

Plain Sermons by Contributors to 'Tracts for the Times'
Volume Three—Edward Bouverie Pusey
London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1841.

SERMON LXXXII.
ST. BARNABAS—CHRISTIAN KINDLINESS AND CHARITY.

ACTS iv. 30, 37.

“And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, son of consolation), a Levite, of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles’ feet.”

BLESSED saint! who thus at the very outset of his course, and immediately upon his conversion, brought forth such fruits, that out of the whole multitude that believed, he was singled out for the praise of the HOLY GHOST by the Apostles’ mouth. When “all that believed had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all, as every man had need,” yet was he chief among chief; all, who were “possessors of lands and houses” did the like, and all, the very least, shall have their praise of GOD, one by one, at the Great Day; yet he, as an earnest of a higher crown and a greater reward, is chosen out of all by name, and handed down to us, wherever the Gospel is preached, as the “son of consolation.” As an example of fidelity, he is set over against one, Ananias, the instance of dissimulation; a vessel of GOD’S mercy over against the example of His judgments; “GOD working in him to will and to do of His good pleasure,” as in that unhappy one Satan ruled, “putting into his heart to lie to the HOLY GHOST;” and so as the one has for eighteen centuries, and shall, while the world lasts, be a bye-word and a warning against his sins, covetousness and lying, so till time shall be no more, is the very name of St. Barnabas the herald of his good deeds and of GOD’S acceptance of this outset of his piety; his former name is well nigh forgotten by us, and scarcely known certainly what it was; he bears the title, even on earth, of GOD’S acceptance; his name bespeaks him, as above others, the refresher of his brethren, and in them of CHRIST his LORD and JUDGE. His very name is an earnest of his final sentence, that being “merciful,” he “shall obtain mercy.”

Such was he in the outset; and more blessed far, that such, yea, more than such, he continued to the end; blessed, that he who cast the price of his lands, as a new convert, in all humility at the Apostles’ feet, was himself (in a manner, out of the appointed course,) raised up to be an Apostle; GOD appointing, as it were, a new thing, and enlarging the number of the Apostles, to receive him whom HE so approved, and who, when invisibly summoned, had “forsaken all to follow” CHRIST; and what Simon Magus would have purchased by money and was accursed, be, by the abandonment of his money, attained, and having therein discovered an Apostolic spirit, had an Apostolic reward. Happier yet,

that he so discharged his high office, as again to have brought down the praise of his LORD. "He was a good man," Holy Scripture saith, "and full of the HOLY GHOST and of faith." What words are these, my Brethren! "Full of the HOLY GHOST." We have often heard them, and so our ears have become dull to them. We know but little of it, and so we pass it by, as were it some ordinary thing. Yet so does Scripture entitle only one human being besides, and him that one, who was chosen to the high dignity of being first in "the noble army of martyrs;" first to be "baptized in the Baptism" of his LORD, to share His death, to confess HIM before men, to be "confessed by HIM before His FATHER Which is in heaven." For although the Apostles bid their brethren, "look out among you seven men of honest report, full of the HOLY GHOST," yet among the seven so chosen, Holy Scripture singles out St. Stephen only for this great title; "they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the HOLY GHOST;" this it repeats of him, just on the eve of his martyrdom, when his whole countenance, gleaming with the holy light of the Indwelling SPIRIT, was visibly, to all who beheld, "like the face of an angel," and he, through that SPIRIT, saw through the heaven of heavens, to the very Throne of GOD, "and the SON of MAN standing at the right hand of GOD." To him alone, besides St. Barnabas, does Scripture bear witness, that he "was full of the HOLY GHOST;" doubtless it was so with the twelve; it may have belonged to those who were thought worthy to be called to be Apostles; as, when our LORD called His "chosen vessel," St. Paul, at once to the faith and to his Apostleship, Ananias was sent unto him that he might "be baptized and wash away his sins," and "receive his sight and be filled with the HOLY GHOST;" doubtless, not for the time only (as is related of others), but to abide in him. Yet so far it has pleased GOD, that of these two only it should be recorded that they were "full of the HOLY GHOST;" nay, the mysterious depth of the title is thereby enlarged, that Scripture does so speak of ONE besides, HIM "in Whom all the fulness of the GODHEAD dwelt," our very Blessed LORD Himself. Again, think of the title in itself; he saith not only as at other times, "filled," but "full of the HOLY GHOST," i.e. not only filled for a time, but lastingly, abidingly; and "full" of Whom? of the HOLY GHOST, of GOD. Why, if we have from time to time some faint visitings of HIM; if we are stirred up to conquer self more resolutely, to serve GOD more fervently, to deny ourselves more for GOD'S glory or man's salvation, or in the language of our Church, "feel in ourselves the SPIRIT of CHRIST mortifying the works of the flesh and our earthly members, and drawing up our minds to high and heavenly things, it filleth us with joy, and doth greatly establish and confirm our faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through CHRIST;" men treasure through years the memory of such moments as these; amid much weakness and unsteadiness of purpose they turn back in thought to these bright spots; they often build their hope of salvation on them, although love has since waxed cold;—but to be ever thus, to be ever filled with the HOLY GHOST, to be able to endure in every part His fiery presence, which consumeth all that is corrupt or earthly or defiled, "with the Spirit of Judgment and the Spirit of burning," how can our dull hearts even think of this? "GOD is a consuming fire," and where HE dwelleth, HE must consume all which is alien or offensive to HIM; and HE dwelleth in us, in proportion

