

b011

EIGHT SERMONS ON THE SEVENTY

PREACHED AT LEEDS
IN 1887

BY
JAMES THONGER

ANGEL AT LEEDS (INDUCTED 1880)
ARCHANGEL, 1895

INDEX:

TEXT: LUKE 10 : 1-20	3
THE SEVENTY	5
SERMON NO. 1 – 23RD JANUARY, 1887.	5
SERMON NO. 2 – 13TH FEBRUARY, 1887	13
SERMON NO. 3 – 24TH JULY, 1887	22
SERMON NO. 4 – 7TH AUGUST , 1887	31
SERMON NO. 5 - 2LST AUGUST, 1887.	40
SERMON NO. 6 - 9TH OCTOBER, 1887.	48
SERMON NO. 7 - 13TH NOVEMBER, 1887.	57
SERMON NO. 8 - 27TH NOVEMBER, 1887,	67

TEXT: LUKE 10 : 1-20

KJV Luke 10:1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. 2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. 3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. 4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. 5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. 6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. 7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. 8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, 11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom,

than for that city. 13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. 15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. 16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me. 17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

THE SEVENTY

SERMON NO. 1 – 23RD JANUARY, 1887.

Text: Luke x, 1

In the Service for the Ordination of Priests the following passages occur in the address of the Apostle to the Candidates, “When Moses chose out seventy men to aid him in bearing the burden of the people, he was hidden to choose those whom he knew to be elders of the people. And God, by His Holy Spirit which He would send down, would make you true Elders, not so much in years, but in knowledge and in wisdom, in grace and perfectness, beyond your fellows in the Church, that ye may worthily help, and be fellow-labourers with, the Apostles of the Lord, and the Angels of the Churches.”

“The like figure and mystery of your calling are set forth to you in this, that the Lord in the days of His sojourning on earth, after He had called and sent forth the Twelve, sent forth other Seventy also, that they might go before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come. So may ye go before the face of the Lord, labouring in your appointed place ; and, following His Apostles, prepare the way of His appearing.”

I have read this somewhat lengthy passage because it has an important bearing upon the Holy Scripture which has been read as a text, bringing as it does into view the act of Moses the leader of God’s ancient people in choosing out, in obedience to God’s command, that ministry of seventy men who should be helpers to him in bearing the burden of the people ; and also that act of our Lord, the Prophet like unto Moses, who, after He had sent forth His Apostles, chose seventy others also to aid them in their work of preparing His way.

There is no doubt a certain sense in which those who are ordained to the Christian Priesthood, and especially those who are ordained by and in the fellowship of the Apostles, do stand in relation to the Apostles as the seventy did who were called by our Lord ; they do the same work, with the same power, and with a similar object in view, and this is the mystery of their calling referred to in the Apostolic Exhortation in the Ordination Service. But there is apparently another and a larger and a more directly anti - typical view to be taken of the Ministry of the Seventy than that furnished by the ordination to the priesthood, and it is to this point that I desire to bring your consideration.

The whole dispensation of the Law was typical, that is, it presented a picture in material things of a dispensation which was intended to be an exact counterpart in spiritual things. In the words of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews, the law had “a shadow of good things to come.” The tabernacle which was specially designed to set forth that dispensation was “a figure for the time then present“.....which, with all its carnal ordinances, was “imposed on them until the time of reformation“ - i.e., until the time when the true tabernacle - Christ - which God pitched and not man should be brought into manifestation.

The act of Moses in choosing the seventy and taking them, and also Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, with him into Mount Sinai, to receive the Law, was the first manifestation of that fellowship in Ministry which was afterwards to be more fully developed and confirmed, as shown in Numbers xi, 17, when God promised to come down and take of the spirit which was upon Moses, and put it upon them: and when He did so it is recorded (25th) that “they prophesied and did not cease“.

The act of our Lord in choosing the seventy was the last act in that dispensation, of the Prophet like unto Moses in associating with Himself, and with His Twelve, those who were to go forth to declare the ter-

mination of the legal dispensation, and instead, to announce - “the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand“.

It is very important to note that this mission of the Seventy was no part of the Christian dispensation - the Holy Ghost was not yet given for Jesus had not yet died or been raised and glorified: it was a work done within the limits of the Jewish dispensation, although not strictly appertaining to the Law. As being within that dispensation it must be regarded as the filling up of that which Moses did, and also as a type of something which has to be seen in the end of the Christian dispensation: and as it was not strictly part of the Law, but a special mission by the Lord in preparing for the future, it must be regarded as an indication of what the purpose of God was when the Holy Ghost should be given, just as the Apostles themselves were chosen within the limits of the Jewish dispensation but were only confirmed in their Apostleship when on the day of Pentecost they received “the promise of the Father.“

The points of interest to us in connection with the ministry of the Seventy are

- (1) What was the event in the Christian dispensation which is the antitype to the choice of the 70 by Moses ; and

(2) What is that in the Christian Church which will answer to (for we believe the event is still for the most part future) the choice of the 70 by our Lord – the one event commencing, the other at the conclusion of the dispensation.

The Holy Scriptures as may be supposed do not throw much light upon the events of the Christian dispensation - they were nearly all future when the canon of Holy Scripture was closed, and so the only way in which they could be alluded to was by type, or shadow, or prophetic intimation, as supplied in the Book of Revelation.

It would be opposed to the very nature and character of the Christian dispensation to forecast and delineate the future. The Holy Ghost Himself, the Spirit of the Father and the Son was to be present throughout the dispensation to reveal mysteries, to declare the will of God, to indicate times and seasons; and so it is, that if we would understand the things of God we must “search the Scriptures“ and particularly those of the Old Testament to see by the light of the Holy Spirit what the shadows and dark sayings therein recorded mean.

The first reference to the choice of the 70 by Moses is recorded in Exodus xxiv; it was before the Law was given. God Himself named four men who should come up to the Mount - Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu – but the choice of the 70 was left to Moses, the Chief. This choice did not amount to ordination or mission, but it introduced a certain number of men duly nominated into a certain amount of fellowship and privilege - they went up to the Mount with Moses and Aaron; they saw the God of Israel, and did eat and drink; but upon them He did not lay His hand. It was long after this - after the law had been given a second time, and declared, and the tabernacle built, and its services ordered - that the Elders, 70 in number, were again summoned (Num. xi, 16-17 & 24-25), this time to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, that God might take of the spirit that was upon Moses and put it upon them “that they might bear the burden with him“. Thus they were to be ordained for fellowship of work with Moses – his coadjutors - but not his equals, for none could be equal with him whom God alone had chosen after a peculiar manner, while they had been chosen by Moses, and God ratified his choice.

The calling of the 70 by the Prophet like unto Moses (Jesus) was, in a manner of speaking, necessary for the winding up of the dispensation with a

ministry of a similar character to that which had been associated with Moses at the commencement. Their work, exactly similar to that of “the 12“, was to prepare the way of the Lord ; but while their work was the same, their standing was inferior, neither did it appear to be permanent as was that of the Twelve: they were sent, and returned when their mission was accomplished. (See Luke x, v.1-20).

The New Dispensation, commenced at Pentecost, witnessed the beginning of the working out of the types of the Law. The Lord having ascended, the anti-type of Moses was seen in the Apostleship, as one, when the heads of the spiritual tribes were gathered together. There is no reason to believe that any besides the Twelve received the direct outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, but it is equally open to our belief that amongst the disciples, who as it is recorded were about an hundred and twenty, there were most, if not all, of those seventy whom the Lord Himself had chosen and who now by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and be associated with them as fellow workers “to bear the burden of the people“, as in the lifetime of the Lord they had been sent by Him to do temporarily Apostolic work, although not ,named‘ Apostles.

In the purpose of God ‘the Twelve‘ and ‘the Seventy‘ go together; the latter (the 70) cannot be without the former, and the former (the 12) cannot complete their work without the latter. So God in these last days having restored ‘the Twelve‘, ‘the Seventy‘ are without doubt associated with them, in those who are admitted to the fellowship of their rule and episcopacy in the Church, i.e. the Angels of the Churches and Angel Evangelists, with those over them in the same episcopal order.

