

**CAMBRIDGE SERMONS
PREACHED BEFORE
THE UNIVERSITY**

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Cambridge Sermons Preached Before the University by Edwin A. Abbott

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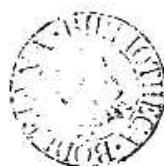
EDWIN A. ABBOTT

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BY THE

REV. EDWIN A. ABBOTT, D.D.

FORMERLY FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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TO THE

REV. J. LLEWELYN DAVIES, M.A.

Rector of Christ Church, Marylebone

This Volume

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

BY ONE WHO HAS FOR TWENTY YEARS

DERIVED FROM HIS TEACHING

GUIDANCE DURING YOUTH AND STIMULUS DURING MANHOOD

HEARING FROM HIS LIPS

THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST

PREFACE.

OF the following Sermons, those on Faith and Science formed a course intended to be preached before the University of Cambridge in the February of this year. Owing to illness, the third was not preached.

The two on Prayer and Work were preached at Cambridge in the year 1870.

I have taken the opportunity of this publication to add a sermon preached at Westminster Abbey in 1869. I was importuned at the time to publish this sermon, in order to vindicate myself against an accusation brought against it, that "it was of a nature to set class against class." But, as the Sermon was preached without the aid of the manuscript, and probably varied considerably from the manuscript in its oral form, it seemed clear that for the purpose of vindication such a publication would have been, at all events at the time, quite nugatory: and there were other circumstances

not now worth detailing, that rendered the publication just then impossible.

But now, on re-reading the manuscript, it appeared to me that, at this interval of time, I might be able to convince the few who might be interested in being convinced, that, at least in its general tenor, the sermon was not of a nature to "set class against class:" moreover, some parts of the sermon seemed to me to commend a tendency to Reform, which, however on the increase, still requires much inculcation before it is likely to attain its due force. For these reasons I have ventured to publish the manuscript, although it covers, to some extent, the same ground as is covered by the Sermon on Work, preached at Cambridge in the following year. I must add that the Westminster Abbey Sermon was written to be spoken, not to be read; though revised, it contains several abrupt expressions and rhetorical terms scarcely adapted for reading. But however it may be æsthetically faulty, it contains nothing of which I am morally ashamed.

If indeed a preacher may be fairly accused of "setting class against class" because he cannot help betraying a feeling of profound dissatisfaction with the present state of religious feeling and

religious action, then I must plead guilty to the charge. For, optimists though we may be in our hopes as to Christ's future Kingdom on earth, yet surely we are allowed, nay, bound, to feel profoundly dissatisfied with our present miserable realization of it. We look around and see Christ supplanted, abroad by a Church, at home by a scheme of salvation or a sacramental dogma: many among the educated classes of our countrymen throwing away the name of Christians without having ever really apprehended what is meant by faith in Christ; and—perhaps the most pitiful spectacle of all—in a large number of fairly intelligent believers, we see a tremulous Christianity, looking despairingly to the future, and paralysed for all the noble aggressive purposes of a Christian Church by a vague horror of the future, by a terrible dread that the belief in a God may be exploded next year, through the unearthing of some new fossil demonstrative of the Darwinian theory, or that the Divinity of Christ may be subverted by the discovery of a couple of Uncial Manuscripts: and, as a consequence of this superstition and this faithlessness, we see the Church, which once led the world, now lagging behind and even retarding it in the path of progress. Seeing all this, who may not be excused for