THE GOSPEL IN PARIS:

*SERMONS*

BY THE

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OF L’ÉGLISE DE L’ÉTOILE, PARIS.

*WITH PERSONAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR*

BY THE

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LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCLXXXIII.

I.

*THE SAYING OF CAIN.*

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?”—GEN. iv. 9.

THESE are the words of the first fratricide. What a con­trast between the mournful drama from which they are drawn and the account of creation which almost im­mediately precedes it! Creation is the plan of God. There all is peace, harmony, and light. It seems as though the human family must of necessity go on in­creasing and developing itself, yet at the same time remaining united in an unalterable affection. Alas! I turn over that bright page only to hear the words, *Am I my brother’s keeper?* uttered close by the bleeding corpse of Abel.

Since then these words of Cain have been repeated at every period and in all places of the earth. We may say that where the Gospel has not been known they have become, as it were, the motto of humanity. Seek in ancient societies the link which should unite all men! Each nation is penned up within its own territory and within its own religion. Even its deity is confined within its boundaries. Strangers are barbarians. The hope of a religious union, of a brotherhood of souls, is so remote from the ideas of antiquity that, in the second century of our era, the philosopher Celsus, the famous opponent of Christianity, wrote: “Men were fools indeed to suppose that Greeks and barbarians, Asia, Europe, Libya, and all the other nations can ever be united in the bond of a common religion.” And what Celsus affirmed with so much confidence, all think, be they Romans, Greeks, or even Jews. No one rises above that more or less elevated selfishness. Every nation seems to say: “Am I the keeper of others?” And Rome, when she conquers the world, brings men together only in the unity of servi­tude and degradation.

Even between the various classes of the same people we find the same indifference, the same distance. For instance, who in antiquity feels any concern for the poor, the slaves, the destitute?

The poor! would you know what antiquity thought of them? Plato—that noble and beautiful genius who has often been called a forerunner of Christ—Plato coldly questions, in his book on the Republic, if, when the poor are ill, it is our duty to help them; and he comes to the conclusion that it is not, because, says he, they are not worth the trouble! The slaves! never was a heathen philosopher surprised at their lot. The orphans, the sick, the destitute! in all antiquity, as still today in China, Japan, the Indies, in all places where the Cross has not been raised, not a hospital, not an orphanage, not an asylum for old age or poverty. Do I then go too far when I affirm that previous to Christianity, and apart from its influence, man has taken for his motto the saying of the fratricide, and that he has always answered the groans of the slaves and the poor by asking, through the medium of his philosophers, legislators, and priests, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

So the world would have gone on to the end, plunging deeper and deeper in selfishness, had not Jesus Christ come. When entering upon the dark path of His humilia­tion, at the end of which rose the cross of Calvary, the Son of God might indeed have said to His Father: “Am I the keeper of that depraved and rebellious race who outrage and forget Thee?” He might have spoken thus, and remained in the light and glory which had surrounded Him from the beginning. What He did say you know. You have heard it at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, in Gethsemane, on Calvary. You have seen Him, this King of kings, taking upon Himself, with our mortal flesh, all the humiliations of poverty; you have seen Him accepting to bear the burden of our sorrows and sufferings; you have seen Him, O mystery of love! so identifying Himself with guilty humanity as to take upon Himself the weight of its crimes, all the horror of its condemnation. On the cross you have heard these ex­traordinary words: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Yes, He, the Holy One and the Just, has felt the consequences of our rebellion. No wonder then, that, at the sight of His cross, the heart of the sinner has trembled. On that cross guilty man has recognised his substitute. It is for us that the blood of the Crucified flows. “It is,” we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “the blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than the blood of Abel.” The blood of Abel reminds us of the words of the fratricide: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” The blood of Jesus Christ is that of the Chief Shepherd dying, not merely for His brethren, but for His enemies.

