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larger knowledge and immensely enriched stores of revelation, but with less dramatic and less authoritative direct disclosures of the Divine will and mind? We have to think more. That is not our disgrace, if it does not prevent us believing more abundantly, more intensely. But to claim a like directness of communication, stamped with the unmistakable seal of Divine authority? That, I for one will not claim. Without the revelation of God in the Bible and in our Lord Jesus Christ I am undone, without a chart if not without a compass.

2. We are reminded of the manifoldness of the Divine activity. He takes His chief workers from every type of personality and from every type of experience. He still needs and finds the statesman-prophet and the artist-prophet, the messenger of hope and the messenger of doom, the recluse and the man of affairs, endowing them with the gifts which make them fit for apparently impossible tasks. We easily limit His range and doubt His availability for our kind of requirement. He still controls the births of great personalities, He still invades every kind of life with His thunderous or whispered challenge.

3. We are reminded equally of the Divine re-

sources. 'There is no kind of difficulty within us or without us with which He cannot deal.' Smear and stain of sin, defect and disability of temperament, entanglement and imprisonment of environment—the Divine Energy can liberate and endow and renew according to our and His need. All the modern elucidations of how things affect the soul of man are useful, if we remember the inestimable powers of recovery and revitalization which are in God alone. Forget that, and we are without hope. Recollect that, make it a part of our working faith, and we belong to the conquerors.

4. Finally, the greatest servants of God begin with a creative experience in their own life. It may not be conversion—we need a bigger name—but it is transformation. If that dies out of our message we defraud our fellows of the good news they need most tragically in this hour. Nay, we do a worse thing, we come near to baffling God when He seeks to redeem our time by personalities newly empowered because newly endowed with what only God can give. On His power to penetrate human personality and to transform it, we must insist if we are to continue to believe in the God revealed in the Old and the New Testaments.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

An Easter Sermon.

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

'The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.'—Jn 5²⁵ (R.V.).

EASTER is the time when all the face of Nature is preaching in white and gold and purple the message of Resurrection. For long months the world has been silent: the fields bare, the trees gaunt and leafless, the birds' voices unheard. It has seemed as if all the beauty of the world was buried and lost.

But although buried it was not dead. Nature was a Sleeping Beauty with a spell upon her. She lay helpless and silent until the sun, that Fairy Prince, stooped and kissed her and she woke to new life.

That is the wonder of Easter. It is as if the sun, that great light of the world, was saying what Jesus, who is 'the Light of the world,' said once

—'the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.' So the world hears a voice and lives. There is a green on the bare brown fields, a bursting of buds on the trees that shall clothe their nakedness in fair, new garments, and a great and glad singing of birds. This is God preaching from the book of Nature what He preaches in His other Book, the Bible—life from the dead—Resurrection.

I want to tell you how I once saw it.

It was in a garden. The front was just a bare, dull sweep of gravel; but in the midst of it, like a point of flame, was a crocus. There had been a flower-bed there, but to save work it had been dug up, its flowers taken away, the earth smoothed and beaten down and covered with gravel. It seemed the finish of the flower-bed, but deep down was one crocus bulb overlooked and left. Under cart-loads of gravel that little vital streak of life lay sleeping. Then the Easter sun shone out and called to it—'Awake, thou that sleepest, and I will

give you light'—and sent its long fingers of wakening warmth down into the cold darkness and touched it. It wakened from its long sleep and pushed up persistently towards the light, through the hard and heavy soil, through the unkindly gravel, bravely and gallantly, until it burst out into the light and unfolded the glory of its golden robes.

It seemed impossible, but there it was, a miracle of resurrection. I thought it the bravest and most wonderful thing I had ever seen; and I can never forget the picture of that stony waste with the gallant little thing of gold shining out in its midst like a gospel.

It is a gospel.

Our hearts are often like that garden. The Gardener, who loves the hearts of girls and boys, plants them with seeds that are meant to flower with beauty and fragrance. 'Honesty' and 'Lad's Love' and 'Forget-me-not,' white flowers of Holiness and Truth, and flowers of Sacrifice, blue flowers of Faith with heaven's blue in their hearts—these He plants and looks to see them grow. God is the Gardener. He didn't stop planting gardens because once 'He planted a garden in Eden' and man spoiled it. He goes on planting gardens, and we go on spoiling them.

Evil things of this world come and persuade us to the ungracious task of digging them up. We sweep away the plants and stamp down the earth and strew it with stones and call it 'Progress.' But—

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore.

The grace of Christ, the Light of the World, shines upon us to waken the dead in us, the Sleeping Beauty of our soul, the forgotten things, the graces that are waiting to be born.

