

FUNERAL SERMON

ON

JOHN STALLAN,

WHO WAS EXECUTED FOR ARSON, AT

CAMBRIDGE, DECEMBER 7, 1833;

AND BURIED AT HIS PARISH OF GREAT SHELFORD, THE

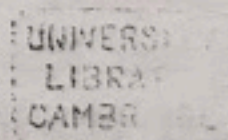
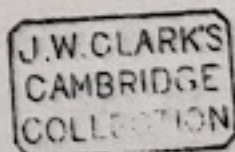
Following Sabbath.

PREACHED BY THE

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Fellow of Christ's College;

AND PRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONGREGATION.



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1833.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain from thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

14-828

EZEKIEL iii. 19.

If thou warn the wicked and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity.

It is little to be wondered at that religious persons find a pleasure in reading the Bible which others, the worldly and the wicked, do not, and cannot. For they that have sought salvation in the way of the gospel, are happy in considering the gospel promises, in applying them to themselves, and thus confirming their hearts by hope. They find the same encouraging and merciful language everywhere; they hear the same gentle voice speaking peace to their souls by all through whom the Spirit of God has spoken to man; by the psalmist and the prophet, and the apostle, and the great Redeemer. So that the volume of Scripture is to them, not only the rule of faith and the guide of conduct; but it is the great spring of their comfort and consolation, their cheering support in the troubles of life, and their never-failing encourager to continue in the way of holiness and truth.

But if there be throughout the Bible a persuasive tone of encouragement and love for all who strive

to make their ways as God's way, to keep their hearts from evil, and to seek God by prayer, by trust in his blessed Son, and by the help of his Holy Spirit ;—if this be the unvarying tone in which it addresses the believing and the penitent, it has another tone equally unvarying, equally conclusive for the obstinate, impenitent, and hardened sinner. To them, no messenger of heaven speaks of comfort or of hope : but there is one and the same condemnation uttered against them and their works from the first page of Scripture to the last ;—wrath and woe, and tribulation and anguish to every soul of man that doeth evil, and repenteth not. Whatever may be the tender mercies and the riches of the goodness of God to his children, the defiled and unbelieving are sternly shut out from all share in them ; they have neither part nor lot in the matter : the gate of peace is fast shut that no ungodly hand may open it and come in ; their lot is, sooner or later, to suffer a dreadful and unspeakable punishment from the hands of that Holy God whose laws they have broken, and whose means of mercy they have despised or abused ; the sentence is gone forth against them, and waits but the will of the Lord to be fulfilled ; when the defiled and the abominable, the haters of God and the despisers of God, those that love sin and those that have no love for righteousness, shall be cast into the outer darkness, where there shall be “ weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

Hear how the man after God's own heart proclaims the end of the enemies of Jehovah :—"The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." ^a "The Lord trieth the righteous ; but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest—this shall be the portion of their cup." ^b "There are the workers of iniquity fallen, they are cast down and shall not be able to rise." ^c Hear what threatenings the Spirit of God, by the mouth of the prophet, pronounces against the bold and shameless :—"Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." ^d "I will punish the world for their evil (saith the Lord), and the wicked for their iniquity, and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease." ^e Hear, yet further, how the Lamb of God himself, who came to take away the sins of the world, could picture the terrors of everlasting vengeance to those in the world that refuse to turn from sin :—"The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things which offend, and do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire." ^f And, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." ^g And hear, too, how his apostle after him, in his Master's spirit, declares the doom of the unrepenting :—"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness."

teousness of men.”^h “The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government.”ⁱ

Yet, withal, it is not the will of God that any of his creatures should perish. How tenderly does he call his erring people: “Turn ye, turn ye, for wherefore will ye die, O house of Israel?”^k “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.”^l How solemnly does he admonish his prophet, “If thou givest him not WARNING, nor speakest to WARN the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hands.”^m How earnestly did his apostle strive for the same end, when “for the space of three years he ceased not to WARN every one night and day with tears.”ⁿ And how powerfully does he shew forth the sins of the disobedient Israelites, “lest any man fall AFTER THE SAME EXAMPLE.”^o

