

# **LENT LECTURES**

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Lent lectures by G. H. Wilkinson

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**G. H. WILKINSON**

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BY

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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THE following pages contain the substance of the notes taken by a member of the congregation, of Lectures delivered in S. Peter's, Eaton Square, during the Lent of 1871.

They were afterwards expanded into a course of Sermons preached in S. Paul's Cathedral during the Lent of 1873.

For the sake of those who are strangers to the Author's general teaching, it may be well to state that a special course of Lectures on Holy Communion is given every year, in S. Peter's. The omission, in this and other works, of any direct reference to that Holy Sacrament, arises from his wish to concentrate the attention of his hearers on the single object proposed for their consideration.

He ventures to hope that, although originally intended for Lenten teachings, the thoughts contained in these Lectures may be used by GOD the HOLY GHOST in preparing Church-workers for taking an active part in the solemn work to which we have been summoned by the Bishops of the Metropolitan Dioceses;—the London Mission of 1874.

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*"Sanctify yourselves: for to-morrow the LORD will do wonders among you."*





## LECTURE I.



LET me begin by drawing in broad outline a sketch of the Christian Life, as it has been depicted by the HOLY SPIRIT in the Bible, and confirmed by the experience of GOD's people in every place and generation.

GOD, of His own Free-Will,—simply because He chose to do so,—elected you and me out of all the millions of mankind. When we knew neither good nor evil, and were unable to discern His Love, He, of His own Will, baptized us into the Kingdom of CHRIST, and made each of us “a member of CHRIST, “the child of GOD, and an inheritor of the Kingdom “of Heaven.”

GOD then gave us over to the rest of the Body,—the Church,—and bade His Church to instruct us in Holy Scripture, in order that the HOLY SPIRIT, pledged to us by virtue of our Baptism, might work in us by means of that Word of GOD, and develop in us the conscious Christian Life.

Long before it can understand what GOD has done for it, or what GOD is doing within it, the Christian child, whose course I am describing, becomes the subject of those influences of Divine Grace which are continually circulating through the whole Body. These influences are increasingly felt, as its higher being is developed. And, sooner or later—unless, through the neglect of parents, or through its own self-will, it grows up without instruction in the things of GOD—the HOLY GHOST enables it to realize, for itself,

“the first principles of the doctrine of CHRIST.”  
(Heb. vi. 1.)

1. *He convinces it of sin.*—He makes that child feel that it has an evil nature, and has been led by that evil nature into definite acts of sin. Under His teaching, the soul learns to say: “I have sinned. I have tried to be good, again and again, and I have failed. My prayers are cold, and full of wandering thoughts. I have no love for God. My religion is a burden, not a pleasure. My temper does not improve, in spite of all my efforts. I love my own will and my own way. I have done this and that, which I ought not to have done. I have left undone this and that, which I ought to have done. I have offended against GOD’s holy Law.”

2. *He reveals the Atonement.*—Gradually, or quickly,—for GOD will not be limited,—in the course of weeks, or months, or sometimes in a single hour; or, in some rare cases, extending the work through years,—the SPIRIT takes the same Holy Scriptures, and reveals to the awakened conscience this glorious fact: “GOD HATH RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF BY JESUS CHRIST.” (2 Cor. v. 18.) “These sins,” He says, “which thou art beginning to discover, were known to GOD from all Eternity. For them, thy SAVIOUR has atoned. Past, Present, and Future, are equally present to GOD. He knew, beforehand, the sins of the whole world. And, knowing that sin had in it a poison which could not be eradicated at less cost, GOD put away sin by the Precious Blood of His Dear SON. He laid the sin of the world, past, present, and future, on JESUS CHRIST. Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world! Thy debt is paid. He was wounded for *thy* transgressions; He was bruised for *thine* iniquities. The LORD hath laid on HIM

“ the iniquity of—ALL. Come into the closeness and  
 “ nearness of a soul reconciled with GOD, without the  
 “ shadow of a doubt, and call GOD thy FATHER.”

Thus working on the individual soul, by means of the BIBLE—this is important ; not by means of its own transient feelings,—the HOLY GHOST opens its eyes to the great Fact which CHRIST declared on the Cross : “ IT IS FINISHED.”

3. *He gains the WILL for GOD.*—He is not satisfied with shewing the soul its own guilt ; nor even with shewing it the completeness of its individual salvation. Still working by means of the Bible—bringing the Bible to bear on this individual soul,—he teaches it that there must be Self-Surrender. He points out to the young Christian the absolute claim of GOD upon his whole being. “ My son, give me thy heart.” “ If ONE died for all, then all died. And He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto HIM which died for them, and rose again.” (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.)

The order in which these foundation truths are learnt may vary in each separate case, and the means by which the result is attained are likewise manifold. A sermon—a book—the voice of a friend—a Providence—a memory of past years suddenly flashing across the mind, we know not whence—any of these may serve as instruments, to GOD the HOLY GHOST. He points out, it may be, from GOD’s Word, the reality of Hell, with its exceeding terror. Or He draws aside the veil, and shews the glory and beauty of the heavenly Kingdom. Or He reveals the Person of the SAVIOUR—the attractiveness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He unfolds the grandeur of that lonely life—the strength of that stern protest against evil—the tenderness which would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax—which would not