We call ourselves Christians. This signifies that we are to be changed into the image of Jesus Christ; that what He was we also desire to be. At the foot of His cross we learn to hate selfishness; we learn that we no longer live for ourselves, but that we are members of one body, and that in a measure we are the keepers of our brethren. But our brethren, where are they? Ask it of Jesus Christ. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,” said He. Yes, all men! His arms extended upon the cross would embrace the whole human family, not only the children of Abraham, but all the children of Adam. Look, then, for a soul which Jesus Christ rejects; for a soul for which His blood has not flowed. Your brethren! they are every­where. Your brethren! they are those who love you, but they are also your enemies. They are those who com­municate with you, but they are also those who refuse you a place by their side in the Church and in heaven. Has God given you wealth? That poor man sitting beside you is your brother. Are you poor? That rich man, towards whom you feel perhaps more envy than love, is your brother. Are you endowed with a noble intellect? That ignorant and narrow-minded being, with whom you have scarcely a common language or one point of intellectual contact, is your brother. Are you virtuous? That fallen being who drags about in your streets the sad spectacle of his misery, of his degrada­tion, of his abjection, that wretch is your brother. Our brethren! they are the publicans, they are those whom society lays under its ban. And beyond the limits of our civilisation and of our churches, our brethren are those poor negroes to whom some so-called Christians still deny the title and character of men; they are those heathen whose customs we loathe; they are those savages of Australia, concerning whom the most intelligent of our sceptics lately asked with a smile if it was worthwhile that a Papuan should have an immortal soul. Our brethren! they are everywhere. When we go through the world proclaiming Divine mercy, and inviting wander­ing sinners to the Father’s house, we tell them all, as did the messenger in the parable: “Come, for there is still room.” From every land and clime we bid them come to the banquet of Divine love; the poor and the rich, the learned and the ignorant, the virtuous and the vicious, till the day when, from the most remote extremities of the most gloomy and desolate region, the last of the savages will arrive in his turn to take his seat there.

Such is the idea which Christianity gives us of the human family. Thinkers and even infidels are today laying hold of it and making it a title of honour; we have a philosophy which bears the pretentious name of Humanitarian, as though it had been the first to feel any concern for humanity. Let us not deceive ourselves in this matter; that idea is a Christian idea; it was born at the foot of the cross. Mankind has understood that it formed but one family only since the day in which the Chief Shepherd died to gather together its scattered members.

We are therefore the keepers of our brethren; their interests are our interests. Such is the general truth which I now desire to recall to your minds. But this general duty presents itself to us under two different aspects, which will occupy us in turn. Man has two natures; he has a body and a soul. He suffers in his body; he suffers in his soul. Thence, for us, a twofold mission: we are called to relieve the sufferings of the body, and to save souls. In presence of this double mission, we have all, perhaps, replied: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” It is this sentiment I would com­bat now. God grant I may be successful!

With both these forms of suffering Jesus Christ was brought into contact. Let us see what was His attitude with regard to them.

First, the sufferings of the body. Jesus Christ met with them under their two most common forms, sickness and poverty. What He did for their victims all the Gospels tell. We see Him ever surrounded by the sick and the poor. These, we may truly say, are the society of His choice. For them He performs His most magnifi­cent works. See how those unfortunate creatures flock around Him! Would you find Christ, you have but to observe the direction taken by the poor. Before He appears their cries call for Him. No voices welcome Him with louder shouts of “Hosannah?” than those of the suffering multitude. Alas! I well know all there is of materiality and self-interest in this eagerness. I know that what they seek is, above all, the powerful hand which feeds and relieves them. I know that later on they will fly from Him, perhaps even curse Him. But that is precisely why His love appears to me more wondrous, more sublime, more Divine. How He raises them! With what tender solicitude He cares for them! He chooses His disciples from among them. He who has not so much as a look for the splendours of earth, He who, in the whole of his Gospel, has never a word for such as Tiberius or Cæsar, bequeaths to immor­tality the names of a Lazarus, and of a Mary Magdalene, thus showing what He has made of the poor, of the lowly, of the most depraved. He is born amongst them; He lives with them; He dies with them, so that, at whatever page you open the Gospel, you find Jesus and the poor inseparably united. And what is more marvel­lous still, a fact of which I cannot think without a feeling of deep emotion, it is not only during the days of His flesh, but to the end of the world, that it has pleased Jesus Christ to be united with the sick and the poor. Since He left the earth, the Lord has chosen a repre­sentative of Himself here below, one who will be His representative until the end of the world! Recall to mind the sublime scene recorded by St. Matthew in his Gospel.

