

THE UPPER ROOM,  
AND OTHER SERMONS DELIVERED  
ON IMPORTANT PUBLIC OCCASIONS

*BEING IMPORTANT TRUTHS FOR THE TIMES.*

BY THE RIGHT REV.  
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"If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself  
to the battle?"—1 Cor. xiv. 8.

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## Preface

The volume now in the reader's hands requires little introductory explanation. It contains a very miscellaneous selection of papers which I have sent forth from time to time, in one shape or another, during a forty-five years' ministry. Some of these papers are not known beyond a small circle of kind friends. Not a few of them are the substance of pulpit addresses delivered on important public occasions, and composed with more than ordinary pains. All of them, I venture humbly to think, will be found to contain some useful truths for the times, and words in season.

I have reached an age when I cannot reasonably expect to write much more. There are many thoughts in this volume which I do not wish to leave behind me in the precarious form of separate single sermons, addresses, lectures, and tracts. I have therefore resolved to gather them together in the volume I now send forth, which I heartily pray God to bless, and to make it a permanent blessing to many souls.

J. C. LIVERPOOL

*Palace, Liverpool 1<sup>st</sup> December 1887.*

## XXI.

### “FOR KINGS.”

“I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

“For kings, and for all that are in authority.”—1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

THE words which head this page are taken from a passage of Scripture which is eminently suitable to the solemn occasion which gathers us together, the Jubilee of our gracious Sovereign Queen Victoria’s reign. A royal Jubilee is a very rare event in history, and in all human probability this is the only one in England which any of us will ever live to see. Let us lay this seriously to heart in today’s service of prayer and praise.\*

The words of the text occur in the first direction which St. Paul gave, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to his young friend Timothy about the conduct of public worship. “First of all,” he says emphatically—“first of all, I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.”

I might say something about the striking contrast between the elaborate and minute ritual of the Old Testament Church under the ceremonial law, and the remarkable simplicity and brevity of the ritual provided for the Church of the new dispensation. It is a contrast easily explained. The worship of the Old Testament was designed for the Jews alone,—for one single nation practically cut off from the rest of mankind,—and was full of types and emblems of good things to come. The worship of the New Testament was intended for all the world, and as the Thirty-fourth Article of our Church has wisely said—“Ceremonies may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men’s manners.”

One thing, however, is very certain. The rule, or rubric, laid down by St. Paul for the guidance of Timothy at Ephesus, is meant to be a rule of perpetual obligation as long as the world stands, and until the Lord comes. Whenever Christians meet together for public worship, there ought to be “prayers and intercessions for all men,” and specially “for kings,” as well as “thanksgiving” for mercies received. This primary rule you are invited to observe this day.

I. Concerning *the general duty of praying for others*, I think it useful to say something. But my words shall be few.

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\* The paper now in the reader’s hands contains the substance of a sermon preached in Liverpool Cathedral, on June 20th, 1887, on the occasion of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, before the Mayor and leading inhabitants of Liverpool.

I suspect the thought crosses some minds—“What is the use of my intercession? What am I but a debtor to Christ’s mercy and grace? How can the prayer of such a poor sinner be of any use to others? Praying for myself I can understand, but not praying for another.”

The answer to all such thoughts is short and simple. It is the command of God, and it is a plain duty to obey it. In this, as in many other matters, it becomes a mortal man to believe that the light of the last day shall make all clear. In the meantime, the “how” and the “why” and the “wherefore” had better be left alone. What we know not now we shall know hereafter. The practice of almost every saint in the Bible, of whom much is recorded, ought to silence all objections. Patriarchs, prophets, kings, and apostles have left us examples of intercession. Do we know more than they did? Do we think they wasted their time when they named others before God? Are we wiser than they?

I have a firm conviction that in this matter God tests our faith and our love. Do we believe that the eternal God is too wise to make any mistake? Then, when He says “Pray for others,” let us not stand still, reasoning and arguing, but do as He tells us. When our Lord Jesus Christ says the best proof of a high standard of love is to “Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you “(Matt. v. 44), let us believe and obey. I always thank God that our time-honoured Prayer Book contains such a grand specimen of intercession as the Litany. I believe the last day alone will show how the prayers of God’s elect have affected the history of this world, and influenced the rise and fall of nations. There was deep truth in the saying of unhappy Mary Queen of Scots—“I fear the prayers of John Knox more than an army of 20,000 men.” So, when we kneel to pray for ourselves, let us never forget to pray for others.

