

SERMON.

Preached in Trinity Church, St. John, Sunday Morning, May 8

By Rev. Archdeacon Brigstocke, Relative to the Decease of the Late Mrs. C. S. Medley.

"My times are in Thy hand."—Psalm xli, 15.

Such was the reflection of David in days of adversity, to which the successful rebellion of his son Absalom had brought him. In days of health and strength, when everything prospered and the world smiles its congratulations upon us it is difficult to think that the time will come when we shall be separated from those who are dear to us. It is a mode of thought, which may make all the difference between prosperity and adversity. David had had the advantage of long training in the school of adversity, so when his troubles came upon him he was more ready than most men to meet them. He was less surprised, and shocked, than we are, when we have been. "My times," he cried, "are in Thy hand, deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me," etc., etc.

Let our enquiry be, What is time? We can only answer, It is an utter mystery. It is a mode of thought, which may make all the difference between prosperity and adversity. David had had the advantage of long training in the school of adversity, so when his troubles came upon him he was more ready than most men to meet them. He was less surprised, and shocked, than we are, when we have been. "My times," he cried, "are in Thy hand, deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me," etc., etc.

In drawing attention to God's providence over all the affairs of human life, I would remind you of the words of the Apostle Paul, "The things which are seen are but a few and the things which are not seen are many." He dwells upon it as a sign of the revelation of the fatherly love of God, and He draws illustrations of it, where many would fail to find them. "Consider," he says, "the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, neither have they storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls?" Again, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet, I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." "The things which are seen are but a few and the things which are not seen are many."

How striking are these illustrations—the sparrows and the lilies of the field—of God's providential care. In the case of the birds, it is remarkable in their migration at certain seasons from cold to warmer climates, over wide and stormy seas, and their return when the winter is passed.

By the "lilies of the field" we are taught that nothing is too minute to be beneath His care. And we learn this further lesson, that in the ordering of God's wisdom and His providence for us far more beautifully than He does for the animals of the lower creation. What more can we want to make us contented with all that befalls us, whether it be what we call good or bad? Whatever comes is the ordering of God's wisdom and His providence for us far more beautifully than He does for the animals of the lower creation.

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and exertion. The sun goes on with undeviating exactness its ceaseless revolution. The stream that rises in the mountain crag wells as it flows onward with a roaring torrent. The flowers that adorn the earth with their exquisite loveliness live by growth. The whole of God's earth is a vast machinery, which is kept in order by the everlasting law of activity and motion. Work was the life of Jesus Christ. He came down from heaven to do His Father's will, and how unremittently He did it the record of His life informs us. He never slacked aside even though it brought Him much weariness and fatigue, much toil and suffering, all the agony of Gethsemane and the tortures of the cross. The object of life, of every one's life, is to do the will of God. And the outward form of the work may take its shape from the circumstances of the life. It may be a high official position, or the forsaking of the gospel of Christ to perishing heathen; it may be waiting on the invalid, or working in an office or factory. The lowest work is ennobled by the motive of doing it for God, the highest is degraded by the absence of that purpose. Christian life is the only life to which we are called; and it is the only life for which we were made; it is the only life which is worth living. And it is the life, let me assure you, where you have as companions the best that are in the world today, and where you are treading in the footsteps of all the great and good that have been before us. Along that road is the noble legend written in large letters: "He lies the way to make the most of life." Yes, in all our efforts to use this life to the best purpose we are encompassed by the presence of witnesses, who are beckoning us onward and upward, that with them we may gain the promised rest.

"They climbed the steep ascent to heaven. Through toil, and pain, O God! to us may grace be given To follow in their train."

Of that number may we confidently reckon her whose life here was brought to a close last Monday, and whose burial was announced to you by the tolling of our church bell. Her realized more keenly than she did that life was a Christian service. Without any ostentation she maintained a life of ceaseless and unselfish activity for the good of others, exemplifying very fully the Christian principle of bearing one another's burdens. Her chief work was in another part of this diocese, where, as a faithful helpmate of one who was known and beloved for his character and work, she did much for the good of the church, which she so loved and adorned. Since she became a resident of this city and a member of this congregation she has for the most part lived in the seclusion of her own home, holding, however, herself in readiness to cheerfully respond to calls made upon her for the furtherance of the Church of Christ. If not reckoned among our active workers, she was, nevertheless, by her regular and frequent attendance on the services of the sanctuary, a holy example, which all would do well to follow.

Her calm faith and loving devotion to the church of her baptism ever gave her peace and guidance. She never questioned the church's authority, or the church's methods, because she recognized that they were of more than human origin, and designed to bring her into communion with her God and Saviour. Her life closed in with much rapidity. The messenger of death was severe and malignant disease, which soon brought on her dissolution. She was not, however, unprepared. For long since she had learned the truth, "My times are in Thy hands." So another has left us. No longer is she to be associated with us here in this world, but in future to be reckoned with those for whom we bless and praise God's holy name, and beseech Him to give us grace to follow their good example, that with them we may be partakers of His heavenly kingdom.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

LESSON VIII.—May 20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—He shall reward every man according to his work.—Matt. 16: 27.

