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Christian Unity, and another with the League of Nations. A third is an appeal for the work of evangelization to which French Protestantism is called by its position. The first and the last sermons go together: mankind as the family of Christ (Sermon i.) is charged (Sermon x.) with the duty of not ignoring the common creaturehood with the lower animals. This is a most moving protest against all cruelty to the lower animals.

In these sermons Liberal French Protestantism is seen at its very best.

One of Dr. Monod's works, *Vers Dieu*, instruction for catechumens, has been translated into English, and will shortly be published by A. & C. Black.

This brief survey may serve as a call to fuller knowledge, clearer understanding, and closer co-operation with Continental Protestantism.

London.

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Rubs and their Reasons.

BY THE REVEREND STUART ROBERTSON, M.A.
GLASGOW.

'I was at ease, but he hath broken me.'—Job 16¹².

I HAVE a little friend called *Pristina*. No: not *Christina*. Look again—*Pristina*. *Pristina* is very little and very neat and has some funny ways. *Pristina* sometimes plays a little trick on me: it is the trick of shamming dead.

I have seen children play a trick like it. They didn't sham dead, but they shammed deaf. They didn't hear when they were called, because they didn't want to hear. They were playing in the garden, and when they were called they were afraid that it was to go a message or to come to their lessons. So they shammed deaf. Sometimes in the morning, when they were called to get up, they shammed being asleep. Grown-up people do it too! A lady rang three times for her maid, and when at last the maid came her mistress asked, 'Didn't you hear the bell?' She answered, 'I only heard it the third time.' The first two times she was shamming deaf. It's wonderful what people 'don't hear' in church. So we have a proverb in Scotland, 'There's nane sae deaf as them that winna hear.'

But *Pristina* does worse. She shams dead. It seems as if she were dead.

There are several creatures that do that. Pick up certain spiders, or beetles, and they draw up their limbs and remain quite motionless, to all appearance dead. Lay them down on the ground again, and off they scuttle, very much alive. It

looks like a very clever trick, and we say they are 'shamming dead.' But, it seems now, it isn't that at all. They are not the artful dodgers we thought they were. By picking them up we have upset their life. We have taken them away from the things which keep them awake. They need the touch of the roughnesses of the earth to keep them alert and moving. When we take them away from them a sort of paralysis comes on them. They seem dead, but they aren't; and they aren't shamming. It is a darkness, a sluggishness, a sort of stiff cramp that comes over them.

That is what happens to *Pristina* when she 'shams dead.' She is a little fresh-water worm, and it seems that if you only keep her from touching anything rough, you send her into a queer death-like sleep. Even a few grains of sand are enough to keep her going.

Now, I think *Pristina* is not only an acquaintance, but a relation: in fact, you and I *are* *Pristina*! We would like life to be smooth and soft and easy. We think it isn't fair that there should be rough, hard things that hurt: grains of sand that fret us, gravel that gets into our shoes and makes us limp with sore feet, rocks which bruise; and other things that fret our tempers, and rub our heart and soul and conscience—sorrows, temptations, trials, difficulties.

We say, 'Why should good things all be difficult? Why should life be full of rubs? Does God love us? Does He care? If He did, would these things be there?'

Yes! He does; and it's these very things that show it. If life was smooth and easy, our souls would fall asleep. A stiff cramp would come upon them. So Jesus says, 'In this world ye shall have

tribulation,' and 'tribulation' means exactly and precisely 'rubs.' When life is easy, the sun always shining, the wind always warm, food abundant and little or no need for work, as in some of the sun-bathed islands of the Southern Seas, the people have never grown up. Their minds are asleep, their souls are unawakened. They are just big children, lazy, passionate, thoughtless, unable to look ahead. Where life is harder, they are a finer folk. Think only of two little countries. One is Holland, where always they have to fight the sea for their life and land, and where they had for long to fight the Spaniards and the cruel Inquisition for their liberty and their faith. Holland has played a fine part in the world and has given high examples of brave manhood and womanhood. The other is Scotland, where the people have had to fight against a hard climate, and between times they had to fight the English to keep their freedom, and persecutors to keep their religion. Scotland has done great things and given great men and women to the world. Sir Walter Scott calls her 'Caledonia, stern and wild,' and then he says she is 'meet nurse for a poetic child.' She has been 'meet nurse' of much greatness, for flabby nurses make flabby children. No two nations have done more for freedom of land and freedom of conscience than these two little nations.

