fact; but the people as a whole have rejected His testimony, and rulers are about to compass His death. This He has foreseen and accepted—accepted even as a foreordained and necessary way. Through death He will rise and live in the hearts of men; through rejection and apparent failure He will march to actual and enduring victory. Some Greeks approach and say to one of the disciples, "Sir, we would see Jesus," and the desire is communicated to Him. He answers their request, not formally, but saying, in effect, that they have come at an appropriate time, for He is about to die. They will see Him, therefore, in the very crisis of His work—dying that He may live, rejected of men that He may reign in their hearts forever. They themselves are a token of this. Greeks, not Grecians—Greek-speaking Jews, that is—actual Gentiles—come up with the Jews who have come to worship at the feast—they link the Jew and the Gentile together, they are forerunners of nations yet to be—men who shall come from all lands and races of men, and at all times, upon this same quest, "We would see Jesus." He, indeed, if He be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Himself. The attractive power of the Cross, the nature and extent of the attraction, this is our subject—a not inappropriate one for an Easter Sunday.

The Attractive Power of the Cross.

If I be lifted up, This is a condition. He must die if He is to live, and thereafter move the hearts of men with attractive power. The corn of wheat, as it is, will remain alone without increase; but by dying in the earth—giving thus its life for the new corn that is to be—it bringeth forth much fruit. Thus, through dying, He would win men, would draw them unto Himself; and not a few, but all men. Let us trace the elements of this attractive power.

There was the pity of His death. The power of the death of Christ is rooted in deep facts of human life. Sorrow is more frequent than joy—finds readier response in human hearts; death is a more solemn, a more pathetic thing, than life. We gaze upon the face of suffering, and sympathy, with its swift darts of pain, pierces us through and through. The Roman Catholic church, dwelling much upon the sensuous respect of our Lord's sufferings, has well understood this fact when it has pressed the resources of art into its service. Sculpture and painting have been made the agents of pity. The crucifix, the carved image of the suffering One, the painted memorials of the grief-pictures which show the Son of Man bound, or scourged, or mocked by the soldiers, or bearing the cross, or sinking beneath its weight, the bowed form, the sorrowful face, surmounted with its crown

of thorns, the scenes of the crucifixion, the descent from the cross, the lifeless body with the nail marks in the flesh, the inhumanity and the dark and silent grave: these have told a tale which has gone straight to the hearts of millions. We do no dishonor to our theme when we say that, our greatest dramatist well understood the power of pity when he made Mark Antony turn the hearts of the people by showing the cuts in Caesar's robe where the "well-beloved Brutus" and the "envious Casca" smote: and pointing to the wounds in his body, dumb mouths which could they speak, would stir the soul to vengeance. So the "Eikon Basilike," the supposed literary image or portrait of a saintly king, moved men in the days of the commonwealth, and had its part, doubtless, in the framing of those curious petitions in the prayer book, in which men prayed concerning a worthless monarch as for a holy saint and martyr whose death the nation must mourn. It was a perversion of right feeling; but we see in the sentiment of pity—a sentiment native and honorable to the human heart. And in this is one of the powers of the cross. For never was grief like that of the Son of Man, and while the heart can feel, or sympathy has place in our nature, the sorrow of our Lord will not cease to stir the soul to pity and awaken it to love.

There was again the coarse, inhuman cruelty of the death. "If I be lifted up," He said; and it is added, this He spake signifying what death He should die. It was an expression used by Him more than once, and its meaning was evident. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." And again, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man." Here the people say—showing that they perceived His meaning—"Christ abideth ever; how sayest thou then that the Son of Man must be lifted up?" The expression was, indeed, a significant euphemism for death by crucifixion. Such death was a lifting up indeed, and the cruelty and horror of it have gone straight to the hearts of men wherever it has been realized. The man taken in the strength of life, stripped, bound to the cross as it lay upon the ground, rough iron spikes driven through the hands and feet, transfixing Him there; the cross then upraised, its end hurled violently into the hole in the ground dug to receive it, and so fixed there; then the slow torture of the hours, lengthening at times into days; the burning heat of the sun; the intolerable thirst; the sharp torments of fierce pain, searching through every avenue of sensibility, and probing the roots of physical being until, at last, exhaustion came; oblivion rolled upon the senses; they ceased to inflict their torments on the mind, and consciousness and being failed. Such was the death by crucifixion—an invention of demons rather than men. And ever as in painting or sculpture; in crucifix or in altar-symbol; in sermon or in book, the Son of Man dying upon the cross, is uplifted before men, the power of that death is seen. The pity, the cruelty of it enter men's souls; and if there be anything on earth which has power to move men in their feelings, it is this.