II. Concerning *the special duty of praying for kings and all that are in authority*, I must not omit to say something. But once again my words shall be few.

A moment’s reflection will tell us that St. Paul’s injunction to “pray for kings” is a very singular and remarkable one. For consider in whose hands the government of the world lay at the time when the Epistle to Timothy was written. Think what a monster of iniquity wore the imperial purple at Rome—Nero—whose very name is a proverb. Think of such rulers of provinces as Felix and Festus, Herod Agrippa and Gallio. Think of the ecclesiastical heads of the Jewish Church—Annas and Caiaphas. Yet these were the men for whom St. Paul says Christians were to pray! Their personal characters might be bad. But they were persons ordained by God to keep some outward order in this sin-burdened world. As such, for their office’ sake, they were to be prayed for.

After all, we must never forget that none are so truly to be pitied—none

in such spiritual danger—none so likely to make shipwreck to all eternity—and none stand in such need of our prayers, as the kings of this world. Few out of the many who criticise their conduct seriously consider the enormous difficulties of their position.

Think of the *temptations* which surround them. Seldom advised, seldom contradicted, seldom warned, they dwell in bodies like our own, and have like passions with ourselves, and are liable to be overcome by the world, the flesh, and the devil, just like other men. I do not wonder to read that when Buchanan, once tutor to James the First, was lying on his deathbed, he sent a last message to his royal pupil, “that he was going to a place to which few kings and princes ever came.” If it be true, as of course it must be, because our Lord said it —“How hardly shall a rich man enter the kingdom of God,” how much harder shall entrance be for a king!

Think of *the countless knots* which a king has to untie, and the awkward questions which he often has to decide. How to arrange differences with other countries,—how to promote the prosperity of all classes of the community,—how to decide when to tighten the reins of government, and when to loosen them,—how to select the right men to fill vacant posts,—how to deal fairly and justly with all ranks, sorts, and conditions of men, attending impartially to all and neglecting none—all these are difficulties which the poor fallible occupant of a throne has to face every week of his life. Can we wonder if he makes mistakes? Well might a poet of our own say—“Uneasy sleeps the head that wears a crown.”

Think of the *immense responsibility* of a king’s office, and the tremendous issues which depend on his decisions. A single error in judgment in managing a negotiation, a want of temper in dealing with an ambassador, a hasty reliance on erroneous information—any one of these things may involve his subjects in a war attended by fearful bloodshed, losses abroad, discontent at home, heavy taxation, and, finally perhaps, revolution and deposition from his throne. And all may come from one man’s mistake.

Yes! we may well be exhorted to “pray for kings.” If we could only believe it, of all the children of Adam they most deserve our daily intercessions. Raised above their fellows by their position, they find themselves, like the Alpine traveller who scales the Matterhorn, fearfully alone. In the nature of things, they can have no equals with whom to exchange hearts and sympathies. They are surrounded by those who are tempted to be flatterers and sycophants, and to make things pleasant to royal ears. They seldom hear the whole truth. They are only human beings like ourselves, needing the same Christ—the same Holy Spirit. Yet they are expected never to err, and are blamed if they do.

Yes! we may well “pray for kings.” It is easy to criticise and find fault with their conduct, and write furious articles against them in newspapers, or make violent speeches about them on platforms. Any fool can rip and rend

a costly garment, but not every man can cut out and make one. To expect perfection in kings, prime ministers, or rulers of any kind, is senseless and unreasonable. We should exhibit more wisdom if we prayed for them more, and criticised less.

III. Let me now invite your attention to *the special subject* which calls us together this day, viz. the celebration of the Royal English Jubilee. This very day our gracious Queen Victoria completes the fiftieth year of her reign. I ask you to come with me and look back on the half century which is just concluded. My aim is to show you as briefly as possible some of the great reasons why we ought to be a very thankful people this day. In a fallen world like ours there always will be many unredressed evils, and murmurers and complainers will be found in every quarter. For myself, I can only say that, on a calm retrospect of the last fifty years, I see so many causes for national thankfulness, that I find it hard to know what I should select, and where to begin. Let me, however, try to name a few.

(a) First and foremost among the reasons for thankfulness, let me mention the stainless and blameless *personal character* which our gracious Sovereign has borne during the long fifty years of her reign. In all the relations of life as a mother and a wife—in the high moral standard which she has maintained in her Court and household—in her scrupulous and diligent discharge of the countless daily duties which her high office entails upon her—in her boundless sympathy with the sorrows of her humblest subjects—where, in the long roll of English sovereigns, will you find one who can be compared with our good Queen Victoria?

