



DEAN STANLEY

DEAN STANLEY

ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, LL. D., a distinguished English clergyman, Dean of Westminster, and after Maurice's death leader of the "Broad Church" party, was born at Alderley, Cheshire, Dec. 13, 1815, and died at Westminster, July 18, 1881. The son of the bishop of Norwich he was educated at Rugby under Dr. Arnold, and at Balliol College, Oxford University. In 1838, he gained a fellowship at University College, Oxford, and in the following year was admitted to deacon's orders in the Established Church; he was advanced to the priesthood in 1843, and in the same year received an appointment as college tutor. From 1845 to 1847, Stanley was select preacher to the university, his discourses being issued in 1847 as "Sermons on the Apostolical Age," and exhibiting very clearly his divergence from High Church and evangelical points of doctrine. He resigned his fellowship in 1851 in order to accept a canonry at Canterbury, but returned to Oxford in 1858 as canon of Christ Church and regius professor of ecclesiastical history. During these years he came into much prominence as a Broad Church leader, his tolerant mind being opposed in equal measure to severe judgments against the ritualists, or against Bishop Colenso, whose work on the "Pentateuch" was then convulsing the church. His sympathies with free thought were shown at this time also by his attitude toward the then greatly derided "Essays and Reviews." The basis of his theology was insistence upon Christian character rather than on dogma as the essentials of Christianity. In 1863, he declined the archbishopric of Dublin, but accepted in the year following the deanery of Westminster. He had for some years enjoyed the esteem and friendship of the late Queen Victoria and at the close of 1863 was married to Lady Augusta Bruce, an intimate friend of Her Majesty. As Dean of Westminster he endeavored to make the services at the Abbey attractive to men of all communions. To preach to his evening congregations at the Abbey, he was accustomed to ask clergymen of note in the Scottish church, as well as English Nonconformists. In 1878, he visited the United States, publishing on his return "Addresses and Sermons Delivered in the United States and Canada." Stanley was a sympathetic rather than a profound scholar, and his writings, while interesting and well written, can hardly be said to possess enduring value. His "Life of Thomas Arnold" (1844) is his best and most widely known work. Among others are "Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church" (1861); "Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church" (1862-72); "Addresses and Sermons Delivered at St. Andrews" (1877); "Essays, Chiefly on Questions of Church and State, from 1850 to 1870" (1870); and a work on "Sinai and Palestine." He was also author of "Historical Memorials of Canterbury," and "Memorials of Westminster Abbey," of a work on the "Epistle to the Corinthians," "Sermons Preached in the East," and "Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford," besides many fugitive sermons and numerous contributions to reviews and magazines.

SERMON: JESUS OF NAZARETH

"Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.'"—John xix, 19.

WHAT are the lessons of Good Friday? especially of Good Friday in Palestine and in this place? In the words of the text, in the title written on the cross, the name of Jesus Christ is at that supreme moment of his Last Passion brought together with the recollection of his early years at Nazareth. What are the lessons which they both teach in common?

Everywhere the event of Good Friday speaks to us of the universal love of God to his creatures. That is why it is so truly called Good Friday. It has its good news as much as Christmas Day or Easter Day. It tells us not only that God is Love, but that he bears love to every one on earth, however far they may seem to be removed from him. It was for this that he sent his Son into the world,—it was for this that Christ died. It was by his death, more even than by his life, that he showed how his sympathy extended far beyond his own nation, his own friends, his own family.

"I, if I be lifted up" on the cross, "will draw all men unto me."

It is this which the Collects of this day bring before us. They speak, in fact, of hardly anything else. They tell us how he died that "all estates," not one estate only, but "all estates in his Holy Church,"—that "every member of the Church" in its widest sense, not the clergy or the religious only, but every one, in his "several vocation and ministry," might "truly and godly serve him."

They pray for God's mercy to visit not Christians merely, but all religions, however separate from ours,—“Jews, Turks, Heretics and Infidels,”—in the hope that they may all at last, here or hereafter, be “one fold under one shepherd,” the One Good Shepherd who laid down his life not for the flock of one single fold only, but for the countless sheep scattered on the hills, not of the fold of the Jewish people, or of the Christian Church only, but of all mankind.

This is a truth which comes home to us with peculiar force in Palestine. What is it that has made this small country so famous? What is it that has carried the names of Jerusalem and of Nazareth to the uttermost parts of the earth? It is in one word, “the death of Christ.” Had he not died as he did, his religion,—his name,—his country,—the places of his birth and education and life,—would never have broken through all the bonds of time and place as they have. That we are here at all on this day, is a proof of the effect which his death has had even on the outward fortunes of the world.

This universal love of God in Christ's death is specially impressed upon us in Nazareth. What Christ was in his death, he was in his life. What he was in his life, he was in his death. And if we wish to know the spirit which pervades both, we cannot do so better than by seeing what we may call the text of his first sermon at Nazareth. He was in the synagogue. The roll of the Hebrew Scriptures was handed to him. He unrolled it. His former friends and acquaintances fixed their eyes upon him to see what he would say.