as we shrink not from that burning touch, which (often with much pain that reaches to the very inmost soul) cleanses and makes us meet for His indwelling by consuming what is unfit. What then must he have been in whose whole self HE dwelt; who was “full of the HOLY GHOST;” whose capacity of GOD’S Presence had been so enlarged, in whom the earthly dross had been so refined, the interior of the temple of his body so purified from mere earthly garnishings, that it could be filled with GOD, full in every part, nothing excluded, every thought, wish, desire, feeling, action, motion, pulse of his whole frame, instinct with GOD; every chord of his whole heart vibrating truly to the touch of GOD, and answering to no other impulse,—self wholly subdued, and “GOD all in all,” his spirit, soul, and body. Should I say, that this is to be “full of the HOLY GHOST?” No! I have spoken only of some accidents of it, some modes of His manifestation, some things without which it could not be, but what in itself is, he only could tell who himself were so filled, or GOD Who filleth him. Others could as little conceive of it as of the joys of Heaven, which heart hath never conceived, and to which it were most like: it were probably as little like what most Christians can guess of, as the mid-day sun is to the first faint gleam of twilight, which breaks through our darkness. For it is of GOD, yea the fulness of GOD; and of GOD none can know but through GOD, communicating HIMSELF unto them. What they in whom GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT thus partially putteth forth Himself are in their holiest moments, can furnish but a faint image of them in whom HE dwelleth in His “fulness.” Divine light and heat, like their visible emblems, when brought together in one, are beyond all measure intenser.

Yet with these words so great, is added another quality, which the world fancies it esteems, and which they who would be religious often despise—that he “was a good man;” good, not in the sense in which our LORD says “none is, save GOD,” good in HIMSELF, but in that sense in which GOD is also said to be good, benevolent, kind to us His creatures. And so GOD hath joined together what is higher far than man can conceive, and which man cannot understand except in so far as he is made partaker of GOD, and what seems to him a light and easy thing—in order to show that no grace or virtue is to be taken singly, but that one animating spirit must run through and cement them all together, even that HOLY SPIRIT wherewith the Apostle St. Barnabas was “filled;” that nothing is light in itself, but that as every sin and every lie cometh and is connected with the father of lies, so every thing may be sanctified and bear the impress of GOD. And so in this case, what when severed from other graces may become what is called mere good-nature, or an easy kindness of disposition, which pains not others, because so to do would pain itself, and pains them not even for their good, may also become worthy of the praise of Holy Scripture, and is by it abundantly praised, is singled out for praise in one who was “full of the HOLY GHOST,” nay, is akin to an attribute of ALMIGHTY GOD HIMSELF,—His loving-kindness, that essential quality of the Divine Nature, whereby HE imparteth HIMSELF to all His creatures who are capable thereof, “is loving unto every one, and His mercy is over all His works.”

