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In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

Rust.¹

'The rust of them shall be a witness against you.'—
Ja 5³.

You know what rust is, don't you? 'Of course,' you say; 'I once had a knife, and I lost it, and'—Oh, don't let us start again on that old story, or we'll never get on. For days and days you kept saying, 'Mother, I've lost my knife.' 'Mother, I can't think where I've put my knife.' 'Mother, *please*, do look for my knife.' But you never found it at the time. Months afterwards, out in the garden, you came on it one day. And the handle dropped off when you touched it; and the blades would hardly open; and even when they did, they were not one little bit of use. They were all covered over with a red, dusty, furry kind of thing that came off on your hands, and yet seemed to leave about as much as ever where it came from. Well, that of course was rust. And it cost you some shillings, you remember. For your knife wouldn't cut any more, and you had to go and buy a new one. But all over the world there are things made of steel and iron far bigger than a knife, hundreds of miles of railways, and bridges over countless rivers, and ships, great ships, huge Atlantic liners, and heaps and heaps more one can't stop to talk about. And if men don't keep watching all these things, the rust will get at them, and will eat in and in, and round and round about, until it makes a kind of sore upon the iron or the steel. When you have a pain you cry out. That's what pain is for. It's the red light that lets the man driving the engine know that there is something ahead that shouldn't be there, and so he stops his train until things are put right for him. But steel doesn't feel pain and iron can't speak, and so the rust sore grows and grows, until the rails may get so bad that they have to be taken up, and the bridges aren't safe any longer and must be rebuilt; and the ships have to be docked and scraped and cleaned. And that takes time, and that means money, so much waste indeed that a wise man who knows about these things thinks that every year rust costs the world—what do you think? Put down a five. Got that? Well, now a nothing, and another, and another, and another, and another, and another, and two more—till they are

¹ By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

like the long tail of a kite—£500,000,000, all lost each year by rust.

But there's another rust, and it wastes more by far even than the first. You couldn't make enough nothings this time to add it up, however long you tried. For this horrible kind of rust eats away lives that might have been how splendid, till they tumble to pieces; and clever minds that might have helped us all so much, yet nothing comes of them; and all the jolly things in boys and girls who used to be decent, but who aren't that any more, because rust has got at them and spoiled them. Perhaps in your class there is a boy who used to do quite well, who kept a good bit up the class, who was an honest little fellow at his lessons, doing them thoroughly night after night. And then there came an evening when he was tired perhaps, or else some game was on, and he just did them anyhow. And at school next day he got off, or else he didn't. Any way he ceased to care, got slacker and slacker, and lazier and lazier, slipped down and down the class, until his last report said, 'Used to be a good pupil, but has gone all to pieces.' But hallo! isn't this your name at the head of that report?

Or you were once a straight little chap, manly and obedient and well mannered. And people went away saying how lucky Mother was to have such a fine boy. But do they say that now? You used to dart off cheerily as soon as you were sent, and got up at once when you were called, and did what you were told as a boy and a soldier should. But one night you were deep in a book, a dreadfully exciting book, when Mother wanted you; and you just growled out something and read on. And since then somehow you have grown slower and slower, and crosser and crosser, and grumpier and grumpier. The rust has got at you, and look what a sad mess it has made of things! Didn't you know?

Well, what are we to do now we do see it all? The rusty rails have to come up, and the bridges may have to be taken down, if they are very bad. And must we too be thrown aside as useless? No. I know two little brothers, one is eight and one fifteen. The younger one has a motor car that runs with real electricity. And he was very proud of it until one day he saw another toy car that had lamps that really lit and really shone. And he did so wish his car had lamps too! And so his brother

searched about and found all kinds of old and useless things that had been thrown away. He got some rusty wire and cleaned it, and some stupid-looking rubbish that he made into a splendid battery, and the little eyes of an electric torch—any old things at all. And the torch's eyes he fashioned into the lamps, and soldered them in cleverly, and made a little switch. And so when the small brother, home from school, got out his car, and, down upon the floor was wishing and wishing his car had got lamps, he started and he looked at it again. For there were lamps, real lamps! And when he touched the little switch they really lit and really burned! And it was all made out of some old rusty things that had been thrown away. But no one has such clever hands as Jesus Christ. Out of the rustiest, crabbedest, sulkiest boy He can make such a glorious little chap. With just our crossness and our peevishness to work with, He can change us into lights that really shine. Let's take it all to Him, the whole mess we have made of things, these rusty, useless, selfish little hearts of ours, and He will make a great thing of them yet.