The world has ended its course, which seemed to be eternal; the din of earth has ceased, and here are all the generations of men appearing before Jesus Christ, like flocks before their shepherd. And what are the words which Christ will address in that solemn hour to those whom He will acknowledge as the beloved of His Father, and whom He will admit to His glory? He might say: “I was your Master, and ye served me; I was your King, and ye announced my kingdom; I was your God, and ye worshipped me.” But no. On that day He will not speak to them of His royalty, nor of His glory, nor even of His Divinity. He will say: “I was poor!”. . . I was poor! this then is the supreme title of the Son of God, of the King of kings. “I was poor, I was sick, and ye visited me, and ye gave me meat, and ye clothed me.” Do you understand what there is in these words? As for me, though I should possess but this fragment of the Gospel, I would adoringly recognise in it the mark of the God whose name is love; I would say, “Surely the Lord is in this place.”

Now see what has been the result of this sublime teaching. The faithful Church has ever considered the poor as the representatives of Jesus Christ. Thence the marvellous spectacle of the primitive Church at Jeru­salem, in which all social distinctions seem to vanish, in which not one of the brethren is left to struggle with poverty. The same love for the poor reappears in the epistles. When the great Apostle Paul sets out on his missionary journeys, and asks of his brethren in the apostolate their last counsels, their final recommendations, he says: “They would only that I should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.” In fact, he is constantly preoccupied with the poor in the midst of his travels, of his perils, of his heroic labours.

Wherever the Gospel has been faithfully preached, the same preoccupation is awakened. At Ephesus, in the Church where St. John wrote these sublime words: “God is love,” the first hospital was founded. Soon after it was followed by the first orphanage. Slaves received the name of brethren, given them for the first time. In fine, notwithstanding the veils with which Christianity is covered, and under which men endeavour to stifle its mighty voice, it everywhere reminds man that the sufferings of his brethren are his sufferings, that none have the right to close their heart to them.

You have heard of the oration in which the most eloquent of the Forum orators startled his hearers by relating to them the tortures of one of their countrymen. He pictured him beaten with rods by the orders of an iniquitous judge, and exclaiming in his anguish: “*Civis romanus sum!* I ama Roman citizen!” This cry alone repeated by Cicero in the market-place at Rome would have been enough to gain his cause, for these words, “*Civis rem anus sum!*”had an extraordinary influence throughout the whole world; they surrounded the man who uttered them with the inviolable majesty of the queen of cities, and covered him with a protection which nothing equalled. There is indeed in this feeling of civil solidarity something grand, something which moves us deeply; and yet, if we look at it closely, this feeling rested merely upon the selfish pride of the royal nation, and Cicero would certainly have left his hearers unmoved had he spoken to them of the punishment of a Greek, of a barbarian, or of a slave. But in the present day, though we love our own native country, can we confine our hearts within such narrow bounds? When we are the witnesses of an injustice, is it not the man rather than the citizen who in us is attacked to the very depths of the soul? Now whence comes, if not from Christianity, that power of sympathy which nought can stay? How is it we now see, in the midst of Christian nations, and there only, that ardent and unflagging interest for the suffering classes? How is it that all the problems connected with it force themselves irresist­ibly upon us? How is it that, in this respect, the modern world pursues a course wholly opposed to that of antiquity? How is it that the saying of the fratri­cide, “*Am I* *my brother’s keeper?*”is so energetically contradicted in all social and political questions? In a **w**ord, how is it that we see this feeling of solidarity increasing more and more, and becoming so intense that, in reality, naught that is human can be foreign to us?