Now, in the ordinary working of the Church the ministry of the Seventy may not be so clearly discerned and defined by reason of the more important and overshadowing ministry of the Twelve, still present, but doubtless the time will come, and that soon, when the distinctive ministry of the Seventy will be seen and felt in every place in the Church whither the Lord Himself would come - Apostolic work wrought by apostolic man, but not ‘of the Twelve‘ nor daring to join themselves to Apostles as equals.

SERMON NO. 2 – 13TH FEBRUARY, 1887

Text: Luke x.

Last month I brought before you the subject of the Ministry of “the Seventy“ as set forth and prefigured in type by the choice of seventy elders of Israel by Moses, first to accompany him into the Mount Sinai to receive the Law, and second at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation that in the sight of the people God might take of the spirit of Moses and put it upon them, that they might with him share the care and burden of the people.

I now propose to consider more particularly the charge which the Lord gave to “the Seventy“ whom He called, as the same apparently sets forth the character of that ministry which is to follow the present work of the Lord by His „Twelve“.

The 10th Chapter of St. Luke’s Gospel commences with the words, “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come“. It is important to observe the time when the Lord called ‘the seventy‘ as it enables us to understand the connection between their work and that of ‘the twelve‘. The previous chapter of

St. Luke’s Gospel treats upon the call and mission of ‘the twelve‘, and their return: it also gives the account of the Transfiguration; and in the 51st verse refers to the near approach of the time when He should have finished His work. The words are, “And it came to pass when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem“. It was „after these things the Lord appointed other seventy also“ ; it would appear therefore that the call of ‘the Twelve‘ was an event early in His ministry and that of the seventy near its close, when the work was more urgent, because the end was near, and the time of witness that remained, short.

I am desirous of fixing the point of time, so far as we can, for the sending forth of the seventy because I apprehend that in the time of the end - now - the time and the circumstances are analogous, and the words of the Lord to the seventy then, are precisely suitable to the present spiritual circumstances and conditions, and intended to apply to them.

It may be well at the outset of our enquiries to consider what is the meaning of ‘the seventy‘. Why that number? In reading and studying God’s word we cannot fail to be struck with the constant use of numbers in the working out of His purposes. He has been called “The Wonderful Numberer“ and all His

works are wrought out in measure and in number - 'He telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names' - "the very hairs of your head are all numbered". Sometimes the reason for the employment of certain numbers is revealed as when God separated the sons of Adam and divided to the nations their inheritance (Deut.xxxii, 8); it was "according to the number of the children of Israel", and sometimes it is left to men in the light of the Holy Spirit to discover and discern the meaning hidden under the various numbers. Doubtless a time will come when all God's purpose shall be clearly seen and it will not be among the least of those things which shall delight the mind of the new man to see God's book open in which all his members are written.

Confining ourselves to the two numbers, 'the twelve' and 'the seventy', we can see more clearly the reason for the former than the latter: twelve appears to be a number which God has employed in the commencement of a work, whether in nature or in grace: it was so in the old creation in the heavenly bodies (12 signs of the zodiac), in the division of time (12 hours in the day), in the division of the Sons of Adam ; and so the choice of our Lord of twelve men to be under Himself, the crowning ministry of the new creation is entirely in accordance with all that had gone

before, and the calling of the twelve in these last days when the Lord set His hand to work a second time is equally in agreement with His revealed manner of working in former times. But when we speak of 'the twelve' we must not suppose that God limits Himself to that precise number at all times of His working: the number has to do with a future perfect condition of things —the present employment of the term rather implies a class of individuals all of whom may or may not be found in the perfect number „in the regeneration“. For example, when the Lord made use of that expression, Judas was one of 'the twelve', - but another had to supply his place ; also Paul and Barnabas were called when there were 12 others besides, and in these last days all who were called did not abide in their place: but whatever may have been the actual number of men at any particular time living and standing in the office, that particular ministry is always called „The Twelfth“.

These remarks will enable us to understand more clearly concerning „the Seventy“, of whom so little is said and of which number there is so little foreshadowing. If, as we believe, the employment of „the Seventy“ marks the closing period of a work, or dispensation, then the absence of any clear and definite explanation is accounted for, for it has been the way of the Lord to leave to faith, in the ending of a dispensation that which His people should have

that which His people should have advanced to the knowledge of, whereas in the beginning of a work He has always made His action plain and evident to man's natural senses.

The first and most evident conjunction of 'the twelve' and 'the seventy' is in connection with the sons of Jacob and children of Israel. This connection is the more remarkable if we bear in mind that which has been already alluded to, viz., that when God divided to the nations their inheritance it was "according to the number of the children of Israel." "For the Lord's portion is His people ; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." (Deut.xxxii, 8, 9).

When Jacob returned into the land of Canaan - the promised land - from his service with his uncle Laban, he brought with him his twelve sons, and on two separate occasions God declared his name to be Israel and "no more Jacob". This period was the most flourishing and important of Jacob's life; it marked the commencement of Israel, first in himself and second in his twelve sons who were all abiding with him in the land promised to Abraham and his seed - Christ.

The place where the covenant with Jacob was renewed was Beth-El - the place where God met with

him friendless and lonely at the first - and the words of the covenant and promise ran thus (Gen. xxxv, 11, 12) "I am God Almighty ; be fruitful and multiply ; a nation, and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins ; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land".

Keep before you the twelfefold division of the tribes, and the land; for the promises are summed up in 12, even to the time of the end when the heavenly Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb's wife, is seen all multiples of twelve: the city 12,000 furlongs long, broad and high, with twelve gates - the foundations twelve - the wall 12 times 12 cubits high.

A time came - it was near the end of Jacob's life - the brotherly unity had been broken and God's judgment followed. The land had to be left and Jacob and his sons had to go into Egypt ; and now the number 'twelve' drops and „seventy“ is introduced. We read both in Gen. xlvi, 27 and Exodus i,5 that all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob into Egypt were seventy souls, and the next verse in Exodus adds, "And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation"; so that their sons who were of the 70 were the heads when that tribulation began under the king "which knew not Joseph".

Now that we are on the subject of numbers it will be well still further to investigate that number two which is introduced in connection with the 70. The Lord appointed other '70' also and sent them forth two and two, etc.

There is a remarkable reference to this duality or twofoldness in the case of Jacob's 12 and 70 descendants. Immediately before Jacob's death Joseph brought to his father his two Sons Manasseh and Ephraim for his blessing, and Jacob after referring to God's promise concerning the inheritance (Gen. xlvii,5) added, "And now thy two Sons Ephraim and Manasseh which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee in Egypt, are mine ; as Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine." It may be inferred that when "Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation." (Exodus i,6) that these two were the heads in that 70 souls who came under that Pharoah „who knew not Joseph.“

The twofoldness of the 70 who are to follow the 12 in the Lord's present work is referred to in several typical passages in the Old Testament as well as in the Book of Revelation.

From the Old Testament we may mention the two spies whom Joshua sent forth to view the city of Jeri-

cho previous to its destruction. The rending of Elijah's mantle into two parts as it fell upon Elisha, and he received a double portion of the spirit: these events are well known to us as types; but the allusions to the two-fold character of the witness of the 70 are far more significant in the Book of Revelation. There, after the first-fruits in the person of the man-child are taken away, it is said that to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness to be nourished there. The same period of time is referred to under another set of figures in Rev. xi. „And I will give power unto my two witnesses.....these are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.“ And when their witness is accomplished it is said that the dwellers upon the earth make merry because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth.

There is quite sufficient here to show how the mission of the „other 70 also“ is identical with the period of time now drawing near, and in considering our Lord's charge to the 70 I desire to show you how that it is a work to be fulfilled by a Ministry very shortly to be brought into manifestation.

I purpose, God willing, to continue this subject on another occasion.

SERMON NO. 3 – 24TH JULY, 1887

Text: Luke x, 2

The first words of Our Lord to the Seventy whom He appointed had reference to a subject which was not mentioned by Him in His charge to the Twelve, and of itself it marked a condition of things which did not so properly apply to the earlier period of His ministry and in its application to a ministry of the seventy in these days it points to a condition of things not yet manifested but very near at hand.