When God wanted to make His people into a nation, He took them into the desert, over sand and rock, through danger and weariness, and by many a sore rub made them into men.

We talk of a man having 'grit' in him. It is the grit in the world that is our chance of getting 'grit' into our character. So a great and wise poet has written :

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,

and St. Paul says to Timothy 'endure hardness.'

We would like to be kept from touching anything rough. We would like a father that does everything for us and fights all our battles. I'm sorry for a boy with such a father, for he'll never grow up into a real man.

Certainly, we haven't such a Heavenly Father. We have One who loves us too well to make our life so smooth that we just fall asleep and get stiff cramp in our souls. Too much comfort has killed more souls than sin. It has just paralysed them and sent them asleep. It was when Peter was warming his hands at a fire that he denied his Lord. It is because they are difficult that we know what are the best things, and it is by the rubs

of life that our souls are kept awake and have their chance to grow.

Knowing Eyes.

BY THE REVEREND R. STRONG, M.A., B.LITT.,
NORWICH.

'Having the eyes of your heart enlightened.'—
Eph 1¹⁸.

One summer's day, when the boys were discussing what game they should play, somebody said, 'Let's play Jack the Giant-Killer.' And when they had settled the very awkward questions as to who should be Jack, and who was to be the Giant, and what part the rest should play in the game, you may be sure they had rather an exciting time. When they told mother about it at night, they were a little surprised when she said, in that quiet way of hers that means so much, 'Yes, that's a great game, and one you will still be playing when you have grown quite big—it may be a dangerous game later on, and I hope Jack will always win.' They said, 'But won't Jack always win, Mother?' to which mother replied, 'Sometimes the giant has been known to win, so we must learn to tackle him.' How to beat the giant becomes a big thing we have to try to learn, and it is just as well to begin learning soon. There was a poet who once told us part of the secret, and this is what he said :

giants to slay
Demand knowing eyes in your Jack.

Like many other people who have thought a good deal about life, George Meredith had thought about this serious task of killing giants, and this is what he had decided, that if you were going to have any success you would need very open eyes, that indeed, as the New Testament says, you must have the eyes of your mind enlightened. Meredith sometimes used to say things in a funny, twisted sort of way, but for the most part it was worth while to have patience to untie the knots. Here he wants to tell us all that it is not enough for Jack to make up his mind to be a giant-killer. That is a part of the story; but then he must get his eyes opened so that he can recognize the giant when he sees him. That is easy enough in the story-books, and anybody can draw some pictures showing what he thinks the giant ought to look like. You could draw everything on a very big scale—big hands, big head, big boots—so that even the baby would know you meant it to be a giant. In real

life, however, giants are not at all like the drawings you make, and those who are the most difficult to fight and overcome seem to know some strange tricks, and they know all manner of strange disguises. You see they would be beaten as easily as possible, if they came out into the world looking like the giants of the picture-books, and you may be sure they don't intend to be beaten if they can help it. The fact is some of them know how to make themselves look quite nice, and Jack—that is to say, you—will need very open eyes to have any luck in the encounter.

Here, for example, is one of the worst of them. His real name is 'Indolence,' but he never uses this name in talking to you, because he is afraid he wouldn't have much influence over you if he did. He thinks, rightly enough, that if he used that name you might soon send him about his business, so the name he uses oftener than any other is Mr. Good-Time. Of course, he has no right to that name, but this giant is not a nice fellow in anything he does, and I'm afraid he doesn't worry about stealing a name from somebody else. He has a way of coming along when some new tasks have to be done and talking in the most pleasant way. If ever you have a problem to solve which looks difficult, just because it happens to be strange, you can hear his smooth voice saying, 'Why do you want to worry about that, old man? Don't you see how strange it all is? What's the good of spending your time on that funny-looking problem in Algebra, which you may get all wrong? Give the thing up and have a good time with me. Don't do anything; let the others get on with it.' I wonder if Jack will recognize whose voice is speaking when he hears words like these. If he does, then there is a chance that he will score one of the great victories of his life, a victory which is going to save him for many a splendid bit of service later on. But if he doesn't see that this is the giant to be slain, a fair share of his life may be spoiled. This particular giant is a terrific task-master, and he is going to keep Jack out of all the fun and adventure and service of life. The truth one needs to remember is that this giant will not have a ghost of a chance of victory so long as Jack finds something to do, and loves the work with all his heart and soul. It is the empty mind that giant Indolence conquers so easily—the Jack who is doing his task with all his mind has already won his victory. All through life let us learn to pray for the opened eyes that we may recognize the horror of this monster, lest he come and enslave us.

