

**FIVE SERMONS ON THE
HOLY COMMUNION,
PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH OF TRIM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649338924

Five sermons on the holy communion, Preached in the Parish Church of Trim by Richard Butler

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Cover @ 2017

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RICHARD BUTLER

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BY

RICHARD BUTLER,

DEAN OF CLONMAGNOIS, AND VICAR OF TRIM.

LONDON:

T. HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY.

DUBLIN:

HODGES, SMITH & CO., 104, GRAFTON STREET.

LIVERPOOL:

HENRY GREENWOOD, 32, CASTLE STREET.

1858.

100.3.74.

THESE SERMONS

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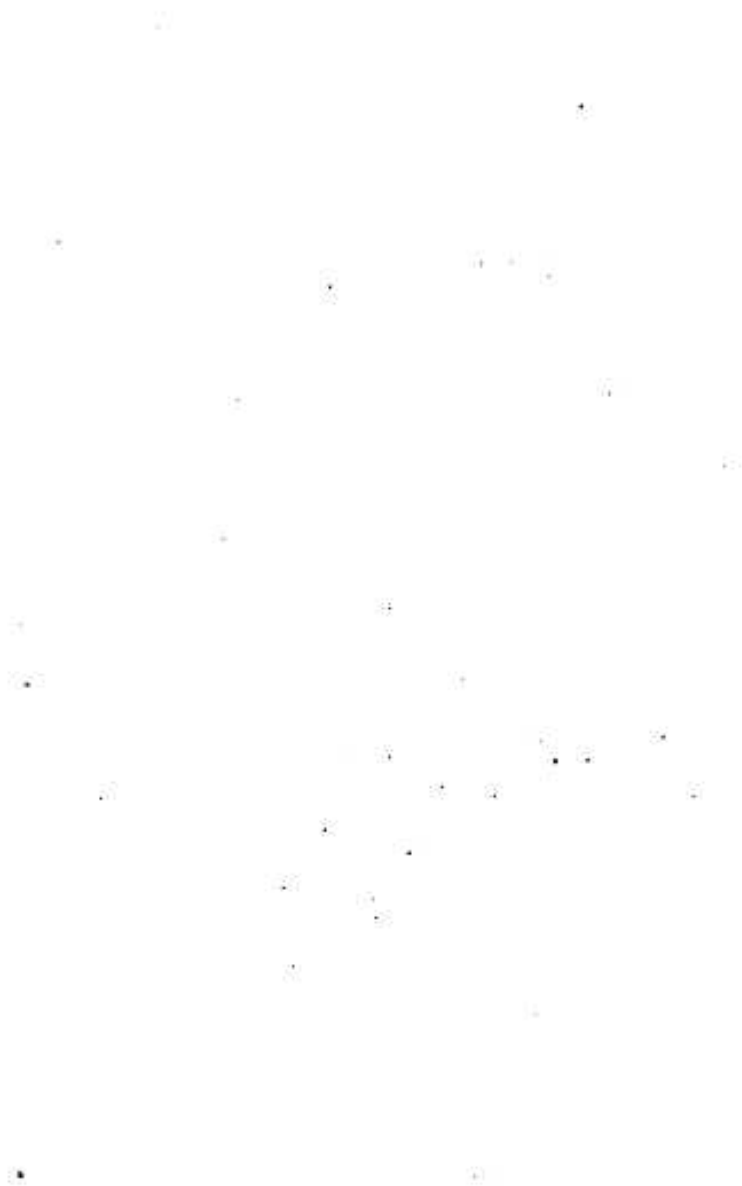
PRESENTED TO THE PARISHIONERS OF TRIM,

AS A TOKEN OF THE AFFECTION OF THEIR OLD FRIEND AND PASTOR,

R. BUTLER,

THIRTY-SIX YEARS VICAR OF TRIM.

VICARAGE, TRIM,
CHRISTMAS, 1855.



HOLY COMMUNION.



"For the bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life unto the world."—St. JOHN, chap. vi. 33.

THE discourse of our Blessed Lord, contained in John vi., is one of the most awful and exciting recorded by the Evangelists. It is about a matter on which we should long to know more—a matter on which unassisted human nature has ever toiled in vain to obtain certain and satisfactory knowledge; and which, now that Divine truth has spoken upon it, we seem to want faculties to comprehend.

In this discourse our Lord speaks of the reconciliation of God to the soul of man, and of the union of man's soul with God. These are subjects which angels long to look into, and which men, until they are admitted into fellowship with angels, if even then, cannot hope adequately to understand. We are upon

earth ignorant and childish, with minds in their original constitution feeble and limited, and now dwindled, dwarfed, and stunted by habitual attention to the poor concerns of this world, and in too many of us darkened and embruted by gross and habitual sin. How can we hope to comprehend the deep things of God? Meekly then, and timidly, like children listening to a father's voice, let us listen to the words of our Saviour, knowing that His words are wise and true; that He would not have uttered them if it did not behove us to know them. Let us then hope and pray that if we now hear them and keep them, the light will at last dawn upon our hearts, and that we shall then behold clearly the beauty and the value of those truths which we now hold like jewels in a casket, like flowers in the seed.

It is, then, first of all, plain from this discourse, as it is indeed from the whole tenor of the New Testament, that none can come to God except through Jesus Christ our Lord; He is the Bread of God that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. And as He adds in the fifty-first verse: "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." This is the great doctrine of the atonement and of the satisfaction of our sins, made by the death and passion of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ. This is the main doctrine of the Gospel, that which makes it to be the Gospel, glad tidings of great joy to all people. Compared with this excellency of the Gospel all things are but loss. Where else can the sinner look for pardon and peace? Are not you a sinner? Have not you offended God? There is no man who will say that he is not a sinner. During the whole course of my life, in my professional ministrations, or in the unreserved intercourse of society, I never met with one human being who deliberately declared that he was as good as he ought to have been; as good as he might have been; who did not confess and deplore that he had not only left undone many things that he ought to have done, but that he had done many things that he ought not to have done. I never met with any human being who trusted in what are called his good works, as sufficient to secure his everlasting salvation. Such a person I never met; such notions I do not believe to exist, and, therefore, against such notions I do not preach. No: every Christian puts his trust, not in the justice, but in the mercy of God. Even those who are not Christians appeal to the mercy of God. It would not be Divine mercy to forgive the sinner while he continued in his sins: it would not be possible, consistent with the eternal distinctions between right and wrong, consistent with the first notions of

his nature, which the Judge of all the earth has written within the hearts of His rational creatures: it would not be possible that eternal happiness should be the reward of unconverted and unrepentant sinners. Nobody ever imagined such wickedness; it never entered into the heart of man to conceive such impiety. But repentance might, perhaps, wash away sin and secure pardon? Indeed? But is not the whole service of our whole lives due to Almighty God, and how can the performance of your duty to-day make up for the breach of your duty yesterday? You might as well say that your performance of your duty yesterday would make up for the breach of it to-day; that yesterday you did what was right, and that, therefore, to-day you may, without compunction of conscience, without fear of God's anger, do what is wrong. Besides, it is not only our sins, but our sinfulness which darkens our minds and makes us fear to appear before God. It is not so much the remembrance of what we have done as the sense of what we are that makes us shrink from His presence—not simply the outward act, which we would try to think we might leave behind us, but the strange, mysterious consciousness of inwrought co-existent, and yet responsible guilt, which is with us always, and goes with us wherever we go, and is not ours, but ourselves. What can we know of God's