We owe this to the Gospel; for, thanks be to God, it is still the salt of the earth. Ah! I know you will tell me that this is not always the case; you will point out to me the many iniquities practised under the shadow of Christianity, heathens corrupted and degraded by Christian nations, slaves whose chains are riveted in the name of Christ Jesus. But is not the very impres­sion which these facts produce the strongest argument in favour of Christianity? How account for the immediate, irresistible indignation which seizes even the most un­believing in presence of these facts? Would they feel so indignant if these crimes were committed under the shadow of another religion? No; what rouses their indignation is the fact that Christians are guilty of them. Ah! men feel that the Gospel is opposed to such deeds, that it is calumniated and altered when such actions are perpetrated in its name. Well, this very indignation is my answer. It attests that the Gospel is innocent of the crimes committed under its shadow; it attests that it is still the safest refuge for all who suffer; it attests, in fine, that He has not deceived men who said to all: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give yon rest.”

When iniquities are committed in those lands where the Gospel has been preached, the infidel triumphs and exclaims: “Of what use then is your religion?” But in presence of those facts, we, on the contrary, must re-echo the grand words of Franklin: “If men are so vile even with religion, what then would they be without it?” Yes, what would they be, what would they become with­out that Gospel against which they thunder forth their accusations? What was the world before Jesus Christ, what would it be without Him? Ah! endeavour to blot out that Sun of souls whose brightness troubles you. And if, supposing an impossibility, you should succeed in your attempt, the fearful darkness which would cover the world would reveal to you, but too late, what the past splendour of the extinguished luminary must have been.

That is what Christianity has done for the sufferings of the body; but, as we have already said, that is but a part of its mission. Above the body there is the soul. Now, the soul is the eternal part of man. If we are called to sympathise with the temporal interests of our fellow-men, what will it be when that which in them is grandest and noblest, when their soul, is in question? I have referred to the dignity which the Gospel has restored to the poorest—to the most destitute. But on what does this dignity especially rest? On the belief that even in the poorest, in the most degraded, there is an immortal soul made for the felicity of heaven—a soul which Christ has come to save by His blood. It is because I believe in the existence of that soul, that the lowest of slaves or the most benighted of savages has a right to my regard. As the sculptor who, gazing upon the shapeless block, already beholds the graceful or majestic figure which his chisel is about to carve from it; as the smelter who, looking upon the dross-covered ore before him, already sees the glitter of the purified gold, so in the most untaught, in the most defiled of beings, I see and hail a regenerated soul, which is capable of reproducing the very image of God. It is a soul in ruins I know, but these ruins are those of a sanctuary which God can soon raise up again and fill with His ineffable presence.

Deprive me of this belief, and man, for me, becomes but a being that appears for a moment in the world, a figure in the immense addition, a wheel in the vast machinery. If I believe only in matter, why should I care to develop that superior life which is in him, but whose full opening his low or miserable condition will never permit him to witness here below? It were better to abandon him to his sad and fatal destiny. It were better to say with Cain, “Am I my brother’s keeper? “

But if I have understood what my soul is; if I have felt that in it lies my dignity, my greatness, my true life, then I will be anxious to awaken that life in others. It is in this spiritual sense that I will desire to know and love my brethren; and I feel that, in this way, I will know and love them for all eternity.

We have, therefore, the charge of souls, for we know what the human soul is worth. Let me add that this charge is a doubly important one; for we know into what a state sin has plunged them.

We have spoken of the sufferings of the body, but is the soul less injured? Is not the soul labouring under an evil far deeper, far more terrible, since it may be eternal? Look around you! How many souls that know not God, that deny Him, that blaspheme Him? How many souls are pursuing their course amidst what is but dissipation and vanity? How many souls are falling further and further away from communion with God? In a word, how many souls are being lost? All this you know. Well, these souls—they must be saved!