The Christian Year.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Favour of Man.

'Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him. . . . The Lord gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.'—Gn 39^d. 21.

The character of Joseph as depicted in Genesis is one of the finest in literature—a rare combination of strength and sweetness, wisdom and humility, with the strength of a soldier and the grace of a courtier. Gifted with such a happy temperament that in adversity he was able to face misfortune with a bright cheerfulness and a half-humorous buoyancy, he was also of such a winsome nature that in prosperity he never grew arrogant or selfish. Added to the flexibility and grace of his character, there were strong self-control and probity that nothing could undermine.

There are three chief reasons which help to explain the force of influence such as Joseph's, and which at the same time reveal to us the source of all such influence.

1. For one thing, whether due to temperament or to principle, he saw the dignity of service, and took delight in serving and helping others. Though it may have begun in his light-hearted and happy nature, it must have deepened into principle before it could have stood the severe tests to which it was put—as, for example, in prison, where he might easily have been soured by brooding over the injustice of his sentence and the hardness of his lot. But, in prison or out of it, he turned so easily to bearing others' burdens and putting his hand to others' work, that it is evident he was inspired by unselfish regard for those about him, whether his fellow-servants in Potiphar's house or his fellow-prisoners in the king's gaol. He had something of the self-devotion that comes from self-forgetfulness. He had had early dreams of his own pre-eminence, of the great position in the world he was to attain, in which his sheaf stood upright and the sheaves of his brethren did obeisance to his, and in which the sun and the moon and the stars bent before him; but now in his trial he did not wait for these dreams to come true before he would bestir himself. In his lot as a slave, and afterwards as a prisoner, he started right away making the most of the situation, throwing himself into his work, without thought that it was menial and beneath him. He was ready to serve anywhere, just because he took an unfeigned delight in serving. 'He found grace in his master's sight,

and he served him,' with pleasant eagerness. He brought sunshine into the dungeon, and made life easier for all by his friendly, unselfish conduct, so that it could be said of him that whatsoever the prisoners did he was the doer of it.

2. Again, the position Joseph took, both inside the prison and outside it, was the natural dominance due to character. A man who added to his lovable qualities such strength of will and such complete self-control was bound to take precedence. He had come through the fire untarnished, with only a keener glitter of steel and a finer edge. The peace of a good conscience kept him from being soured by the injustice of his sentence. His conscious probity freed him from all personal care, and made it possible for him to devote himself to the service of others. Such a character as the story depicts could not fail to command influence, a character so strong and so sweet, so controlled and yet so buoyant. The bright cheerfulness which was his great charm was one of the fruits of character. It was the result of that integrity of conscience for which he suffered and through which also he triumphed. It was no mere chance then, but was indeed the inevitable effect of his character, that Joseph laid hold of his kingdom of personal influence even within the narrow bounds of his prison, so that 'he found favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison,' as formerly 'he found grace in his keeper's sight,' as he served him.

3. The third and deepest reason which explains this influence was his faith. The inspiring source of his life and of his character was religion. Here we get down to the bedrock. It was Joseph's confidence in God which bred in him his strength of character, and which moved him to constant service. This is the foundation of all the rest. In his direst temptation he was upheld by a sense of rectitude and a sense of honour, so that he would have been ashamed to repay his master's kindness and trust by base ingratitude; but the chief secret of his strength was the thought of his relation to God, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' In addition to the motives which ought to weigh with any honourable man, there is the supreme motive of religion. The inner and impregnable line of his defence is his faith in God. His nobility of nature had its roots deep down in his spiritual life. The air of distinction and the easy gracefulness with which he won men's hearts were not mere surface qualities. A constant reference to a higher law and a higher will gave stamina to his character, and kept him

from the pitfalls that menace the man who is merely good-natured and obliging.

