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THE SORROW OF LENT

FOR SIN, AND NOT FOR SUFFERING;

THE MORNING SERMON

IN

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BURLINGTON,

ON THE

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT,

February 22d, A. D., 1863.

BY THE RECTOR,

THE REV. WM. CROSWELL DOANE, B. D.

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S E R M O N .

*ST. MATTHEW X. 34.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Hard, indeed, is this saying of the Prince of Peace. It is a private, confidential utterance to the twelve Apostles. He begins, in this chapter to draw, closer to His heart, nearer to His thoughts, more in contact and communion with what St. Paul calls, "the mind of Christ," those whom He was so soon to leave, as lambs, Himself the Shepherd, far away, in the midst of wolves. And they *are* hard sayings. The herald song of the Angel Chorus was strung upon this earthly note of Peace. The heavenly chord was "*Glory*;" the echo, as it rebounded against the hard and frozen ground, upon that winter morning, in accord with *it*, was *peace*. Long ago, in the prophetic enumeration of His titles, and His offices, this one was secured to the promised Child, "the Prince of Peace." And the beautiful feet of Jesus and His disciples, as they trod down the mountain sides of the old centuries, before the rapt eye of the inspired Seers, were "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace." And yet, this is His saying, "I came not to send peace; I came to send a sword." *How* is it, rather, *is* it, that there is discord, between the voice that the Church uttered with the opening Christmas season, and the voice with which she introduces this solemn fast of Lent. Beloved, I want you to undertake with me a quiet, thoughtful study of these striking words, and to take home, the plain and practical Lenten bearing of them upon your lives. By a strange coincidence,

* The first lessons for the day, were the seventh and ninth chapters of the prophecy of Jeremiah; and the second morning lesson was the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

this is a day which, for many and many a year, has been a Saint's day, in the calendar of patriotism. I honour the spirit that honours such a day, and such a man, as, on this day, God gave to all the world. And upon this day, the nation enters, through all its length and breadth, either directly as Church people, or indirectly in the great and growing influence of the Church upon the outer world; upon this day, the nation enters, from one end to the other end, from one side to the other side, upon the solemn Lenten Sundays. It is not unfitting, that a veil of Christian thoughtfulness and sorrow floats around the great memory of to-day. We should not keep it half so well in any *direct* celebration, as here, and now, among the awful national warnings with which to-day's Holy Scriptures overrun. And yet, I am not here, nor are you, to name a human name, to keep an earthly feast. I speak only of the providential pointing, which, by this sort of patriotic holy day, leads up our thoughts, from the prophetic denunciations of a ruined nation, to see the threatened ruin of our own. Instead of that complacent and vainglorious boasting, which has, for years, exhausted rhetoric, in search of words sufficiently self-glorifying to boast our national superiority, in freedom and success, to any people of the earth; instead of the proud vaunting of that courage and strength, by which we were *delivered* from subjection into sovereignty; instead of these, there are the discordant voices of men contending unto blood for *rights*; of men who, with the readiest counsel and most freely offered, yet fail to find the remedy for our national disease; and amid these, we hear the rumblings of that far off thunder which comes across the sea, and the cries from the battle-fields, the groans from the hospitals, and the wailing from fatherless, widowed, childless homes. And down through all this noise, this discord, this confusion, *making* itself heard, as thunder does, above all earth-born sounds, falls this great voice of God, in the first lesson for this morning's service, upon the very day when we are wont to praise our human deliverer, to glory in our human deliverance; in words, to whose terrible truthfulness, who dares to give the lie, words, to whose wondrous application, who will venture to refuse assent; words, from whose awful responsibility which one of us can writhe away? "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery and swear falsely and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods, whom ye know not; and come and stand before ME, in this House, whereupon my Name is called, and say, '*We are delivered*

to do all these abominations.'" Ah, my brethren, delivered men, free men, are not they who are the slaves of such enchaining and debasing habits. "Abraham's seed, and never in bondage to any man," is well enough for boastful lips to say; but "he that committeth sin, is the servant of sin." "While we speak of liberty, we are the servants of corruption;" and all our national pride, that totters now, so miserably to its fall, is but the trusting "in lying words that cannot profit."

