

**A SERMON PREACHED AT ST.
ALDATE'S CHURCH, OXFORD, ON
BEHALF OF A PROPOSED CHURCH
AND PARSONAGE HOUSE AT
HEADINGTON QUARRY**

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A Sermon Preached at St. Aldate's Church, Oxford, on Behalf of a Proposed Church and Parsonage house at headington quarry by Samuel Wilberforce

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SAMUEL WILBERFORCE

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A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D A T

S T. A L D A T E ' S C H U R C H , O X F O R D ,

O N B E H A L F O F A

P R O P O S E D C H U R C H

A N D

P A R S O N A G E H O U S E

A T H E A D I N G T O N Q U A R R Y .

B Y

S A M U E L , L O R D B I S H O P O F O X F O R D ,

C H A N C E L L O R O F T H E M O S T N O B L E O R D E R O F T H E G A R T E R .

P U B L I S H E D B Y R E Q U E S T .

O X F O R D :

J. V I N C E N T ; A N D I. H. P A R K E R ;

J. H A T C H A R D A N D S O N , L O N D O N .

1847.

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OXFORD.

TO THE REVEREND

RICHARD LYNCH COTTON, D.D.

PROVOST OF WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD,

THIS SERMON

IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS

SINCERE FRIEND AND BROTHER,

S. OXON.

CUDDESDON PALACE,
Nov. 1, 1847.

40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

SIR,

I have taken the liberty of inscribing these pages to you, not only because it was at your request that this Sermon was originally preached, and is now published, nor only as a slight token of my high admiration for your Christian love, and zeal in all good works, but specially from your connection with the relief of that peculiar character of spiritual destitution which in one place this effort is intended to supply. Your parochial ministry in Berkshire made you well acquainted with the spiritual wants of the scattered inhabitants of our hamlets, and for the supply of those wants, in more than one parish surrounding Denchworth, many generations will, I doubt not, call you blessed. You felt, as I believe, most justly, that no wants are more urgent. The case, indeed, of the poor dwellers in our great towns

has its own peculiar aggravations; but to these the vast numbers of the destitute has, thank God, already attracted attention and relief. Not one word would I say to damp the zeal of those whose especial efforts have been addressed to the relief of this necessity. I would only desire to call attention to another, and if a less obtrusive, a no less real call for Christian charity.

No one who has not become practically acquainted with them can duly estimate the deep trials which dry up the spiritual life of the poor families who are gathered into the remoter hamlets of our agricultural parishes. Here too often the poor do literally grow up uncared for, and unknown. Afar, in most cases, from all the softening influences of occasional intercourse with more educated neighbours, they become coarse and hard not only in outward manners but in character and habits. Commonly the poorest of the poor are thrust into these outskirts of civilization; their children are rarely found in our schools; their girls grow up without the restraining, elevating influences which flow to all from the consciousness of being observed by those above them in habits and education; their young men are not led by any secondary

influences to place a restraint on those sensual appetites which by their coarse indulgence so eminently brutalize the whole character, whilst the elder people seem, for the most part, drowned in the impenetrable apathy of hardened ignorance. The one remedy for this evil is to plant the presence of a truly Christian pastor amongst them. By ministering to them, the gospel of Christ's grace, and the ordinances of the church, this reaches their wants in the more direct manner; and incidentally it has the same effect, by planting amongst them one, who, by a sympathy with all their temporal wants and afflictions, opens their hearts to the softening influences of kindly intercourse with the educated and comparatively polished.

This we may do with far more certainty amongst these outlying hamlets than in our busy towns. In these it is too often long before a new church is filled, even when it is built. But the residence of a true pastor in a wild rural district is felt at once, and they who lend their aid to this work are healing the springs of society. It is their especial blessing that they plant a living principle of good for succeeding generations. Amidst the recurring temptations, wants, trials and sufferings, amongst