The man who has no deeper motive than that of pleasing others, or even serving them, becomes pliable and cannot be depended on. All Joseph's amiability would not have stood the tests to which he was subjected, if there had not been behind them this root-virtue of strength; and even the strength would have broken under the weight, if it had not been inspired by the assurance of the presence of God. This meant the introduction of principle into his life. Trace back the qualities we have been considering to their fountain-head, and we see them springing from faith. His delight in serving and his self-devotion were not the result of a desire to be a favourite among his fellows. That motive will not carry one very far. Joseph was enabled to look not altogether on his own things but also on the things of others, because he at the same time looked on higher things. The real favour he found in the sight of men owed its origin to the favour of God.

So linked were these in the sweet and sunny early life of Joseph that we cannot but think of the boyhood of Jesus, as 'He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' And when Joseph, too, like Jesus, had to choose between the favour of men and the favour of God, he chose the hard way, the way of the Cross, rather than give up his Heavenly Friend.¹

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

Grace.

'The grace of God.'—I Co 14.

Many of the distinctively Christian words used by our Lord and His Apostles were just old words which came into the New Testament from the Septuagint: a Greek translation of the Old Testament, made at Alexandria about 284 B.C. These were old classical Greek words—such as Love, Hope, Faith—into which our Lord in His wonderful way breathed new and beautiful meanings without changing or misusing them; as He always beautifies and turns to gold everything He touches.

In the Septuagint we find this word *charis* used for the most part in that old primary sense, beauty of form or manner, or sometimes of conduct or demeanour. It is not till we arrive at the Proverbs and the Prophets that there creeps into it the idea of favour on God's part to man. And in its last occurrence, in Zechariah, we find for the first

¹ H. Black, *According to my Gospel*, 173.

time the dawn of the Christian meaning: 'I will pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.'

But in the New Testament we get the full brightness of the gospel meaning shining out of the word; and it takes its place at last as a jewel in the golden treasury of Christian language, which has ever since enriched the world. It is the gem shining in Mary's hair when she first appears before us, 'Ave Maria, Gratia plena.' It ushers in the Birth of God—'And we beheld his glory, full of grace and truth.'

Grace, on a Christian's lips, whether he know it or not, means this: 'beautiful gratuitous favour,' given to the world of men by God, through the only means by which He ever deals with the world, Jesus Christ—the Incarnate Word of the Father. It is called grace, because it is the full and final expression of all the infinite beauty of God's character, in that it bestows upon men the ineffable privilege of union with God. And it is 'gratuitous,' because it does this at the price of God's own life. For, to make it possible, He stepped down into our strait and misery, and identified Himself with our creature-nature, and underwent our due penalty that we might identify ourselves with His purity and so qualify for a share in His glory.

And so grace is no vague subjectivity. It is the most dynamic and beautiful thing that is to be had in this world. The most beautiful, because its sire is Love and its mother is Sacrifice. The most powerful, because it confers upon man the power and the right to share, yes, and even to deserve—which is more wonderful still—the glory of God.

Grace is the medicine of character, and the food of the soul. It is omnipotent, like its Giver. It can turn a churl into a gentleman, and a fool into a sage.

1. Now self-discipline, alone, cannot do this, but grace can, and does. For grace works, not negatively, but positively. It does not only aim at the excision of the bad thing, but puts in the good thing, which grows and grows until there is no room left for the bad thing. Salvation is not a negation. It is not merely being free from sin; it is being full of light. It is not like the call of the mother to the little girl in the street, 'Go and see what Tommy is doing, and tell him he mustn't.' Into the swept and garnished soul came seven other demons, worse than the first; for it was not furnished.

It is sin that is the negation of virtue; virtue is the positive thing. If we are proud, we do not want merely to get rid of our pride; we want to

get humility. If we are unchaste, we do not want just to stop being so; we want to get purity; which is not the negation of the sexual passion, but the consecration and sublimation of it.