The Mark of the Beast.¹

'Beware of dogs.'—Ph 3².

Dogs are pets and faithful friends with us; in the East they are outcasts and scavengers, and when a man wants to call any one by a vile and insulting name, he calls him 'a dog.' So when St. Paul wanted to describe some mean, underhand, slinking folk who were making trouble he called them 'dogs' and warned the Christians to beware of them.

Well, here is a story of a dog. Everybody likes dog-stories: Ulysses' hound that recognized him at his home-coming when nobody else did; Llewellyn's Gelert who saved the young prince and was killed by the hasty father; Greyfriars' Bobby: these are all pleasant stories about dogs. This is not so pleasant.

It is written on a brick in the British Museum, which bears the imprint of a dog's paw, the mark of the beast. Thousands of years ago in Babylon the brickmakers were at their work, making bricks of moist soft clay, moulding them very carefully, for they were for the king's palace. As each brick was finished, it was stamped with the king's mark and set out to dry and harden in the hot sun.

Noonday came and the workmen went off for their midday meal. In the sun the sentry drowns. A dog comes slinking up to see what it can steal.

¹ By the Reverend Stuart Robertson, M.A., Glasgow.

Suddenly the sentry notices and shouts and hurls a stone. The dog scurries for the gate, but the mischief has been done. One paw has trodden on a brick and left its mark right on the top of the mark of the king, blotting it out. There will be trouble for the unfaithful sentry, and the brick is spoiled for its high purpose. An unclean thing has touched it and left its mark.

So out it goes into the rubbish heap, and there it lies buried under the dust for thousands of years, till at last it is dug up and brought with many others to London to tell its silent sermon of how the mark of the beast defaced the mark of a king and wasted the work of his servants.

It is the story of many lives. Moulded in God's image, stamped with His character, meant to be part of His building, they have been spoiled. The watchman dozed, conscience slept, and some beastly thing set its unclean foot where the print of God's finger had been, and they were no use for God and goodness. They went into the rubbish heap, cast out, outcasts.

You see them in the Bible. Mary Magdalene was once a sweet, innocent girl, clean and pure from the hand of God. But an unclean thought stole into her heart and set its foot on its beauty, and she became an evil thing. You find her, Jesus found her, on the rubbish heap of life—'a woman of the city which was a sinner.'

Zacchæus was once a decent, honest lad. But a slinking, greedy, sneaking thought stamped itself on the soft clay of his nature, and he became a swindler and a cheat, another outcast.

And that would have been all their story, like the story of the brick, had it not been that it was Jesus who found them in the rubbish heap. For He can do with souls what workmen can't do with spoiled bricks: He can blot out the mark of the beast and restore the stamp of God's image. He is a Saviour. He did that with Mary Magdalene and with Zacchæus and the woman of Samaria. He made them again, bricks fit for the building of God. He can do that for any one, and He is the only one who can.

That is great news, and good news. But here is better. He can keep us from the beginning so that the beast shall never set his mark on us, and the mark of the king shall be as clear and undefaced at the end as at the beginning.

And this is, above all, news for you young folk. Your nature is like soft clay now, ready to take any impression. That is what 'character' means. It means 'stamp,' 'impression.' You are God's handiwork; you come from Him; you are His;

His stamp is on you and He means you to live for Him.

How are you going to keep His mark unblotted? It is not easy. Watchers may nod. Fathers and mothers can't see everything. Your own conscience may sleep, and some prowling, slinking evil set its ugly mark on you.

One sees faces in the street stamped with the stamp of evil as plainly as a sheep is marked with ochre. They weren't always like that. There was an artist once who used a beautiful boy as a model for a picture of the Infant Jesus. His face was pure and innocent. Years afterwards he wanted a model for a picture of evil. He found one in the street and paid him to sit; and he found out that it was the same person! The boy who had served for a likeness of Christ had grown up, and the mark of things beastly had quite blotted out the stamp of God.