I believe we do not realize sufficiently the immense importance of a Sovereign's personal character in the present day. The character of a ruler, like the insensible pressure of the atmosphere on every square inch of our bodies, will always have a silent, quiet influence on the conduct of subjects. The lives of sovereigns are an open book which all can read, and the example of a crowned head often does more than legal enactments. There can be no doubt that the enormous immorality of the French Court in the eighteenth century was the true cause of the first French Revolution, and the Reign of Terror. During the last half century the foundations of not a few governments in the world have been rudely shaken, and some have been completely overturned. Nothing, I suspect, had contributed so largely to the stability of the British throne as the high character of the Royal Lady who has occupied it. A revolutionary spirit, we all know, has been frequently in the air during the last fifty years, and a disposition to pull down all established institutions, and substitute new-fangled schemes of government, has repeatedly shown itself. The rise and progress of Chartism and Socialism have often made many afraid. Nothing, I firmly believe, has kept the ship of the British State on an even keel so much as the inner life of our beloved

Queen. If that inner life had been such as the lives of some of the Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts, I doubt extremely whether the royal standard would have been flying at Windsor Castle this week.

(b) In the next place, let us be thankful for the *singularly long period of time* during which God has permitted our gracious Sovereign to sit on the throne of her ancestors. Of all the kings of Judah who reigned in Jerusalem, Uzziah and Manasseh were the only two who held the sceptre for more than fifty years, and even David and Solomon's reigns were only forty years long. Our own kings, Henry the Third, Edward the Third, and George the Third, each reigned more than fifty years. But, since the world began, we know of no female sovereign in historic times, on the face of the globe, who has worn a crown so long as our good Queen Victoria. I am sure we are not sufficiently grateful for this. Even under a constitutional monarchy like ours—in which everything does not depend on the whim of an imperial autocrat—frequent changes on the throne are calculated to have a disturbing influence, and a new sovereign's views of his power and duties may not always coincide with those of his predecessor. There is a deep meaning in Solomon's words:—"For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof" (Prov. xxviii. 2). In early English history, the bloody wars of the Roses swept away the flower of our nobility, and struggles between the rival houses of York and Lancaster frequently shook the throne, and desolated the realm. At a later date, the unhappy Commonwealth struggle overturned for a time our long-established institutions. Happy is the land in which there are few changes on the throne. "Grant our Sovereign a long life," and "God save the Queen," should be the daily prayer of every British patriot.

(c) In the next place, let us thank God for the *enormous growth in national wealth and prosperity* by which the half century of Queen Victoria's reign has been distinguished. It is a simple matter of fact, that in no preceding fifty years of English history has there been anything like it. To use a well-known phrase, the capital or income of the country has moved on "by leaps and bounds." In spite of occasional cycles of bad times and commercial depression,—in spite of bloody and expensive wars, such as the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny,—in spite of providential visitation, such as cholera and the Irish potato famine,—the progress of the nation and the increase of wealth have been something astounding. The *waves* on the shore have seemed to come and go, to advance and retire, but on the whole the *tide* has been steadily rising every year. In 1837, the sums of money deposited in Savings Banks were only 14 million. They are now 90 million.—In 1843, when the income tax was first imposed, each penny in the pound brought into the National Exchequer £772,000. In 1885, each penny produced £1,992,000.—In 1843, the assessable value of lands and tenements was only 95 million. In 1885, it was 180 million. The assessable value of

trades and professions in 1843 was only 71 million. In 1885, it was 282 million.—The population of the United Kingdom was 25 million in 1837. It is now, in spite of the Irish famine and a ceaseless emigration, 37 million. In our own city of Liverpool, the population in 1837 was only 246,000. It is now, including suburbs, 700,000.—The tonnage of shipping at our port in 1837 was only 1,953,894. It is now 7,546,623.—The number of ships entering was 15,038. It is now 21,529.—In 1837, Liverpool had 9 docks, with a frontage of two miles and a half to the river. There are now fifty docks and basins with a frontage of six miles.—In 1837, Liverpool dock dues were £173,853. They are now £694,316.—Surely we ought to be thankful. This is the finger of God. It is “the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich.”—“Both riches and honour come from Him” (Prov. x. 22; 1 Chron. xxix. 12).\*

(d) In the next place, we ought to be thankful for the *extraordinary advances which science has made* during the half century of our gracious Sovereign’s reign. We have bridged the Atlantic with our steamers, and brought our English-speaking cousins within a week of our shores—a thing which I well remember Dr. Lardner declared to be impossible. We have covered the land with a network of railways, making journeys possible in a few hours, which formerly occupied days. We have opened communication with every part of the world by electric telegraph, and can send messages in a few hours, which formerly would not have been conveyed in as many months.