And what were the words which he chose? They were these: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the cap-

tives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." What he said on this text is not described; we are only told that they " marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth."

But what those gracious words were we can well see from the words of the passage itself.

"The Spirit of the Lord was upon him," first, "to preach the Gospel to the poor," the glad tidings of God's love to the poor, the humble classes, the neglected classes, the dangerous classes, the friendless, the oppressed, the unthought-for, the uncared-for.

The Spirit of God was upon him, secondly, "to heal the broken-hearted:" — to heal, as a good physician heals, not with one medicine, but with all the various medicines and remedies which Infinite Wisdom possesses, all the fractures and diseases and infirmities of our poor human hearts.

There is not a weakness, there is not a sorrow, there is not a grievance, for which the love of God, as seen in the life and death of Christ, does not offer some remedy. He has not overlooked us. He is with us. He remembers us. The Spirit of God was upon him, thirdly, "to preach deliverance to the captive."

Whatever be the evil habit, or the inveterate prejudice, or the master passion, or the long indulgence, which weighs upon us like a bondage, he feels for us, and will do his utmost to set us free, — to set at liberty those that are cramped and bruised and confined by the chain of their sins, their weakness, their misfortunes, their condition in life, their difficulties, their responsibilities, their want of responsibilities, their employments, their want of employments.

And, fourthly, "The Spirit of God was upon him," to

"give sight to the blind." How few of us there are who know our own failings, who see into our own hearts, who know what is really good for us! That is the knowledge which the thought of Christ's death is likely to give us. That is the truth, which, above all other truths, is likely to set us free. "Lord, that I may receive my sight," is the prayer which each of us may offer up for our spiritual state, as the poor man whom he met at Jericho did for his bodily eyesight.

For every one of these conditions he died. Not for those only who are professedly religious, but for those who are the least so, — to them the message of Good Friday and of Nazareth is especially addressed. Christianity is, one may almost say, the only religion, of which the Teacher addressed himself, not to the religious, not to the ecclesiastical, not to the learned world, but to the irreligious, or the non-religious, to those who thought little of themselves and were thought little of by others, to the careless, to the thoughtless, to the rough publican, to the wild prodigal, to the heretical Samaritan, to the heathen soldier, to the thankless peasants of Nazareth, to the swarming populations of Galilee. He addresses himself now, to each of us, however lowly we may be in our own eyes, however little we think that we have a religious call, however encompassed we are with infirmities; his love is ready to receive, to encourage, to cherish, to save us.

I pass to the other lesson which Good Friday teaches us here. It is that, whatever good is to be done in the world, even though it is God himself who does it, cannot be done without an effort, — a preparation, — a Sacrifice. So it was especially in the death of Christ, — so it was in his whole life. His whole life from the time when he grew up, "as a tender plant" in the seclusion of this valley, to the hour when he died at Jerusalem, was one long effort, — one long struggle

against misunderstanding, opposition, scorn, hatred, hardship, pain.

He had doubtless his happier and gentler hours, we must not forget them: his friends at Bethany, his apostles who hung upon his lips, his mother who followed him in thought and mind wherever he went. But here, amongst his own people, he met with angry opposition and jealousy. He had to bear the hardships of toil and labor, like any other Nazarene artisan. He had here, by a silent preparation of thirty years, to make himself ready for the work which lay before him. He had to endure the heat and the cold, the burning sun and the stormy rain, of these hills and valleys. "The foxes" of the plain of Esdraelon "have holes," "the birds" of the Galilean forests "have their nests," but "he had" often "not where to lay his head."

And in Jerusalem, though there were momentary bursts of enthusiasm in his behalf, yet he came so directly across the interests, the fears, the pleasures, and the prejudices of those who there ruled and taught, that at last it cost him his life. By no less a sacrifice could the world be redeemed, by no less a struggle could his work be finished.

In that work, in one sense, none but he can take part. "He trod the winepress alone." But in another sense, often urged upon us in the Bible, we must all take part in it, if we would wish to do good to ourselves or to others. We cannot improve ourselves, we cannot assist others, we cannot do our duty in the world, except by exertion, except by unpopularity, except with annoyance, except with care and difficulty. We must, each of us, bear our cross with him. When we bear it, it is lightened by thinking of him. When we bear it, each day makes it easier to us. Once the name of "Christian," of "Nazarene," was an offence in the eyes

of the world; now, it is a glory. But we cannot have the glory without the labor which it involves. To "hear his words, and to do them," to hear of his death, and to follow in the path of his sufferings, this, and this only, as he himself has told us, is to build our house, the house of our life; of our faith, of our happiness, upon a rock; a rock which will grow firmer and stronger the more we build upon it, and the more we have to bear.

"The rains may descend, and the floods may come, and the winds may blow and may beat upon that house;" but the house will not fall, "for it will have been founded upon the rock."