Yet neither is this all; the words are not alone, but are a key to other Scriptures

and to the life of the blessed Saint whose memory we this day cherish. In every character there are probably, whether in good or evil, some one or two qualities prominent. Bad men have rarely all vices; and GOD'S saints have, for the most part, some one more conspicuous excellence. Of course, no excellence can stand altogether alone, for GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT will not dwell with sin, It will not manifest Itself in one way only, but will gradually absorb and penetrate the whole man, and though acting in different degrees, will still act in all, subdue all, be apparent in all. As the light of day penetrates every corner of this house of GOD, although in some places more brightly, so must the light of GOD, or GOD who is Light, every corner of the Christian's heart, although in some more purely. "The whole body" must be "full of light, and no part dark," although the light enter into one part more visibly. And hereby may a person best know whether any thing which seems good in him is a mere natural quality, or a Christian grace, namely by this, whether it be in him alone, or nearly alone, or whether the whole man, his whole temper of mind and actions, be in the course of being made subject to the love of GOD. In whatever degree this be taking place in him, in that degree he may hope that whatever good thing is found in him is the work of the Indwelling SPIRIT of GOD. Yet of Christian graces is that also true, "every man hath his own gift of GOD, one in this manner and another in that manner." Even in the Saints of Holy Scripture, we see some one quality conspicuous; in Abraham, unhesitating faith; in Isaac, tranquil patient expectation; in Job, patience; in Joseph, purity; in Daniel, uncorruptible self-denial from boyhood onwards; in Moses, a holy zealous meekness; in Joshua, a leader's, in Elijah, a prophet's zeal; in St. John, love for his MASTER'S Person and for his brethren; in St. Peter, for His Office; in St. John Baptist, self-denying austerity; in St. Paul, the earnestness of one to whom much had been forgiven; in St. Barnabas, goodness of heart. "All these worked one and the self-same SPIRIT, dividing to every man severally as HE willed." Other and manifold graces, of course, there were in these holy men, and without them these graces had not obtained their excellence or had been blighted; thus in Joseph, filial and brotherly affection; in Daniel, love and watchful prayer for His people; in Moses, sympathy with the people of GOD, and rejection of a throne and of the world for their sake; but still in their different proportions; St. John and Moses, and St. Peter and St. Paul, were full of zeal, but it showed itself in a different way, and what in the one was a chief grace, was in the other subordinate; GOD showing His power thus variously, that none might despise the other, because he had not his excellence; and showing forth in each thus conspicuously some one grace, that in each some attribute of GOD might be the more glorified, and by all an example of the whole company of Christian graces be exhibited as in a high degree realized in men of like nature with ourselves.

That then most conspicuously realized in St. Barnabas was Christian kindness. We first hear of him as the "son of consolation," and that (whatever other meanings it may have had) in connection with his parting with "lands and houses for the kingdom of heaven's sake." Next, when Saul essayed to join himself to the disciples at Jerusalem, and they were all "afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple," it is Barnabas