There was yet further, the injustice of the death. We have not to ask, Did He Who died so deserve to die? It may well be doubted whether any man by a long course of aggravated crime could deserve so to die. In the case of our Lord it was the moral elevation and beauty of His life which formed the crowning wrong of His death. The records of that life have been before the world since the day He died, and enmity itself has detected no flaw in its complete and perfect goodness. The words of Sir Edwin Arnold, in his "Light of the World," are true words:

This godlike one:
This spotless, stainless, sinless, blameless Christ;
Whom none did once conceive of one small servile
From perfectness, nor ever shall; so strong
The elements obeyed Him; so divine
The deities worshipped; so with virtue charged
The touch of Him was healthy; so masterful,
The dead came back upon His call so mild,
The little children clustered at His knee,
And nestled trustful on that kind breast
Which leans today on God's.

His life indeed, stands before the world today as the one imperishable type of exalted and perfect manhood. We may justly esteem ourselves as good where we in any degree approach to His standard; and ever for a man to compare himself with Jesus of Nazareth is to be convicted of grossness and sin. And in this was the utterable wrong that such a life should be terminated by such a death, and that such loss should be inflicted on our race as to quench a spark of life so divine as that. The sense of justice may be ineoperative for a time, yet even so it does but sleep. It will awake, it will arise and exert its power. You read the cablegram from New Orleans the other day the dreadful story of lynching. The act must be condemned as unregulated and leading to excess; but in the unanimity of the perpetrators and the swiftness and completeness of their deed we see the working of a moral power—crude and violent, but in essence true. Such power is within men. It will set right a wrong. If one age commit, or uphold, an injustice, subsequent ages will revise the judgment. And it has been so here. Do we say the power of the Cross is in the pity of it? Yes, and in a deeper, sterner feeling—the moral indignation of the ages against the greatest crime, the deepest wrong this earth has known.

There was, again, the sacred mystery of His person and His work. We may not attempt the barest analysis of these. We remember that He was the Son of God, and that He died to bring men to the Father. There are limits, after all, to the power and meaning of a mere martyrdom. To make the death of any mere man the object of intense, prolonged, and continuous thought were an unprofitable task. The grief of man renewed from age to age for the death of one of themselves, however great and holy, and who might not even

WE know how to keep up Good times. The hands and purses of buyers carry the news, and bring us more HANDS and FEET to clothe.

know that they mourned his loss, would be meaningless—or worse; but in this case our sorrow becomes the tribute of our wonder and our love, and is itself a form of worship. Here elements of highest deity had inwoven themselves with our humanity. Infinite power had subdued itself to work and suffer within the limits, and through the medium of a human life; and so this death of Christ upon the Cross was the close of an incarnation—the incarnation of deity in human flesh. And in this way was the marvel and the power of that death.

Nor in this alone. There was the purpose for which He died. Men have died at the hands of their fellows because they were in their power and could not escape. Some have brought themselves to their end. They have died for an idea, for pride of intellect or of will; some purpose of their own has led them to their calvary; ambition or pride has fashioned their cross; and self-will and worldly purpose, turned to its own despite, transfigured them there; but Christ died when He might have lived—died for love of man, a sacrifice for the world's sin.

The immortal pity of that soul serene,
Pitiless only to its body, firm
To hold it uncomplaining, patient, still:
Close to the cross, of one iniled with the nails,
With the dull, senseless wood for sake of man
And great salvation of all flesh to be.

And in this is the wonder and the power, in these things the mighty and unailing attraction of the cross.

The Nature and Extent of the Attraction.
We say the nature and extent, for the meaning of this word "all," the extent, that is, to which Christ will draw men, is bound up with the question as to the nature of the attraction intended. As a fact, our Lord although lifted from the earth, has not drawn all men unto Himself. The vast mass of the human race have been, and are away from Him. And the question comes: How are we to understand His works? Must we put in here some qualifying word of our own? try to mend, that is, the teaching of the Great Teacher? We think not. The words must stand as they are, with no tinkering on our part. They are words of the Master. We ought not to dare to meddle with them. We must receive them. We must try to understand them.