Girls and boys, you are meant to be real 'little bricks,' as we say. We know what we mean when we say, 'He's a brick!' and all who love you want to be able to say it of you, even God Himself. You are His bricks to build His Holy City. His stamp is on you in the beginning. He made you and moulded you. The only way to keep His image unspoiled and His mark undefaced is to give yourselves now to Christ to keep. It is good to know the Saviour who restores and remakes and redeems the life that has gone wrong, and rescues that out-cast from the rubbish heap. But it is best of all to know the Saviour who can keep us from the beginning; and you can know Him now.

The Christian Bear.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Disturbing Dream.

'Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.'—Gn 40*⁸.

It was not their dungeon, but their dream, that so disturbed Joseph's fellow-prisoners that morning. 'Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?' said Joseph to Pharaoh's officers, as he went his round of the prison. And they did not reply, 'Because we languish in prison; because we have lost a very good job; because our chances of promotion are seriously imperilled; because we are worrying about our wives and children.' They were sad, they said, because they had dreamed a dream.

One of the most arresting features of our age is the sad aspect of men and women to-day. There

is something pathetic even about their frenzied pursuit of pleasure. Shades of the prison-house, as Wordsworth has warned us, begin to close about us all as life goes on. We grow conscious of our limitations, and as those sober-liveried warders, Age and Infirmary, begin to visit us in their rounds, we grow more sensitive to the clank of chains and the creaking of locks. But none of these things is the real cause of our distress. Man has an amazing capacity for adjustment to environment. It is not his dungeon, but his dream, that makes him look so sadly to-day. Dreams can be much more disturbing things than dungeons, a fancy far more painful than a fetter. It is the thing that has come to us from outside the prison that is so perturbing, the vision of that which we might have been, of the place which we might have filled. All the restless seeking, all the discontent, is evidence that man has dreamed of something better than prison fare, some loftier destiny, some ampler sphere. The world's trouble is that of the dream that finds no explanation or fulfilment.

'Do not interpretations belong to God?' said Joseph to the sad-visaged prisoners. 'Tell it me, I pray you.' How men long for sympathy and understanding, an ear in which they can tell their dreams and whisper their desires! The world to-day, looking so sad after its long and broken night, needs some one who will take it back to God, some one who will encourage it to give its confidence. 'Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it me, I pray you.' Joseph is not too busy to stop and listen to the story of the strange, perplexing dream.

That is why the Man Christ Jesus is saving the world from despair once again, because He visits each in the narrow confines of his cell, seeing the troubled look, and inviting the confidence of each sufferer. He takes us back to God. He explains life to us, showing us for what we were meant. He came down and shared our prison fare in order that He might do this thing for us. 'Tell it me, I pray you,' says the voice which speaks as never man spake. And they tell it, 'each man his dream.' He knows; He makes it plain. It takes One who was tried in all points like as we are, yet without sin, to tell us the meaning of life, and the heart of man turns to that interpreter of dreams, with His tender tones, so healing of the world's sadness, 'Tell me, I pray you.'

Have we grasped the meaning of that yearning which sometimes rocks the very soul? The artist flings his canvas aside; the author tears up his MS.; the musician still seeks the lost chord; the

social reformer is impatient with the slow-moving wheels of progress ; the scholar pursues an endless research ; the scientist finds that one discovery but beckons him on to another ; the captain of industry scraps the ever inadequate plant ; the explorer sails on and on. 'Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?' Because yesterday we were content to awake from a dreamless sleep, and had no thoughts above the trough. But to-day we are thralls of a dream. Last night we inhabited a prison, and were not ill-content : to-day we are unhouised by a dream, pilgrims of a discontent.

Joseph was the very man to trust with the secret of a dream, for he, too, had been a dreamer of dreams. 'Tell it me, I pray you,' says a greater than Joseph. In His words and in His deeds, in His life and in His death, He has shown us all. He came to tell us that this yearning for freedom is the earnest of our inheritance ; that it is no delusion of the night, the offspring of sorrow and despair, that we shall yet stand before the King, and serve Him at His table. He has shown us that there is no destiny too high, no dream too exalted, for the prisoners who are continuing a season in ward. There is no key to life save that which Jesus offers.

When we see that vacant look upon the faces of the pleasure-seekers ; when we see that hunted look upon the faces of so many of the workers, that anxious look upon the faces of the great employers of labour who have to find work for all ; when we see that wistful look upon the faces of so many young men and women who are facing life with all its possibilities, we know their need. They need an interpreter, some one who will explain them to themselves and show them the meaning and the opportunities of life. They have each and all dreamed of a better world, of a healthier society, of a nobler destiny, of a happier outlook. The heart of man has dreamed great dreams ; but to-day there is sadness everywhere, for he has lost the key to their interpretation.