To save souls! For this Jesus came upon the earth. He saw those lost souls. By the glance of His holiness He measured the depth of the abyss in which they were plunged, and to draw them out of it He gave everything—His heart, His blood, His life—everything, ay, even the love of the Father, of which He lost the sense on Golgotha. Henceforth the love of souls has gushed forth at the foot of the cross. See St. Paul. No sooner is he seized with this love, than all else fades and grows dim in his life. His heart has found its supreme passion. He must needs set out, he must march on, he must go forward, he must carry salvation everywhere. One church is founded. He leaves it to found another. After Antioch, Galatia, then Ephesus, then Macedonia, then Greece, then Rome; soon it will be Spain. Even during the hours of night he is beset by visions. Voices cry to him: “Come over and help us!” And when, in his weakness, he would fain murmur: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” the voice of his conscience replies with inexorable power: “Woe art thou, if thou preach not the Gospel!”

The love of souls! Whenever the Church has lived the life of her Master she has felt this love; she has been penetrated by it. That is how we can account for the existence, in our modern world, of a fact utterly unknown to antiquity, of a fact peculiar to Christianity alone*—missions.* Missions! Oh, I know to what attacks they have been exposed; I know how unbelief has sneered at their apparent failures. And yet, know you of anything grander than that mysterious link which causes us to take an interest in what takes place at our antipodes, to pray for souls from which we are sepa­rated by thousands of leagues? Here are our children gathered together. We tell them of the Eskimos of Greenland, of the negroes of the Gold Coast; their young hearts are moved and softened; they feel an irresistible compassion for those unknown heathen. For them they make sacrifices, and the savings of many a poor apprentice will be employed in procuring food for the heart and mind of some savage of Africa. What philosophy, what philanthropy has ever produced any­thing like this? Missions! Ah! Christianity alone was capable of giving them birth. Men may sneer at them; but have you ever reflected on what our civilised Europe would have given to the heathen world had not the missionaries been there? Alas! what has it brought them? Arms to destroy one another, brandy or opium to demoralise and degrade themselves. But, behold! among those conquerors who have proved more barbarous than their victims, there have been, and there are still found, men in whose hearts a strange love burns. They come to those heathens and tell them that there is in heaven a Father who loves them, and on earth brethren who would save them; they relate to them the wondrous story of the Incarnate Son of God, and plant in their hearts the cross of Jesus Christ. They are persecuted, scoffed at, killed; but others follow them, and soon on the land watered with their blood are seen, springing into life, the flourishing churches of New Zealand and Labrador, in which, at this very hour, thousands of souls are outstripping us in the kingdom of heaven by their love and zeal. And thus the net of the Gospel, borne of yore by the fishermen of Galilee, sees its two extremities meet after having enveloped the whole world.

But the souls to be saved are not found only on dis­tant shores. Let us beware lest we allow ourselves to be drawn, by imagination only, into those grand enter­prises whose heroism inflames all generous spirits. The souls that are intrusted to us are also those quite near to us, in our family, in our dwelling, at our fireside; they are in our streets and in our workshops. It is amongst those we are first of all to display our activity; it is to them we must carry life and light. Ah! what would it avail us, I pray you, to travel over sea and land to make proselytes, if we leave at our gate a Lazarus covered with sores, or a soul ignorant of the truth that saves? Let us have love enough to embrace the whole world, but let the first objects of that love be those whom God has given us!

Such is our mission in all its extent. It were, on my part, unfaithfulness to the truth to limit it in any measure. Now, let us see how we fulfil this mission.

What, in the first place, shall we say of those who do not fulfil it at all? Alas! it must be confessed there is a religion which is closely linked with coldness of heart. There is an intellectual orthodoxy which is the most fatal of heresies, for it teaches the world, as far as it lies in its power to do so, that the Gospel has no efficacy, and that the blood of Jesus Christ has watered the earth only to leave after it the aridity of the desert. There are people who believe themselves saved, and who have never loved. In their opinion, to be saved is to have settled their affairs with God once for all. They accept the doctrines, whether broad or narrow, easy or severe, which prevail in the Church to which they belong; and having thus solved the weighty problem of eternity, they return with a light, dry, and worldly heart in the midst of a world which is suffering and perishing far from God.