The harvest was evidently that which was upon the mind of the Lord in sending the Seventy the Harvest is that which we know to be upon the heart of the Lord now. The work by the Twelve was, and has been, so far as actual gathering is concerned, a work small and circumscribed, more in the nature of sowing than of reaping, of preaching the Gospel as a witness to all nations, rather than of gathering a multitude from all nations. What could twelve men do among all nations ? All that they could do would be to gather together a comparatively small company of believers whom they could so instruct in the things pertaining to the Kingdom, that when the time should come they might go forth in larger numbers to do a larger work.

In parables which we now well understand, Apostolic work has been the gathering and preparing a handful of first-fruits who should be so thoroughly imbued with the apostolic spirit that they should be as their epistle read and known of all men. What part those gathered as first-fruits shall have in gathering and preparing the harvest we cannot tell: this we do know - that the completion of the number of the first-fruits will mark the time of the commencement of the harvest ; and one of the first things to be done will be the appointment of the other Seventy also. As a matter of fact the Lord by His Spirit has already indicated His mind and declared who are to be 'of the Seventy', but their being sent forth tarries ; partly, doubtless, because the Apostolic work is not yet completed, and partly because the number of the Seventy must be completed.

When the time has come for them to go forth two and two, the harvest will be ready, and according to the word of the Lord it will be 'great'. And although the labourers will be many in comparison with the Twelve, the Seventy will be few in comparison with the work to be done. The urgent matter at the outset laid upon the hearts of the Seventy will be to pray - "pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest".

The command by the Lord 'to pray' marks the time for Him to work, because He does not call upon His people to ask Him for anything until the time has come for Him to give that which He desires them to ask. When the Lord gives the word, great will be the company of those who will publish it. The Seventy will not be the whole company of preachers - they will be the heads, ruling authority in the time of harvesting as 'The Twelve' have been the heads in the time of gathering first-fruits.

From the increased number of heads we may gather some idea of the increased magnitude of the work to be done. How the united band will meet from time to time to confer upon their work and order its goings we know not, but it would appear that the executive authority will be vested in two in every city and place and that under them will be those many labourers whom the Lord will raise up to carry forth the word.

So used as we have been to the gathering of units, it is difficult for us to realise what the gathering of the harvest will be like; but we must strive more and more to our hearts expand to the largeness of the work that is to be done; and surely for some time past the Lord has been enlarging our hearts to embrace a wider field than that we have hitherto la-

boured in. The circumstances of the work of the Lord for the last few years have been altering, perhaps to some of us imperceptibly; but if we compare things now with what they were some ten years ago when the Lord took to Himself the Pillar of Apostles, and what has been called 'the overlapping' commenced, there has been a great and marked change. The company of believers were then, for the most part, embraced within the narrow limits of the small congregations under the headship of ministers, in fellowship with, and serving under, the Apostles. Now the ramifications of the Lord's work can scarcely be defined, and great numbers beyond those in visible fellowship with Apostles are one with them in faith and hope, besides a still further and larger number who are being prepared in spirit by Him who effects all the preparations of the heart in men for that which He purposes to do with them.

„The harvest truly is great“ - “a multitude whom no man can number“, - they are to be gathered, for all the faithful in Christ Jesus must be brought into the unity of the faith and this surely means, into the apostolic faith. For although in the time of harvesting the Apostles will not be personally present, the Seventy who succeed them will be in fellowship with them having a double portion of their spirit and we may be sure that all gathered by them will recognise

what the Lord hath done by those who have gone before in preparing His way and making ready a people prepared for the Lord.

In speaking of a work which is still future and of which, of course, we can have had no experience, it is impossible to say that this or that will be done ; all that we can say must be either that which is actually revealed, or that which is evidently in accordance, or analogy with God's dealings in past times. Keeping close to the parable which the Lord Himself employs, viz. that of the harvest, we know from experience as well as from revelation that it is divided into two parts, or we may say three, if we include the dealing with the tares: - 1. There is the first-fruits. 2. The harvest itself with which is included (3) the gathering of the tares. I will not dwell at any length upon the first of these because that part of the work is nearly done: necessarily it is a comparatively small work, a gathering by hand from various parts of the field those ears which appear to be first-ripe, that they may be presented before the Lord and accepted on behalf of the great congregation, an earnest and pledge of the abundant harvest which shall gladden the heart of the Husbandman who hath purchased the field for Himself with His own blood.

“The field is the world ; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.....the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels.“ (Matt. xiii, 38, 39).

In order that we may be fully impressed with the unity of the Lord's Work I would remind you that the harvest-field is one ; the distinction between first-fruits and harvest is not so much a question of spiritual condition as period of ripening and mode of gathering. The ground, the sun, the rain are the same and the ripening is very much at the same time, but the first-fruits are gathered first and presented before the Lord in His Temple as a separate sheaf, while the harvest is reaped and gathered into the barn. Let not those who are first-fruits boast themselves in that they are first gathered or that they are riper and better than others ; rather let them rejoice that God in His sovereign power and electing grace has chosen them when in the field there may be multitudes of ears as fat and full and ripe as themselves. And let not the first-fruits grudge those who are of the harvest any spiritual privilege which they may have imparted to them, even to the anointing of the Holy Ghost which is God's promise unto all. No blessing, or mercy, or privilege, or position which a gracious and merciful God assigns and imparts to that great multi-

tude which no man can number, will ever detract one iota from the privilege which attaches to these first-fruits who are faithful, for they will ever abide the nearest to the Lord.

The gathering of the Harvest will be in a time of sore and increasing trial: our sympathies should even now be extended to them in fullest and largest measure, for they are perfectly one with us - one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in all. Even in the gathering of first-fruits there have been those gathered by hand who were not, nor ever could be, of the elect number. “They went out from us because they were not of us“: the presence of those who are evil has ever demanded the keen scrutiny of those angels of the Son of Man whose duty it has been to separate. The presence of these has been a bitter trial to the faithful and a sore blot upon the Lord's work, and their excision has been a painful experience to themselves and others. But how small has been this trial in comparison of what will be when the reapers, the angels of the Son of Man cut down both wheat and tares together and fulfil their work of separation, gathering the tares into bundles to burn, and the wheat into the Lord's barn. How sore then will be the trial of the faithful we cannot tell, so closely intermingled will be the children of God and the children of

the wicked one - the tares and the wheat. But the Seventy will no doubt have special grace given to them to fulfil this work of separation which, from the parable of the tares and the wheat, appears to form a part of the duty devolving upon them. As angels - messengers - of the Son of Man they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

From the Book of Revelation (xith Chapter) in which the work of the Two Witnesses, which we take to be the ministry of 'the 70' is described, it is evident that the spiritual power imparted to this ministry is very great, far larger than has been given to the Twelve so far as its manifestation among men is concerned, and it is because of the exercise of this power that their ministry excites such hatred and animosity, ultimately bringing them under the power of the beast who ariseth from the bottomlees pit.

We cannot now realise what the character of those times will be: we live in times of comparative peace when through the power and mercy of God, and the all-prevailing intercession of our Great High Priest the winds of judgement are restrained; but when they are let loose, and evil man and evil spirits fulfil their wicked purposes almost without restraint, it will need

such a ministry, endued with a double portion of the spirit, and mighty power, to withstand their enemies, to fulfil the work committed to them.

SERMON NO. 4 – 7TH AUGUST , 1887

Text: Luke x.

I concluded my last Teaching upon the Mission of the Seventy by referring to the character of the times in which they would have to labour. The harvest which has to be gathered has to be reaped - wheat and tares together: the tares to be gathered into bundles for burning ; the wheat to be gathered into the Lord's barn.

