

SERMON

Preached by the Rev. Canon Thorndloe, at the opening service of the Synod.

Psalm 25 : 8. Prayer Book Version.

"Them that are meek shall He guide in judgment: and such as are gentle them shall He learn His way."

Truth, especially in its higher reaches, is commonly presented to us in the form of paradox. The seed which we sow in the earth "is not quickened except it die." "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." "He that loseth his life for Christ's sake and the Gospel's the same shall save it." And so our text tells us that if we would exalt ourselves in wisdom we must humble ourselves in our own conceit, and if we would form a right judgment in any matter we must begin by submitting our judgment to the Almighty.

It is well at all times, but especially in emergencies like the present, to keep clearly before us this seeming contradictoriness of Truth. It were so easy to be dismayed by affliction; and to deem the removal of those we have loved and trusted the signal for every kind of disaster. Yet we know that however it strain our spiritual fibre, Trial, if we do not rebel against it, if we resist it only in that spirit of meek endurance which sends the roots of faith deeper into the soil of truth, should be a source of strength and blessing.

Many among us have doubtless felt disheartened by the death of our late beloved Bishop. To himself we can realize what must be the gain of his departure. By a sudden snapping of the cord of life he has been spared what he sorely dreaded, the painful experiences of aged incapacity for work, the heavy cross of consciously declining powers. And now he rests in Paradise. But we seem suddenly to have awakened to a just appreciation of what he has been to the Diocese in the way of strength to protect its interests; of wisdom to guide its counsels; and of goodness to inspire its tone. And it is but natural perhaps that the realization of such a loss should cause dismay.

Yet why? The greatest man is but an instrument in the Divine Hand. God's cause is not endangered when He lays aside one instrument that He may take another. Moses dies on Nebo but Joshua is ready at Jordan. It is no disloyalty to the memory of the departed to believe that God took him because his work was done. The whole Church and every member of