It may be a verse of a hymn that stirs them, the quietness of Holy Communion, the tenderness of a christening and the white innocence of a little child, or, perhaps, some sore sorrow. But it is all the grace of Christ, who uses many ways to waken our sleeping souls to life.

Will you hear Him? You haven't really begun to live till you do. Is Easter to be only the truth of a far-off garden long ago in old Jerusalem, and of the world of Nature around us? Or is it to be the truth of your young heart—now?

It may be. It is meant to be. When we sing 'Hallelujah! Christ is risen,' it should not be just a glad remembrance, but something we know in ourselves. We ought to be able to go on and sing, with the same gladness, 'We are risen.'

There is no grave of selfishness, or forgetfulness, or feebleness, or old hard-trodden-in habit, no strong weight of disappointment or sorrow, that has power to hold our soul, if we will hear Christ, any more than the earth and the gravel had power to keep down the crocus, so frail and feeble. That answered the call of the sun: so can we.

The ever new message of Easter-tide, the wonderful gospel of the Resurrection, is, 'The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear Thy voice; and they that hear shall live.'

Girls and boys, 'now' means 'now'; and 'they' means 'you.'

Two Men's Treasure.

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM J. MAY, ILKESTON.

'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . ; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.'—Mt 6th. 20.

The newspapers are full of all sorts of things, beautiful things as well as nasty things; only sometimes they print the nasty things so large and the lovely things so small that the lovely things are overlooked and not read.

Not very long ago the newspapers told us that two men had died and both had begun life as poor boys, both had left very much treasure behind them, only different kinds of treasure. The papers told the story of one man who had been poor and had worked hard and looked ahead and saved money, and at his death he had left behind him about £4,000,000. I do not know how much money that is, but it is a great deal for one man to have to worry about. Then the papers went on to say that in his will the rich man said he had not left any money to help hospitals and poor people, because he had given away a lot of money while he had been alive. The papers said that he had given £10,000 to a hospital here, and £10,000 to a hospital there, and that was all.

Then the papers told a much finer story. Another man had died—a young man, this one. Between thirty and forty years ago a little boy was ill in a hospital ward in Liverpool. He was very poor. He was very ill. At first he was very, very miserable. He thought that he was going to die, and that no one cared whether he did die or live. But soon he began to think differently. He had a comfortable bed and clean clothes. That was rather nice. He thought he would like to live a bit longer to enjoy the nice bed and the clean clothes. Most wonderful of all, people were kind to him. Nobody kicked him because he was in

the way. Nobody cursed him because he needed something. People did things for him as though they liked doing them, did them as though they thought he was worth it; and the boy thought he would like to live just to have a little more kindness shown him. He soon began to get well, and the kindness kept on. It got right down inside his heart, and he said to himself:

'When I grow up, if ever I get a chance, I will do something for the hospitals, just to tell them that I am grateful for their kindness.'

The boy got well and grew up and became the editor of a great London newspaper. He knew that he was not likely to live very long, but he made up his mind that he would *live* every hour he was here, and, especially, that he would do all he could for boys and girls who were just as miserable and unhappy as he had been, and for hospitals.

One day he stood in a long hospital ward in a London hospital where every bed had some one in it whose eyes were bad. The sunlight was pouring in through the windows but they could not see it. There were lovely flowers on the tables and by the bedsides and no one to see them but the nurses. The patients were in the dark hour after hour, day after day, night after night. There was nothing they could do to pass the time, nothing to help them to forget the pain, nothing to cheer them up when they were afraid they would never see the sunshine and the flowers again.

'I wish I could do something to help them,' he said. 'There are so many of them, so many hospitals full of sick folk, full of people waiting for operations, people in terrible pain, people tired of lying in bed. I wish I could do something'—then it came to him all in a flash—'Wireless! Let them listen in.'

But that meant a lot of thinking and planning. How were you going to have a set with three hundred pairs of headphones? Who would look after it and tune it in? And, above all, who would pay for it? So he talked to wireless engineers and hospital governors and doctors and all sorts of people. Then he talked to everybody through his newspaper:

'How would you like to be in hospital all day in the dark in pain with nothing to do? Wouldn't you like to help me put in wireless for these sick people?'

The King said, 'Yes, please,' and the Queen said, 'Of course, we should,' and lots of ordinary, common people said, 'Rather!' and they sent shillings and half-crowns and five-pound notes and headphones, and to-day, at every bed in every

hospital in London, there is a pair of 'phones that sick people may listen in or else a loud speaker in the ward.

And all over the country people said, 'We, too, have a hospital. Our sick people shall have wireless,' and they did it. It was all because people were kind to a little sick, miserable boy and he grew up and fulfilled his vows.

