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S E R M O N S

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

AND ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS

BY

J. B. MOZLEY, D.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, OXFORD, AND
CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH

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TO
THE VERY REVEREND
RICHARD WILLIAM CHURCH, M.A., D.C.L.
DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

This Volume

IN GRATEFUL RECOLLECTION OF A LONG FRIENDSHIP

IS DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

OF the following Sermons, the six first were preached by the Author before the University in his turn as Select Preacher; the seventh in his own turn; the eighth and ninth as Canon of Christ Church.

Of those that follow, six were preached in the Cathedrals of Worcester and Christ Church, the three last on public occasions at Hurstpierpoint and Lancing College.

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and baffling *extra*, which was not even formally provided for in his scheme. Nature goes off at a tangent which carries her farther than ever from the head under which he places her, and shows the utter inadequacy of that head to include all that has to be included in it. The secret of nature is farther off than ever from what he thinks it. Physical science goes back and back into nature, but it is the aspect and front of nature which gives the challenge; and it is a challenge which no backward train of physical causes can meet. This applies even to the useful contrivance of nature, viz., that what we have to account for is the face of nature, that which meets the eye in the shape of obvious arrangement and collocation. The physical causes are only all the separate items traced back step after step; which is no explanation of their collocation. Thus, the more men retreat into the interior the farther they fly from the true problem, and leave altogether behind them the question—what makes the arrangement and the disposition? But the remark applies even more conspicuously to the beauty of nature. I will explain.

There is this remarkable difference between useful contrivance and beauty as evidence of an intelligent cause, that contrivance has a complete end and account of itself without any reference to the understanding of man. True, it is an object, and a very stimulating object, of the understanding, but it does not require that use of it in order to account for it; even if no single one of all those sentient beings who profit by the contrivance of nature *understand* it, still they profit by it all the same; this is a sufficient account of it; it is enough if it works; and it is not necessary for its use that it should be seen. But it is essential to the very sense and meaning of beauty that it should be seen; and in as much as it is visible

themselves to be quite satisfied, saying that they have no desire to go farther; that that is all that the community can want; that they do not for their own part wish to trespass upon forbidden ground, and to invade the sanctuary of the human heart; they leave that to a higher tribunal. *This* judgment then is all-important to him; he dreads with a real terror *this* judgment being against him; he hangs upon the breath of an outward superficial interpretation of himself; and, if this is favourable, he has got all he wants; he has passed the ordeal, and he is satisfied. But is there not all this time a judgment buried in the depths of human hearts, which he does not meet and which does not clear him? Is there not an unspoken sentence upon him, a silent verdict in the consciences of the righteous and holy which goes deeper than "explanations"? And is not this mute verdict an anticipation of that judgment which will not be silent but outspoken—the disclosure and manifestation of the human heart which will take place at the last day? Nay, and is there not even a judgment in his own heart which he does not pass altogether comfortably? Is there not a voice within him which would speak if he would let it, and did not suppress it; and which, if it did speak, would scatter to the winds the superficial and conventional acquittal of men, and overthrow in a moment his technical defence? This judgment, which is hidden at the bottom of human hearts; which the righteous who welcome it, and even the wicked who suppress it, alike conceal, this is the real judgment; real, though at present only mute and expectant. Fear this judgment—for if it is against you, you are indeed in sad case. This mute judgment is on all sides of you, it surrounds you; you do not hear it or see it, but there it is. Within the consciences of men is the tribunal which condemns you. You may be carried aloft