The opening words of Our Lord in His charge sufficiently show the reception which the Lord's servants may expect. "Go your ways: behold I send you forth as lambs among wolves". The messengers whom the Lord chooseth and sendeth forth must be like Him who is their Master - the Lamb of God - holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, but although they are lambs they are not to be devoured by the raging wolves, for they are under special care and protection - "nothing shall by any means harm you". Their lamb-like character does not mean that they are defenceless and without power, but bespeaks their innocence; and as virtue is stronger than cruelty, so are these servants of the Lord able to confound their adversaries by their wisdom, and the strength of Him who is stronger than any power that can be brought against them.

But it is evidently¹ not without design that the Lord uses this animal - the wolf - to describe the kind of experience His servants would have; for the wolf is a cruel and bloodthirsty animal without a single good or noble quality, and the few references that are made to wolves in the Scriptures indicate men of a selfish and cruel character who occupy places of rule and use their influence and power not for the benefit of those over whom they are set, but for their own advantage. And particularly they indicate men in ecclesiastical office, as our Lord says, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves". And again, the Apostle Paul in his affecting final words to the Elders of Ephesus, said "I know that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock". There have always been such cruel pastors as these, if pastors they can be called at all, but the latter days will witness a vast increase of these, as of all other ungodly men, and they will be the chief opponents of 'the Seventy' in their work.

But like all other classes of men they will have their head, and as the Seventy head up the witness for God, so these 'evening wolves' will come under the

¹ Im Originaltext steht „evidently“; dies dürfte wahrscheinlich ein Tippfehler sein! Anm: Scheffler

headship of that beast which cometh up out of the earth who has two horns like a lamb and speaks as a dragon. We have heard much in times past concerning these two beasts, i.e. the one coming up out of the sea, the other out of the earth, but it is to be feared that we have not fully realised who and what they are, and what their true character is. (Rev. xiii, 1&11, etc.). As the time of the end draws nearer and nearer the Lord will give to His people clearer discernment concerning them, and as we are now considering the ministry of the Seventy, it will not be out of place to consider these two beasts, one of whom will be their chief opponent, and the other their great persecutor, both being inspired by that third beast - the angel of the bottomless pit.

If we had time to enter fully into the subject it would not be difficult to show how that in nearly every case of opposition to the work of God there are two powers - one, which is the ruling power, the other an instigating or prompting power, and generally speaking the latter is the more cruel, insidious and crafty. A few examples will be sufficient to serve my purpose by way of illustration. When Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh to obtain deliverance for the children of Israel, Pharaoh himself was the chief

actor, but it was Jannes² and Jambres³ who withstood Moses; they were the ecclesiastical party among the Egyptians who stirred up Pharaoh to act as he did.

Again when Balak, king of Moab, desired to cut off and destroy the children of Israel, he was conscious that in himself he had not the power to do so ; therefore he sought the help of the wicked prophet Balaam to use his spiritual powers against them. And when God restrained him from this "he taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols and to commit fornication."

So when Ahab, cruel and unjust as he was, hesitated to dispossess Naboth of his vineyard, it was "that woman Jezebel" who urged him forward saying "I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth", and she wrote the letters of authority and sealed them with Ahab's seal.

Lastly, when the time came for Jesus Christ to be put to death it was certainly the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate who was the chief actor, but it was the

² Jannes = Betrüger; Übervorteiler, Verführer (wohl ägyptisch Zauberer): 2.Tim 3.8

³ Jambres = stolz, eigensinnig, widerstrebend . 2.Tim 3.8

ecclesiastical party - the High Priest, scribes and others - who prompted the wickedness. They said, "Crucify Him, crucify Him"; and when Pilate would have let Him go they said if he did so he was not Caesar's friend.

All these cases and many others to which we have not time to allude were so many evidences of those evil powers in human nature which are ever seeking to hinder God in His work, and all will be summed up in those two beasts who in the final attempt to overthrow the work of God are joined together and inspired by the spirit of the evil one. It is the temporal power, apostate from its true standing, and the spiritual or ecclesiastical authority prostituting its spiritual powers to destroy instead of edify the work of God: or to sum up in one word, it is Antichrist and the Apostate Church - the male and the female - against Christ and His Church.

The account of the two beasts to which I am referring is contained in Rev. xiii.th Chapter. The word beast is an unfortunate one for our understanding of the passage because it hardly conveys to our minds the true meaning. The same word is used here and in the vi.th Chapter, where upon the opening of the seals the four beasts say in turn, "Come and see"; but the word beast is expressed by two different words in the

original Greek text. The four beasts are "ζωον" - forms of life - manifestations of the life of Him who sitteth in the midst of the Throne. The two beasts in Rev xiii are "θηριον", i.e. wild beasts and the idea intended to be conveyed is - man apart from God, the natural man, wild unrestrained by the grace of God.

The first of these two wild beasts rises up out of the sea ; it is a power developed from the great mass of humanity. In its beginnings it must not be regarded as an individual, but as representing the tendency of man to act apart from God, being a law to himself, and regardless of any other law. The Apostle John said that in his day there were many antichrists ; and if there were many then, how much more numerous must they be now ; and as self will and boldness in defying God is ever on the increase where it has begun to work and has got firm footing, how much more must the power of antichrist have developed now. The time must come, and it is near, when all this lawlessness and impiety will be manifested in a head - an individual will become the representative of that spirit of antagonism to God which has been working so long, and as the Scriptures say, "upon his heads are the names of blasphemy". In the work of persecution and active evil against God and Christ this 'beast' is chief and answers to Pharaoh, Balak, Ahab and all those temporal powers which in time past have been

hinderers of God. I will not further describe this beast, as the other one is that which more answers to the wolves into the midst of which the Seventy are sent.

This wild beast is a power second to the other, second in time of development, as well as second in regard to assistance. But although second it is in reality the most powerful, for it is more clever, crafty, cruel: it is the apostate ecclesiastical power. When its apostasy is manifested it is already an organised body: it does not rise like the first beast out of the heterogeneous mass of humanity - the sea - but it comes up out of the earth, out of the midst of the settled institutions of men. With characteristic cleverness it bides its time, and it is only when it sees that the power of the first beast is in the ascendent that it transfers its allegiance to it. Its ecclesiastical character is seen in that it has two horns like a lamb ; it is a false prophet, a wolf in sheep's clothing, a spiritual opponent to that spiritual ministry of the Seventy which will then be doing the work of the Lord.

How dangerous this apostate ecclesiastical power will be can be seen by the description of its character - it not only exerciseth all the power of the first beast (i.e. the temporal sword is entirely at its disposal), but it speaks as a dragon, it is inspired by the spirit of

evil, and its chief work is in deceiving them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which it has power to do in the sight of the first beast. It is the devil's counterpart to the Lord's work. Of the servants of the Lord it is said (Rev. xi, 5.6), „If any man will hurt them fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies: they have power to shut heaven that it rain not: they have power over waters to turn them to blood and they have power to smite the earth with plagues“.

On the other hand this second beast (Rev xiii, 13) “doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down of heaven; he has power to give life to the image of the beast, and he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand and in their foreheads“.

With such tremendous evil spiritual powers at work, it is to be wondered at that the Seventy should be endued with such a measure of spiritual power ! a double portion of the Spirit ! so that they should be able to say as the Seventy said to Our Lord on their return, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name“ ; and Jesus replied to them “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions,

and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you,“.

Think not, my brethren, that the pictures here presented to us are merely pictures of the imagination: they are tremendous realities, and the thing that it is my desire to press upon your minds is the nearness of the manifestation of these things. All things are ripening fast for the rising up of the beast out of the sea, and when his power is seen the second beast will not be slow to worship the rising sun and be ready to prompt him to every evil thing as Jezebel did Ahab; and even now, as another indication of the nearness of the time, the Lord has begun to speak more particularly of the Seventy who shall go forth when His present apostolic work is finished.

SERMON NO. 5 - 2LST AUGUST, 1887.

Text: Luke x, 4-6.

