

THE CHRISTIAN RACE

AND OTHER SERMONS

BY

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MCM

PREFATORY NOTE

ALTHOUGH the Bishop of Liverpool has published many books—Commentaries, Biographies, and Theological Dissertations—he has never published a volume of sermons.

When his many friends heard that he was about to resign the See of Liverpool, they urged him to publish a volume of his sermons as a “memorial” of his *sixty years’* ministry. The Bishop kindly consented to do so, and invited me to make a selection from his MSS. and to prepare the sermons for the press. I need hardly say that I willingly undertook the task as a “labour of love” for my aged Bishop. The selection I have made for publication sets forth the great doctrines of our Faith—Sin, Redemption, Regeneration, and Sanctification. I have also added sermons which call attention to the *Practical* side of Christianity, and which especially emphasise the “DUTIES” of the Christian life. The closing sermons proclaim the coming of our Lord; the Reward of His Saints; and the Rest of Heaven.

Friends, who knew of the preparation of these sermons for the press, have been praying that the “message of God” which they contain may bring blessing to many thousands. In the sure and certain hope that His Word will not return unto Him void I have prepared this volume of sermons by the first Bishop of Liverpool—and in this hope it is sent forth.

T. J. MADDEN,
Archdeacon of Warrington,
LIVERPOOL, *March 1st, 1900.*

The Bishopric of Liverpool was declared vacant on March 3rd, 1900. [Bishop Ryle died 10th June 1900. (ET editor)]

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

“Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.”—MARK vi. 34.

THERE is a certain island called Madeira, lying many hundred miles to the south-west of this country, where the climate is said to be the most healthy and delightful on the face of the earth. In Madeira they know nothing of those sudden changes from heat to cold which we sometimes experience in England. They seldom see anything of frost and snow during the winter, the air is always mild and soft, and particularly well suited for those whom God thinks fit to afflict with diseases of the chest and lungs. Such being the climate, you will not be surprised to hear that great numbers of sick and consumptive persons are in the habit of visiting Madeira from this country, to restore their failing health, to prolong their lives as much as possible, to obtain a short relief from pain which cannot be overcome at home, to catch at the last chance of recovery which a physician holds out,—aye, and often they only arrive in time to be gathered to their last home, to lay their bodies in the dust even as their fathers, and be carried to their graves by foreign attendants in a foreign land. Oh! what pain and trouble men will undergo to get a few years' health! how many hundred miles of sea and land they will cross to secure a short-lived peace of body! and yet they will not understand us when we call upon them to strive and labour after eternal life—to care for nothing, to count all things loss until they have won Christ and obtained peace for their everlasting souls, such as the world can neither give nor take away.

But the point I wish to call your attention to is this: It is said that these unhappy persons, who meet in this island of Madeira, as it were, upon the edge of the grave, do show towards each other a degree of affection and tenderness and sympathy, and kindness and love and attention and interest, such as we hardly ever see among ourselves. And why is it so?—Because they are obliged to live in the constant prospect of death—because they cannot put the subject from them as an unpleasant one, like too many among ourselves—because they feel their thread is so slender it may snap any day—because they see before their eyes death and the tomb and judgment and eternity—because they really believe their time is short and their end at hand; and under all these feelings, and many more too, they have a strong compassion for others, and a strong compassion for themselves—they feel the need of comforters, and so they do as they would be done by.

Now, wherefore have I told you all this? I would fain see in you the same spirit of faith; I wish, before I speak to you of millions of souls in dis-

tant parts of the world fast going towards destruction, before I lay before you the immediate subject of this afternoon's sermon, I wish, I say, to remind you that the great spiritual disease which is carrying these millions towards hell is naturally your own too. I desire, if possible, to lift the veil from off your eyes, and press upon you that their case may be your own: are they sinners?—so by nature are you; are they perishing?—so by nature are you; are they ignorant of Christ?—so by nature are you; and if you really know the danger of sin, and the excellence of the gospel-remedy, you will not require much persuasion on my part, you will rejoice to give assistance to your brethren according to the flesh, you will count it a labour of love to contribute according to your means for the souls of all who are still without God in the world.