Even then he was not content. He remembered that there are schools here and there where there are boys and girls who have got into trouble with the police and have been sent to these schools to learn to behave themselves. They ought to have wireless, too, he said. Once more he talked to the people through his paper, and the wireless came.

Then, only a few weeks before he died, he remembered the men who keep the lights burning on the lighthouses and light-ships round the coast and warn vessels to keep away from the rocks, and sometimes do not see a newspaper for five or six weeks at a time.

'They also deserve to have wireless,' he said, and once more he talked to people through his newspaper, and the wireless came.

Well, he had not got much money in his pocket when he died, but I think he had great treasure, and the treasure of all the love and kindness he showed and all he did for other people is something which he has not left behind, but something which is his very own for all eternity. Do you remember what Jesus once said?

'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but lay up treasure in heaven.' The stories from the newspaper help you to understand what He meant.

The Christian Year.

EASTER SUNDAY.

The Tenderness of Christ towards those who have failed Him.

'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.'—Jn 20^{19, 20}.

We cannot read our New Testament, where it describes the days which followed immediately upon the Crucifixion of our Lord, without feeling that that Awful Event had plunged the disciples for the time being into amazement and despair. It was not what they had expected. And although

Jesus had been careful to warn them against all worldly anticipations, it is quite evident to us that the disciples had never abandoned the hope that one day, it might be even at the very last moment, their Master would summon some supernatural force to His side and mount an earthly throne. We know what did happen. Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried.

There they were, then, full of disappointment concerning Christ, things not having turned out as they had expected, the whole world for the time being seeming to them to be awry and senseless. Along with that they had the feeling, though they may not have understood themselves at the first, that, talk as they might in their anger about going back to their old habits, as a matter of fact they could never be the same as they had been—that now, since they had been going about with Christ for three years dealing with matters which, it might be, were beyond them, yet not quite beyond them and not always beyond them, they could never now go back to those occupations with which at one time they had been content. When a man has once seen Christ, he may one day abandon Christ, but he can never be quite the same. Mingling with these two feelings there was that other—that the death of Jesus had tried them in the balance and had found them wanting. The Crucifixion had made it quite clear to everybody who cared to think about them, that the disciples at that stage were merely worldly men. Now we are never so angry as when we are angry at ourselves. We are never so disappointed as when we are disappointed in ourselves.

1. In the first place, then, it was to men who were honestly disappointed in Christ, disappointed that He had permitted Himself to die, that Jesus appeared showing them His wounds. Seeing Him there, and thus, a great blindness passed away from those disciples, a great worldliness and stupidity of the spirit was scattered like clouds by wind and sun. That came to pass in their minds which had just happened in the case of the two on the way to Emmaus—they saw, by a flash of insight into their own Scriptures and into their own history, that it behoved the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory. They were Jews, and, seeing Jesus there with His pierced hands and side, they saw not the contradiction of the ancient faith, but the awful fulfilment of it. Christ in disappointing their poor worldly thoughts about Him, and poor worldly ambitions for Him, had not disappointed them on the High and Holy Plane, on that only plane whereon the soul can be satisfied—when we

see God stooping in Holy Love and Suffering to save.

2. Resolving that darkness, Jesus dealt also with a second source of darkness in their spirits. Much of the sorrow of the disciples in the days immediately after Calvary came to them as they looked forward to the days that lay before them. How were they to go on without that society, that companionship, about which they were only now beginning to understand what it had been to them? But, appearing now as He did, that great sorrow in their hearts was composed. It was as though He, Christ, were saying to them: 'I am still with you. All that I ever was to you I am still, and may be to you more and more. I was dead: I am alive for evermore. Death is nothing to such a communion as we may have.' And so, once more 'were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.'

3. Much of the sorrow of the disciples arose from their miserable thoughts about themselves. They had seen Christ taken captive, and they had forsaken Him. One of them had seen Him buffeted in the Judgment Hall and had denied Him. They had seen Him crucified and made a public spectacle, while they had stood afar off beholding these things. The Cross had found them out. Christ's three years' patience with them had gone for nothing.

'And Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you, and he shewed unto them his hands and his side.' And how did it comfort them, how did it make them glad, to see His wounds? Would it not add to their shame to see His hands and His side? Would it not have been a great kindness if Jesus had veiled His wounds, thus sparing them this goad to their own painful memories? No, for it was the wounds of Jesus which they most wanted to see. For away at the back of all their miserable thoughts about themselves there was this thought—that Jesus would never have any need of their love now; that they had failed Him in the only days in which they might have been faithful to Him; that now He was away in a region where He had no need of their loyalty, either in the dim abode of shades, or in the radiant Presence of His Father.