The mission of ‘the Seventy’ like that of ‘the Twelve’ is of a special character: it is not intended to be permanent, but they are to go, and do their work, and return. Whatever spiritual meaning there may be in the purse, or scrip, or shoes which they were not to carry with them, this at least we may understand - that the Lord Himself will prepare the way before them. They are not going on a fruitless errand, but to gather in the harvest, and although there will be doubtless very many who will not receive them, still there will be a multitude whom no man can number. And while hardships will not be wanting amongst the wolves, yet their bread and their water shall be sure, rendering unnecessary the making provision for themselves or for their journey, and as it will not be for long they will only require to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: and as the King’s business is urgent and demands haste, they must salute no man by the way. They must not occupy or waste their time by knowing men in the flesh, but with single heart and eye devote themselves to the special work for which they are sent, for they will not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of Man be come.

All the references to the character of the mission of 'the Seventy' sent forth by Our Lord have their spiritual application to 'the Seventy' shortly to be sent forth. There is every reason to believe that it is a short work that the Lord will accomplish by them, much shorter even than that of the labours of 'the Twelve' whom the Lord has sent forth in these last days; for the work to be done is not to be laying foundations, discovering long forgotten truths, and setting in order all things which were in confusion: these things have all been done by the Lord's Apostles. Their successors will minister in the lines laid down by them, covered by their mantle, working in their spirit.

The circumstances under which the Seventy will have to labour will be so entirely different to the present that it is difficult to conceive how their work will be accomplished, and it is only by careful consideration of the various scriptures bearing upon the subject of the harvest, and the two witness company, with the light that has been shed upon these scriptures from time to time, that we can in any way apprehend the nature and conditions of their work.

The present work of the Lord, although in some respects attracting a considerable amount of attention at the outset has, since the Separation of the Apostles, been a hidden work. Not that it has been done in

a corner, or that the Apostles have not used every endeavour by the ministry of the Evangelists, as well as by the written Testimonies which have gone forth to make it known; but notwithstanding every endeavour it would appear that it has been in accordance with the mind of the Lord that His people should have been hidden, in order that His work might grow in peace. At the same time it was necessary that there should have been the Testimonies which have been delivered in order that those individuals who were to form the company of the First-fruits might be gathered out.

It would appear that the work of 'the Seventy' will be far more public in its character, more of what we understand by missionary work, and probably from its beginning to its close brought prominently before Christian men in their various sections and divisions. The Book of Revelation leads us to suppose that this period of witness will be inaugurated by many signs and convulsions, spiritual and natural. The verse referring to this time is in Rev.viii,5, where the ministry of the Lord having fulfilled the work of intercession, "the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar and cast it upon the earth": and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake; and then the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

We have had sufficient experience of the frail character of the bonds which hold society together to be aware that although the present time may be a time of peace, yet a very few hours may suffice to change entirely the aspect of affairs social, political and national. Feverish unrest, uncertainty, perplexity, and an inexplicable sense of peril and danger prevail amongst men ; and even now many voices, none of which are without signification, are clamouring for recognition - the voice of the people - the voice of the rebellious - the voice of the discontented - the voice of the infidel - the voice of the wicked spirits low out of the ground - all these and many others are heard and wherever there is a voice there is a following. Amidst all these the still small voice of the Spirit of Peace is scarcely heard ; but the time is very near when He whose voice should be heard above all shall make His mighty voice to be heard ; for He shall roar out of Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake. It is a time following upon the stretching forth of the right hand of the Most High (see Psalm 77) when He will no longer keep silence, but will cause the voice of His thunder to be heard in the heaven, and send forth His lightning to scatter His enemies, and cause the earth to tremble and quake.

These things will arrest the attention of men and will be the means by which God will prepare the nations for His next act - His strange act. The seven angels to whom the seven trumpets have been given have only waited for the signal to be given - waited during the time of silence in heaven - waited during the time of offering the much incense - waited while the censer is overturned upon the earth and during the troubles that follow; and then the trumpets begin to sound.

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid (margin "run together")? The time of judgment will begin, that time in which the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness - the right ways of the Lord from those who at that time will be qualified to teach them. Another figure used in Revelation to set forth the work of the Lord proper to this period is that contained in the xivth Chapter. Immediately after the first-fruits are gathered to Mount Zion it is said in 6th and 7th verses, "I saw another another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice - Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters".

This figure connects itself even more forcibly than that of the seven angels with trumpets with the words of the gospel relating to 'the 70'. They go forth to preach the gospel of peace to Christendom, they go to the many houses - the many sects and divisions of the Church of God - they declare the gospel of peace; they say "Peace be to this house". There are those who will receive the word and the peace of God shall rest there. A place will be found for the servants of the Lord while they discover who in it is worthy; these will be gathered and prepared to be built into that one spiritual house and temple of God of which even now the foundations in apostles and prophets have been laid. They will recognise the work of the Lord in these last days, and they will rejoice in that which He hath done, although they will have lost the opportunity for the fuller and longer blessing which came to those who would hear in the earlier time - the day of small things.

This returning of so many to the ways of righteousness and truth will excite the fiercest animosity of the Evil One and of those powers whom he will energise to do his evil work. There will be "war in heaven", that is, those principalities and powers, those wicked spirits in heavenly places will put forth all their powers to work the spiritual destruction of the saints of God, but so long as the war continues in

the heavenlies, the angels of God - those who are sent to minister for the heirs of salvation will keep the wicked ones in check until the time when there shall be no more room for them in heaven. And while this spiritual war is raging, there will be corresponding trouble on the earth; for the presence of the God of peace and the manifestations of His Spirit will provoke the wicked and lawless one - the wild beast from the sea, and the equally dangerous wild beast who will arise from the earth, and they will seek to wear out the saints of the Most High by every means which the ingenuity of man inspired by the spirit of evil can bring to bear.

Thus while the house of God will be conscious of peace from God resting upon it, the cities and houses of the wicked will be left desolate, devoid of comfort, and ready for destruction, because they would not have the God of peace to rule over them. "My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war". The everlasting gospel preached by the messenger of God - 'the 70' - will bring the peace of God to a multitude whom no man can number; but a still greater number will be found in opposition, - to them the preached gospel will be a savour of death unto death, producing no good results either religious or moral. They will rather be maddened by the uncompromising word of

truth which they will not be able to gainsay or resist. The two prophets will torment them with the truth - they will have such power in wielding the sword of the spirit that they will pierce them through and through with the fire of God which proceedeth out of their mouth.

The enemies of God will be conscious at that time that they are no match for the messengers of God, but this consideration will not cause them to relax their efforts. Though unable to prevail they will know that their power is increasing and they will continue until, in the purpose of God, they shall at last overcome, but only then to see that they have been fighting with a mightier power than their own. To 'the 70' above all the disciples whom the Lord sends forth are His words recorded by St. Luke (xii. 4-5) applicable: "I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell ; yea. I say unto you, fear him." Overcome by the beast which ariseth out of the bottomless pit, the two witnesses may lose their lives ; but after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God will enter into them causing them to arise, and their enemies will behold them as they ascend into heaven.

SERMON NO. 6 - 9TH OCTOBER, 1887.

Text: Luke x, 8-11.

The subject for our consideration in this text is "the gospel of the kingdom". It is no new thing, but that which was from the beginning of the dispensation, but acquiring new force and power as the time for the revelation of the kingdom draws near. The gospel of the kingdom is in a certain sense a special gospel ; it was preached by John the Baptist when he first went forth as the Forerunner of the Lord preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". It was preached by Jesus when He first went forth after His baptism by John in Jordan and His temptation in the wilderness. „From that time“, Matthew says, "Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". It was preached by the Twelve when they were specially sent forth by Our Lord - "As ye go, preach saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; it was preached by the Seventy as recorded in the text, "heal the sick and say The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

The gospel as preached by the Apostles after the day of Pentecost was not 'the Kingdom of God is nigh unto you', but it was a present kingdom for, by the

coming of the Holy Ghost, the kingdom of heaven in a mystery was present; those who were baptised both saw, and entered into, 'the kingdom', as the Lord showed Nicodemus. That which rendered the preaching of the gospel by the apostles at the beginning so powerful and so successful was, that the things which they testified to were living spiritual realities. They did not address the children of God as those who were outside, who continually needed to be urged to 'come and be saved'; they dealt with them as those who by baptism had attained to a heavenly standing; they were citizens of the kingdom; they sat down to eat meat in the kingdom of God; they were seated with Christ in heavenly places; they were children of the kingdom. The gospel of that day was the present grace of God - "the kingdom of God is within you".