Now, I wish to bring under your notice two points, and these are: I. The example that our Lord Jesus Christ has set us in our text; and II. The case of the unfortunate people whom you have an opportunity of assisting.

I. First, then, I will say a few words upon our Lord's example. We read that "He saw much people as sheep not having a shepherd." He beheld a mighty multitude collected together—not altogether disposed to receive instruction, but ready to listen to the voice and direction of anyone who would take them in hand, and still in utter ignorance about the way of life. The scribes and Pharisees, who ought to have been their natural teachers, had done nothing for them; they had sought their own advantage, and not the advantage of the flock, and as for the little doctrine they did preach, it was ruinous to men's souls, because contrary to the Bible. It was not agreeable to the law and the testimony. And thus deserted, these poor sheep, these Jews, were perishing in the barren wilderness of this world, scattered, wandering, and ready to faint for lack of the bread of life and the water of life. They were starving in places where there was no pasture, carried about by every kind of doctrine, unable to defend themselves against that roaring lion the devil, without a friend to guide their feet into the paths of peace, without a hope to comfort them in the hour of death and on the bed of sickness, without a counsellor to say, "Here is life and light and love—this is the good way, walk ye in it."

But we are told the Lord Jesus "saw them, and was moved with compassion." See what a merciful and loving Saviour we have to do with; wonderful indeed must be the hardness and unbelief of men's hearts, when such a one stands knocking at the door and is only rejected and refused.

"He saw, and was moved with compassion." He saw a mighty crowd of persons in the dark about the way of salvation, He saw that in a few years all would be lying in their graves. He saw them unprepared for that great day when the books shall be opened and every one shall be judged accord-

ing to his works, and “He was moved with compassion.” He felt a deep affection towards their souls, a tender pity and concern because of their spiritual necessities. He felt that each before Him would soon be for ever and for ever in heaven or hell, and we may well suppose that He whose gentle and loving spirit was moved to tears over Jerusalem, that cruel unbelieving city, He who wept at the grave of a chosen friend—we may well suppose that such a one as Jesus was touched at this moving sight. O Christless sinners! O careless, unconverted men and women, you little know the depth of that affection which your Lord and Master feels towards you; you little think how great a value He doth set upon those neglected souls of yours; you little consider how much He grieves and wonders at your sleepiness and unbelief.

But think you, He was content with pity and compassion. Oh no! His was no empty feeling, such as many now profess. He acted on it. He knew that ignorance would never excuse anyone in the day of judgment, and He would not leave this great people to perish in it. “He began to teach them many things.” Although He was fatigued and weary, hungry and thirsty, although He had gone apart to rest awhile, although He knew that nearly all would go away without faith, without inquiry, without consideration, still He would set before them the kingdom of heaven. He was always ready to work for the good of souls, it was His meat and drink to do His Father’s will, and so “He began to teach them many things.”

The wickedness of their own hearts, the danger of hell, the value of the soul, the happiness of heaven, the free grace of God, the power of the Holy Ghost, the need of some righteousness—these are some of the matters which no doubt He taught—for many indeed are the things we are naturally ignorant of, and many are the things the gospel of Christ contains. O, beloved, we all need much teaching, much instruction, line upon line, and precept upon precept. We are naturally all in darkness, knowing nothing of ourselves and our sins and the gospel. We must call upon the Lord Jesus, if we would be saved. He shall enlighten, He shall teach us great things that we know not, for unless we are taught of Him we shall most assuredly perish.

Such was the conduct of our blessed Lord, and if you are sincere in making Him your example, if you really desire to be like Him, if you wish to be conformed to His image and follow in His blessed steps, you will be moved with deep compassion towards the people of whom I am about to speak, you will do what lies in your power to teach them many things and deliver their souls, you will look to Jesus and say, “Lord we would do likewise.”