And then comes, Lent—right in the midst of wars, of sufferings untold to heart and body, of fraud, of political strife and contentions, of wranglings after place, of graspings after money, of extortion, of bribery, of violence, of drunkenness, of profanity, of **irreverence*, of wanton triviality, of wickedness in high places and in low; right in the midst of all this, comes in Lent; with its fasts, its heart-searchings, its humiliation, its self-denials, its penitence, its confessions, and its prayers. There is a Lent of *sorrow* over all the land. With forced mirth, or mocking frivolity, the world of fashion gilds and glosses over the groans and tears, the fears, the anxious uncertainties, the terrible possibilities of every day. But, literally and truly, the echo of the laughter is a knell: and they are ghastly skeletons, in almost transparent robes, that make gay the carnival routs of these sad times; for "from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem, the Lord God has caused to cease the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, for the land is desolate." Oh my beloved, let us do what in us lies, to make it a Lenten time of devotion, of penitence, of *grief for sin*, of voluntary self-punishment; lest there be written, uttered, soon of us, those words, too terrible almost for utterance, those words of such utter, outer hopelessness and ruin; "pray *not* thou, for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession for them, for *I will not hear thee*."

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." You know, that in the elder days, there were many sentimental expectants of Messiah's reign, who looked for all

* It is incredible, yet said to be true, that a *public* speaker, within a few weeks, in a *public* speech, closed with this *hyper*-blasphemous parody, "There is none other name under heaven, given among men in whom this nation must be saved but only the name of—Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States."

good and perfect human gifts of peace, prosperity and plenty, and the kingdom restored to Israel. The Apostles shared the common hope, in some degree. They fondly dreamed to have heaven transplanted to the earth; as though some traveller should scoop a hollow, in a floe of ice in Baffin's Bay, to plant in it, a tropical palm. They forgot that great lesson, of God's *gradual* dealings, God's *gradual* development of everything. They lost sight of that essential and inherent, axiomatic truth, in the Divine economy, which gives no gifts, till men are fitted for their reception and appreciation; which only sends the mature and mellow fruit, when patient waiting has stood in the working footprints of unwearied toil, trodden deeply into the earth, which has been dug and furrowed and tormented, with the sharp teeth of spade and hoe and share. And they looked for peace to be the instantaneous result of the Messiah's kingdom; the sudden and spontaneous outgrowth, wooed by the sun and wind of Heaven, from soil that had been rank with every sort of noxious weeds. The dew of the Messiah's birth was "of the womb of the morning;" His dew was "as the dew of herbs," and the earth was "to cast out its dead;" its old and honored *wrongs*.

But *with the influences* of heaven, must be the toils, and trials and tortures of earth. And against this sentimental expectation, this theory of an unaided, effortless, spontaneous, irresistible outpouring of peace; this expectation of a harvest with no seed-time, no patient waiting, no toilsome work, the Saviour lifts the denial of His purpose, in the great words of the text, "I am not come to send peace." It was the very longing of His soul, the one and only intention, for which He had left the Father's side in Heaven; "of twain to make one man;" to reconcile the Gentile and the Jew; to make mankind at one with God. By a designed coincidence, His birthday fell upon an age of peace. The gates of Janus were closed, for the third time only, since Rome was built.

* "Peace, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing, the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving with her myrtle wand,
She strikes an ~~amorous~~ peace, through sea and land.
No war, or battle's sound
Was heard the world around:

* Milton's hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity.

The idle spear and shield were high up hung,
The hooked chariot stood,
Unstained with hostile blood,
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was by."