This richness and fullness of spiritual truth - this apostolic gospel - did not long continue, and the Apostle Paul marvelled that those to whom he wrote were so soon removed from him that called them unto another gospel, a gospel which was not indeed another, but was a diluted, a modified gospel, a twisting and turning of the truth to suit the opinions of men and the circumstances of the times. The pure gospel is the apostolic gospel concerning which the Apostle Paul said "though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that we have

preached unto you, let him be accursed", and there cannot be any other gospel pure and unadulterated save that which Apostles preach. The rejection of Apostles, and the quenching of the Spirit, which is inseparable from the rejection of Apostles, involves a lowering of the standard to suit the fleshly minds of those who oppose God's ordinances, and so heresies and false doctrine inevitably follow.

The Gospel which has been preached since the rejection of Apostles has not been the apostolic gospel; it has not been the gospel of the kingdom, nor the gospel of the present grace of God to His Church: it has been simply the gospel of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ, and even this elementary gospel has had to give way in the case of multitudes of preachers to a system of morality and a calling upon men to abstain from fleshly sins which would be a disgrace to heathens. This latter forms the principal part of the preaching among the sects in the present day; and it is because the true gospel has apparently been entirely lost that God in His mercy has restored His apostles to preach again the gospel of the kingdom in all its fullness and all its purity.

I cannot now dwell upon the apostolic gospel as we have been privileged to hear and to accept it; our present subject is the consideration of the work of

‘the 70‘ which succeeds apostolic work. All that we can say as regards the apostolic gospel is, that it is too high, too spiritual, too unworldly, to suit the men of this present day who think more of the “religious world“ than the “kingdom of heaven“.

What are we to understand by “the gospel of the kingdom“ ? There are of course many things which it includes, but what is it in its simple meaning? It is the good news concerning the rule and government of the King in His own house. It has to do with the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ as King in His own Kingdom. It is not so much what He has done as Saviour, as High Priest, or Teacher, but what He is as the Son over His own house - the Head over all things to His Body the Church - the One whom the Father hath made Lord and Christ.

This aspect of the gospel is that which John the Baptist - the Forerunner - preached. He came to testify the kingdom of heaven in the person of Jesus Christ ‘at hand‘ - present in their midst. His words, as the prophet, bridged over the time of humiliation of the Son of God; he spoke of Him as a mighty one, the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, the executor of vengeance, whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor; and the Judge who will separate between chaff and wheat.

The same aspect of the gospel - a present Lord - is that which was conveyed in the preaching of Jesus Himself when He testified that the Kingdom of heaven was ‘at hand‘ - present. John the Baptist sent to ask Him “Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?“ The reply of Jesus went to show the proof of His presence, as the Messiah, in the works that He did. This same gospel of the kingdom was also preached by the Apostles whom our Lord sent forth: they testified to the kingdom of heaven ‘at hand‘; they went to prepare the way of the Lord; to tell the people of Him who had come and was in their very midst.

I must now again remind you of the difference in time between the preaching of the Twelve and that of the Seventy, because we shall have to note a remarkable difference between the manner of each in preaching the Kingdom. The Twelve were sent forth early in Our Lord’s ministry, they were to testify to Jesus present, and to prepare the people to receive Him. The Twelve therefore preached the Kingdom of heaven ‘at hand‘. The Seventy were sent forth at the end of the Lord’s ministry, and while they too preached the Kingdom of heaven, there is this remarkable difference and, as if to emphasise it and draw attention to it, they were to say “the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you“. They were to say the same both to those who would receive, and to those who rejected them.

To the former it was as much as to say that although the Lord was not in their midst to bless them, still He was near and they should have their reward from Him because they had received His messengers; while to the latter there was in the words a warning and a threat. You have not received us, but do not think you will escape responsibility, for the Lord is near to judge you, and it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

This difference in preaching the gospel of the kingdom will enable us the better to understand the difference between the gospel as it will be preached by the Seventy soon to be sent forth, and the gospel, and the gospel as now preached. Now the kingdom is 'at hand': soon it will be 'nigh'. What are we to understand by this difference? That which distinguishes the condition of the Church under living Apostles from her condition at any other time is that the rule of Christ is a present living reality. Christ as the King is after an especial manner present as the Ruler over His own house. The 'kingdom' is present, and the influence of it pervades the whole body but is, of course, more particularly felt and realised by those who receive and acknowledge the rule of the Lord in His Apostles. This rule of the Lord is better felt than explained. You understand it, brethren ; it enters into your daily spiritual life; you do not think of it because

everything goes so evenly and smoothly. It is only when something goes wrong, if only for a moment, that you become conscious of it: a slight error in doctrine, a trifling matter of disorder in the worship, the slightest departure from the regular course of things produces an instantaneous feeling of discomfort which, if the evil was perpetuated would increase, but the Lord by His Spirit, or through His Ministries, corrects the evil, and comfort is restored; the son of peace in righteous rule is present, and so peace pervades the house.

This holding of the head, this deference to the Lord in those who bear His rule constitutes the kingdom; it is the spiritual recognition of the presence of the King. But those who are looking for the appearing of the Lord will, when that event takes place, have the assurance of and enjoy His presence in much larger measure than is possible now. This time of change, spoken of under various symbols - the taking away of the man-child - the gathering of the firstfruits - the shutting of the door, etc. will constitute the difference between the kingdom being 'at hand', or present, and 'nigh'. The Lord who has been present with His people by His Spirit and by His ordinance of rule will have gathered His first-fruits to Himself. They stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb while the next phase of

His working is being carried on, the gathering of the harvest, that multitude whom no man can number.

This will be the time of the ministering of 'The Seventy'. They will have a work to do in the midst of those who are faithful, who believe their testimony. Labouring in a time of increasing tribulation they will be endued with a large measure of spiritual power to bless and to comfort, to heal and to revive those to whom they minister. To them will be committed the everlasting gospel - the gospel of the kingdom - to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth: their word concerning the kingdom will not be the King present, but 'nigh': they will be able to point to a work already begun, to a company already gathered; to the Lord in Zion, in the midst of His people longing for the gathering of the harvest. What strength, what comfort, what assurance will it be to those who are abiding faithful to God in the midst of great tribulation to know that there are those who have already attained to a measure of glory and blessedness, but who wait for the full fruition of it until their brethren also are gathered; for not until then can the Marriage of the Lamb take place. He does not marry first-fruits alone, but the whole body perfected shall form His Bride - His Wife.

And while the 70 have their mission of comfort and blessing to those who receive them, they have their word of testimony and warning to those who will not receive them. In the midst of the streets and broad ways of Babylon they will have to take their stand, and while they wipe the dust from their feet, they will yet have to proclaim aloud that notwithstanding their wilful rejection of the truth, yet the Kingdom of God is nigh; that the King will come in a time when they are not expecting, "in flaming fire to take vengeance upon those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ".

SERMON NO. 7 - 13TH NOVEMBER, 1887.

Text: Luke x, 12-16.

These words show what will be the result of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom by the Seventy, and so far as the effect may be upon the various ‘cities’ to whom they are sent, it may be summed up generally in one word – ‘rejection’. Not, however, that their mission will be barren of results of a favourable character, for “a multitude whom no man can number” will receive the word of their testimony; but these will not be converted “cities“, that is, the various divisions of the Church as separate establishments or sects will not be converted in their corporate capacity, but those who believe will be gathered out of the established order of things.

There is a tremendous responsibility resting upon those to whom the Lord sends His messengers and among whom His works are wrought, and as the dispensations have rolled on and the final accomplishment of the purpose of God has drawn nearer and nearer, this responsibility has increased and the judgment of God upon those who reject His overtures of mercy and His warnings of coming judgments becomes more severe, and the hopefulness of recovery and restoration less probable.