But, such is the perverse and hardened heart of man, that the most part disregard the warnings and admonitions of God, the voice of which is so drowned by their own violent and stormy passions that it cannot be heard at all, or is so faintly heard that its sound is speedily forgotten. And so they live in this world as though they were to live for

ever in it; minding earthly things and forgetful of all other; careful of their bodies, but heedless of their souls: fearing the law of man far more than the law of man's Maker, and loving the praise of men more than the praise of God. Nay, there are yet worse than these: men of bad desires and bad purposes; whose vile passions have been left to run riot without controul; men of hardened hearts and seared consciences, without fear, without belief, without hope, without shame; knowing no remorse for evil, scoffing at all that is good; who have neither love nor feeling for any but their own selves, and their own base lusts; void of natural affection; earthly, sensual, and devilish; whom God in his anger has given over to a reprobate mind, as vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.

Yet it is not for want of calls and warnings that they are lost; not for want of promises and encouragement; not for want of admonition and reproof. For it is not possible but that every one of them, in this Christian land, has heard the way of salvation through the Lord Jesus: it cannot be but that every one of you has been called by the baptism of Christ, and knows that he who nameth that name is bound to depart from iniquity. And who shall plead that he is ignorant of the holy laws of God, of the greatness of the reward for the righteous, and the horrors of the punishment for the unrepenting sinner? And who knows not that the heavenly Father has promised the help of his

^h Rom. i. 18. ⁱ 2 Pet. ii. 9. ^k Ezek. xxxiii. 11. ^l Ezek. xviii. 32.

^m Ezek. xxxiii. 8. ⁿ Acts. xx. 31. ^o Heb. iv. 11.

Spirit to all those that ask for it in his Son's name? If the parent has not taught you these things, yet you might have learned them from the minister. If you heard not the minister, God himself has caused his holy Scriptures to be written for your learning; he has laid open the pages of his book before you, where he that runs may read the will of God and the Saviour, and know both the depth of the riches of his grace, and the fierceness of his anger; may learn the way of peace and the means by which his soul may be saved alive. And God has called upon you by his works as well as in his word. Think, every one of you, what God has been doing for you in the whole course of your lives. Has he not sent mercies, that you may learn to be thankful to him, and to praise the Lord for his goodness? Has he not visited you with troubles and afflictions, to draw off your hearts from the world, and to fix them on himself—to convince you that the life on earth is not a thing to be desired or loved in comparison with that blessed life, free from care, and sorrow, and want, and pain, which they who seek their God shall inherit in his kingdom? Health, and strength, and spirits, have been given to you that you may thereby be fitted to do God's work in the world, and be happy in the doing of it. Sickness and infirmity have at times fallen upon most of you, and old age upon many, to warn you that this life is both short and uncertain, to give you a nearer view of death, and to

accustom you to look steadily towards the world that lies beyond the grave. Have remorse and shame never saddened your hearts, and conscience inwardly rebuked you when you have done what you knew to be wrong? Has not joy cheered you, and a glow of comfort and happiness warmed your very spirit within you, when you have been doing good, when you have relieved a distressed neighbour, or resisted a temptation to sin? Yet what are all these but so many ways in which the voice of God speaks to his people, to deliver them from sin, and bring them to himself? He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear the call of God and obey it. Or, must the Lord call yet louder upon him? Shall he speak with a voice that shall make both the ears of him that heareth to tingle? Yea, sometimes he doth so speak,—in language terrible, astounding, not to be mistaken, so that the sinner may be left without excuse.

It is a fearful thing when *one* is made a warning to his fellows—when a bitter doom falls upon one whom we have known, the neighbour of many, the acquaintance of others, the companion, it may be, and associate of some—when such an one is brought down suddenly to the grave, by sickness, by accident, by any of those thousand modes through which man may be given up to death. But oh! *how* fearful is it when he is taken off from the midst of us, not by the wasting power of disease, not by the blow of misfortune or of chance—but by a death