But this was but the prophetic picture of a history which should be realized through the travail pains of strife and war. From that day forth, there has not been an age, in which the very signs of the great judgment day have not been enacted, in the wars and rumours of wars, the distress of nations, the failing of men's hearts for fear and for perplexity. And HE who ruleth over all from the beginning has vindicated, all along, and in no age more fully than in ours, the truth of these great words: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." Painting, in that day of the first coming, in faint and shadowy outlines, the picture of that peace, which, at His second coming shall be perfected and made perpetual, He has, in His providential ordering of the world, connected the hopeful seed time with the fulfilled harvest, by the series of hoes and harrows, of spades and ploughshares, that have furrowed the wide earth, into a great universal grave of the hopes, the hearts, the bodies of men. And yet, beloved, His purpose, His intention, His final object, His certain accomplishment, is peace. But it is peace, through the sword. The figure of the text is strong even to violence. Its perfect consistency, to our shortsighted vision, that cannot discern the beginning from the end, seems contradiction. We may perhaps read in one version of the Christmas Carol, that the peace is only "to *men of good-will," to men† well-pleasing unto God; and so, knowing our ill-will to one another; our tone of life and heart, displeasing unto God, we may avoid the seeming contradiction of the Lenten and the Christmas voices. Or we may take, as we had better, higher ground; and appropriate the bitter warning of the text; that our peace, the only peace that God will send upon this earth, is a peace won by the sword; the peace of God's victory, through the sword of the Cross, over the powers of evil and the god of this world; the peace of our self-conquest, by the sword of suffering self-denial; of our conquering the world, by the

* "Pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis." "ἀνθρωποις ἐνδοκίας."
† "Homines bene placiti."

sword of sharp, severe and violent attack, upon its enthroned wrongs, its crowned evils, and its usurping sins. This is the force, the power of the words. That peace, which the Prince of Peace will give to all mankind, He must, because of our wickedness, wring from us with the sword, and therefore, He sends that sword which shall conquer and compel His peace. Dearly beloved, the religion of Jesus Christ comes into this world, in complete contrast, in open opposition, in direct warfare, with its spirit. The peace, the world seeks, and is satisfied with, is the stagnant compromise with corruption, which leaves the rotting sediment intact, to spread its slimy silence, breeding death, upon the surface of the tide of time, which is stilled by the weight of its disgusting presence. As when, a violent inflammatory disease brings torturing pains to the poor body of the sick man, the doctor hopes for cure; but, when the painlessness of mortification sets in, the patient is encouraged, and the physician hopeless; so has our peace been the hopeless token of inevitable death, to every body but ourselves. And He is the good physician who prefers our pain; He is the Prince of Peace, the only Giver of real peace, who is come to send the sword. It is not His choice, His gift, His preference. But we pervert His purpose, by our sins. We compel, by our corruptness, the means He uses, to attain His end. And it is He, therefore, who, in all ages and in all the world, He, who, in this age and in our land, is come in the disastrous dangers that sadden all our hearts, sending not peace *first*, but the sword; the sword, to win for us His peace. Now I beseech you, brethren, to take in this truth, to keep in view this end; to own the absolute necessity and cause of this. It is a voice to you and me as individuals, to us as Burlingtonians, to us as Americans. "I am not come to send peace, but a sword. Think ye not that I am come to send peace." Think not, that this money-making, self-glorifying, power-increasing, party-serving, self-seeking stillness of our former years, is His peace. This sorrow, this severance, this suffering, this shame; this is His gift. What are you sorry for; what are you suffering from; what are you keeping Lent about? O selfish, silly hearts! We are all sorry for the suffering which may check our sin, not for the sin which causes all our suffering. We are grieving for the sword, which Jesus Christ sends to hew out for us final, perfect and perpetual peace. We are mourning for the loss of that flimsy, shallow, stagnant, corrupt and poisonous prosperity, which, in our blindness, we mistook for peace. Look at that other word of God: "I am