And grace puts in these things, because it puts in Jesus Christ; and the good thing gradually chokes the bad and crowds it out. And so, slowly, but surely, we come to look back with real distaste on the old ideals and standards of life and conduct, and when temptation comes, though our first thought may be, 'How pleasant it would be to yield!' our second is this: 'No—I don't really want it. It isn't good enough.' This plane of development, if we can rise into it, is salvation in process and in being.

Do not imagine for a moment that this work of grace upon the soul involves depletion of character, or loss of individuality. On the contrary, its sure end and aim is the development of personality in its true perfection. Only by its means can man, as a person, ever come to his true focus. A Christian's ideal self lies potentially reserved for him in the New Humanity, which is the Christ. 'We have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' 'We are being kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed.' We are 'growing up into him in all things, which is the head.'

2. And then, grace does another wonderful thing. Even suppose our own efforts could make us good, we would be unworthy and incapable of that union with God which is our destiny. Unqualified by any part or share in the God-Man who is the only Medium between flesh and Deity, the objective taint of fallen and untoned humanity would still exclude us from all vital relation with the unapproachable purity of God. No degree of natural virtue can lift man into contact with the footpace of God's throne; much less into the heaven of His heart. But even this miracle is possible to grace. For it does not merely concede, or pronounce, man worthy of union with God. It makes him so. There is no putative compromise about it; it is qualification pure and simple. It does not merely impute to man, but actually imparts to him, the merit by which his pioneer has opened the way to God. So that, when man—the process of his redemption perfected—attains his eternal destiny, he enters on his rights. For He passes into Christ's kingdom as part of Christ. The deserts and merits of that body whose organic member he is have passed into him and become his own.

We are in the holy season of Lent. The name comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word, *lencsten*,

which means 'spring'; probably because Lent is in the spring of the year. But there is a deeper fitness in the name, and a mystical. For Lent is, or should be, the time of the new life of the soul; the yearly spring in which she so renews her dispositions that the life of God creeps up with new vigour into her veins, and she puts forth fresh shoots of holiness. But this spiritual spring differs from the ordinary spring of Nature in that there is, or should be, a greater luxuriance every year of leaf and flower and fruit. Making full allowance for that backsliding which is inseparable from our earthly efforts towards God, the record of the Book of Life ought to find us nearer to God than we were a year ago. It is not that every Easter should acclaim some specific sin conquered, some particular grace acquired, though God grant it may be so, but that every Lent, year by year, ought to achieve something towards raising the whole tone and quality of the soul.

The chief cause that hinders this ideal is sloth; the subtlest and deadliest enemy of the Christian; the ugly, negative thing that scarcely seems a sin, whereas it comes to us with all the sins in the universe hidden in its knapsack. It is the last and most insidious of all the capital sins, because it deters and separates us from the only remedy for sin—the use of grace. It is commonly said that Satan tempts us to sin; but he has a labour-saving device more effective than a hundred sins; he tempts us to sloth. All the sins in the world cannot hurt or hinder us when once God's grace has cancelled them; the tactic of the enemy is therefore directed against grace.

Now there is only one effectual antidote of sloth; and that is love. No other power can touch or stir it. The laziest person in the world will rouse himself to action for the sake or favour of one he truly loves. Seeing, then, that the love of Christ is itself a grace, or gift given by Him; and that this love is the only force which can galvanize the self-loving sluggish soul into the active practice of 'the means of grace, and the hope of glory'; let us implore the Holy Spirit for the gift of love, that the animal inertia, which makes men and women careless of the call of the Physician, may be counteracted by the enchanting vision of His beauty.

Let us sustain our communions, our efforts at grace-given self-control, our church-going, our meditations, and our prayers. We will be ambitious that Holy Week and Easter shall not find us scrambling to 'make good' lost ground—for none but God can 'make good,' or make us good; but

advanced a little closer to the Standard of Calvary, grown somewhat higher in the stature that is Jesus, a little nearer to His heart.¹

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Backgrounds of Life.

'Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.'—Gn 22^d.

'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.'—Ps 121^l.