In the words of the text the Lord Himself compares the judgments which shall come upon the cities which reject Him and His messengers with those cities concerning whose overthrow and desolation His people were acquainted and He pronounced a heavier woe upon them, saying that in the day of judgement it would be more tolerable even for Sodom than for them. And if the doom of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum was to be so much more severe than Tyre and Sidon and Sodom, what must the fate of Christendom be if she rejects the Lord in His last endeavour to bring His people back unto Himself. For to each past dispensation there has been a space and an opportunity for repentance, but now there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. The rejection of the Lord now is treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace.

Seeing that our Lord Himself mentioned these various cities it is well that we should consider what were the privileges they enjoyed; what was the nature of the witness for God which was sent to them - the special sins reprov'd and the judgements which came upon them because of continuance in sin, and rejection of God's offers of mercy.

We know, as indeed every intelligent Christian child knows, of the judgment which came upon Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plain; how they were destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven. We may not be so well aware of the previous history of Sodom, but it is very desirable that we should know this because Sodom stands as a singular and signal type and example, the antitype of which is still to be seen when that shall have been accomplished which is referred to in the Book of Revelation - the crucifixion of the Son of God a second time, which spiritual act takes place in the spiritual Sodom, as it is said of the "great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also Our Lord was crucified".

Sodom, like most of the great cities referred to in the early history of mankind, was built by one of the Sons of Ham, the father of Canaan, whose eldest son was Sidon who laid the foundations of the great city afterwards called by his name, from which city a colony went forth and built Tyre which afterwards became the greatest and most important city in that part of the world. These three cities so ancient and so great, referred to by Our Lord, are mentioned in Gen. x as forming by a chain of great cities the borders of the Canaanites. "And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as then comest to Gerar unto Gaza ;

as then goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zebsim, even unto Lasha".

From the beginning the reputation of Sodom was bad; the very first account given of it when Lot went to dwell there was that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly". The nature of their sin it is important to observe because the spiritual antitype of it is exactly the sin of God's people in the last days. The Apostle Jude says, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire". The Apostle Peter also (2 Peter II, 6-8) referred to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly - and how God delivered just Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. But although Sodom was so bad, God did not leave Himself without a witness there, not only in the person of just Lot who in God's providence had his abode there, but also in the friendship of faithful Abraham with the king of Sodom whom Abraham delivered after the battle of four kings with five mentioned in the xivth Chapter of the Book of Genesis. The king of Sodom had also the advantage of the knowledge of Melchizedek - King of Salem and Priest of the Most High God who dwelt near to him.

Notwithstanding all this, and also the most urgent intercession of Abraham the friend of God that if there were ten righteous within the city God would spare it, the condition of the place was so bad that God could no longer delay His judgment, and after having provided for the safety of Lot and his family the Lord rained upon Sodom brimstone and fire out of heaven and utterly destroyed both place and people.

It was indeed a terrible example of wickedness (not ten righteous in the city), and of God's judgment, and yet mark the Lord's words concerning those who rejected the Seventy in his day - "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for them". Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida were specially named by Our Lord for 'woe', not perhaps because they were worse than others, but because in them so many of His mighty works had been wrought, and the gospel of the kingdom had been so fully preached among them.

Sodom stands as an example of the utter corruption of the flesh through sin; so bad that there is no remedy and death must pass upon all, death not perchance to utter destruction, for the Lord's words lead us to see that in the future judgment some place of repentance shall be found, 'it shall be more tolerable for Sodom'. The flesh although dead will under new

conditions be raised up, and every man shall stand up in his own body to give account for his own works: and it may be that as in the signal judgment of the flood some repented when too late, so also in the signal judgment of the cities of the plain by fire some also might repent. The mercy and compassion of God is larger than that of men, and He will judge righteously, not only according to men's doing but according as they have accepted or rejected Him in that measure in which He has revealed Himself to them.

Again the Lord said „it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon“ than for those who rejected Him: for if the mighty works which had been done among them had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented sitting on sack-cloth and ashes. These cities stood upon a very different footing to Sodom. There was not in their midst that fleshly wickedness which characterized the cities of the plain; but there were those sins which fill the proud heart of man when lifted up by reason of his intellectual powers. The words of Ezekiel respecting Tyre show her in most glorious light; they are positively ravishing in their description of her beauty. "Thus saith the Lord God, Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty: thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set

thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire: thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. Ah! then all was changed - violence, corruption, iniquity in traffic, therefore was the doom pronounced. I will bring forth a fire in the midst of thee, it shall devour thee and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee“. Tyre and Sidon were not destroyed after the manner of Sodom and Gomorrah but their destruction was equally complete and as cities they have long since passed away.

And what of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum ? In the latter place Jesus dwelt after John the Baptist had been put to death; here, and in the two other cities on the western shores of the Galilean lake most of the Lord's mighty works were done. Here He wrought His miracles and spake as never man spake before. In His person the kingdom of God had come nigh unto them - the Son of the Living God - the Christ - the Messiah - the King of the Jews had lived and preached, healed sick, raised dead, cast out devils in their very midst. A few may have believed on Him, but by the great mass He was rejected and so the judgment was pronounced. Like Sodom, Tyre and Sidon, Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum have

long since passed away but it is not in the destruction of the cities that the 'woe' of the Lord has been fulfilled; it is in the day of judgment when the righteous Judge will take all things into consideration, the opportunities and privileges on the one hand, and the temptations on the other, that then it will be found to be more tolerable for Sodom and for Tyre and Sidon, which would have repented than for those cities where He Himself as well as His servants had been rejected.

But now we come to this present dispensation. Great as were the privileges the cities of Judaea and Galilee enjoyed in the personal ministration of the Saviour, the grace bestowed upon Christian men in the gift of the Holy Ghost - the Spirit of the Father and the Son - is far greater and the responsibilities largely increased. Already has the Church incurred the displeasure and come under the judgment of Almighty God for rejecting those whom the Lord sent forth as His Apostles, but inasmuch as the Gentile Apostleship had not in the early days been sent forth in its completeness and therefore could not have been rejected, the long-suffering of God towards the Gentiles has endured while the Jewish people have as a body cut themselves off from gospel privileges. True - St. Paul was rejected both by Jewish and by Gentile Christians, and the Church has undoubtedly had to

suffer for this sin; but God would not punish His people for rejecting a ministry which so far as the Gentiles were concerned was incomplete, St. Paul having stood alone as one born out of due time. But now, brethren, this excuse no longer holds. In these last days the Lord Jesus - the Head of His Church - has again sent forth His Apostles completing the number to the Gentiles - the Uncircumcision - and so far as the great mass of the Baptised are concerned they, in all their cities, their sects and their parties have rejected them, and in rejecting them they have rejected Him who sent them.

And what shall we say of the woes pronounced upon the great city Babylon. Sodom was bad, but in the judgment it will be more tolerable for Sodom than Capernaum: Capernaum was exalted to heaven in that the riches of the kingdom of heaven were richly and abundantly displayed by Him who dwelt therein - but she has been brought down to hell; death and the grave have swept over her, but in the judgment it will be more tolerable for Capernaum than for Babylon. For a time judgment lingers and mercy rejoiceth over judgment in that the Lord sends forth another and a larger company of messengers in His own name to preach the everlasting gospel. It is their rejection that will bring about the final overthrow and the great city shall be divided into three parts, and the cities of the

nations will fall and great Babylon will be utterly destroyed, never to rise again - like a great millstone cast into the sea. Hope for Sodom and the cities of the plain - hope for Capernaum and the neighbour cities of Galilee, but no hope for Babylon and those who are within her at her fall, for they reject the merciful Lord's last message of mercy. "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed".

SERMON NO. 8 - 27TH NOVEMBER, 1887,

Text: Luke x. 17-20.