Shall we say, then, that this word "to draw" has two senses? that there is a drawing which is of favor, and one which is of condemnation? Can we save our orthodoxy, and at the same time our Master's words, in this way? He is judge as well as Saviour. His words judge men; His life judges them. Being what He is, no human being can be indifferent to Him, or unaffected by Him. Some are drawn in faith and love; others rejecting His grace, are yet "drawn" in such wise that their attitude towards Him, even in rejection and ill-will, is an unconscious homage to His right and power. Ever more and more, Christ is becoming a test of character; the cross is made to be a divider of men's thoughts. The day is coming when all who have ever lived will stand at His judgment bar. They will be drawn unto Him, and by Him. They who have received Him will come for final acceptance at His hands; they who have rejected Him—and he rejects Christ who rejects the things for which He lived and died—will come to Him in that great day, drawn to a judgment which will be by the principles of His cross. And so at last His word will be fulfilled, and all men be drawn to Him.

Now, is this the meaning here? Is it possible in this way to retain our Lord's words in view of the facts with which we are confronted. It is not. And we have spoken at this length upon the idea that justice might be done to it, and yet its impossibility be apparent in its very statement. To suppose such a double sense of the word would be simply to adopt a disguised method of altering what our Lord has said. The meaning is one and the same. The drawing spoken of is that of acceptance and favor. In the only other instance in the New Testament where the word "to draw" occurs in a moral sense it indicates an "exertion of spiritual power for the purpose of conversion." "No man can come unto Me," said Jesus, "except the Father draw him." Here we have a persuasive influence from the Father "drawing" men to Christ. Our Lord says, "I will draw men to Myself." He means that by the might of His cross and passion He will cast over men the potent and gracious spell of a divine attractiveness. For our Lord to "draw" men unto Himself is to attract them by the moral beauty and power of His own life and death. It is to bring them to His side by the constraining force of what He is and has done for men; and to fix them there in adoring gratitude and love. It is to quicken them inwardly by His power; to evoke within the spirit of obedience and of trust; it is to convince them of sin and of the power to forgive; of spiritual need and his ability to meet all that the human heart demands; it is to inspire them with His own ideas, and to bind them in personal loyalty to Himself and to His service forever, that, sharing His humiliation now, they may hereafter share His glory.

This is what it is for Christ to draw men unto Himself. And His word here is that He will draw all men—that is, He will do this in the case of every single human being. Now, should we be staggered by this, in view of the fact that the great mass of mankind have died, and are still dying without so much as knowing what He is, we must remember that He is eternal—"the same yesterday, today, and forever;" and has eternity in which to fulfill His word. Judgment, condemnation, hell are real as is His mercy; for He spoke of them; and we see them even here and now, in rudimentary form, prophecies of what shall be; and they are awful as His own words here painted them; yet may they be but steps and paths in the process, leading on to the completion of His work. See what He has done already. "I will draw all men unto Myself." All men—men of all races. This has been and is. The

Egyptian and the Jew, the Greek and the Roman, the Teuton and the Celt, the Basque and the Slav, the Laplander and the Esquimaux, the Papuan, the negro, and the Malaymen of all these races have been drawn to Christ. There is no race of men but has sent its units or its millions to swell the mighty number of those who have bowed before the cross.

All men—men of all kinds; and this both as to culture and to character. Weak men and changeable have found through Christ the energy of a steadfast purpose and a changeless love. Timid souls who could never trust in themselves have trusted in Him, and become fearless and strong. Men of firm will and rough fibre and granite-like endurance have been moulded by His Cross into that gentleness which is true strength. And men of finer type and mould have yielded to Him the homage of their more delicately tempered natures. The vicious have been shamed into virtue, and the good have perceived through Him the type of a nobler goodness. Men dull of understanding, slow of thought and speech and others of quick conception and brilliant parts; the trained intellect and the untrained; the neglected child of nature and the pampered offspring of society; the rude unlettered man and the man of refined speech and manners, the latest product of the literature and art and science of his time—out of all these Christ has drawn men unto Himself. There is absolutely no style or type of man whom His Cross has not subdued. All men—men of all periods and all ages of individual life. Ere Christ came His spirit was in the world, and drew men to God. When Jerusalem was still standing, and Rome was at the height of her power, the Cross attracted men. When the ancient civilization was submerged, pious monks and others uplifted the Cross; and zealous missionaries carried it far into German forests, and to the island homes of our English race. Later, when Europe awoke in the days of Erasmus and Luther; again, in the eighteenth century revival; and now, in the life of the churches of today, the Cross has had, and has its power to attract men to Christ. The little child, too, just learning to spell the name of Jesus, and the aged man who has spent through the text-book of a life's experience: the young man, with his enthusiasms, and the staid man of middle age, who has burnt out the early fires of his most passionate beliefs or unbeliefs; out of all these times and states there are those who have been won to Christ, drawn to Him by the attraction of His cross.