come to send fire on the earth, and, what will I, if it be already kindled." Take the two words together; the fire and the sword. And what will He; He, who is to fall the first victim to this sword; to the fury of this fire; He wills, He longs, He desires that the fire be kindled, that the sword be whetted, that the fury be accomplished; the sword to prune, the fire to purge, the evil that is in the world. And we, we do not share in His desire; we dread the sword, we fear the fire; we are content with the evil, we complain and mourn at the suffering, we are satisfied with the sin. Beloved, these are tremendous words, for us to hear, as Christians entering upon Lent, as Americans, as citizens of our city. They suggest a national, a public evil and calamity. They imply public and national humiliation, and *sorrow for sin*. They do not shut out, but they involve, individual sorrow, because you and I, as individuals, make up the great mass of the city and the nation. And our sins, yours and mine, are the component parts of that great, giant mass of evil, which grasps the pierced Hand of Jesus, as it opens wide to pour down on us peace; and closes it, upon the hilt of a sharp sword, with its edge whetted against ourselves. What is the lesson? That we must keep this Lent *as sinners* not *as sufferers*; as Americans not as individuals, *only*. I would not take this sword as setting forth directly our terrible war. That is but part of the sword. I would not under-rate the agony of this war's sufferings; for I have seen, with you, the heart rendings of the unhusbanded, the unfathered, the unsonned: the maimed and dying in the hospitals. But there is a greater, deeper sorrow than all this; the sorrow for the sin that causes it. Look out among ourselves; how drunkenness stalks, openly, in sunlight in the streets. Look at those very hells on earth, within sound of our Church bells, in which, inhuman villains violate with impunity, even the broad permissions of the license law;* and barter their own souls away, for the sixpences they steal from starving households, when they sell the fire of drink to boys, to well known drunkards, to men who are drunk when they buy it. Look how a timid, time-serving, treacherous justice drags unconscious and stupefied sin to prison; and leaves these unrighteous traffickers to ply their infernal trade, unharmed. Look at the squinting eye of our law-administrators, that cannot see the back-doors open, because the front shutters are barred, in our drinking shops

* Appendix A.

on Sunday. Listen to the incessant roll of railroad transportation, desecrating the silence of God's Holy Day, and compelling hundreds of men to labour on the day of rest, in outright, *understood, acknowledged violation of the human law*:* which we permit, because we tolerate the men in office, who are afraid to stop it. Look at the fearful increase, in all the land, of this most deadly and destructive sin of drunkenness. Or go up higher. Look how for years, love, sympathy, good-will, the common-weal, have all been swamped in bigotry, intolerance, self-opinion, self-righteousness, violence, self-interest, disregard of public faith, self-will; in sectional pride, in personal or party spoils. Look at the vile and venal corruptness of our public men: almost the highest officers of federal and state governments accused and uncleared of shamefaced bribery; posts of the most sublime responsibility, at auction, to the richest bidder; the scramble after places of honour and of profit, conducted by the avowed, deliberate purchase of votes, in money given, in free and liberal entertainment, in the sale of under offices of trust; the holy halls of the administration of justice, of the legislation of right, of the execution of law, very bar-rooms and brothels for vileness and violence: while the wilful pursuit of party ends, the trivial, blaspheming, revolting *unappreciation* of the deep solemnity of the issues of the hour, make buffoonery and party victory and personal triumphs, the chief characteristics of this terrible time.

And yet, men only say, we are no worse than other nations. Oh, what a word is that! We, in the bare infancy of our life as a nation, avowedly as *bad* as the nations whose corruptness is imbecile with age: babies profane, and little boys inebriates. And yet how, *not* worse? The finger of God, in letters of blood, has written on the Capitol walls the sentence of its years of infamy in the management of our Indian affairs, and still for all that massacre, what is done? A few Indians are hung, and rightfully; the deeper-dyed heathen, on the borders and in the Agencies, go on sustained in their career of swindling, in the encouragement of the savage vices of those tribes, in their deliberate infection of them with disease and sin; till, even now, the noble Bishop of Minnesota lifts up this voice in warning of a Chippewa war to come, exceeding in bloody atrocity the Sioux massacre of the other day. The government of this *Christian* country

* Appendix B.

