

**THE ARMY OF
CHRIST, A SERIES OF
LENTEN SERMONS**

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The army of Christ, a series of Lenten sermons by Martin A. Keene

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MARTIN A. KEENE

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THE ARMY OF CHRIST:

A SERIES OF

LENTEN SERMONS.

BY THE

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“O ALMIGHTY God, who by Thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to Thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed Thy flock ; make, we beseech Thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach Thy holy word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

SERMON I.

THE ARMY OF CHRIST: ITS DISCIPLINE AND UNIFORM.

"All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—
1 St. PETER, v. 6.

THE words humble and humility, both in English and in the language of the New Testament, are derived from words, signifying the ground, and refer to the outward gesture, by which that state of mind is usually manifested.

In Eastern countries respect for superiors is shown either by a bow, so profound, that the head nearly touches the ground; or by a complete prostration of the whole body on the earth. And even with ourselves, as the haughty erecting of the head is the way of expressing pride, so is bowing, or in some cases, kneeling, the usual mark of respect and deference. If, then, humility be, as it is, a desirable thing, we

may well wish to be able to take up in this sense words, which we should never desire to be true in the sense in which the Psalmist uttered them—"My soul cleaveth unto the dust." This we should specially desire at this present season of humiliation, when we are called to think upon our sins, and humble ourselves because of them. Thus, to lie low both toward God and toward man is at once a safe and a happy position—nay more, the only safe and happy position. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." It is at the root of half our misery and sin. It cleaves more firmly to us, perhaps, than any other evil, appearing now in one form, now in another, often seeming like an angel of light, but ever bringing along with it unhappiness to its victim, and to those around. In those led by the Spirit of God, its effects are much to be deplored. It mars the work of Divine grace in the heart, eats away many a fair fruit of holiness, and thus brings injury to the Christian and dishonour to his Lord. How earnestly then should we desire and pray to be humble!—humble toward man and toward God. Nothing more frequently and seriously than want of humility hinders the sinner's entrance through the strait gate, and after he has entered checks his pro-

gress in the narrow way that leads to life. May you and I, dear brethren, daily be made more truly humble, and thus more truly happy and holy. May we learn of Him, who was meek and lowly of heart, that so we may find rest to our souls. That which we have brought before us this evening is humility toward man: "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility."

I. In the first place, let us consider the direction, "All of you be subject one to another." What are we to understand by words like these? Do they require us to disregard the distinctions of rank and position, appointed by Him who ruleth over all? Is the whole fabric of society to be upset, so that the master may take the place of the servant, the parent of the child, the monarch of the subject? By no means. The very opposite is the lesson taught here, as every where else in Holy Scripture. In the words immediately before the text the Apostle says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." Some have thought that we have here a repetition of the important rule so often repeated in Scripture, that young persons should yield proper respect and obedience to those farther on in life. There is not enough in our days of such deference and respect for