the most awful, the most ignominious, the most deplorable,⁴ and the most heart-striking that can happen to man—not sinking into a timely grave full of years and honour, but violently cut off from life in the prime of manhood, disgraced, dishonoured, a name for good men to hear with pity and horror—pity for the sufferings of the unhappy man, but horror, detestation, and abhorrence at the atrocious wickedness which brought him to his merited end. Not tended in his last sad moments by the kind sister, the tender mother, or the affectionate wife, to smooth his pillow and ease his aching head, to consult for all his bodily wants with the gentle unwearied ministrings of love, till the suffering spirit passed quietly and calmly to its heavenly home: but surrounded by the unfeeling crowd assembled to gaze and stare in heartless curiosity on his last agonies, on the last convulsive struggle by which his guilty soul was wrenched from its tabernacle. Not soothed by the recollections of a God reconciled, a Saviour worshipped, duties performed and commandments obeyed: but tormented in mind and conscience by the woeful pangs of remembered crime, by the terror of meeting a far more awful judge than the one who has lately pronounced upon him the dread sentence of the law, horror-stricken at the thought of judgment, and shuddering at the name of hell. And oh! how terribly may he find his worst fears confirmed, nay, exceeded by the destiny that met him on the other

side of that tremendous gulph which he thus passed. We know not, and we presume not to conjecture, how much repentance might have done for this unhappy man, or whether he spent the time that was unexpectedly prolonged to him, in earnest and unwearied penitence, in pouring out his soul to God in prayer, in supplicating the mercy of the Most High, and seeking the help of his Redeemer, and with godly tears, and deep and heartfelt sorrow and remorse, prepared to meet his God. Of all this I know nothing: but I *do* know that for unrepented sin there is no mercy, no pardon, no hope. The word of God hath spoken it, and no man may gainsay it; and if a minister preaches any other doctrine than this—if he teaches that a guilty culprit may be saved without repentance, without newness of life, without a saving faith, visible in good works and in heavenly tempers—he is an unfaithful steward of the trust committed to him; belies the apostles and the prophets, and the doctrine of his Master whom he professes to follow, and the laws of that God whom he has undertaken to serve.

So, then, our duty is, that which was laid upon the prophet by his God in the chapter from whence the text is taken; to be ever WARNING men of the consequences of sin, and shewing them that the wrath of God will assuredly fall on the children of disobedience. And we call on them to be WARNED, not only by the word of God and the

preaching of his minister, but also by the course of his providence in the world; by the judgments, which even in this life fall upon the sinner, sometimes stopping his godless course by a violent and awful death, but more frequently by destroying his comfort, his peace, the worldly goods wherein he trusted; and thus striving with the spirit of man to loosen its hold from earth, and instruct it to lift itself up to heaven and to God.

Aye, thou young man, that rejoicest in the prime of thy life, and the fulness of thy strength,—it is a good thing to have the rich treasure of health and spirits—to feel thy limbs strong to labour, and thy heart ever open to cheerfulness and mirth. God has blessed thee abundantly in these things; and great cause hast thou to be thankful for them. And well shall it be with thee if these thy best and earliest years of life shall be so spent that the blessings of the Most High may follow thee through the cares of manhood and the infirmities of age, nor leave thee at the dark hour when thy soul shall pass the door of death, and behold the light of that other world. Oh! well is thee, if thy heart has been right towards God, and filled with love for the thing that is good; if thy hand has been diligent and honest; if thy conduct has been sober and chaste; if thou hast been careful of those great duties that belong to thee—to honour thy parents, to love thy brethren, to be kind and merciful to thy neighbours—a consola-

tion to thy father when his strength failed him; and a blessing to thy aged mother in her latter days. But woe unto thee if it be otherwise. Woe unto thee if thou hast joined the abandoned crew of the profligate and the vile; if thy ways are become like their ways, and thy vices such as theirs; if thy tongue has learnt the language of blasphemy, and uncleanness, and lies, and cursing; if thou hast practised thine hand in theft; if thou art a drunkard and found often in the ale-house, and seldom in the house of prayer: if thou hast scorned all the sweet duties of domestic life, despised the counsel of thy father, and mocked the tears, the prayers, and the anguish of thy mother, and thinkest little of bringing down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. If thou hast done this, thy youth, and strength, and health, and activity, yea, and life itself, have all been given to thee,—not in vain, indeed, but to thy condemnation and misery. For thee, there will be no joy in manhood, no blessing on old age; thou wilt find neither comfort at home, nor peace abroad. Thy bad and stormy passions will fill thine own heart with misery; thy ill conduct will make thee shunned and abhorred by thy neighbours, save those that are as wicked as thyself; in sickness and in trouble thy soul shall be vexed and find no relief, because the curse of God is upon thee, and will not allow thee to be at peace. Yet has he warned thee in his mercy to flee from the wrath to come, ere thou be cut off

in thy sins and perish for ever. He calls upon you to repent while your heart is yet tender, while conscience is yet awake; while you can yet feel and think, before sin has blinded your eyes that you cannot see, and deadened your conscience that you may not feel. *Now* resolve to be sober, and honest, and godly, while the opportunity is allowed you; and prove that you are a reasonable being, and so much better than the beasts that perish, that you know how to choose the good and avoid the evil, when the choice is fairly set before your eyes.