'But Jesus appeared and shewed unto them his wounds. Then were they glad.' He was not yet, then, away beyond their reach, beyond a certain need of them. He had still—His wounds. There was something they could yet do: they could live in the world as those who have seen the unhealed wounds of the Saviour of the World.

We too have failed towards Christ in many a shameful way. And at times our bitterness is this,

that we think that we shall never be able to re-instate ourselves in Christ's affection. To us, too, to us at this sacred season, if our hearts are really engaged, Jesus comes, and He shows us His hands and His side. He shows us His wounds that are still open—shows us that there is still many a thing which we can do for His blessed sake, and in the doing may lose the bitterness of our memories.¹

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Winter is Past.

'Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come.'—Ca 2¹¹. 12.

At this delightful season of the year, when we witness again the recurring miracle of the unfolding leaves and the new-blown flowers and the returning song-birds, there are few of us, I think, whose hearts do not leap forth to acclaim the wonder and glory of this radiant world. 'I love the smile of the earth,' cries a character in one of Mr. E. F. Benson's books—'I love the smile of the earth when she wakes in spring, and puts forth her thoughts again. When she thinks about hawthorn, she thinks in little squibs of green leaf ; when she thinks about birds, she thinks in terms of nightingale-song ; or when she thinks about crocuses, she sees her thoughts expressed in yellow chalices, with pollen-coated tongues. She thinks she has had enough of the grey winter-withered grass, and lo ! the phalanxes of minute green spears charge and rout it. She thinks in the scent of wall-flowers, and the swift running of lizards on the stone walls, and pink of peach-blossom, and foam of orchid-flower. My goodness, what a poet she is !'

Now what is the special message of this blessed spring-season to us ?

Well, in the first place, the spring is *the great natural revelation of life*—of revival, of rejuvenescence. It is the very season of resurrection. Graves open ; sleeping things awake ; imprisoned things are emancipated ; dead things live. There is movement and change and progress. Everything is full of force, full of vitality, full of life, and is thrusting upwards and outwards towards yet more abundant life.

Every clod feels a stir of might,

An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And groping blindly above it for light,

Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers.

Now all this awakening into life that is going on around us—what is it but an acted parable of another sort of awakening into another sort of life and a higher ? Is it not appropriate that we should keep Easter in the springtime, when all Nature is reviving from its death-like slumber ? Is it not well that we should be reminded that the same Life-giving Spirit that is seeking out the dead things in the woods and fields, and transforming them so wonderfully into buds and leaves and tinted blossoms, is performing a similar gracious office for the benefit of man ? He seeks the spiritually dead. He seeks the men who are dead 'in trespasses and sins'—the arrant outcasts and incorrigibles who have long been given up as hopeless, dead to home and dead to friends and dead to all decent society—dead to everybody but God. And He also seeks those other dead, who lie comfortably coffined in narrow formalities and respectabilities, buried in dismal sepulchres of spiritual lethargy and self-compacency, where no ray of light can touch them. To all these comes the Life-Giver.

To-day spring seems to be coming in a special sense. Everywhere around us dead things—cold, stiff, sapless, wintry things—seem to be stirring and warming and reviving. Dead peoples, dead societies—are they not gradually awakening to the larger possibilities of national existence ? Dead churches, where a complicated system of ecclesiastical machinery has obscured or blocked out the vision of God—are they not being quickened to new insight and new vigour ? Dead doctrines and beliefs, dead loyalties and allegiances—all sorts of beautiful things which, during long years of stagnancy, have drooped and shrivelled up and withered—all these have been touched by the breath of the Giver of Life, and begin again to flower and flourish. For the springtime—may we not believe it?—the springtime with its transfiguring freshness and vitality is coming back to us to-day, and 'once more,' as Tennyson puts it in his poem on 'Early Spring'—'once more the Heavenly Power makes all things new.'

Then, again, just as spring is a revelation of life, so is it, further, *a revelation of beauty*. Only think of the incomparable loveliness of the spring flowers alone. Why, so enchanting are those spring flowers that almost every one of them has found a poet of its own to sing its individual praises. The daisy, for instance, and the celandine have each been hymned by Wordsworth, the daisy once more by Burns, the snowdrop and the tulip by James Montgomery, the violet by Herrick, the primrose

¹ J. A. Hutton, *There They Crucified Him*, 246.

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¹ J. A. Hutton, *There They Crucified Him*, 246.

by Henry Kirke White, the daffodil by Austin Dobson. Lowell, again, has celebrated the flame-like glories of the dandelion, Elizabeth Barrett Browning the 'mountain gorses, ever golden,' while Walt Whitman's magnificent chant, known as 'Lincoln's Burial Hymn,' is all fragrant with the clean, invigorating perfume of the lilac :

Stands the lilac bush, tall growing, with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom, rising delicate,
with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle.