One evening some of us heard Chopin's great Nocturne in C Sharp Minor played by that wonderful little elfin old man who interprets Chopin to us as none other living can do. The printed programme set forth the usual banal explanations of what people have thought was in Chopin's mind and heart before he sobbed it forth upon the strings. One said, 'It is the gloomiest and grandest of Chopin's moody canvases'; another, 'The sudden outburst of quickly passing passion followed by accents of despair—all of which seem to speak of the tragedies of life.' But those of us who heard

will never forget how, before he seated himself at the piano, the little *maestro* came forward with that unearthly smile of his, and told us the secret. 'I must tell you ; it is very interesting. Chopin told Liszt, and Liszt told me. In this piece all is sorrow and trouble—oh ! such sorrow and trouble—until he begins to speak to God, to pray ; and then it is all right.' That is the burden of all the low-toned nocturnes of life. All is sorrow and trouble until we turn to God.

A wonderful sense of peace must have stolen into the hearts of Pharaoh's two officers as they unburdened themselves into Joseph's sympathetic ear. His interpretations must have brought the two men great comfort and great strength, the one to live and the other to die. It makes all the difference when we know that the issue of our lives, whatsoever it may prove, is not the accident of chance, but part of an ordered plan. It is the uninterpreted life that is hard to live. It is the uncertainty that torments. If we knew that we would glorify God either by living or by dying, either were easy to accept.

It is neither the mystery of life nor the fear of death that brings an ache to our hearts when we sit alone with our thoughts. The sadness is in this, that we know we were made for bigger and better things than we have ever yet reached. We may be certain, however, that if our dreams and visions are lofty, we shall not be left to languish in doubt and uncertainty for ever. For our dreams are ever where our treasure lies. And if they are about the dignity of service, of pouring the red wine of life into the King's own cup, watching the blossoms of endeavour shoot forth, as that old Egyptian officer watched them in his so vivid dream, we know that we shall never be mocked of Him who sends the dream and holds its key. And if the issue of our dream should be other, and the thieving birds should snatch from our basket the bakemeats of life, all that we have toiled to prepare for the royal banquet, then we shall get something better than bakemeats. For, whether we seem to succeed or whether we imagine that we have failed, we know that we are His. It is ours only to think of our King and how best we may serve Him according to our differing gifts. And then, whether our dream leads to promotion in service here or to promotion in higher courts, we know that we are doing God's will ; and that brings peace. Ours is the part greatly to dream : the interpretations belong to God.

'After three days,' said Joseph ; and so it came to pass. There was no prison in all the land of

Egypt that could hold men who could dream like that. 'After three days,' we Christian folk repeat; for it was not possible that hell and the grave with combined force could hold in their prison-house the sympathy and the understanding and the love that dwelt in Jesus.

And still He comes to each of us who is conscious of his limitations, comes to them that are in ward in what is after all the Master's house, saying, 'Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?' 'And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. And he said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell it *me*, I pray you.'¹

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Presence of Christ the Church's Supreme Need.

'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'—Eph 5¹⁴.

'Lo! I am with you all the days': if that is really so, how do we venture to make the assertion that the supreme *need* of the hour in the life of the Church is the presence of Christ?

One of the greatest pictures in the whole of the New Testament is a dark house showing dimly through the swiftly gathering gloom. And on the threshold, in a listening attitude, stands a radiant Form. With upraised hand He knocks, and listens, and then knocks again. Patient the face is, and gentle, but infinitely sad. Sometimes it seems that in all the Bible there is no picture so ravishingly winsome and tender; sometimes that there is no picture so charged with rebuke, so vocal with Divine Judgment. For, see! whose is that white and startled face, that looks out, with a drowsy trouble in the eyes, through the dark window's curtains drawn for a moment aside? It is the spirit of a Church that had fallen sound asleep. Inside, the room was cold and dark. The table was unfurnished. The ashes on the hearth were spent.

What a world of tragic possibilities that picture thrusts before our eyes! Christ present *always* with His Church on earth: but it makes all the difference in the world whether He is within the house, or whether He has been compelled by our unfaithfulness to stand on the threshold knocking at the door.