Let us think for a little about the mountain backgrounds of life. Our lives are like a great landscape: each life has its own foreground and background; the foreground full of detail, full of the movement of our daily work, looming much larger on our sight than the distance beyond it, pressing upon us calls of business that we cannot put off, keeping our thoughts immersed in the ceaseless hurry and hustle of our professional career, calling continually for our immediate attention to this or that thing that has to be done. Such is the foreground of life. And then behind all this multiplicity of detail and movement come the wider horizons, the larger aspirations, the deeper convictions, the eternal truths, the unchangeable principles to which we must continually lift up our eyes if our life is to have any general plan or purpose. These are the mountain backgrounds. Both foreground and background are equally indispensable. But there is this difference between them. Men, as a rule, are naturally inclined to pay far more attention to the foreground than to the background. There are, indeed, sluggish or visionary natures which are content to stand aside from the ordinary activities of life, but these are exceptional. Most men find their immediate daily duties so engrossing that they are apt to neglect the view beyond. The mountain distances become blurred or blotted out. That is a great loss—how great a loss our Lord teaches us Himself by His own example. We cannot suppose that He, in His busy daily life, ever really put God out of His thoughts; always He must have had with Him the sense of His Heavenly Father's presence. Yet none the less He felt the need of going up into a mountain apart to pray. How much greater is our need of lifting up our eyes to the mountains from whence cometh our help.

The idea that life is like a landscape is a mere metaphor, of course, but it may be helpful and suggestive. Let us look at some of the moral and spiritual backgrounds.

¹ T. H. Passmore, in *Lenten Sermons*, 110.

1. There is *the background of the inner personality*, for instance. Behind the foreground of conduct comes the background of character. The teaching of Jesus covers the whole range of this spiritual landscape. He says, 'Keep my commandments'—that is, the rule of conduct. But He also says (and we feel that it is a still deeper saying), 'Ye must be born again'—that is, the need of regeneration of character. These two sayings are closely connected. Conduct and character must be in harmony, or there can be no real sincerity of life. Many lives, we all know, never attain this sincerity. Sometimes a man's character is better than we should infer from his words and actions. He talks, it may be, flippantly; he does things that are inconsiderate and wrong-headed, but his heart is in the right place. Sometimes, on the other hand, the character is worse than the conduct. A man may be a hypocrite; his conformity to the moral law may be purely conventional. When these discrepancies exist, which of the two elements is the more important? Ought we to focus our attention more on the foreground or the background? There are hard-headed, practical people who have no eyes for anything but action. 'Do your duty,' they tell us, 'and do not worry about the condition of your soul.' But that seems a short-sighted view. What are all your external actions worth, apart from your inner personality—apart from the real you, the deep-down you, as some one calls it? Our conduct lies open to our inspection. We cannot help knowing about it, but how little we sometimes know about our inward self. Do we not all need to raise our eyes from the foreground of our daily words and actions to the background of our dimly discerned personality?

2. Then, again, there is *the background of prayer*. Every true prayer, it has been said, has its background and its foreground. The foreground of prayer is the intense immediate longing for some blessing which seems to be absolutely necessary for the soul to have; the background of prayer is the quiet, earnest desire that the Will of God, whatever it may be, should be done. Examine from this point of view our Lord's perfect prayer at Gethsemane. In front we see the intense longing that the cup of agony and death might pass away from Him; but behind there stands the strong, steadfast desire that the Will of God should be done. Take away either of these conditions and the prayer becomes less perfect.

3. Take, again, *the background of Divine truth*. What do we see as we look down on the fore-

ground of our lives in these days of controversy? There lies before us a series of battle-scenes full of noise and confusion—the conflict of parties within the Church, the conflict of Church and Church, the conflict of Christian and non-Christian belief, the conflict of religion and agnosticism. Our brain seems to reel as we survey the combat and perhaps take part in it ourselves. How shall we keep our head amidst these fierce charges and war-cries? How shall we save ourselves from using our own creed as a shibboleth, or from beating our religious convictions into weapons of controversy? How, we ask? There is but one way. We must lift up our eyes to the still, solemn mountain background which rises far away beyond the scene of conflict. There, on the distant horizon of our lives, we shall find, if we have but faith to see, that eternal truth which is one aspect of the nature of God, that truth which tests and explains and reconciles our partial and conflicting beliefs.

