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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

## Entre Nous.

### What Christ Means to Me.

Many will have read in 'The British Weekly' the articles of Grenfell of Labrador. They have now been published with the title *What Christ Means to Me* (Hodder & Stoughton; 2s. 6d. net). When Dr. Grenfell was asked to put on record what Christ meant to him he might have made a statement of his faith and left it at that, but he has chosen a more conclusive way. It is to take his own life and to try to analyse it 'as better evidence than any mere statement of what Christ has meant to one human being.'

In boyhood days Christ was a companion. At school Christ was 'a very silent partner in the life of us English boys . . . but He was a very real companion of many of us all the same.' Later, when we look at what Grenfell 'lived by' in Labrador, we see what Christ meant to him then. It was through his chief, the late Sir Frederick Treves, that Dr. Grenfell's mind first turned to the Deep Sea Fisheries, and it was in 1891 that he visited those on the Newfoundland Banks and began his arduous work, which entailed so much material privation. Here are his own statements of what Christ meant to him then and later.

'Christ means to me the best kind of a Friend, as well as Leader, Who is giving me in this world ten times, nay the proverbial hundred fold, as good times as I could enjoy in any other way. Christ's religion to me is primarily for this world, and the New Jerusalem is to come down from Heaven on to this earth and we are to be the Washingtons and Nelsons. We are to save that city—and we are to have all the fun of really creating it. If Cræsus and Midas, Bacchus and the Satyrs, have the fun of life here, then the philosophy of the East is right. Life is hell: and Nirvana and nothingness is Heaven. If Christ is right and life is a field of honour, and Sir Galahad and Nathan Hale and Edith Cavell got the real fun out of it, then to every red-blooded man life becomes Heaven in proportion as they seize its opportunities for service.'

'Christ means to me that this world has the potential in it of a Kingdom of God.' 'He means that we are the sons and heirs of the Maker of this marvellous cosmos and are the channels upon it of His Kingdom to be.'

'The Christ I visualized is inconspicuous for all absolutely unnecessary differences. He would wear no jewellery of fabulous value any more around His neck than in His nose. No ostentatious show of

any kind was His. He hated titles, separating man from man. Leadership in everything that was of value for body, soul, and spirit was His. He was the last on earth to be anything snobbish. He was the Captain of the team, the Solon of scholars, the most modest and unobtrusive in social life. He loved play and work as well as worship. I could not love a Christ as divine Who did not. So for me the interpretation of Christ has had to aim at all that.'

'Christ means to me a living personality to-day who moves about in this world, and who gives us strength and power as we endure by seeing Him Who is invisible only to our fallible and finite human eyes; just as any other good comrade helps one to be brave and do the right thing. Faith was essential for that conviction fifty years ago. To-day with telephones and radios and X-ray, and our knowledge of matter as only energy, and now with television within our grasp, there is not the slightest difficulty in seeing how reasonable that faith is. "The body of His Glorification" passed through closed doors, so the Apostles said—well, why should I be able to see it any more than I can see an ultra-violet or an ultra-red ray or molecule, an atom, an electron or a proton? All that those old fellows claimed was that "now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."'

### Work.

'Work is the only salvation of what is good in man.'

'Christ has become to me to mean more and more *doing* something, anything, well.'

'Following Christ is a hard task. It is a warfare. But He teaches me increasingly that life is worth while if and only as we make its goal "well done" and not "well comprehended."'<sup>1</sup>

### General William Booth enters into Heaven.

Lectures, if they are good, on the religious message in modern poetry are sure of an audience. Dr. Hugh Thomson Kerr, the pastor of Shadyside Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, has chosen poems by Walter De La Mare, Richard Le Gallienne, Francis Thompson, Alice Meynell, Gilbert K. Chesterton, Alan Seeger, Rudyard Kipling, Vachel Lindsay, William Ernest Henley, and others, and has analysed them in order to bring out their gospel

<sup>1</sup> W. T. Grenfell, *What Christ Means to Me*.

message. Perhaps some of the poems chosen are rather well known, but they were suited to Dr. Kerr's first purpose—to reach the large invisible audience of listeners-in. But some of the poems are very little known. Have you read, for instance, that one of Vachel Lindsay, 'General William Booth enters into Heaven'? Here are five of the verses and, briefly, what Dr. Kerr has to say of their message.

'Lindsay presents to us first of all a great preacher of redemption. General William Booth belongs to that multitude which no man could number, but he was also born to lead . . . and leadership is suggested in the opening word of Mr. Lindsay's poem . . .

Booth led boldly with his big brass drum.  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?  
The saints smiled gravely, and they said,  
"He's come."  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

The words suggest the man and the message which he proclaimed. There was a note of heroism in the gospel which he preached.

Booth died blind, and still by faith he trod,  
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.  
Booth led boldly and he looked the chief:  
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,  
Beard a-flying, air of high command  
Unabated in that holy land.  
Jesus came from out the Court-House door,  
Stretched His hands above the passing poor.  
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there  
Round and round the mighty Court-House Square.

'It is a great picture of the redeemed. William Booth led a multitude of redeemed souls into the very presence of God. He did not go before the throne of God empty-handed. . . .

Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,  
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,  
Drabs from the alleyways and drug-fiends pale—  
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail!  
Vermin-eaten saints with mouldy breath,  
Unwashed legions with the ways of death—  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

'It is a strange company. No more strange crowd was ever gathered under one banner.

Yet in an instant all that blear review  
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.  
The lame were straightened, withered limbs un-  
curled,  
And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world.

What is the meaning of it all? It means that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It means that the Lord Jesus Christ still does what He once did.

'It is a picture of the Redeemer. It is not the great multitude which no man can number which crowds the canvas. It is the Lord Himself upon whom the central light falls; it is General Booth's Saviour and not General Booth that fills the poet's page.

And when Booth halted by the curb for  
prayer  
He saw his Master through the flag-filled air.  
Christ came gently with a robe and crown  
For Booth the soldier while the throng knelt  
down;  
He saw King Jesus—they were face to face,  
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.  
Are you washed in the blood of the  
Lamb?'

The title of the volume is *The Gospel in Modern Poetry* (Revell; \$1.50).

#### Balanced Burdens.

The Rev. Stuart Robertson, M.A., has gained a great reputation, and rightly so, as a preacher to boys and girls. His latest volume has much excellent application to conduct and it is full of stories, and they are good stories too. The one which gives the volume its title—*Balanced Burdens* (Hodder & Stoughton; 5s. net)—is this. Mr. Robertson has a friend who is a missionary amongst the Indian Santal tribe. 'One day my friend was expecting a visitor, a brother missionary, and he sent a Santal to meet him and bring on his luggage. So the Santal took his carrying pole and set off.

'At the station he found that the luggage consisted of one heavy bag. Now he couldn't divide that burden into two, as was his custom, and plainly he couldn't carry the bag hanging from one end of his carrying pole.

'This is how he solved the problem. He looked about till he found a stone about the same weight as the bag, hung that from one end of the pole and the bag from the other, and walked proudly home with his double burden! His easy way was to carry twice as much. He balanced the one burden with another, and carried the two when he only need have carried one.

'It seems funny, even stupid, doesn't it? Well, it may be funny, but it isn't stupid.

'It is easier to carry two bags than one, *because they balance.*'

But readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES have little need to have Mr. Robertson commended to them, for they have already read a number of his sermons. Two of those which are now given in this volume first appeared in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. But we cannot have too much of Mr. Robertson, and so we have taken one from his new volume, and you will find it in *Virginibus Puerisque*.

### The Merchant Adventurers.

Mr. William Canton was the historian of the Bible Society, and in this capacity he wrote the authoritative history of it; a work which ran to five volumes. But he was also a poet and the author of those delightful books of children's sayings that so endeared him and W. V. to the hearts of the last generation of English readers. All his qualities of accurate recording, of historical imagination, of poetic expression, and of humour appear in *Yesterday, To-day, and For Ever* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s. net). It is his last book, for Mr. Canton, at the age of eighty, passed away just as it was finished. He was asked to go through the annals of the Bible Society and write some account of the incidents which he found there, with the hope that 'a wider and more serious reading of the Word of God' might be encouraged. The writing is so admirable that the reader is drawn on from chapter to chapter. In 'Fire and Sword,' he shows that the testimony of the martyrs has not ceased. Amongst the incidents retold in this chapter is that of the martyrdom in 1849, in Madagascar, of four persons of noble birth. It was unlawful to shed their blood, and they were sentenced to be burnt alive at Faravohitra, at the northern edge of the plateau on which Tananarivo stands.

'It was a day of flying showers and bursts of sunshine. On the way to execution, says the native account, "the Christians sang the hymn beginning 'When our hearts are troubled,' each verse ending with 'Then remember us.' Thus they sang on the road."

'Two of the four were husband and wife, and the woman was near the hour of motherhood. "And when they came to Faravohitra, there they burned them, fixed between split spars," with more wood heaped about them. As the faggots kindled, the woman's child was born. No hand of pity was reached out to save it. "And there was a rainbow in the heavens at the time, close to the place of burning"—so close, indeed, that the end of the bow seemed to rest on the martyrs, a marvellous sight, at which some of the spectators fled in terror.

"They sang again, even while in the fire. Then they prayed, saying, 'O Lord, receive our spirits, for Thy love to us has caused this to come to us; and lay not this sin to their charge.' Thus they prayed, as long as they had any life. Then they died, but softly, gently; gentle, indeed, was the going forth of their life. And astonished were all the people around who beheld the burning of them there."

There are chapters on the adventures of the Bible men, those merchant adventurers who went into the inaccessible places of the world. But it would not be Mr. Canton if the book was without humour, so we have a chapter on the wit and wisdom of the colporteur. It is difficult to quote from it because one story follows another in the author's own inimitable way, but this is one: 'Here in Korea, where once women used to have no names of their own, and when there was a crowd the street was white, not black, with people, Kim the Korean goes about with his delightful assistant Skylark, a donkey who pretends to eat books. Kim offers his Gospels, and if a man will not buy a copy, "Why, look here!" cries Kim, passing the book to Skylark, who takes hold of it at once with his lips; "this donkey is wiser than you are; *he* takes what is offered him." And as a rule the man laughs and pays for a copy.'