Is that saving faith? No; it is but its pitiful coun­terfeit. Jesus Christ has described saving faith in these beautiful words: “He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

No, I do not believe in a religion which leaves the heart untouched, in a religion which does not energetic­ally call forth abnegation and sacrifice. The faith which saves is the faith that impels us to save others. Well, once again let me ask,—How do you fulfil this mission of renewal and salvation?

“*Am I my brother’s keeper?*”We dare not say it, but dare we not think it? Are not these words the most faithful expression of the feeling we experience when we consider the mission with which God has intrusted us? And if selfishness has never prompted us to utter them, have we not often uttered them out of mere discourage­ment? Ah! it is in presence of such a task we must humbly recall to mind the words of the Master: “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” The spirit is willing, and, in fact, who is there among us that has not been seized with profound emotion in presence of this sublime mission with which God charges us? Who is there that has not felt that life thus understood is the true life? But soon, tomorrow perhaps, when once again you will be placed in presence of this mission, when you will he called no longer to admire, but to act, the flesh will be weak. Let us admit it, the task is great, and this very greatness appals us. There are times when the thought of all that is to be done pur­sues, besets, and paralyses us. There are times when we hear a vague and deep murmur rising from the depths of our soul, and growing louder and louder! It is the sound of the sorrows of earth, the groans of the oppressed, the bitter complaint of the hungry, the cry of rebellion, or the horrible mirth of perishing souls. All these voices unite and swell like the waves of an angry sea which the stormy wind has raised; their despairing cries reach us. Then, bending over these unfathomable depths, we say: “Of what use would it be to speak my feeble words in this tumult, of what use would it be to crumble my bread upon the surface of this vast ocean?”

You who have felt these temptations, you who know how strong, in these evil hours, becomes the discourage­ment which steals into the heart, listen, I have a good word for you. I say to you all: “Look to Jesus!” You sink beneath the weight of your task though you have but a few souls to rescue, a few sorrows to relieve. How then was He, who had the whole world to save, enabled to pursue His work to the end? Because He accepted the will of the Father from day to day; because His work of renewal and salvation was wholly con­centrated in each of the duties which every hour brought before Him. His business is to save the world. Yes; but it pleases God that this gigantic work should begin in a humble district of Galilee, and that the first fruits of this great harvest should be a few poor fishermen. Well, in this lowly and insignificant task which many a world-wise man or many a great preacher of our days would perhaps have despised, Jesus is faithful, faithful in each little detail, faithful towards every one of the souls which God intrusts to Him, towards every one of the sorrows which the Father sends Him. Oh, wondrous example? Who could have supposed that among that obscure nation, in that remote country, the salvation of the world was being prepared? It was thus that Jesus understood His task. He whose heart was large enough to sympathise with all our griefs, He who felt that a love deep enough to save all mankind filled His soul, begins by healing and saving those who surround Him. Not one of them appears to Him to be beneath His notice, and it is in connection with the lowliest and humblest that He will teach the world His most sublime lessons.

Let us, therefore, learn of Christ. Let us begin to act as He did in the humble sphere where God has placed us. Let us accept each work which He sends us, let us comfort each sorrow which He places directly in our way, and, in this faithful and persevering toil, discouragement will certainly never seize upon us. One will labour to gather some souls around the Word which raises and cheers; another in a school will pursue a course of instruction rendered powerful by prayer; a third will seek to obtain work for some poor outcast, who will thus be enabled to earn an honest living; another, again, will watchfully and lovingly follow through life orphans adopted in the name of Christ. What more? The work is infinitely varied, but even its greatness is not discouraging for the Christian who pursues it in the spirit of Christ, for he knows that not one of his efforts will be vain, that not even the most insignificant sacri­fice will be lost.

But I hear your final objection. Yes, say you, we are ready to work in the humblest sphere and to work courageously, but on condition that our labour bear at least some fruit. But this labour has been fruitless, we have seen our efforts rendered powerless by obstinate indifference or heart-rending ingratitude. Then follows the mournful story of those vain attempts, of those humiliating failures, of those painful discouragements which every Christian knows, and might, doubtless, recount in his turn.

To all those objections, to all those reasons for losing heart, let me oppose the answer you have just heard, let me once again say to you, “Look to Jesus!”