Is Christ within, or left standing at the door to-day? Is He perchance within, but not as our honoured Guest? He *is* present—that much is very sure. But do we realize His presence? From

¹ H. L. Simpson, *Put Forth by the Moon*, 26.

that tremendous personality there have flowed time and again into human life streams of healing, quickening, uplifting—flood-tides which have changed the course of history, which have refreshed and renewed the face of the dry, parched land. Why is it not so to-day?

When Balaam stood on the heights and looked down on the camp of Israel his tongue was held from cursing. He said:

How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?
How shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?

The Lord his God is with him,
And the shout of a king is among them:

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,
And thy tabernacles, O Israel!

But to-day all the so-called prophets of the world are standing on the heights looking down at the Church, and their curses are unrestrained. Why? Because they hear no more the rustle and the shouting as the King passes through the camp. Yes, that is the only thing that will silence the criticism of the Church to-day: the realized presence of the Lord in her midst again, making her rise up to do His service with a new consciousness of power. Not that we need pay too much heed to what the critic has to say. It is enough to mark the fact that he *is* speaking. There is only one Critic who has the right to be heard by the Church; and that is the Church's Master and Lord. And He speaks to us through our own consciences.

Are we not conscious that much of the old radiancy of faith and trust has faded from the face of Christ's Bride? And is it not true that it is because the certitude, the assurance of His presence has grown somewhat dim and faint? For one reason or other an estrangement has fallen between us and our Lord. We will not say we have thrust Him out to the door again. In many a corner of the Church His presence is recognized with joy. He is still inside, a guest perhaps among the company, but all eyes are not towards Him. He might be dead for all the attention multitudes nominally within the Church are paying to Him. There is a widespread indifference to-day to the simple fact, nay, the tremendous fact that Jesus is alive. Jesus *is* alive! But we are concerned about other matters, busy about mere externalities.

What would the realized presence of Christ mean for us? What a difference it made to multitudes that Jesus once lived in their midst. Hard hearts, embittered lives, tired folk and

broken, looked in His face and saw there a light so winsome that they came, they could not tell why, to unburden to Him all their care and shame. And often, in many another scene with this simple workman in the midst, there were tremblings and shrinkings and tears and shame. Men drew away back from Him, as if His presence were the judgment-seat of God. And excitement spread over the face of the land. It was all so simple and wonderful. And something within the hearts of the people began to stir and wake. 'Never man spake like this,' they said. The Lord hath visited His people.

It was to them as wonderful as it would be to us to-day to hear strange news breaking out of the skies from heaven. He was the shadow of a great rock in a weary land—a land where dead souls wandered, crushed by superstitions, broken and embittered by injustice, oppression, and wrong, the sky all blotted out by the tangled growth of the Rabbis' traditions, the ways all blown over by the desert sands of their weary rules and maxims; and all the longings of the soul for the presence of God dried like the brooks in a summer's drought—until this Man came. And lo, the nightmare was broken by a beam of heavenly splendour! The great God had burst the awful bars of spiritual death that had shut Him out. The people heard God calling in the looks and tones and gestures of this Man. And they cried, 'Lord, to whom can we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

Many a time has He visited the world since then. After the crowning hour of ecstasy at Pentecost, when all the company became filled with the spiritual presence of the risen Lord, the disciples went out to stir Jerusalem to its depths. Thousands believed: 'Jesus is alive! He is at the right hand of Power! This which ye see in us is proof of it.' And from that city they went forth over the length and breadth of the dying civilization of the Græco-Roman world. That was the first great coming again of Christ after the Resurrection, the first realization of His presence with power. The Resurrection may be 'the land where the great mists lie, but it is the land whence the great rivers flow.' Every revival, every reformation, every uprising of a down-trodden principle of the kingdom He planted to take its stern but glorious revenge has been a fresh proof of the Resurrection. He is not dead. He is alive. But because of our faithlessness, we do not realize His presence. We are His doors of access to the world. He is longing to come again with power. But the doors are barred with pride and doubt.

What must we do?