And surely this exuberance of floral beauty is not without a meaning for the understanding heart. Is it not itself an exposition, as it were, a clear and conclusive demonstration, of the liberal love of God? That is exactly what it is. All this overflowing loveliness is a revelation of the bountifulness of the Providence that blesses us.

Then, lastly, not only is spring a revelation of life and a revelation of beauty; it is also a *revelation of abounding hope and joy*. No season of the year is so symbolic of pure joyousness. The whole world seems, as it were, to be breaking into laughter; and the echo of that laughter haunts the spring-songs of the poets. Listen!

In our hearts fair hope lay smiling,
Sweet as air, and all beguiling;
And there hung a mist of bluebells on the slope
and down the dell;
And we talked of joy and splendour
That the years unborn would render,
And the blackbirds helped us with the story, for
they knew it well.

We have been through our winter, our drab, depressing winter, and often we thought in despair that the spring would never come. Professional pessimists told us that it would never come. Yet, spring has indeed its 'certain date,' however it seem to be delayed. It is coming. It is certainly coming, though we cannot tell how it is coming. We really do not know how all things will work together ultimately for our good. We really cannot imagine how some of our losses will ever be made up to us. We cannot possibly divine how our sighs will be turned into songs, or how we shall win strength and salvation from our agony. It is all just a hope, and, in some of our moods, it seems to us a wildly extravagant hope. Yet the Divine way with Nature is the Divine way with the life of man. Out of winter comes the spring; out of misery nobly borne comes the rapture of great

gladness. And for those who trust in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, the tardy hours will bring at length a priceless boon out of every sad experience, a thrill of delight out of every throb of pain, a solid advantage out of every apparent disaster, and in the end—some day, somewhere—the sweet music of the spring-song, 'Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.'

This natural spring that we see everywhere about us, with its revelation of life, its revelation of beauty, and its revelation of joy—does it not bring to us this message?—'There shall be a new heaven and a new earth. There shall be a greener world and a bluer sky. There shall be a nobler manhood. There shall be new hearts and new souls. The old things are passing away amid fierce agitations and convulsions, and all things are becoming new.' Yes, a happier world is yet to be, where 'everlasting spring abides and never-fading flowers,' and where, as in long-lost Paradise, God Himself shall once more walk with man amid the bowers and blooms of the garden in the cool of the day. Let us look forward, therefore, with confidence to the better things that are in store for us. Let us anticipate, and prepare ourselves for, 'the earth's divine renewal.'¹

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

In Another Form.

'After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.'—Mk 16¹².

He appeared unto them in another form—not another person. It was the same Christ and Lord. But there was some difference of manifestation. That is the plain truth coming to meet us out of the region of mystery where for us the final truth of things must ever dwell. After His resurrection Jesus was to His disciples Jesus—with a difference. The disciples never doubted that He was the same Jesus with whom they had passed through the cornfields, and traversed the Syrian highways, and voyaged on Gennesaret. But the human form which was soon to pass from their midst already seemed to be playing a lessening part in their recognition of their Lord. In a little while they should see Him no more—that is, as a man sees his fellow-man. Soon the vision of the living and ever-present Christ was to be reserved wholly for the inward eye of every reverent and faithful soul. But it would

¹ F. H. Dudden, *The Delayed Victory*, 73.

appear that already the old order was changing, and the outward form of the Master was already becoming less and less an essential medium for the revelation and recognition of His unchanging personality. This much may be gathered from the story of the days between the Resurrection and the Ascension.

The Magdalene, to whom Jesus appeared in Joseph's garden, in the clear sunlight of the Easter morning, failed to recognize Him until He called her by her name, and that one word so tenderly spoken brought the flash of inward vision that told her she stood in the presence of her Lord. It was her heart that first recognized Him. Recall for a moment another scene. Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, with Thomas and Nathanael of Cana and two other disciples—seven of them in all—were coming ashore after a night of fruitless toil on the waters of Tiberias. Jesus stood on the beach and asked them how they had fared, and gave them instructions to cast their net again; and not one of the seven recognized Him until, as they hauled in the net and felt its straining meshes, and caught the silvery glimmer of scales beneath the water, one of them suddenly realized who it was at whose bidding they had cast their net. And it is very significant that the man who first woke to the recollection of this, and to the recognition of that Figure on the shore, was John, the disciple who was bound most closely to the Master by the bonds of affection, and who had that faculty of intuition and perception that is the birthright of affectionate and sympathetic natures.