Aye, thou aged and time-worn man, thou hast seen many days both of sorrow and of joy. God has extended thy years, and thy life has been prolonged, whilst thou hast seen many of thy kinsfolk and acquaintance drop into the grave before thee. And the time cannot now be far distant when thou too wilt be called to lay down thy aged body in the narrow house of all living, and to appear in spirit before the judgment-seat of Christ. How wilt thou stand the trial! Consider that point well *now*, for then it will be too late. Have thy long years been spent in doing the work of God, and walking in the way of his commandments? Hast thou kept his sabbaths—hast thou honoured and revered his name—has thine hand been honest and thine heart upright—hast thou kept thy tongue from evil-speaking, and thy lips that they spake no guile—has thine hair grown grey

in piety and prayer; and hast thou been such an example that every mother wished her son to grow up like thee, and every acquaintance took note of thee that thou hadst been with Jesus? Or has thy prolonged life been stained with vice and impurity—is it a dark course of impiety and wickedness? hast thou come to these thy last days a stranger to thy Saviour, an enemy of God, a servant of the devil—doing his work, and taking his wages? Hast thou had so many warnings, so many preservations, so many undeserved and unasked for mercies, and all in vain? Oh! turn, then, and repent, while there is yet time. Harden not your heart, while it is yet day—for soon “the night cometh, when no man can work.” The days of your life must, in the course of nature, be few—let them not be evil also;—teach thy feeble knees to bend in prayer; teach thy unwilling tongue to speak to God, to implore the grace of the Redeemer; repent for the many, many sins that have stained thy youth, thy manhood, and thine age; and let not death surprise thee even yet unprepared to die.

Aye, thou father of many children, it is indeed a proud and happy thing to see around thee the young company of those to whom thou thyself hast given being—to see them in the playful gaiety of childhood, and the mirthful joyousness of youth; to aid the ever-ready laugh, and to dry the soon-forgotten tear—to observe their rising growth,

their blooming health, their never-failing spirits; and to feel thyself grow young again in the contemplation of those that are, thy recollection tells thee, as thou thyself wert also. Yea, but there are greater things than these. Hast thou been to them a father indeed—a wise instructor, a fit example, a steady and serious corrector of the wrong? Have they learned the lesson of honesty and uprightness from thee?—from thee, learned to reverence their Maker, to respect his name, to love his word, and to frequent his house?—from thee, learned to be sober, and diligent, and chaste, and pious?—from thee, learned to begin and end the day with prayer, to ask the blessing of God upon their daily food, and to remember always that the eyes of the Lord are upon them, spying out all their ways? Or is it indeed the sad reverse of all this? Hast thou brought them up, not in the careful nurture of the Lord, but in all carelessness and neglect? Hast thou been to them a pattern, not of holiness, and goodness, but of profaneness, intemperance, impurity, and all that is abominable and vile? Do they hear cursing from thy lips and so learn betimes to curse? Do they make light of theft, because thou hast laughed at honesty? Do they despise the word, and the house of God, and the fear of his anger, and the hope of his blessing, because thou hast set them the example of all this? If it be so, be sure thy sin will find thee out. It may be that thou shalt thyself repent

of the wickedness thou hast committed, and turn heartily to God, and he shall hear thee, and the gate of salvation be yet open to thee. But who shall repair the mischief thou hast done to the souls of thy children? Who shall heal the deep corruption and cleanse the impurity with which thou hast polluted their hearts? Truly on thine head will the bitterness fall. They will grow up such as will grieve thy spirit and make thee tremble for their end. They will owe thee no gratitude, and so will shew thee no affection. If you rebuke them, they will taunt you with your own example. Reproach them, and they will plead your own instruction. You will derive from them no solace, no comfort, no cheering hopes of their well-being in life, no enlivening prospect of a blessed meeting with them again after death. If the grace of God does not in mercy stay them, and strike conviction and repentance into their hardened hearts, as far as thou art concerned, they are lost and utterly undone.