1. What must we do *to realize His presence in ourselves as individuals?* We must turn in on ourselves again. It is not the excitement of the crowds that is going to bring the Lord Christ down. As a nation, we have been living too long on the surface of life. In the Church we have been covering too long the poverty of our faith by a babble of religious small-talk. We want to get alone with ourselves in the presence of God. And in that solemn interview with ourselves we must remember the searching eyes of the Spirit of Christ are on us, lest we deal too leniently with ourselves. Let us listen to all this inner unrest, this inward whispering that all is not well, this longing for the old spring of gladness—longing for a fresh baptism of power. Make a fresh beginning with Him in prayer, in penitence and lowliness of mind. And He will make a fresh beginning with us.

2. What more must we do *to realize Christ's presence in the Church?* The first essential is this. We have got to learn all over again the true secret of Christian fellowship. Not in big conferences. We come into the presence of the crowds not to discover truth, but to proclaim it, and have our hearts confirmed by it. It is the secret of the quiet gatherings of the two or three we need to learn again. For it is there men come to discover truth, to wait for God, to pray, to glimpse new visions, to make fresh adventures of exploration into the unsearchable riches of the vast heart of God. If by God's Spirit we could learn to break the frost of our close reserve about things unseen; if we could learn to meet with the two or three, it may be not always to say only what we believe, nor yet to say what we think we ought to believe; if we came in absolute candour to tell each other our misgivings and doubts, yea, even to voice that old, sad, broken-hearted cry, 'But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel'; but always if we came to pray, surely our hearts would begin to burn within us, for lo, He would be talking with us by the way!

3. And what must we do *to make Christ's presence known to all the world?* It is not more organization the Church needs. It is Power, the Spirit's Power, the Power of the living, active presence of Christ. It is not new methods in the first place. The Power would forge these for itself. We want to get the fire of the Spirit rekindled on the hearth. That alone will bring the people to the house of God. It is the glimmer of firelight through the windows that draws the benighted wanderer home. If the house remain dark and cold, what matter

though it be swept and garnished? It is only devils—of bad temper and strife and suspicion and jealousy and fear—that return to hold high revel in such a place.

But if we become as little children again, conscious that we have missed our way, we will begin to realize the presence of Christ within, and the world will begin to take knowledge of us that we have been, and are, with Jesus. Men will look on the Church as they looked on St. Francis of Assisi and his shining company: they will see it 'fragrant with a wondrous aspect.' And the power that this poor, worn, and spent world needs will begin to flow into human life again. Christ will become recognized as the Healer, the Peacemaker, the Lord and Prince of life, ushering in the day of His Kingdom.

It is coming, very surely coming. There are signs of it everywhere, not only in the Church but in the world. The world's great writers, poets, dreamers are proclaiming that it is a Christ-haunted world. They are coming back to His feet to ask Him all the most terrible questions of life. The day of a new appearing, another of the days of the Son of Man is most certainly on the way.¹

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Illusion of Arithmetic.

'There is a lad here.'—Jn 6⁹.

The feeding of the five thousand did not take place as a demonstration of supernatural power. When Jesus saw that it was interpreted in that way He immediately left the multitude and went away into the wilderness to be alone.

The story is not intended to fasten our interest upon a transient incident which took place hundreds of years ago, but to teach us eternal principles. The hungry multitude forms a parable. The little boy with his five loaves and two fishes is a parabolic figure. The disciple Philip making his arithmetical calculations is a parable; and the gathering up of the twelve baskets of fragments which remained over and above is also an eternal parable. It is intended to discountenance a certain attitude of mind towards life's forces, which we may call the arithmetical attitude. It is a significant way of teaching that the powers of man, when linked with the powers of the Divine, are capable of incredible amplification. It enshrines a gospel concerning life's remainders.

¹ J. A. Robertson, in *Ascension and Whitsuntide Sermons*, 147.

1. The sum that was set for Philip to work out was absurdly simple. He had only to count the number of people present and then estimate the cost per head of feeding them. Philip based the cost per head at one farthing. It was a simple thing to calculate how many farthings would be required to give each of five thousand people something to eat. It is the arithmetical way of looking at life. We are all rather partial to it. Arithmetic seems to us to be an exact science. We grow weary of problems and speculations. We would like, if we could, to get down to some basis concerning life which is perfectly sure and which never varies from age to age.