(again the “son of consolation”) who reassures them, and obtains for St. Paul the communion of his brethren: when others shrank from the persecutor, Barnabas informed himself that he was indeed a disciple of HIM Whom before he blasphemed. And in this world what rarer act of charity than—not to be indifferent to sin, because men love it, but—to take pains to ascertain that one who has deeply sinned is a true penitent, and so bring back to the brethren one whom even they shrink from? “Charity thinketh no evil.” Again, when men of Cyprus and Cyrene had, through the hand of the LORD with them, “brought many at Antioch to turn to the LORD,” Barnabas was sent down by the Apostles, and then follows that praise of Scripture just spoken of; “When he came, and had seen the grace of GOD, he was glad, and exhorted them all with purpose of heart to cleave unto the LORD, for he was a good man, and full of the HOLY GHOST and of faith; and” (by his coming) “much people was added unto the LORD.” “Charity rejoiceth in the truth.” “Charity envieth not, is not puffed up;” he rejoiced at this which was done, although done by men inferior to himself, took the lower place, and as the “son of consolation” built up and exhorted those whom he had not himself won to the Gospel. Nor would he remain chief among them, but departed straightway to Tarsus to seek Saul, by whose brighter light his own glory was to be eclipsed. “Charity seeketh not her own.” Next, when the Gospel was to be carried beyond its then confines, into the centre of the heathen, Asia Minor, he is chosen by the HOLY GHOST HIMSELF, and separated with St. Paul “to the work.” Here also, although the elder in the faith, he gives the first place to Paul the younger; he who had recently been a protector of St. Paul, and presented him to the brethren, now subjected himself to him whose advocate and patron he had lately been; although chosen and placed first by GOD, “separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work,” he takes the lowest place: majestic in appearance, so that the poor heathen thought him their very chief god himself, the very king of their gods, their Jupiter, he gave place to him “who was in bodily presence weak,” so that St. Paul was the chief speaker. When “the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, If ye have any word of exhortation to the people, say on, Then Paul stood up.” “Charity vaunteth not itself.” Once only in life doth Holy Scripture speak of a sharp contention, as once only did Moses, “speak unadvisedly with his lips;” the one lost Canaan, the other was severed for ever from the companion of his labours, whom he had brought to the Apostles, with whom he had been “separated to the work.” So heavily doth GOD chastise the errors of His distinguished servants; one sharp contention severed for ever, by GOD’S appointment, those who yet remained one in mind. Yet even here St. Paul and Barnabas each acted according to their several graces, wrong only in this, that their “contention was sharp;” St. Paul, the austere maintainer of a holy discipline, urged not to take him who had departed from them in peril; St. Barnabas, as he had before explored the truth of St. Paul, so doubtless now also of his sister’s son, and would again, take the untried but penitent companion. And so, GOD overruling, each took his several province, and the Gospel was the more spread; and the milder Apostle was sent to the weaker inhabitants of Cyprus, the sterner and more energetic to the wilder heathen: nor yet was Mark advanced to that office of visiting the

Churches from which he before shrunk, and the charitable severity of St. Paul impressed on St. Mark the heinousness of his fault, and prepared him, by GOD'S grace, to be stern with himself, and the founder of a strict and courageous Church, and for his crown of martyrdom; and the tender kindness of St. Barnabas saved him from being abandoned, and from being "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow," and fainting at the outset. "Charity suffereth long and is kind." Yet, though thus mild, he had the firmness so often separated from mildness, so that even when St. Peter yielded unduly to the Jewish Christians, St. Paul thought it strange that "even Barnabas should be carried, hurried, away." It was but for a short time, it would seem, and then, borne or hurried away by the dignity perhaps of St. Peter. There are yet two more incidents noticed of St. Barnabas; the one, that when a work of charity to the poor saints of Jerusalem was prepared by those of Antioch, Barnabas was chosen to bear it,—still indicating his mercifulness. The other illustrates his self-denial. The text relates how he sold his hereditary possessions, and left his lands for the Gospel's sake; and afterwards he lived, not even on any common stock, he availed himself not of his privilege to "live of the Gospel," as "preaching the Gospel," hut, like St. Paul, "his own hands ministered to his necessities."

"Have I only and Barnabas," asks St. Paul, as if it were something almost peculiar to them, "I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working?"

Such, then, was the eminent saint whom our Church would this day call to our minds, whom JESUS CHRIST chose, out of the order, as it were, to be, with St. Paul, the Apostle of us Gentiles: in one thing conspicuous, of one grace the human exemplar among his brethren, but throughout in harmony, in nothing jarring, or resisting the pervading influence of that HOLY SPIRIT, Which filled him wholly, and attuned every thought in its whole compass to the blissful sympathies of heaven. Firm and self-denying, yet compassionate on the infirm; meek and gentle, yet "delivering over his life unto death," (as the Apostles bare him witness,) for the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; charitable, so as to command Apostolic respect, and bring down the praise of GOD, at once delivering over all he had, not claiming even the distribution of it, seeking neither power nor influence, but taking contentedly the lower place, and through the long succession of years maintaining himself with an unpretending simplicity; with outward advantages of person and of the learning of the priestly tribe, yet in godly sincerity setting others higher than himself; yea he had, concentrated in himself, all those natural advantages which men boast of, that outward appearance which once deceived even the eye of Samuel, wealth, learning, winning character, high expectations, noble descent, (i. e. descent from that tribe whose privilege of being near the LORD, the great of the world then thought higher than their own,) yet all, descent, popularity, wealth, learning, reputation, outward show, he held as nothing, followed implicitly our LORD'S command, "Whosoever shall be great among you shall be your minister;" consecrated or gave up all to GOD, and so received all back from GOD, the praise of GOD which he sought, and the praise of men which he sought not; and humbling himself he was exalted, and how much more shall he be exalted at the Great Day!