II. I have to tell you now that there are multitudes throughout the world who are truly and literally as sheep without a shepherd, and it is on their behalf you are now invited to contribute to this Missionary Society.

There are the heathen: I mean the men who know nothing of the Bible and its contents, who never heard of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, who have not even a head-knowledge of the gospel, who worship idols or nothing at all, who live in ignorance of either heaven or hell, or die as the very beasts that perish. It has been calculated that upon this earth there live and move about eight hundred millions of men and women, and out of these it has been ascertained there are at this moment at least six hundred millions of idolaters, that is no less than three-fourths of the whole world, who do not make the smallest profession of Christianity: out of every four of the inhabitants of this earth, God looketh down and seeth three who do not know the name of Jesus. Oh, what a fearful, what a soul-chilling thought is this! After all that Christ hath done and taught, after all the miracles and labours of the apostles and preachers of the gospel, behold we are living in the last days, and there still exist no less than six hundred millions of immortal souls who are every one strangers to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

Away with the delusion that may come across your minds that these unhappy men are doing well enough without the Bible, and are pleasing God after their own fashion. I tell you it would be easy to fill books with the accounts of the cruelty and the lust and the pride and the blasphemy which prevails among these miserable multitudes, and above all in the religious worship of their idols, their gods made with hands. Alas! there is not one word of that fearful description given in the first chapter of the Romans, there is not one word, I say, which is not being daily fulfilled in those dark places of the earth where Christ is not known. "They do not like to retain God in their knowledge, and so God has given them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. They are filled with all unrighteousness, fornications, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murders, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." These words were written of the heathen eighteen hundred years ago, but they are a most accurate description of the state of things in the present day. So true it is that without the Bible man's natural heart is always the same; that without Christianity there is no real morality; so true that without true religion the corruption

which is within us comes to the surface, and we are fully shown to be little better than a mixture of the beast and the devil.

These are the heathen whom this great Missionary Society desires to bring unto Christ, these are the heathen who are dying in their sins at the rate of two thousand every hour and thirty every minute, without hope and without God in the world. These are the sheep without a shepherd whose wretched state should move you Christians to compassion, and make you give all you can to help to send them ministers to teach them the way to heaven.

But I would not have you ignorant, beloved, that there are others whose case is quite as pitiable as that of the heathen, who have quite as strong a claim upon the compassion of all who follow Jesus. There are those thousands of Englishmen who live in our colonies abroad—in India, Canada, Australia—those bold and industrious men who have gone forth as emigrants to settle in a new country, and are gradually clearing and civilising wild districts which no Christian ever trod before. And I tell you that these settlers are indeed in every sense too often sheep without a shepherd. They find themselves in a land that is very thinly populated. It often happens that a man is thirty, forty, fifty miles from any place of worship. He never has the opportunity of going with a multitude to the house of God; he never hears the joyful sound of the preaching of the gospel; he has no minister to consult if he is in difficulties; he has none other than the private means of grace, the Bible, and private prayer. Oh, when it comes to this, it is indeed a fiery trial of a man's foundations: to be alone with your own family in a howling wilderness, to have no witness of your dealings but the Lord, to have no bell to summon you, to have no minister to invite you, to see no church to remind you, to find no neighbours to encourage or shame you,—I say that this doth put a man's religion to the proof. This soon brings out his real character. This soon discovers whether he has had a form of godliness without the power, or whether he has indeed the root of the matter in him, and is one of that little flock which will follow Jesus, yea, even in the dark. Truly you little know the value of regular means of grace, so long as you are familiar with them. But go into a wilderness, place yourself where there is no church and no minister, and no public prayers and no preaching and no sacraments, nothing but yourself, your Bible and your God, and you would soon feel a mighty difference—you would discover that without these helps the road towards Zion is a weary pilgrimage. Think you there would be much religion in Exbury, if all the places of worship were pulled down, if all the ministers were withdrawn, and each was left to the care of his own soul? There may be lewd men of the baser sort who think it would make no difference; but I do sadly fear that in a very few years sin would

abound, and God would be almost forgotten, and true religion would be starved and frozen into the smallest possible space.