In these verses there is a tone altogether different from those which precede them. There, the Seventy⁴ are represented as fulfilling their mission among men upon the earth, and the result of their work appears to be but very little if at all successful ; and a terrible woe is pronounced upon the cities that reject them, to the effect that „in the judgment“ it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon and Sodom than for them. Here in this passage we are, as it were, introduced into a spiritual region; the veil is lifted and we are enabled to see things that are hidden from the eye of flesh. To outward appearance the servants of God have met with no success but, in the invisible, and among opposing spiritual powers, their work has been effectual, and success greater than man could expect has attended their efforts. The Seventy returned again with joy, saying “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name“. And what a strange reply the Lord made to their joyful announcement! He saw even beyond that which they had experienced. „I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven“, and then He went on still further to show them that their work was not yet accomplished; that they had still much to do in the spiritual region to which they should be

sent, and that although the power of the enemy was great, they should nevertheless tread under foot the serpents and scorpions, and should come forth unhurt. But while they were endowed with such mighty power, they must not make that the ground of their rejoicing, but rather that their names were written in heaven.

This is a wonderful passage of scripture and like many of the words of Our Lord has applications far beyond the time and the persons to whom they were spoken. We must strive to enter into the spiritual character of them, to know the reality of the saying of Our Lord to His disciples, „The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life“. If we look merely to the external aspect of the work of the Lord, and measure its extent or success by human estimate, we shall fall very far short of apprehending what the Lord has done, and is doing.

Moreover, there is internal evidence in these words of Our Lord, that He looked far beyond the time concerning which He appeared to be speaking; for then Satan had not fallen from heaven, neither has he yet fallen: and although there were no doubt to the Seventy to whom He was speaking grounds for encouragement and hope in what He said, yet the words were intended to apply to those, in a then far off time,

who should realise how great the power of the enemy was, and also the power that rested upon them to overcome him. It was long after this that a Gentile Apostle addressing the Roman believers said, “the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly“, not just yet but soon; and it was still longer after, that the last surviving Apostle, beholding in vision “the things that shall be hereafter“ told how there was “war in heaven ... and the dragon and his angels fought and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.“

When the Lord addressed the Seventy, the warfare with spirits had not actually begun. The Lord Himself in the temptation in the wilderness had indeed secured a victory; and, in His ministry upon the earth, He showed an earnest of the power which man should possess; but beyond here and there casting out devils from those who were possessed of them, and forcing them to cry out that He would not torment them before the time, there was comparatively little done until the Lord Himself ascended into heaven beyond the reach of the enemy who pursued Him to the death.

The “opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers“ presented too favourable an opportunity to Satan to prosecute his evil work, to be neglected. Was

not he a believer? Yes, he believes and trembles, but his fear of the future does not deter him from present evil work. It was ever the practice when the Sons of God came to appear before Him that Satan also came with them; his sorest temptations have ever been for those who desired to walk closely with God, whether in paradise with our first parents, or among the chosen people who surrounded the Tabernacle where God dwelt in visible glory, or with the Son of God in the wilderness. We who know our calling to be seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, are only too well aware that our warfare is “not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with wicked spirits in heavenly places.“ Happy and blessed are they who, knowing their calling, will not waste their precious time or expend their energies or grieve their Heavenly Father, with His Blessed Son and Holy Spirit, by fighting and quarrelling with their brethren - His children; but devote their whole energy to the work of opposing those wicked spirits whose work it is to hinder the Lord in the Members of His Body by stirring up strife, breaking unity, disseminating evil principles, and making men believe that darkness is light, bitter is sweet, and evil is good. Those who will thus oppose the wicked spirits shall have experience even in this present time that the devils are subject unto them through the name of Jesus, and shall have strong as-

urance that the time is near at hand when the Evil One shall no longer have place in heaven to vex the saints of God.

The work of God must never be judged by human standards. He is a Spirit - His work is spiritual and extends far beyond the capacity of human senses to comprehend. The people by whom He is working must have faith and undoubting assurance that He is working; and, bearing that in mind, will not place limits to His power. Our attitude must not be that of the Prophet of old who, faint-hearted for a time at what he considered his ill-success, wished for himself that he might die. He thought he stood alone but God had 7,000 in reserve. Do you estimate the success of the present work of the Lord by visible results? Are you tempted to say „Lord who hath believed our report?“ We trust, brethren, that you have large capacity of discernment. If we open our spiritual eyes, even with our present limited capacity, we shall be enabled to see how in the space of 50 years since the Lord began His work the whole spiritual aspect of Christendom has undergone a change. It is not merely that the Lord hath prevailed in a remnant to perfect - so far as perfection can be attained in this present mortal state - holiness in worship, purity in doctrine, unity in love, and righteousness in things temporal; but the savour and influence of these things affects more or less the

whole body, and there is manifested a desire for perfection in worship, for soundness in doctrine, for increase of unity, for sacrifice for the love of the brethren, as has not existed for centuries. And if our brethren have not attained to the knowledge of the right way as yet, our faith is not lessened in the fact that He who hath begun a good work in them will also perfect it.

And if it may be asked - Is this change brought about by us ? we would reply, most distinctly, that while we have not either as individuals or as a body done it, nevertheless the Lord hath most certainly done it by those whom He hath chosen and sent forth to bear witness to His truth in the fellowship and communion of Apostles. The work is a spiritual work, and has to do with spirits, and spiritual men; powers of evil have been subdued and powers of good have been developed and manifested far beyond our ordinary ideas. The Lord, who is the Lord of angels as well as of men has been prosecuting His work of subduing all things unto Himself. Through the action of His Spirit in the Church the holy angels have learned more of the manifold wisdom of God, and the evil angels have also learned that their time “in heaven“ is becoming shorter. The result of this is increased spiritual activity both on the part of those who wait upon the heirs of salvation and of those who are the minis-

ters of Apollyon — the destroyer. The war in heaven is becoming fiercer and hotter ; the power of God's people to withstand and overcome evil spiritual powers is becoming more and more manifest; and the power of the enemy to influence and possess the children of disobedience is fearfully on the increase. But the time has not yet come for the full manifestation of spiritual power either on the one side or the other, and brethren, "ye know what withholdeth". The mystery of iniquity works but the four angels still hold back the four winds - powers of evil and powers of good in antagonism; horns to push and destroy; carpenters to edify and build up: these withhold until the time comes when the holy intercession which now prevails shall cease to be offered and then the powers of evil shall break forth - locusts and scorpions - to torment men so that they shall desire to die and death shall flee from them.

Then will be the time, after that the man-child shall have been born and caught up to God and to His Throne, and the woman shall have fled into the wilderness, that the war in heaven shall come to an end and the far-off vision, seen by Jesus, but tarrying for the appointed time, shall be fulfilled and Satan shall fall like lightning from Heaven, and all his angels with him. Driven out from the company of those who shall by the favour of God have attained to the

place of safety in God's pavilion, the devil will be filled with great wrath against the dwellers on the earth, but the witnesses for God shall have power to tread on serpents and scorpions and pursue their work unharmed. "I will give power unto My two witnesses.....if any man will hurt them fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will."

We may well believe that men of God possessed of such powers as these might be inclined to rejoice in their might and glory in their strength and power, but the words of the Lord lead us to see that they will be preserved from all unseemly rejoicing over their defeated enemies. The terrible character of the times will leave no room for anything but bitter sorrow: they prophesy in sack-cloth, and the little book apparently so sweet to the taste will be bitter to the eaters, by reason of the lamentations and mourning and woe contained therein.

In that day, the only ground of rejoicing for the saints of God, labouring in the midst of the tribulation, will be the undoubting assurance that their names are written in heaven. The Lamb in His Book

of Life keeps them for a memorial before Him, and their work, well and faithfully done, shall ensure them an acceptance with Him in the blessedness of the First Ressurrection

Brethren, we have thus briefly considered the different phases of the work of The Seventy as the same are shadowed forth in the mission of those "other Seventy also" whom the Lord sent forth while He was upon the earth. We believe the time for the sending forth of the Seventy in these last days to be so near, that those who shall be employed in this ministry are now upon the earth, their hearts being prepared of the Lord in His secret place. Let us ever strive to be so at one with the Lord in His present work, that when that change shall come for which we are looking, we may be amongst that blessed number of whom it is said, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which cometh upon all the world to try all them that dwell upon the earth."

May we not be dwellers upon the earth in that day, but in spirit and in truth "in heaven".