Say I this as if I would herein praise St. Barnabas? Oh no! What have we to do with praising Saints and Martyrs of Apostolic days, who, at our best estate, are so unlike them? What have we to do with praising, as from ourselves, those whose praise GOD hath sealed? Our safest praise is (as our Church this day doth for us) reverently to repeat what Scripture saith of them. Our safest praise, said I? No, for ourselves, our safest praise were to awake, to arouse ourselves, to be following his steps, to praise him by actions conformable to his, to realize his life again on earth, to be in our measure St. Barnabas'; so shall his praise, and the praise of GOD in him, be the more multiplied, when many, like him, shall add to their faith manly courage, and to manly courage knowledge, and to knowledge self-restraint, and to self-restraint enduringness, and to enduringness godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity, and so be—what? perfect saints? no—but “neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our LORD JESUS CHRIST;” when many, like him, shall hear their SAVIOUR’S voice, “Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow ME.”

It is indeed part of natural piety to keep in grateful remembrance these our benefactors, our fathers in CHRIST, the founders of our Church, the foundation whereon, in CHRIST JESUS, we are built up: we keep the birth-day of our kings, and rightly, since through them we may “lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty;” we keep the anniversary of our victories, (would we kept them as the memory of GOD’S deliverances,) where Christian blood has been by Christians shed, and we think that the memory thereof will increase the patriotism and courage of our citizens. And would not our Christian courage in fighting our good fight, and would not our love for our heavenly country be more stirred up within us, if we kept the birth days of our heaven-born warriors (the days on which by the death of martyrdom they were born to endless glory); if we meditated thereon, what they had been, what they are, what they shall be, saints on earth, with their LORD in Paradise, with “white robes,” as the emblems of their acceptance in Heaven, to reign with HIM for ever? Yet they were also men like ourselves, with the same feelings, the same weakness of the flesh, though with mightier temptations; it was not their strength, but their weakness, and their LORD’S “strength made perfect in their weakness,” which triumphed over their weakness and Satan’s strength. “Is the LORD’S arm shortened at all that it cannot redeem, or hath HE no power to deliver?” GOD HIMSELF will answer, “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid His face from you, that HE will not hear.” His gifts were not confined to those His first children; His heritage is not wasted by passing through so many hands unto us; nor so narrow, that it should not suffice when diffused through so many nations and languages; and not rather multiply, as the loaves which HE blessed, so that it should satisfy and well fill all who wish to partake of it; His kingdom is not like earthly kingdoms, mighty at first, but gradually to decay; it is subject to no laws of human changeableness, of rise, and strength, and decay; it is subject to no law but only

His, that “they who seek the LORD shall renew their strength, shall mount up with wings as eagles, shall run (their blessed race) and not be weary, shall walk (in His ways) and not be faint;” no law but “that they who honour GOD, HE will honour; and they that despise HIM shall be lightly esteemed.”

And so now these our holy-days might well be turned into mourning, because we are, as it were, in captivity, and the “glory” of the Ancient Church is “departed,” and we “see not” the “signs” of GOD’S presence, “neither is there any prophet any more.” Yet it shall not be always thus. We believe that GOD’S “SPIRIT will” yet “be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field,” and His “weary inheritance” again “be refreshed,” and His glory more visibly appear; yea, we daily pray that this “His kingdom” may “come” in power. Nay, already there seemeth as it were the shaking of the dry bones, whereof the prophet spoke, “a noise, and lo! a shaking, and the bones coming together, bone to his bone,” and” the sinews and the flesh” may yet “come upon them, and the skin cover them from above,” and “the breath come into them,” and the universal Church, which now is in comparison but as a valley of dry bones, “live and stand up” again “upon her feet, a very great army.” Signs of these times there already appear to be; “the earth is shaken and the inhabitants thereof;” and so men look more to the Rock of Ages, which moveth not; slowly indeed do we seem to turn, yet motion is begun; bone seemeth to be coming to his bone, however far the time may be ere the full living SPIRIT of our GOD dwell in them. This period, these our festival-days, which from the very times immediately after the Apostles the universal Church has kept, by prayers, by thanksgivings and joy for the blessed departed, by receiving the Holy Communion (as is this day again offered you), may, if duly kept, hasten; kept, as they did, not by listlessly listening to their histories, but by imitating their deeds. The festivals which we keep in memory of our LORD, we keep chiefly in memory of His great loving kindness towards us; the festivals of these our fellow-servants we keep to remind us, how men have served our MASTER, how men may again serve HIM, that we may be these men. I mean not that most of us should look for such high office; it requires probably too steady a faithfulness from the beginning to be vouchsafed to such as us; we are too much entangled with the customs, and self-indulgent usages, and vain unrealities of the world, and have not faith enough to break through them; yet if we cannot be Barnabas, we may at least sit at the feet of Barnabas, and learn of him as he did of his Divine Master, and he and the holy angels will be glad at our return; gladder yet, if we could be partners of his glories.