4. One other spiritual background let us mention—it is *the background of the Christian ideal*. Behind the foreground of the actual daily lives lived by Christian men and women comes the distant ideal—and do we not constantly feel that it is unattainably distant?—which the Master has set before His Church. The teaching which presents that ideal is no mere dead record of a life that has passed away: it is a perennial reservoir of suggestiveness. Age after age has witnessed the re-incarnation of the Christian ideal. It has been assailed in these days, as it has often been assailed in times past. But the movement of modern thought has not been without its compensating advantages to Christianity, and I think we may claim that, in some respects, we are in closer touch than men used to be with the mind and the heart of Jesus Christ. We have been able to give new meanings to some of the familiar sayings, and we may be quite sure that we have not yet exhausted all that Christ has to teach us. Across the temptations and struggles, the difficulties and perplexities, with which the foreground of life is strewn, the Christian can still look up with confidence to the ideal which Christ sets before him, and feel the value of its example and guidance.¹

SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

Failure.

'What, could ye not watch with me one hour?'—Mt 26⁴⁰.

Carved upon a memorial stone to a Confederate

¹ H. G. Woods, *At the Temple Church*, 232.

leader in Charleston, South Carolina, are these words :

The Hour of Conflict,
The Day of Defeat,
The Years of Oppression
Brought to his Courage
No slackness ;
And to his Loyal Service
No Abatement.

No such words could have been written of the steadfastness of Jesus' friends at Gethsemane, for the day of defeat found them sleeping, the year of oppression brought slackness, and crises caused their erstwhile loyal service to be abated. Jesus found Himself in solitude, with no human hand or voice to assist Him in the supreme moment of human history.¹

'What, could ye not watch with me one hour?' What is the meaning of these words? The disciples by the light of the moon pass into the wood, staying near the main road; Peter, James and John going farther within. Why should they watch and pray? Is it that in these last hours Jesus is eager to be given some time to fight His battle in communion with His Father in heaven, to receive from God insight into the full meaning of what is to befall Him and strength to bear it? His was a conflict in which no stranger dared intrude, and so He withdrew Himself even from the chosen three. It was desirable that the spying emissaries of the priests should not come upon Him without warning. This probably explains in part the words of Jesus. His enemies were approaching and He desired time for undisturbed fellowship with God, and when the soldiers came He was to be given warning of their approach. There were other reasons. In the agonizing strife He longed for the company of those men who, in spite of their frailties, were His dearest and best friends. The animal receives a mortal wound and steals to its lonely lair to die alone, but man, in his last hour, is comforted by the presence of faithful ones who, by their prayers and companionship, support the soul ere it takes flight. Could ye not watch with Me one hour? Could ye not in prayer support Me, in love surround Me?

While these reasons may not have been absent from His mind, the chief reason was for their own sakes. Trials greater than they could envisage were to befall them; the Bridegroom was to be removed; their Leader was to fall into the hands of evil men, and then, bereft of His counsel, they

would be tested as never before, and in order that they might pass through their fiery furnace unscathed they must remain on the alert. We know how sadly they failed. They did not realize how momentous the hour was; they had never before found their Master overcome by His enemies. When the people desired to throw Him from the pinnacle of the temple He passed through their midst unnoticed. A few months before, soldiers had come to arrest Him but found themselves helpless in the presence of His Divine dignity, and the disciples must have felt that in some strange way the Master would again evade anything to His hurt. They had not learned that, for a purpose they could not understand, the hour had come when Jesus would use none of His Divine powers, the Hour of the Prince of Darkness, and so they fell asleep, and the slumber of these early morning hours explains the cowardly escape, the rash action of a man only half-awake who smote off a soldier's ear, and the persistent denial of the disciple who was so certain that he would never fail His Lord.²

Why did not His friends stay by Him in the supreme moment?