2. But it is not so easy even as it appears to estimate loaves and fishes. 'There is a lad here,' and there is something about the lad which confuses all our calculations. Why, Nature herself loves multiplication rather than simple addition. Here are a few seeds, it may be of wheat, and lo, they produce twenty, thirty, or sixtyfold! There is an expulsive multiplying force in Nature which confounds our arithmetic. We are always estimating the power of the world to feed its population. Every now and again, in the newspapers, an estimate is given of the extent of the coming harvest and the potential fertility of one land or another. These forecasts and estimates never get down to the root of things. There is more involved than the mere productivity of the earth. There is always something human, there is always something psychological, which complicates the issue. They tell us every now and again that the earth cannot feed more than an estimated population. But we have never seen yet an earth in which men, in harmony with the Divine, were earnestly intent upon seeing that no son of man went hungry. If we were to see such a thing as that, the feeding of the five thousand in the days of Christ would seem like a mere prophetic gleam of what Nature can do when she and man and God work together in harmony.

3. To go a step farther. When we count men and women we are nearly always wrong. There is no fallacy which has been more often exposed in history than that of counting men. Nobody yet has ever learned to count a crowd. 'There is a lad here.' In importance he may reduce the rest of your crowd to the significance of cyphers. Every notable name in our annals is a name that has confounded arithmetic. Napoleon Bonaparte said once that he was worth an army corps to France; and who can deny him? Would we say that the population of England in the seventeenth century

was so many millions, counting Oliver Cromwell precisely in the same way as we counted the groom who saddled his horse for him? There are millions of examples. Every memorable name is a name that made arithmetic look foolish.

Anybody who loves Robert Louis Stevenson must have resented at first that candid biography by J. A. Steuart, and Lloyd Osborne's revelations of the weak side of that great man. Mr. Strachey made many people angry because he told us so much about Queen Victoria. In America they idealize Abraham Lincoln. He seems to them little less than a patron saint. William Herndon, one of the men who knew him best, wrote another biography with the definite intention of stripping away illusions and showing us a more human, though an intrinsically greater, Lincoln with the little excrescences and deformities he never quite threw off.

There is a mean way of thinking about big men, and there are people who are only too glad to think that way. They present you with their incontrovertible facts, and say, 'Call *him* a great man? Look at his weaknesses, look at his meannesses.' That is your arithmetical calculation, but it is false. They *were* great men in spite of everything. Nay, who knows if they were not perhaps greater because of these things. They let some parts of their life remain undeveloped because they gave such marvellous strength and vitality to certain great aims and causes. The little side is part of the big man, but whoever judges big men by their weaknesses is an arithmetical microbe. There is something 'over and above' in every great life, something we cannot calculate, some expulsive force we cannot analyse.

4. 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost'—not the fingered and half-eaten morsels that a careless crowd left to be trampled in the grass, but the broken, yet unused, portions of bread that the disciples had not distributed, because the multitude had enough. They who had merely eaten had nothing over, or what there was was negligible. They who had served had a basket full. It is a parable of eternal significance. There is no question in life more appealing, more significant, than the question of its remainders. We can make our arithmetical estimate. We can calculate the years if we leave a slight margin for uncertainties. What will be left over when life is finished?

The Christian has a deep and sacred belief concerning the recompense of the just upon which one might wax eloquent. But this generation has had

its wings clipped; it can take no flights of faith and hope into the world beyond. It is only now that this generation of ours is beginning to let its wings grow again. Faith will come again. It cannot be that this little globe we call the earth, a mere fragment amidst multitudes of worlds greater than itself, is the only sphere of destiny. It cannot be that this half-expended, unexhausted thing we call the human soul has no future beyond the grave. Faith will come again, ah!—but right here and now there is already something in life over and above all arithmetical estimates of its value. There is a lad here—a lad who might put his little basket with its fragments of food into association with the Divine and find himself made bread-giver to the multitude. There is something in us over and above the circumstances which we are facing. There is a Divine grace that can make us adequate.

Let us believe in it more and more. Let us keep on believing in it, let us test it. There is a Divine dynamic that, linked with our human frailty, can make life splendid and marvellously fruitful.¹

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Brands of the Lord Jesus.

'From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.'—Gal 6¹⁷.