And if not in us, yet in our children, GOD may yet raise up Barnabas, if we set before them, not the vain examples of the fleeting world around them, not to do as do others, but teach them to live with Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs, to emulate their doings, to seek their crown. And the way thereto lies through humility; by humbling themselves they became exalted, and we, if we meditate on what was realized in them, what in ourselves, may through that humiliation be the readier to resemble them.

And now, in what way I could attain unto, the example of one eminent saint of that goodly company has been set before you; “whose faith follow, knowing the end of

his conversation,” reward from his SAVIOUR’S hands in eternal glory. Imitate or labour to imitate it in its completeness, for so only can we attain to any portion of it, as it ought to be; charity without zeal is but a veil of indifference; alms-giving, without self-denial and benevolence, feeds but self-satisfaction and pride; sensitiveness to suffering, without sacrifice to relieve it, is but hypocrisy and selfishness. And this inconsistency but disgraces in the eyes of the world the very virtues which we would wish to honour, and “gives occasion to the enemies of our GOD to blaspheme.” Shall we wait then till we are consistent? so should we never begin; for it is amid many inconsistencies that we learn to be consistent; but only that we should begin evenly, not be very zealous for what we think man’s well-being, and forget GOD; or (which is the rarer error) be zealous for GOD, and forget man. For as he only loveth GOD who loveth his brother, so he only can love his brother who loves GOD. Yet blended together, although each at first imperfect, each grace will impart to the other of its light and warmth, until, while one grace be eminent, GOD’S “SPIRIT shall be shed abroad through “the whole “heart,” and pervade the whole man, yea, and fill it wholly.

And wherewith did St. Barnabas begin? The text tells us, with ardent, self-denying charity. He “having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles’ feet.” My Brethren, let me speak plainly; we in these latter days have been much more anxious to prove that the example of primitive times is not binding and imperative, than to look whether it be not an example and a privilege held out to those who can follow it. Granted that our LORD does put no such yoke upon us, that HE leaves us to a free and spontaneous service, that “while the land remains, is it not our own? and after it is sold, is it not in our own power?” Is this all? Followeth it, because a thing need not be done, because GOD’S wrath comes not upon us for not doing it, that therefore there is no privilege in doing it, no blessing annexed, no “good pleasure of our GOD” upon those who do so? Must we do all we may do? Granted that many of us are lawfully hindered, are all? Can no one Christian be found to do that in their lifetime, which at their deaths many still do, when they need it not,—give their substance unto GOD? How is it that what even in these latter times hundreds of thousands did to recover from the heathen the sepulchre of their LORD, where HE once had lain, “parted with their lands,” none now do for His living temple, wherein HE now dwelleth, even those who have been baptized into His Name, but who are being torn away by Satan? How is it that men, even in this land, sold their lands to build those goodly houses to our GOD, and now we build goodly houses for ourselves, and let the living temple of GOD lie waste? If all cannot be parted with lawfully, why not some? some, not merely of our superfluities, year by year, but (what only requires faith) of our substance so that we may be poorer in the sight of men, richer in the sight of GOD? How is it that we hear so much of the desirableness of “laying field to field, till there be no space,” of adding fortune to fortune, of increasing riches, and we hear scarcely at all of the blessing of diminishing riches, of parting with the world’s perishable goods, of parting with fields or lands, and giving the produce to GOD’S treasury, of lending to GOD, of clothing CHRIST? And yet who dares claim this to