Did Jesus Christ succeed while He was on earth? Were His benefits met by gratitude, were hearts touched by His words or converted by His miracles? Did He see the multitudes He had fed undertake His defence in the hour of danger, or give Him some token of their sympathy? Did the apostles whom He had taught, the apostles whom He had surrounded with the most tender care, remain faithful to Him? Alas! we must own it, there never was a ministry less productive of apparent results than that of Jesus Christ. What a contrast between the charity displayed and the results obtained! Three years of sublime teaching; three years of a holy and spotless life; three years of incomparable love; in fine, a ministry so grand that all others pale before it like as the most brilliant stars pale before the sun, and all this to end in gathering together at the foot of the cross two or three women weeping and trembling in presence of a scoffing and cursing multitude!

Well, ye discouraged souls, who mourn over your want of success, what would you have said at the foot of the cross? Would you ever have supposed that this cross was His triumph, and that the day was drawing near when all the nations of earth would come and worship at His feet?

That is the Divine plan. That is the holy foolishness of which the apostle speaks. To conquer in defeat, to conquer in humiliation, to conquer by giving His life, such is the victory of Jesus Christ!

That will, perhaps, be yours also. Like Him you may not be permitted to see the fruits of your activity, like Him you will sow in tears, like Him you will call souls who will refuse to answer, like Him you will multiply the bread of your charity to ungrateful poor, like Him you will see your best intentions misconstrued, your love slighted. . .. Well, in those gloomy hours when discouragement is ready to steal into your souls to draw from you the words of the fratricide, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” in those hours, behold Jesus Christ; and, looking to His unalterable love, to His extraordinary patience, to His mercy which is greater than all the hatred heaped upon Him, you will find strength to go on 1iving, working, blessing, till the day when God will welcome you with the words, “Enter into my rest.”

No, we will not grow weary. And, moreover, listen. If you, Christians, forget your poor, suffering, and sinful brethren, if you cease to labour with a view to raise and save them, there is in the world a vast and mysterious power propagating darkness, vice, and iniquity, and which slackens not its efforts for one moment. He whom the Scriptures call the Prince of this World, he has also his army and his missionaries. They are con­tinually on the march, calling souls; their voice is heard everywhere; they speak and they write, seeking disciples and imitators. “Follow me,” says the man of pleasure or the unscrupulously ambitious worldling to the poor, but still pure youth, as he passes before him in the pride of his wealth and of the homage by which he is sur­rounded. And the young man follows, dazzled by the fascinations of fortune and ease, and he sells to the world the soul which yesterday yet had been pure and generous. “Follow me,” says the harlot to the young workwoman, as she passes before her, rioting in the noisy mirth and luxury of a day. And the unhappy maiden follows her into that existence of demoralisation and infamy; she sacrifices to vice the soul, alas! consecrated to God by a mother’s tears, the soul for which so many silent prayers had been wafted heavenward. “Follow me,” says the sceptic to the rising generation, as he goes on sowing by his words and by his pen his doctrines of unbelief and death. “Follow me, for the homage of the noblest minds is mine, for the most exquisite of all glories, intellectual glory, attends me in the path I tread.” Alas! how many are there who follow him! How many there are who, amid the plaudits of the age, proclaim with a maddened enthusiasm to all the hearts embittered by misery and suffering that heaven is empty, that there is no God there to receive their prayers, and that annihilation is the end of all things. “Follow me,” they cry to all as they hurry down the broad way. They are not content with losing themselves, they must needs ruin the souls of others also.

And yet, O Christ! Thou wert waiting for them; for them also Thou hadst suffered, and from the cursed tree Thou hadst said to them all, “Come unto me.” But have they seen that cross? Do they know Him whom we call the Saviour? What have we done to proclaim Him? What have we done to win souls for Him? O Lord! speak to our consciences; snatch us from our languor, from our unconcern, from our love of ease; inflame our hearts, enable us to achieve great sacrifices, and give us grace to show the world that Thy work is continuing still, and that the final victory is promised to the faith which works by love!