Every one knows the characteristic legend concerning Francis of Assisi, which tells how on his hands and feet and side he bore mysterious crucifixion marks, in token of his spiritual conformity to the Crucified. St. Paul, however, was not thinking about any supernatural stigmata. He was remembering things much simpler and more commonplace. Those scars where the stones cut when they pelted him at Lystra, and those seams where the rods bit when they scourged him at Philippi—it is marks like these that he calls to mind. For the words written of George Fox were still more true of St. Paul: 'Then he grew weakly, being troubled with pains and aches, having had many sore and long travels, beatings, and hard imprisonments.' Soldiers who were crippled in the Great War can feel to-day that they carry in their bodies the seal of their sacrifice for England.

There remains a deep spiritual sense in which the like good confession ought to be possible for every Christian. And we shall understand it when we consider how a brand implies at least three things—ownership, advertisement, and genuineness.

¹ F. W. Norwood, *The Gospel of the Larger World*, 214.

1. A brand implies *ownership*. For this reason farmers brand their sheep, and ranchmen brand their cattle. Within living memory negroes in America were branded by their owners as slaves. The ancient Hebrew law provided that in certain cases a bondsman should have his ear nailed to the doorpost, to show that he was henceforth his master's property for life. In like manner, to bear the brands of Jesus Christ means to have Him for our Owner and Possessor. This idea of ownership helps us to understand why the Apostle could say: 'Henceforth let no man trouble me'; because a slave, just by reason of his slavery, is curiously emancipated from half the anxieties which beset people who belong to themselves or to one another. His master finds him his food and raiment, and sets him his work; and so long as he satisfies his master, he need care little for other men's praise or blame. And so slavery, by a kind of paradox, brings with it also detachment and freedom—freedom from the cares of this world and from the deceitfulness of riches. A strange peace settles into the soul of the man who can say quietly: 'Whether I live, I live unto the Lord; or whether I die, I die unto the Lord; living therefore, or dying, I am the Lord's.'

2. Again, a brand implies *advertisement*. We can instantly pick out a porter at the railway station, or a policeman in the street. Each of them bears it on his body. And ought there not also to be something about a Christian which shows plainly whose he is and whom he serves? We may admit this, without advocating any special religious garments or badges, without defending 'these offensively celestial uniforms,' as Ruskin once called them. Surely the brands of Jesus Christ pierce deeper than a costume. And surely, even in the workaday world, we have sometimes met

people who carry about with them the very stamp and signature of goodness.

To advertise our religion is a grave and sacred responsibility. Yet none of us can help doing it. When Père Besson, the French Dominican, went to preach to his countrymen who were in Italy, the Italians themselves flocked to hear him, because they said his face was worth many sermons. Two young Italian soldiers were standing at the edge of the crowd round his pulpit, almost out of reach of the voice which was speaking to them in a strange tongue; and one said to his fellow, 'Look at that man: he is a speaking crucifix!' When we have grace to preach like that, we shall find fewer deaf children sitting in the market-place.

3. Once more, a brand implies *genuineness*. It is the trade mark which guarantees that an article comes from the right factory. Concerning St. Paul, we may say that he was hall-marked with Jesus Christ. And, after all, there is no surer and safer evidence of a genuine Christian than this—that the man reminds us of Christ. People will often wrangle about what they call the notes of the Church, the signs and proofs by which we may distinguish the authentic Communion of the faithful from its spurious imitations. The decisive notes of the Holy Catholic Church must be moral and spiritual tokens. Wherever we meet with a company of Christian men and women who are so tender-hearted, so self-forgetful, so humble, so pure, so brave, that they put us irresistibly in mind of their Saviour, then, though we may dislike some points in their order and their discipline, and we may shrink from some clauses in their creed, yet henceforth let no man trouble us with criticisms and objections: in that fellowship we are conscious of nothing except the wound-prints of Jesus Christ Himself.¹

¹ T. H. Darlow, *The Love of God*, 236.

The Visit to the Tomb.

BY PROFESSOR D. S. MARGOLIOUTH, D.LITT., OXFORD.

THE observation of E. Nestle, published long ago in this magazine, that ἐπίσει, 'shall strive' (*i.e.* 'litigate'), in the Greek of Mt 12¹⁸ is a mistranslation of the Lewisian Syriac *nrib*, which is here quoted from the Peshitta of Is 42², and means 'shout,' which is the sense of the corresponding

Hebrew and LXX, might well be the foundation-stone of Synoptic criticism. The present writer has experimented on Jewish scholars, more familiar with Hebrew than with Syriac, and they have fallen into the same mistake. The inference that the Greek is translated from the Lewisian Syriac