himself? to whom almost would not the words seem too high to use? And rightly; for were we to claim such high titles as “lending to the LORD” to our petty pittances, it were hypocrisy as well as niggardliness. For what then are we keeping it? For pomp, for ostentation, for luxury, for things which perish in the using, for vanities, which at our Baptism we renounced, and which are destroying or enervating and emptying body and soul, emptying it of the HOLY GHOST, whereof St. Barnabas was full,—”for our own hurt,” as Scripture saith, both as a nation and as individuals.

Granted again, that those of us to whom GOD has entrusted more of this world’s goods than to others, may also, in moderation, lawfully enjoy them; that our frames often need more comforts than our poorer and hardier brethren; that the tastes which have been cultivated in us, may (in discretion) be lawfully gratified; that something is to be allowed even to the habits of society in which our lot is cast, and with whom and upon whom we are to act—followeth it, that because something is to be allowed, therefore every thing is? that because we may have some indulgences above others, therefore we may be self-indulgent? because we may have comforts, therefore we may be luxurious? that because some things are permitted us, therefore we are to forego nothing? that because we retain things decent, i. e. becoming in our station, therefore we are to fall in with our times, in which each rank has been copying that above it and deepening its luxuries? that because we may, without sin, expend on self, therefore it is not more blessed to deny self, and build temples to our GOD, or give to CHRIST in His poor? Even might we safely go on thus (and who remembering the “woe upon those who are rich!” can witness the habits of our upper and middling classes without misgiving and anxiety?) yet is there no brighter crown to be gained? Would there be no blessing, if our women broke off the ornaments (which it is at least safer¹ for Christian women not to wear) as the Jewish women of old, for the service of their GOD?—none on luxuries abandoned, establishments diminished, show and display laid aside, equipages dropped, superfluous plate cast into the treasury of GOD, the rich (where it might be) walking on foot here, that they may walk in glory in the streets of the city which are of pure gold?—all abridging our luxuries, comforts, ease, the things “coveted by the flesh, the eye, and the pride of life,” that we might give to those who need? Is it much for us to forego to this end such things as these, when to this end a Saint, an Apostle, the called of CHRIST, separated by the HOLY GHOST, who shall hereafter “sit on” one of the “twelve thrones,” worked with his own hands?

Alas, my Brethren, it is sickening to men like yourselves, who live in simpler abodes, to see again, after some absence, the poms and vanities which we have all renounced, enthroned in the edifices, and streets, and shops, of this vast city, and so (one knows too well) in the hearts of so many of GOD’S people! What then must it be to the ALL-HOLY?

Could we but once come to put the question to ourselves, “Is it then good for me to keep this? Need I it? or my children after me? May it not be spared? Might I not set aside this or that superfluity?” Could we but once think it a blessing that we might part with our wealth, instead of a blessing that we might accumulate it, or spend it upon the

lust of our eyes, GOD, if we sought wisdom of HIM, would guide us onward, would show us the way we should walk in, if we lifted up our eyes from this fleeting world, and fixed them on His Throne of Grace. So should we have more like St. Barnabas, more “laying up for themselves a good foundation, that they might obtain eternal life.” But now, because we take the maxims of the world as our guide instead of the Word of GOD, while we boast ourselves of our adherence to Scripture, the words of Scripture are like the charm in the deaf adder’s ear; we read them, hear them, boast of them, every thing but understand them and do them. GOD sets forth examples, and none follow them; invites, and none accept. HE saith, “by mercy and truth iniquities are purged away,” and we would have easier terms, and so keep our money and our sins; HE saith, “Whoso hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto Me, and what he layeth out I will repay him;” and we think it no privilege that GOD would make HIMSELF our debtor; HE saith, “Whoso soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously, and whoso soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly,” and we care not for the barren harvest, the barren harvest of everlasting glory, so we may be spared and sparing in our seed time. HE saith, “GOD loveth a cheerful giver,” and men reject the love of GOD, and the brightness of His Fatherly countenance, so that while they live they may “do well unto themselves, and count themselves happy men.”