Without following the history any further, it is clear that the story of the days between the Resurrection and Ascension tells us that, in the recognition of Jesus by those to whom He revealed Himself, the spiritual senses predominated over the physical, and the heart played an ever larger part in the work of perception. It is abundantly clear from the narrative that it was no apparitional and illusionary Christ that the disciples recognized; but it is equally clear that they who had been wont to recognize their Lord in precisely the same way as they recognized one another, now needed that their physical senses should be quickened and reinforced by the spiritual forces of memory, faith, and love.

And now, of all the things that might be learned from these strange and wondrous days when Jesus passed among His disciples—a figure so simply human, and yet so mysteriously Divine, now obeying and now conquering the laws of time and space—let us then learn this lesson: we must not

think to find⁷ in the⁸ forms and manifestations of spiritual life that reality and finality which can only rightly be attributed to spiritual life itself. Form plays so large a part in our physical and material reckonings, judgment by appearance is so necessarily a part of our life in a world of appearances.

'He appeared in another form.' He is always doing that. Would that our faith were deep enough, would that our insight were keen enough, would that our love were catholic enough, to recognize Him in all the forms and fashions of His coming unto the children of men! For all of us whose religious experience is a reality there is one form we recognize. We know Him as He has come to us. Let us not think that every man must know Him exactly as we do. Let us never hold up before our brother's eyes our portrait of Christ, and say, 'That is He, and there is no other: when you see that you will see Him, and not till then.' Let us say to ourselves rather, 'That is my vision; but it may not be his.' Many a stumbling-block would be removed from the path of the seekers after Christ—and many a misjudgment would be averted or corrected—if only we could come to see that the Christ of all true spiritual experience has more than one fashion of revealing Himself to men, and of imparting to them the treasures of His grace. He has Divine power, Divine mercy, Divine love for us all. The Cross of His mysterious passion casts its healing shadow across the life of humanity. Some find the Risen Christ as the Magdalene who found Him suddenly when He named her name. Some find Him in the doing of His will, as the disciples who cast the net in Tiberias, and found it was their Master and Lord they were obeying. Some go the journey to Emmaus—the way of many a heart-burning, many a meditation, many a mind and spirit struggle—and find Him in the breaking of bread. At the core of all Christian experience there lies the same eternal truth, for it is the same Christ who meets us all; but many are the forms that experience can take.

'He appeared in another form.' These are words to hush for ever the foolish strife about modes of worship. There are those who look upon the eastern window of a cathedral, casting its glorious colours on altar-cloth and surplice and pavement, and say it stands for gross materialism. In their eyes the ritualist is an idolater. There are others who attend a meeting in a Salvation Army barracks, and go away and talk about irreverence. And they are all wrong. One man's history and tempera-

ment make symbolism and ritual invaluable to him; another man's history and temperament make him glory in a form of worship that is stripped of everything that might be called in any way symbolic. The same Christ appears to each worshipper. There is no change of personality, there is only a change of form.

And may we not find in these words we are considering a warning against associating the Divine revelation of God in Christ too exclusively with the thought and activity of the Christian Church? It has been already demonstrated to the satisfaction of most thoughtful people that there is no quarrel between Christianity and science. But it would seem in these later years that the scientists are themselves coming nearer and ever nearer to the Christian view of God and the world through that reverence, faith, and truth that are of the very essence of the truly scientific spirit. Many who have no regard whatever for orthodoxy have a supreme regard for truth, and are finding the truth along lines that are certainly not obviously evangelical.

'He appeared in another form.' There has come over the Christian Church a great change of view on more than one important part of the Christian creed. Our view of salvation is not so individualistic and self-regarding as it was. The oneness of the race, the socialism of the gospel, and the supreme self-forgetfulness of the Cross have taken men out of themselves, and wakened all the truly social and serviceable instincts of men's souls. Men are learning, as never before, to live for men. The words 'the people' are not a vague term, having no significance for the individual. The problem of the many is coming home to individual hearts and consciences. The man whose bread is sure is concerned about his brethren who are hungry. The woman whose life is set amid the sweet protections of a love-lit home is taking to her heart the pain and peril of her sister who is compelled to live her life face to face with the shames of the world. Some are afraid of this tendency and teaching. There is no need to be. It is the same Christ revealing Himself to men in another, and maybe a truer, form.

So, as we ponder the mysterious manifestations of the Risen Christ, let us remind ourselves that this same Jesus is ever in our midst, and we must be ready to recognize Him in the garden of our hope and sorrow, on the Tiberias of our daily toil, in the beauty of the earth, and in every place where duty, pain, or love may take us.¹

¹ P. C. Ainsworth, *A Thornless World*, 93.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Christ Fashioned Within.

'It pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me.'—Gal 1^{16, 19}.

'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you!'—Gal 4¹⁹.