First, because the will-power of His friends gave way in the crisis. They had not counted on so long or so hard a road. There were reproach and hazards of which they had never dreamed in those evenings by the Sea of Galilee, when the sun was all a glory of red and yellow over the Judean hills. Although will-power is not as strong as subtle, instinctive forces within us, nevertheless there are times when only iron restraint can save us. General Gordon, who met his death in the Soudan beneath the spears of the Mahdi, was once led to a room full of treasure and told by high Chinese officials that this treasure would be his if he would countenance certain dishonourable practices. Iron will developed in desert marches, in fighting disease, and in upholding the Empire's honour in three continents, came forward to save him and gave him power to refuse. There are unexpected tests, crises for which no one is prepared, temptations for which no one has developed a specific defence; and, when the rush of circumstances is upon one, all one can do is to fall back in determination upon a former dedication and pray for strength to hold fast.

Again, Jesus was lonely because even His closest friends were unable to share His dreams. Although Cecil Rhodes may be blamed for a crass and material imperialism, his steadfastness in holding to a dream

¹ G. Stewart, *The Crucifixion in our Street*, 156.

² A. Chisholm, *High Roads and Cross Roads*, 67.

of a united South Africa under the British flag is one of the outstanding dreams of Empire of the last century. Down at the Kimberley Club, as his intimates grouped about him at night, he was wont to take down a great map of Africa, and, placing his hands on the territory beyond Cape Colony up to the central lakes, he would exclaim: 'All that shall be red; that is my dream.' And through long years of fragile health and immense difficulty he held to this dream, which was finally realized.

Jesus' friends had failed to appropriate for themselves His vision; there was no set to their minds to carry them onward in the midst of the gathering storm, and they slumbered and slept, insensitive to the immense significance of that night in the life of Jesus. They did not realize that for the sake of His dream of a new era in human existence Jesus committed His all, and God's all, to a farcical trial and a savage crucifixion as the utmost which love could do in redeeming men. The sheer unthinking dullness and the inability of His friends to use their imagination hurt Jesus more than all else. It was a time for great faith and great friendship, and Jesus received vacillating indifference.

But His disciples did not lose the battle that night; they had lost it long before. Their action on the fatal evening had been prepared for in the previous weeks. What we think to-day we shall do to-morrow; what we are at twenty we are apt to be at forty, only more so. Weeks of spiritual slackness, even if in the presence of Christ, had made easy their action on Jesus' night of agony.

It is difficult to keep a dream undimmed when trouble comes:

To hope till hope creates from its own wreck
The thing it contemplates.

To believe in a cause when it is under foot and

trampled upon, to cherish an ideal of a world state when it is defeated by the largest majority against any issue in the history of mankind, to follow Christ closely when He is alone in the Garden, sweating great drops of blood and grappling with the issues of life and death. Little did this sleepy group know that later generations would frame the prayer:

By thine agony and bloody sweat,
Good Lord, deliver us.

The supreme crisis in human history was approaching; the greatest single manifestation of God's outreaching love was about to be set forth, but this insensitive group was unable to keep vividly before them the dream of the Kingdom which Christ had come to establish.

Not only did their wills and their dreams give out, but also their belief. They had lost faith in themselves and left Jesus alone without their presence. Many of us develop a sense of inadequacy, and feel that we are useless to the world and to God. Jesus offers the world a conception of human personality which says to each, 'You are precious, you are valuable, you are loved.' But on this ghastly night these men, who could have meant so much by their mere companionship, had no confidence in themselves. They had lost sight of what they had to offer of friendship in His hour of tribulation.

We must believe in ourselves in order to help God. The Son of God is lonely now as He was in Gethsemane for responsive human hearts. And we must believe in Jesus. He asks men to give their wills, their dreams, their faith, to Him. He promises, in return, not ease or comfort, but, perchance, the promise to Garibaldi's Red Shirts, 'forced marches, battles, and death,' but in the end that spiritual victory which shall overcome the crassness and brutality of the world.¹

¹ G. Stewart, *The Crucifixion in our Street*, 158.

Christ's Answer to the Question about Divorce.

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

ACCORDING to the Lewesian Syriac of Mt 19^a in answer to the question 'Is it permitted to a man to dismiss his wife on any pretext?' Jesus replied:

לא קריחתן דמן דעבד לרבא אף לנקבתה הוו עבד

'Have ye not read the ruling of Him who made

the male, who also made the female? (Gn 2²⁴)— "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." Hence they are not two, but one flesh. That which God hath coupled let not man sunder.' The use of a simple ܓ ('of') for 'the