But such is just the condition of a large part of those colonies where many of your fellow-countrymen dwell. Oh, have compassion on them, and let them not famish for lack of the bread of life!

And then consider the miseries to which a man is liable who lives beyond the reach of any of God's messengers. People may think they get on well enough, when everything in this world appears favourable, while health and strength and temporal prosperity is given them; and "What good we should get from a minister?" is their thought. But when the evening of life draws on, when sorrow and sickness break in like an armed man, when death and hell begin to stare them in the face, when one is taken and another taken from the family circle, and conscience reminds them of forgetfulness of God, and Bibles are taken down from shelves where they had long been neglected, and prayer is found a more difficult matter than they had thought—I say that then the want of God's appointed ordinance is deeply felt, and many a secret wish comes out, "Oh, that we had some minister of Jesus close at hand!" But this is just a picture of many thousand families of our own flesh and blood in foreign parts. The Lord incline your hearts to have compassion on them, and help to send them teachers of the way of life.

III. And now, beloved, I have fulfilled the promise that I made, to show you a mighty multitude of sheep which have no shepherd, and it only remains for me to press home upon you all the duty and the privilege of giving according to your power in aid of Foreign Missions.

Behold, I set before you the great machine by which Christ crucified may be preached to the hearts of those who are now sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. "Go ye into all the world," said Jesus, "and preach the gospel to every creature." Oh, how unworthily and coldly are we listening to His voice! There is not more than one missionary to a million of souls in the present day, and shall not God visit such a nation as this? Shall He not punish us if we stand calmly by, and fold our arms and never lift a finger, while thousands are dying without having seen the Lord's Christ.

I do beseech you all, if you have one spark of the mind that was in Jesus, if you have any value for the everlasting gospel, if you know anything of the guilt of sin, if you have ever felt anything of the grace of God, if you are not utterly dead to all spiritual things,—I do beseech you to prove the sincerity of your profession by contributing liberally to the support of this missionary society. Oh that the money which will be spent in so many places this week in drinking, idleness, and sin could only be applied to spreading Christ's Gospel!

I say, it is impossible for anyone to know the truth and not to burn with anxiety to bring all men to the knowledge of it. He that has no zeal about the souls of others can have but little about his own. He that is not with Jesus in this work is indeed against Him. Where is the use of a man praying "Thy kingdom come," if he has no mind to help it forward? It is as bad as saying to your brethren, "Be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful." "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

Say not "We are very sorry for these people, but we can do no more; we are too poor, we have other uses for our money." What! do you forget the widow who gave two mites which made a farthing out of her poverty, and cannot ye do anything? The Lord Jesus saw her, and He sees you and knows the worth of your excuse. And have ye never read that it was thought a solemn duty in the New Testament churches to give to the necessities of others? They were afflicted, persecuted, tormented. Many of you would have said, "Better keep our money at home," but this deep poverty abounded, "and to their power," says St. Paul, "yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift." And who were ever poorer in the end for giving anything to God? He that watereth shall be watered himself. He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord; and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again.

Say not, "We are no keepers of other men's souls: every man for himself," Oh, but this will not avail you at the bar of Christ. "The King shall say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

And what should you think of one in time of plague who had a special remedy and took no pains to give it to his neighbours? Be sure you will never sit in Abraham's bosom if any damned soul shall be able to say, "Father Abraham, that man might have cared for my salvation; he might have sent me help, and he would not."

But oh, remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive," and small as the contributions of Exbury

may seem, who knows but they may be the means of saving precious souls? who knows but you will give cause to heaven itself to rejoice?—“for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over ONE sinner that repenteth.”