'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'—Col 1²⁷.

We are all familiar with the saying that in every man there are three personalities. But a truer reading of human nature modifies this statement. There is only one personality, but that personality lives and moves in three worlds of thought, desire, and will. The first of these three worlds is that of our ordinary thought and our transient feeling as they are expressed in the intercourse of life. The second is the world of inner desire, with its self-communing and unconfessed hopes and fears. But within and behind these two there is a third realm. It is a world wholly unknown to our fellow-men, and greatly dark to ourselves. It is the Holy of Holies—the shrine of the soul. The other two are only the Outer Court and the Holy Place.

We know how real this inmost and benmost sphere of life is. When we were children there were names which were household words, places familiar in every feature, incidents which were the great events of our short history, persons who were our guides. Many of these have melted into the infinite azure of the past. We cannot recall them by any act of will. Yet let some name stand out on a page, or let some word fall upon our ear from a speaker's lips, or let some old faded letter come into our hands, and at once, swimming up out of this secret inmost world, there come the names, faces, events, personalities, upon which we thought death had laid its binding spell. They were not dead; they were only lodging in this inmost and benmost world of our being.

The broad law of a victorious Christian life is that Christ must be dominant within the soul. Christ must be fashioned within. It is not enough that Christ should control the outer court of our life, our judgment, our habits, our intercourse with the world, or even our worship and services. It is not enough that Christ should be the Master in the second chamber of our being, and that we should think on Him with reverence, and dwell upon Him in quiet meditation, and find our minds glow with tender feeling towards His moral loveliness. Christ must pass in through the two outer courts. He must enter to abide within us, and to hold our will in the hollow of His hand. He must be the indwelling personality who will fashion us

like unto Himself. The whole history of the Christian conquest is the fashioning of Christ within.

There are three clearly outlined stages in this fashioning. The first is—*Christ born within*; the second—*Christ formed within*; the third—*Christ perfected within*.

1. *Christ born within*.—There is a decisive spiritual change by which a man becomes a Christian. We should not encourage any narrow thoughts about the circumstances of its happening, or the emotions which it arouses, or the words in which it finds expression. We are all so different in age and situation, in our past and even our present, in our training and our temperament, that no two men ever have had the same experience in this vital change. For that reason it is described in Scripture under many names. It is called: 'being renewed in the spirit of your mind'; 'being quickened together with Christ'; 'being called out of darkness into his marvellous light'; 'becoming a little child'; 'awaking as from a deep sleep'; 'passing from death unto life'; 'becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus.' But Jesus always uses the final, the perfect, and the most beautiful word, and He names it—the new birth. Where does this new birth take place? Not in the outer world of daily thought and action, and not in the inner world of self-communing. It takes place in this inmost core of our being. What is it in simplest terms? It is Christ passing into the secret place of our soul, a spiritual presence, to be fashioned within.

To that experience Paul refers in one of his strange words: 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.' We know how Jesus laid siege to Paul. We can mark the steps by which He conquered him. Paul's large, sane, penetrating mind began to understand the wisdom of Christ's words. Jesus, in His grace and loveliness, began to creep into the study of his imagination. Then Christ passed into the second world of Paul's deeper thought and more wistful desire. The conviction that the way of his walking was not securely right brought forth self-reproaches and strange relents. The record of that stage of experience is to be found in the words, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' But Christ was not yet born within. There came that moment on the road to Damascus when the great light shined about him, and the voice of Christ rang through him, and the barrier of the shrine was broken down, and Christ passed in to dwell at the centre of his being. God had revealed His Son in Paul.

2. *Christ formed within*.—It may seem that we are speaking in too high, too daring, and too mystic, a way when we declare that Christ may be fashioned within the spirit of man. But it should not be a strange thing to any one to say that one personality may possess and pervade another. It is quite within the range of our experience that one personality has become the life and force of another, so as to be formed within. Browning, with his usual insight into the working of the soul, has set this truth in his poem 'By the Fire-side.' He describes a simple scene. He shows us a husband and wife sitting by the hearthstone in the evening hour. They have lived in a close and unsullied fellowship. They are both growing old. The husband tells his wife how deeply and potently her personality and character have penetrated his. Then he passes to the scene of the perfect consummation. It came, as they stood at the close of day, on a rustic bridge over a quiet stream:

A moment after, and hands unseen

Were hanging the night around us fast;

But we knew that a bar was broken between

Life and life: we were mixed at last

In spite of the mortal screen.