PLACE IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.—Spoken Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A. D. 20, immediately after the last lesson.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—Time.—Spoken Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A. D. 20, immediately after the last lesson.

Place.—The Mount of Olives, where Jesus stopped with His disciples on His way from Jerusalem to Bethany.

The section includes the three parables of judgment in this chapter.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.—Matthew 25: 31-46.

Read Matthew 25 and Revelation 20: 11-15.

Commit verses 34-45.

31. When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.

32. And before Him shall be gathered all (a) nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35. For I was a hungry, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in:

36. Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me:

37. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee a hungry, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink?

38. When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?

39. Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?

40. And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch (c) as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

41. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42. For I was a hungry, and ye gave Me not meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me not drink:

43. I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and ye visited Me not.

44. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee a hungry, or athirst, or sick, or naked, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?

45. Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to Me, ye did it not to one of the least of these, which are sent to Me.

46. And these shall go away into (f) everlasting punishment: but the righteous into (g) life eternal.

REVISION CHANGES.

Ver. 32. (a) All the nations. (b) Separately.

Ver. 40. (c) Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these shall go away into (f) everlasting punishment: but the righteous into (g) life eternal.

Ver. 41. (d) Into the eternal fire.

Ver. 45. (e) Of these least.

Ver. 46. (f) Eternal punishment.

(g) Eternal life.

LIGHT ON THE TEXT.

This lesson is not a parable, but a picture, and a prophecy. What is here described will really take place at the end of the world, the close of the present order of things.

Helps Over Hard Places.—31. Son of Man shall come.—His final coming at the end of the human state, when all things shall be made new.

In His glory.—He will no longer be in obscurity, as when on earth. Upon the throne.—As King.

Right hand.—The place of honor and blessing. Sheep.—Innocent and useful, a symbol of God's people. Goats.—Wild, passionate, ungoverned, a symbol of the wicked.

Inherited.—Receive as the children and heirs of God.

For I was, etc.—These acts are such as are possible to all Christians, and express a true Christian spirit. They are not such as require money, but such as involve the sacrifice of time, strength, rest, and life.

To clothe the naked, etc.—Hebrew, and loving spirit; to visit the sick is an act of spontaneous self-sacrifice.

These good deeds which are named are but specimens of all those good deeds which presuppose faith in Christ which purifies the heart and works by love.

These things have the spirit and follow the example of Christ.

When saw we Thee, etc.—The truly good do good so easily and naturally that it soon passes out of their mind. These words show the fruit of faith, and proved it.

Depart.—The far from God in character, must go far from Him in blessedness.

When saw we Thee.—The bad things are better than the are.

Neglect of the poor is neglect of Christ. Sins of omission only are mentioned here, neglects of duty, absence of good works; but they are enough to condemn us.

GUIDING QUESTIONS.

Subject: The Day of Judgment.

To what part of Christ's life does this lesson belong? Where was this discourse spoken, and when? What two other parables in this chapter?

The Judgment Scene (vs. 31-46).—What is the greatest event in the future? At what time will the day of judgment come? (Rev. 20: 11-15; Heb. 9: 27; Mark 13: 32.) Who will be the judge? (John 5: 22, 27.) Who will be judged? (2 Tim. 4: 1.) Into what two classes will they be divided? Who are meant by the sheep? the goats? Why so called? Why is there need of a day of judgment?

II. The Judgment of the Righteous (vs. 34-40).—What six good works did the righteous do? Were these all, or only specimens? How did these show their fitness for heaven? Were they saved by their good works or by faith? (Rom. 10: 9, 10; Jas. 2: 14-18.) What is faith without works? How will the righteous be rewarded? What is the final reward of the righteous? (v. 46.) What is eternal life?

III. The Judgment of the Wicked (vs. 41-46).—Who were on the left hand? Why must they depart? From whom and what? For what are the wicked condemned? How was their neglect of the needy a neglect of Christ? What did their neglect show of their character? Where must the wicked go? Is their doom just? Is it necessary? Could they have escaped it? How may we avoid it? Why are only sins of omission mentioned?

SHIP NEWS.

PORT OF ST. JOHN.

Arrived.

May 10.—Sch. Roy, 88, Lloyd, from New York, via Cape Cod, 10 days.

May 11.—Sch. Dora, 63, Manning, from New York, via Cape Cod, 10 days.

May 12.—Sch. Dora, 63, Manning, from New York, via Cape Cod, 10 days.

May 13.—Sch. Dora, 63, Manning, from New York, via Cape Cod, 10 days.

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