† Missionary Paper, No. 24, by the Bp Seabury Mission, Taribault, Minn., February, A. D. 1863; and also Church Journal for March 5th.

tolerates a Pagan temple and idol worship, in the heart of San Francisco. It administers the Senatorial oath to Mormons, who, in their support of the vile sensuousness of polygamy, have rejected utterly the Bible, on which the sacredness of an oath depends. And there is reserved for this age, a depth of degradation on which the moral decency of heathenism looks, frowning and amazed; in that new law, just passed the Senate, which seeks to compel me, or any other minister of the Prince of Peace, to bear arms and to shed blood. The heathen augurs stayed at home to consult the omens of the god of war. The Jewish priesthood, *in God's own battles*, stayed on the hill top, away from all the carnage, and held in prayer the issues of the fight. The Christian minister is to be forced out into the ranks; or compromise with wrong, by paying fines. Shall not God's soul "be avenged, on such a nation as this." And we, what are we to do; not to abuse, denounce and disobey: nay but to make these evils our own; to correct them, as we may, to pray, confess, amend. The Church, remember, has nothing to do with the mere civil enactments of the State. Her ministers must attack *all sin*: aiming at what lies *about them*; and at the underneath, immoral motives; not the outside, surface, political results. But you as Christian men have to do with these things, in influence, in votes, in your share of the administration of the country; to see to it, that not only shall the king be feared, the majesty of law sustained, and vindicated; but that beside, in all things, God shall be honoured too.

"I am come to send the sword; I am come to send fire, and what will I, if it be already kindled." The wise, far-seeing, deep, loving will of God desires and decides for us the sword; this sorrow, this suffering, this shame. Let us not deprecate *it*, nor grieve at *it*. National wickedness is worse, a great deal, than national war. But underneath this, let us confess, correct, attack, expose, the wide-spread and infectious corruption, which has left no part whole, from the head down to the lowest member of the body politic. We have leaned too long upon mere man; till now, in our hour of utmost need, God has left no one man, anywhere, upon whom any would be fool enough to lean; and we *must* fall back on God. We must accept the sword of our national calamity, as sent of Him.

Can it be that the Devil, has carried us up to the *pinnacle of our

* St. Matthew iv: 1; the Holy Gospel for the day.

national prosperity: that at his bidding, our only thought has been to make bread of stones, turning everything to gain. Have we listened, in our wicked longings after wider empire, to his false whisper. "I will give all these, to thee, if thou wilt worship me?" O let us prove it not so, by a vigorous, out-spoken, "Get thee hence Satan;" giving up bread, power, pride of place, all things that are his gifts and the reward of our service to him; and then God will send us the ministering angel of His peace. And the correction of these evils, that have forged and sharpened this bitter sword, must be personal, must be among ourselves. The outgrowths of this time, the leaders, the great men in their own esteem, must slough off, in the healing of this deep ulcer: and from the bottom, the heart, the depth, the nation, the people, must come up the healthy growth of new, sound, living flesh. The patched up peace of moneyed prosperity, gained by a bargain with selfishness and sin, must be given up; and the sword of the Lord, in its sharpest edge, be accepted and hugged to our hearts instead. And our Lenten work, as individuals of this great nation, is to turn from man, from sin, from self, "unto the Lord, with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning;" while "the Priests, the ministers of the Lord," under the very waving of this sword which Jesus sends, "weep between the porch and the altar," beseeching Him, *when it may be for our peace*, to stay His hand; and crying, with the full voiced antiphon of your response; "Spare thy people O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach."

In the darkness of the hour, the eyes of every human prophet fail to catch the breaking of the day. But we may feel our way through it, with groping hands, outstretched in prayer. It may be, that from this generation, so far gone backward from our fathers' virtues, the kingdom is to be taken away, "the crown" to "fall;" "for we have sinned." But for the great hope of future days, for the fulfilment of the promise of the past, we have sore need to confess, to plead, to pray; for the triumph of law, the vindication of violated authority; for victory, union, peace; for President, Congress and our arms; for restored virtue, for public honour and morality, and a return to the fear of God; crying "unto the Lord in our trouble," that He will,—*first* accomplish His work in us;—and *then*, in His own good time and way, "deliver us from our distress," "making this storm to cease till the waves thereof are still."