Hearken then, all of you whom this message most concerns—you that are still in the gall and bitterness of sin, and have no steady purposes of amendment of life, no deep and heartfelt conviction of the terrors of the Lord, and the dreadful nature of everlasting punishment. Hearken, you whose hearts have never been touched or softened by the gentle mercies of God, nor tasted that the Lord is gracious, and that it is a pleasant and happy thing

to live in such a way as a Christian would most wish to die in; happy in the love of their Saviour, happy in the blessed peacefulness of a quiet conscience, happy in the glorious prospect of that excellent reward that is treasured up for the righteous in the life to come. Harken, all you who care not for the state of your souls, whose lips move oftener to cursing than to prayer, who love every false way and hate the truth. Be still and attend to this solemn warning, for to you, and to such as you, it is sent. Stop for an instant in your wild course of sin, and hear those awful words, "Shall I not visit them for their offences, saith the Lord, and shall not my soul be avenged on a people like this?" Or, are you yet resolved to hold on in the same way that leadeth to death, to forget God and to set at nought his holy laws—are you still bent on sin and upon the pleasing your own fleshly appetites whatever it may cost you in the end?—Go then,—and, upon leaving this place, stand at the head of the grave where that guilty sufferer is soon about to be laid, and there boldly declare that whatever be the consequence, you will not cease to do evil nor learn to do good. Stand over that lifeless corpse and there set God at defiance, and bid him do his worst and spare not. Say *there*, that you will still be a swearer, a blasphemer, a drunkard, a sabbath-breaker, and all that God most hates and abominates, and care nothing for his anger, so long as you keep clear of justice from the laws of

man! But no, no—there is none so wicked, so hardened that he dare do this,—there is none here (I firmly believe) that has not some seeds of repentance in his heart, though the ground on which they are sown be stubborn and untilled—none that does not sometimes feel shame and sorrow for his vices—none that does not feel some longings after the sweet pleasures of a religious heavenly-minded life, that does not sometimes sigh forth a wish that the blessing of God were with him—that his many sins had not separated between God and him. And if ever he should feel this, surely he should feel it now, when it has been clearly shown to him by a terrible example, that "the wages of sin is death." Now then let him firmly resolve to cast his sins behind his back, and seek the pleasure of them no more; let him pray fervently and deeply to his Father in heaven that he may receive him as a returned prodigal, and that there may be joy in heaven over a repentant sinner: let him fly the doors of the alehouse and the company of those yet unmoved and unrepenting, who would mislead him into new sin and more deadly ruin: let him seek to converse with the religious and the good, and submit himself to be taught by them, the way of Christ and salvation: let him (if he is able) seek out the book of the Lord, and there learn his danger and his duty—the evil of sin and the blessings of righteousness. For the sake of his soul let him do thus, or he will perish everlastingly. The Lord

has himself declared that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked: his desire is, that they should be converted and live. It is life, not death, that his ministers are commanded to preach: our commission is to offer salvation, sure and certain salvation, a speedy, glorious, and everlasting salvation to every one of you that will accept it; to the poor as to the rich; to the ignorant as to the learned; yea, even to the drunkard, the profane, the dishonest, the ribald, the despiser of God and of his word. We are commanded by the Lord our Master to offer you a pardon for all that is past if you will but now, at last, turn from your sins, and be such as a servant of Jesus Christ ought indeed to be: we are commanded to beseech and entreat you that you accept this offer, and repent; to tell you what preparation is made by Christ; what mercy stays for you; what patience waiteth on you; what purposes of kindness God hath towards you; and how happy, how certainly and unspeakably happy you may be if you will. "We have, indeed, also a message of woe and death; but that is not our principal message. We must tell you of the danger of unrepented sin; but this is to make you see more plainly the need you have of mercy, and to move you to seek the grace and salvation of the Redeemer. We are first to offer you forgiveness if you will repent; and it is only to those who will not repent, nor hear the voice of mercy