The heart sickens, while it goes over such miserable faithlessness, such trust in the uncertainty of riches, and such mistrust of GOD our abiding good. It faints, more and more, as it sees the tens of thousands gathered together, “walking in a vain show, heaping up riches,” though “not knowing who shall gather them,” or spending them on vanities. And now it seems as if GOD were again warning us more loudly of their uncertainty; a heavy gloom, it is said, hangs every where over the prospects of many of our wealthiest; and men’s hearts failing them for fear; many are looking fearfully to that which is coming upon them; looking hither and thither whether there be any to save, whether there be any hope, or the sand-built house must fall. Whether the clouds will burst, and the crash come, we know not; but this we know, that whether it will or no, will depend, not on man’s foresight or contrivances, or the stability of houses, but upon the Providence of the living GOD. If we continue to idolize wealth, God, if HE take not His mercy from us, will take away our wealth, not to give it back to us, as had we given it to HIM, but in order to restore us to ourselves. So has HE done with us formerly; so did HE, not very many years past, with many among us, as a warning to us, not to tempt HIM further; and woe to that nation which neglects His warnings! Our vessel is overladen, and the storm is upon us; it were wise to lighten it for the present danger; how much more, when God will, in addition, mercifully accept what even in our fear we cast over, and keep it for us, and give it back to us, in “the true riches.” Man says, “heap up,” that you may be rich; God, “scatter,” and I will “increase” your riches.¹

¹ Preached in London during the commercial anxieties of 1837; the immediate alarm was mercifully removed; the warning is retained, since the history of all other luxurious commercial nations, shows how

But whatever now be, we must soon be laid “ashes to ashes, and dust to dust,” and then whose shall these things be? Oh may GOD fix all our hearts on that day, and open our eyes to behold our SAVIOUR returning as our Judge, to “take account of our stewardship!” Think on this awful hour; picture it to yourselves; this world burning up, heaven and hell before you, and, more than all, your very SAVIOUR’S countenance falling upon you, all your sins of your whole lives in review before you; nothing between you and your Judge, every thing open to His eye, and His eye on thee; think what it will then be to thee to hear the gracious words, “Forasmuch as thou hast done it to one of the least of these My brethren, thou hast done it unto ME;” think what it will be, by the mammon of unrighteousness, to make thy Judge thy Friend; and do as thou then wouldest wish thou hadst done. And ye, who are now about to approach once more to the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of CHRIST our SAVIOUR, to meet HIM again face to face, and that “you may dwell in HIM, and HE in you,” you have often, I doubt not, felt distressed that (however it arose) what you offered at this most awful moment, bore so small a proportion to your other charities, that what you offered at GOD’S Altar could not be called even an earnest of your debt to HIM. To-day, the day of the Apostle of Charity, your MINISTER will give to all those who, with their souls and bodies and the memorials of their SAVIOUR’S suffering, purpose to offer on His Altar their alms, an opportunity of glorifying greatly His Holy Name. The alms this day offered are to aid in the plan lately formed by our Bishops for providing those² who shall take care for the souls of your hitherto neglected Brethren; it is to impart to them the blessing which you have richly. Not to interfere with your other gifts to this same purpose, (for all which you can give and more is needed,) but, as it were, an earnest that you wish to follow the example which GOD has by His Church this day set before you, to have some portion of the praise and of the crown of Barnabas.

You are approaching in a mysterious manner to your REDEEMER and INTERCESSOR; HE will be spiritually present, spiritually impart HIMSELF: what you give, you give in His Presence to His very SELF; and HE in Heaven, where HE sitteth in the glory of THE FATHER, will present with your repentance, your love, and your faith, these fruits of your faith to His FATHER, bedewed with His own Blood. HE delegates to you the high office of enabling those whom HE has appointed, to hire fresh labourers into His vineyard, to gather His own scattered sheep, for whom HE laid down His life; yea, what you offer is (sanctified by that His Blood) the price of souls. May HE so enlarge our narrowed hearts in love for His members, that HE may HIMSELF dwell more largely in the hearts, which by love HE hath opened.

precarious our dizzy prosperity is, that the giddier its height, the more it needs GOD’S arm to hold it up, the more sudden and hopeless (unless we humble ourselves) will probably be its fall.

² The Additional Curates’ Fund, then just formed.