All Men for Christ.

Now, what our Lord has done is a pledge of what He will do. Barriers of race, of character, of age, have not quenched the power of His cross, nor shall do. Christ has not drawn all men, do we say, unto Himself? Some of all He has drawn; and for the rest—we say it reverently—we must give Him time. The function of an insect in the economy of nature is performed in an hour; that of a man, a nation, a race needs longer scope; that of an eternal being must be eternal. Epochs and ages are of men. God has eternity. What our Lord has said, that He will do. As it is He has done, and is doing far more than we sometimes think. In the greater kindness, the gentler manners, the purer laws of our time; in the care for the poor, the slave, and for little children; in the modern conflict against ignorance, misery, and vice; in the revolt from heartless maxims of trade; in the recognition of the duties as well as the rights of property and of man, Christ is fulfilling His word. He is drawing men unto Himself. And for the wider hearing, for the complete fulfilment of that word there is the lifetime of His own eternity. It is so. Christ wrought in the world, and suffered in the sufferings of men, and He came in the weakness of our flesh, and must it not be that, if when this world is blotted from her place among the stars His word is not fulfilled he will still working towards it? The woman sought the lost coin till she found it. The shepherd went out after the lost sheep till he found it; far as it went he would go till he overtook it, and brought it back. These are Christ's own parables, and they are in harmony with the teaching here, "I will draw all men unto Myself."

Brethren, this is the gospel of the Crucifixion. This is the gospel—may we not say?—of the resurrection, of the risen and exalted Christ. And it has most near, and personal and practical import. I will draw all men—that includes you and me. Has He drawn us to Himself? If I be lifted up will I do this? He was uplifted once by the men of hate, He must be uplifted evermore by the men of love. In our lives and our words we must uplift Him, and so shall we have a share in the result when in far-off ages His word is fulfilled, and Christ has drawn all men unto Himself. Amen.

Of Christ the Way, the Truth, the Life.

"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him," and will make him sit together with me in my Father's kingdom.
O Lord Jesus, as thou hast said and promised, so let it come to pass, and grant that I may not be wholly undeserving of this favor.

I have received the cross from Thy hand; I have borne it, and will bear it even unto death, even as thou hast laid it upon me. Verily the life of a Christian is a cross, yet it is also a guide to paradise.

I have begun, I may not go back, neither is it fitting to leave that which I have undertaken.

Courage, then, brethren, let us go forward together; Jesus will be with us. For the sake of Jesus we have undertaken this cross, for the sake of Jesus let us persevere in the cross.

He will be our helper, who is also our guide and forerunner.

Behold, our king entereth in before us, and he will fight for us.
Let us follow manfully, let no man fear

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HYMN.

O deep the passion, great the woe,
The Lord endured to slay the foe,
That we the depths of Love might know,
The Love that dies for man.

Yet in the woe, a joy as deep
Mingled, and laid the pain asleep;
And we are glad, although we weep
With John, beneath the Cross.

For through the gloom that veiled the hill
A heavenly vision came to fill
His heart with joy ineffable;
The Vision of the End.

The whole of mankind gathered in,
His sheep, His own beloved kin,
Saved from themselves, and saved from sin
By God the Father's Love.

Then sank His head upon His breast,
Then was His heart, at last, at rest,
Holy and undelled, and blest;
"All is fulfilled," He said.

O Jesus, who thus died that we
Might know Life's deepest mystery,
Lead us, through Love like Thine, to see
Our Father, face to face.

—Stopford A. Brooke.

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