All these things, and many others, have budded, blossomed, and bloomed since Queen Victoria ascended her throne. They have added immensely to the comfort and convenience of modern life. They have practically annihilated time and space, and lengthened life, and enabled us to do an amount of work in twenty-four hours, which our grandfathers would have thought Quixotical, romantic, absurd, and impossible. But they are simple facts. Surely we ought to be thankful.

(e) Finally, and above all, we ought to be most thankful for the *immense advance which the cause of religion, education, and morality* has made throughout the realm since Queen Victoria came to the throne. Human nature, no doubt, is not changed. The millennium has not begun, and much evil abounds. But still, that man must be blind or obstinately prejudiced, who does not see an immense change for the better, both as regards duty to God and duty to our neighbours throughout the country, in the last half century. Church building, no doubt, is not everything, and bricks and mortar do not constitute religion. Yet the mere fact that 2000 new churches, besides Nonconformist chapels, have been built in England and Wales during the

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\* For the figures in this paragraph I am chiefly indebted to my friend Sir James Picton, of Liverpool, a well-known master of statistics.



last fifty years, by voluntary efforts, and nearly thirty million of money have been spent in restoring old places of worship and building new ones, speaks volumes. Even here in Liverpool and its suburbs, there were only 36 churches and about 70 clergymen in 1837. At this moment there are 90 churches and 185 clergy.—In 1837, the income of the Church Missionary Society was £71,000. It is now £232,000. The Pastoral Aid Society only received £7363. It now receives £50,122.—In 1837, there were only 58,000 children receiving education in all the schools of the National and British and Foreign School Societies throughout England and Wales. In 1885, there were nearly 4,000,000 under instruction and inspection. It is a striking fact that during the half century of Queen Victoria's reign, her Governments have spent fifty million on education.

As to works of philanthropy and efforts to promote morality, time would fail me if I tried to recount them. The labours of men like Lord Shaftesbury and others have raised the condition of the working classes cent. per cent. The Ten Hours Factory Act, the legislation about women and children working in mines, the creation of ragged schools and reformatories, the rise and progress of the temperance movement, the many efforts to ameliorate the condition of the working classes by education, sanitation, public parks, and recreation grounds,—all these things have been the creation of the last fifty years. I call them healthy symptoms of our condition as a nation. I humbly confess that we are still very imperfect. There is still a vast amount of improvidence, wilful poverty, drunkenness, impurity, and Sabbath-breaking in the land which is greatly to be regretted. But these evils are less than they were in proportion to the population. And, at any rate, we see them, know them, and are honestly using means to prevent them. Surely our hearts, when we compare 1837 and 1887, ought to be deeply thankful.

On a day like this it is meet, right, and our bounden duty to praise God. Let me earnestly entreat all whom I address today to turn from the black clouds in his horizon, to look at the blue sky, and to be thankful. Where is the nation on the face of the globe which has had such reason to thank God for the last half century as Great Britain? And who can deny that, in reckoning up the many blessings of that period, we have reason to thank God for the wise and beneficent reign of our Queen? There are names in the long roll of English kings which no Englishman can think of without shame. The memory of a Royal William, or Henry, or Edward, or James, or Charles, or George, is by no means always fragrant. But I doubt if the future historian will ever record the name of a monarch whose subjects will have had such cause to be thankful as we have for Queen Victoria.

And now to these praises and thanksgivings let us add an earnest prayer that the life of our beloved Sovereign may yet be spared to us for many years, and that these years may be years of increasing happiness and use-

fulness to the end. We all know that she has had many sorrowful times to pass through. The deaths of the Prince Consort, the Princess Alice, and the Duke of Albany, were crushing trials which will never be forgotten. Let us pray that she may be spared further trials of this kind, that she may long continue to live in the affections of a prosperous, united, and contented people, and that when she is removed from this world of sorrow, she may enter with an abundant entrance into that kingdom where tears are wiped from all eyes, and receive that crown of glory which alone never fades away.