that we must speak of damnation." Here, then, in the name of the Lord of life, I proclaim to all you that hear me this day, to the worst of you, to the greatest, to the oldest sinner, that you may have mercy and salvation, if you will but repent and turn to God. There is mercy in the Father; there is sufficiency in the satisfaction of Christ, the promise is full, free, and universal for those who will accept it upon God's terms. But, then, as you value your souls, remember what kind of repentance it is that Scripture speaks of. It is not to break off from one or two sins, and then be satisfied that enough is done, and that more is unnecessary. It is not just to abstain from such gross and atrocious crimes as the law of man will judge, and which bring shame, or imprisonment, or a disgraceful death. It is not to correct outward acts of sin while the heart is foul, and the conscience polluted, and all the thoughts bent upon the world, and the world's good: but it is to change the whole manner and conversation of your lives; to be holy, and upright, and religious in earnestness and truth; to practice all holy tempers of meekness, kindness, and gentleness towards men; to be contented and cheerful in your appointed station, knowing that you are thereto appointed by Him who knows what is best for you, and whose kind providence will make even sorrow, and poverty, and sickness,

and distress work together for good to those who love him. This is the change that must be made if you would be saved. There is no middle way to be taken. You must have life or death, and you are free to choose.

And you, such of you as have already made your choice, and that the right choice;—who have said from your hearts—“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”—I beseech you be not content with caring for the souls of your household and yourselves only, but that you use every means you possess to bring home the truth to the consciences of your neighbours and acquaintance, and press this solemn warning seriously upon their minds. Especially you whom God has placed in a higher walk of life, and blessed with the good things of his bounty, and the means of influence among those in humbler station,—you, more especially, do I admonish and entreat that you use not these talents as unprofitable servants, but lay them out in the service of the Lord, who gave them, to promote the honour of His name, and to win souls to Him. Let not your servants and dependants be lost in ignorance and sin, while you stand carelessly by, satisfied that you have the labour of their bodies, and heedless what becomes of their immortal souls. Give them the benefit of your good advice, as well as of your good example. Pray for them, and pray with them, and if they know not how, act by them as

your Saviour has done by you, and *teach* them how to pray. Take every occasion to correct those wrong and dangerous notions that wicked persons for their own bad ends have been at great pains to spread among them, that the rich are their enemies, combined to wrong, and to oppress them. Disabuse them of these wild and false opinions, which fill them full of disquietude, and discontent, full of jealousy, and malignity, and suspicion of all above them, and about them, and which have driven many to commit the very crime for which this one unhappy man has just suffered the last dreadful penalty,—as if their own condition would be bettered by making that of others worse,—as if their labour would be rewarded the more, after they had destroyed the means of paying for labour—as if the servant would thrive because his master is distressed—as if the abundance of their food would be increased by the destruction of that very stock from which they should be fed. Show them the folly, the madness of such doings, at the same time that you press upon them the enormous wickedness and the dreadful punishment. You have it in your power to do much good to those who are in this darkness of ignorance and sin, and it is your duty, and ought to be your delight to do it. Think of the blessing that is pronounced on those who turn a sinner from the error of his ways, and save a soul alive. If you are sincere in your professions of service to Christ, thus may you best prove your sincerity,

and show yourselves worthy of the calling wherewith you are called. This, be sure, is the path of duty which is plainly pointed out to you, and if you conscientiously act up to it, the blessing shall be upon your own heads.

But, O thou Father of light and truth, and thou all merciful Saviour, and thou, too, Holy Spirit, the fountain, and means of grace, let not the solemn warning of a good providence be sent in vain to this people; let it sink into their hearts, and fill them with sad and serious thoughts respecting their own condition; let them, we implore thee, O Father, be instructed by it, to seek the death of sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, that they may find mercy from thee, and that iniquity may not be their final ruin!

APPENDIX

I. JOHN STALLAN, the unhappy cause of the foregoing discourse, was thirty-three years of age when he was cut short in his course of crime by a just punishment. His case is a very remarkable one, not only on account of his repeated acts of guilt, (for he confessed himself the author of *ten fires* which have taken place at Shelford in the last five years,) but more particularly, because it shows how pitiful a bribe will lead men to commit the very worst of crimes when they have once learned to think lightly of sin, and no longer desire to be, and to be esteemed, honest, sober, diligent, and faithful.

