

SERMON.

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels."—Mark viii. 38.

It is not the words or the doctrines, but the practice of those doctrines that Christ taught, that men are ashamed of. I have no doubt that even the enemies of Christ, in listening to the glorious truths which fell from his lips, were often filled with admiration, and retired, saying, We have heard strange things to-day. How admirable those lessons of heavenly wisdom! how powerful his teaching and far-reaching the application! how simple and yet how sublime his utterances! how unlike the poor, weak and watery effusions of the Scribes and Pharisees, who merely repeat what they hear! And indeed, when one thinks of the beauty of His life, and the method of His teaching; when we call to remembrance how that whenever and wheresoever he appeared, He scattered around Him the glories of His divinity and held up the great ideas of God and the Gospel in the sweetest pictures, which even the foolish could comprehend, we do not wonder that the common people heard Him gladly; that even His enemies, that had intended to lay hands upon Him, retired, saying, "Never man spake like this man!" and that now and then a voice should be heard from the crowd, saying in a rapture, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which gave thee suck. But what did Christ say in reply to that rapture? *Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

Men are not ashamed of the Gospel so long as it is presented to them as a picture is presented. They will look at it, admire it, and say it is glorious; but when they are called upon to espouse it, to take it up and give expression to it in their life, and be witnesses for Christ in the world, they shrink back in shame. There is not a word that He has spoken, however excellent in itself, that man is not ashamed of in this respect—that he is not ready to trample under his feet in way of neglect. He has not the courage, the metal

and the manhood to come forward and say: These words of God are true and righteous, and these words shall be the guide of my life, and the rejoicing of my heart.

I. Take for instance, the word which Christ has spoken in regard to self denial: *Whosoever shall be my disciple, must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me* This act of self-denial—self-denial in regard to besetting sin, is the necessary qualification to enter the kingdom, the first step in the divine life; but this involves a style of courage for which the world is not prepared. There are thousands qualified to make a dash upon the enemy and "take the guns" from the jaws of death, that have no power to break the chain that binds them to the devil—thousands that could bravely withstand a bayonet charge, that could not for one moment withstand the banter and the boast of gay and godless associates. There is a courage and an honour pertaining to high principle which is not for one moment to be compared to the common coarse courage of the field. It is the courage of the young man who knows how to "stand up for Jesus," when there are few or none to keep him in countenance; the courage of the youths in Babylon, who, when threatened with the burning fiery furnace, by the greatest monarch in the world, replied with the courage of the soldier and the courtesy of the gentleman: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King; but if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Here is one, who from conscientious convictions has espoused the principle of Total Abstinence. He has been invited to spend the evening with friends gathered from different parts of the country. The grave and the