APPENDIX A.

It is thought that the execution of the Sec. 2nd only of this first law would give the city a yearly income of \$500, at least. If it can be proved a *paying business*; perhaps the law may be enforced. The suggestion is commended to the Council Committee on "Ways and Means."

"Be it ordained by the Inhabitants of the City of Burlington, in Common Council assembled, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same.

SEC. 1. It shall not be lawful for any person, not having a License to keep an Inn or Tavern, to sell or knowingly permit or cause to be sold by less measure than one quart any wine, rum, gin, brandy, cider, spirits, or other ardent spirits, or any other liquids of which distilled spirits shall form a component part, except such as are used or compounded for medicine, under penalty of Ten Dollars, for every such offence, or imprisonment in the jail of said City, for a term not exceeding ten days, at the discretion of the magistrate before whom such complaint is made.

SEC. 2. That if any person or persons, possessing or occupying any house, building, room, cellar or apartment of any kind within the limits of Burlington, shall, on the Christian Sabbath, or first day of the week, called Sunday, sell, permit, or cause to be sold therein any oysters, soup or refreshments of any kind, or beer, ale, cider, porter, or liquor of any kind, mixed or unmixed, or shall keep open any establishment for the sale of such articles, or shall permit any number of persons other than his, her or their own family to come together therein, and to remain drinking, tippling or misbehaving themselves, he, she, or they shall forfeit and pay the sum of Five Dollars for every such offence, to be recovered before the Mayor or any one of the Aldermen of this City."

An Ordinance relating to the Keepers of Oyster Saloons in the City of Burlington.

SEC. 2. That no License shall be granted to any person or persons for such purpose aforesaid, unless the Common Council shall be clearly of opinion that the grant of such license is necessary to accommodate the public; and that the person or persons applying for the same is and are reputable for honesty and temperance.

SEC. 4. That the applications for License shall be made to the Common

Council at least two weeks previous to the time when the same shall be granted,
 * * * and a certificate thereunto annexed, signed by at least ten respectable citizens and freeholders of the city, setting forth that such Oyster Saloon is necessary for the accommodation of the public, and that such person or persons is and are of good repute for honesty and temperance.

SEC. 5. That all such Licenses shall be * * * subject to be revoked by Common Council, by resolution, at any time, for a violation or neglect of any of the provisions of this or any other Ordinance which the Common Council shall or may pass, relative to the same.

SEC. 8. That no person or persons so licensed shall suffer any drunkenness, riot or other disorderly conduct in his, her or their place of business, or on his, her or their premises, under the penalty of Ten Dollars for the first violation hereof, and Twenty Dollars for each and every subsequent violation.

SEC. 9. That no person or persons so Licensed as aforesaid, shall incite, promote, encourage, permit or allow, or engage in any game of address or hazard * * * or any betting or gaming for money, or any other thing of value whatsoever, under the penalty of Ten Dollars for the first violation, and Thirty Dollars for every subsequent violation, his License shall forthwith be void, and such person or persons so convicted shall be incapable of being again licensed in like manner for two years thereafter.

APPENDIX B.

A Supplement to an Act entitled "An Act for suppressing Vice and Immorality."
 Approved April 15th, 1846. Approved March 16, 1854

SEC. 1. No transportation of freight; excepting milk, on any public highway, railroad, or canal, shall be done or allowed by any person or persons within this State, on the first day of the week, commonly called the Christian Sabbath: *Provided*, That nothing in this Act contained shall be construed so as to prevent the transportation of the United States mail by railroad or on the public highways, or to the regular trips of ferry boats within the State or between this and another State.

SEC. 4. Every Justice of the Peace in this State is hereby empowered and required, upon his personal knowledge or view, or other due information of any canal boat or railroad car, transporting freight through any part of this State as aforesaid, he shall be authorized and required to stop and detain the same, or order the same to be stopped and detained, at the cost and expense of the proprietor or proprietors of such canal boat or railroad car, until the following day, and then to be dealt with as hereinbefore is directed.