II. We know, too well, unfortunately, that the crime of *burning* has been very frequent in many parts of England for several years past. We know, too, that in some instances persons have been urged to it by a *malignant spirit of revenge*, on account of some supposed ill-treatment—because they looked upon their employers or their superiors as their enemies, and so in the hatred and malice of their hearts strove to do them all the injury they could. We know that these bad and furious passions will sometimes so blind men's reason that they will never stop to think, nor consider the sad consequences their mad rage may bring on themselves and on others. But Stallan had not even this bad reason for his offences. He had no ill-usage to complain of. He was employed by a kind master, who trusted and put confidence in him. A labouring man could hardly be placed in a better condition than his.

III. It has sometimes happened also that when farm-labourers have been distressed, being at the same time ignorant and therefore easily led astray, they have been persuaded by men, whose depravity and vileness are only equalled by their craft and cunning, that they might, somehow or other, better their condition by destroying the property of those who were richer than themselves. And so these foolish souls lent an easy ear to the tempter, and did this grievous wrong to their neighbour, which must in the end fall on their own heads. But Stallan was not like one of these. He was not ignorant; for he had learned both to read and write. He was not in distress; for at the time of his apprehension he was earning twelve shillings a week. He had no advisers to wickedness but his own bad heart—unless, indeed, as he himself declared, *they were of his own household*.

IV. The reason, and the only reason he gave, for these repeated acts of guilt, was, *that he got six shillings at each fire for working the engine*. For this petty sum he destroyed property to the amount of many thousands of pounds. For this, he caused alarm, loss, distress, and discomfort to worthy men, his neighbours, his employers, by whom he was trusted and kindly treated. For this, he filled his native village with terror, anxiety, uneasiness, and distrust; and brought shame and sorrow upon several innocent persons, who were charged with or suspected of his guilt. For this, he braved the danger of detection and the fear of punishment; and for this, he at last suffered the punishment he most justly had deserved. What must be the state of that man's heart and mind, who for *any* consideration could be brought to act thus? What must have been the state of *his* heart and mind who for such a poor miserable bribe could cause all this misery, and incur all this guilt?

V. The history of these times will hereafter be read with wonder and disgust. Englishmen of a future day will hardly know how to think it possible, that farming-labourers should

be such *fools* as to go on, year after year, on a regular system of destroying the produce they themselves had been toiling to raise; such *madmen*, as not to see that whoever suffer *first*, they must themselves be the sufferers in the end, by such a course. The distress *will* come, and they *must* feel it. I say nothing of the cruel and brutal character of the crime of burning; I say nothing of its mean, cowardly, and dastardly character; I say nothing of its ungrateful and unfeeling character towards the men who put bread into the mouths and clothes upon the backs of the labouring poor. All arguments of this kind would be thrown away upon persons capable of a wickedness like this. But I say what they *can* understand and *can* feel; this *burning* system will be all to their own loss in the end: the distress *will* come, and they *must* feel it.

VI. Stallan's is not a common case. Even in the parts of the country where burning has prevailed most, I should think it unlikely that any other fires have been caused from the same motive as his. These fires, I firmly believe, have in most instances arisen from the operation of the POOR LAWS. They have been caused, sometimes from revenge, against those who had courage and resolution enough to resist the impudent and unwarrantable applications for parish relief, which the idle and profligate are always ready to put forward; sometimes with a view of frightening the land-holders into compliance with all demands of this kind, however unreasonable and unjust. The time is come when this vile system must be thoroughly changed—when it shall no longer be allowed to corrupt the labourer and impoverish the farmer—to encourage improvidence and idleness—to set a bounty upon early and imprudent marriages—to discountenance industry and diligence—to multiply beer-shops and public-houses, and to sow dissension between rich and poor, between master and servant. Never had any government a fitter occasion for the display of its wisdom, firmness, and temper.

than in grappling with this monstrous and still-increasing mischief. Till this pest is scourged and chastened, religion and good morals will lift up their voices in vain. Till this eating-canker is healed, the high and manly spirit of self-supporting independence, which once graced and upheld the character of the English peasant, will continue to sicken and languish, and be less and less seen each returning harvest.

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