3. *Christ perfected within*.—'That God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.' This hope, made confident by the experience of its power, breathes through the aspirations of all the New Testament saints. Paul's prayer is consummated in John's unforgettable anthem, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.' What is the reality to which this hope looks out? The day is coming when all that is earthly shall pass away, and all that is temporal shall be no more. What shall remain is this inmost world of our personality where Christ has been formed within. There shall Christ be perfected. We have been planting our bulbs in the earth in the knowledge that:

There is a day in spring

When under all the earth the secret germs

Begin to stir and grow before they bud.

As the life within begins to move, the outer husks and coverings fall away into death and rottenness. But the life sends up its living green shoots into the world of light and beauty. Then the form of the plant begins to appear, and finally the flower lifts its head in the mellow sunshine. So Christ.

born within and formed within, shall, in that new atmosphere of light and love, be perfected, and we shall be 'conformed unto the likeness of God's dear Son.'

All this rises up to a solemn issue. It brings us face to face with the alternative which cannot be escaped. Either Christ has been born within, and is passing on to a perfect fashioning, or some other personality is becoming the indwelling and dominant spirit of our inmost being. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' That is the timeless word of the wondrous music with which Christ seeks entrance that He may be fashioned within. But the shrine will not remain empty. If Christ be denied, some other will enter in. The Evil One will become dominant, and we shall be fashioned unto his likeness, as too many men have been.¹

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Conquest of Limitation.

'Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel.'—Ph 1¹² (R.V.).

Wherever there was a church in need Paul was there to help it; wherever there was an open door Paul was the first to step in. Nothing mattered to him except that the work should go forward, and the greatest part of its burdens he carried on his own shoulders. And now there are to be no more adventures. That part of the story is ended. The days of open doors have gone; all the doors now are barred and bolted. He is a prisoner. The need of distant provinces may cry out for help, but he cannot go in answer. New fields may open up, but he cannot take advantage of the occasion. The old adventurous spirit is in bonds. How will he regard it?

'Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel.' Resignation bows its head and says, 'What must be must be, I accept'; faith lifts up its eyes and says, 'Even here there is beauty and meaning and scope.' Now that is what we get in St. Paul's sentence. It is a verdict of faith. There is no submission about it. There is rather the note of a half-humorous conquest. The Apostle looks at his narrow confinement and says, 'Even this is not without its effect.' His prison turns into a new kind of pulpit. The work goes on.

¹ W. M. Clow, *The Evangel of the Strait Gate*, 151.

Now we are on the threshold of a great subject here. What is the task of faith in this world? Not so much to explain as to overcome! Faith does not set out to give us a clear-cut explanation of the why and wherefore of things; it is the spirit which goes out into the midst of inexplicable things to shape them after its own fashion. Faith is a life, not a scheme. Ultimately in this great business of human life mystery broods over the face of things, explanations are withheld, and the whole issue comes to this, whether we are going to wrest out of life's problems some gain which can never be lost. The man of faith does not know more about the meaning of life's problems than any of his fellows, he is not in possession of the key to the puzzle, but he has within himself the spirit which challenges life to give up its hidden riches.

So the greatest test of faith comes to us when life shows its worst side, and it comes, I think, supremely in old age, when the whole temptation of life is to feed on memory instead of on hope. The greatest witness of faith is old age, which has still the forward look. That your young men should see visions is no wonderful thing; that your old men should dream dreams is. Paul was never greater than in the closing stages of his life when he saw in his prison an opportunity, and his heart leapt out in thankfulness to take it.

But this same issue is always fought out when adversity appears, whether it comes in youth or in age. The difference between men and women is not the measure of adversity which comes to them, but what they do with adversity when it appears. In every life sooner or later 'the rains descend, the winds blow, and the floods arise'; for one man the house of life falls in ruins, for another it stands secure, and the difference lies not in the intensity of the storm, but in the power to withstand.

There is a fine story which is told of Marshal Foch, that one day when the position of things was critical, the further retreat would have endangered the whole line, one of his divisional generals sent him a message saying that he could not continue to hold a certain line of trenches which had become untenable, and in reply the Marshal sent him this message, 'If you can't hold on, you must advance.' It is a great motto for life, and the power to advance in such circumstances is where the great test comes.

And now if that is faith's greatest test, it is also by inevitable consequence the field where the greatest triumphs are won. What is the thing that we could least afford to lose out of the story of our lives or the story of the world? It is the record of the hard days. The victories which men

have won over against circumstances are the greatest stories in the world. One thinks of Milton in his blindness writing words like these :

I argue not

Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward.

One thinks of Beethoven in his deafness giving music for the ears of future ages. Or one turns to another field of life and thinks of James Watt, the great inventor, feeble in body and starving on a few shillings a week, saying, 'Of all things in life there is nothing more foolish than inventing.' Nearer still in time there is David Livingstone dragging a fever-stricken body over the wastes of Africa for a dream he had set out to attain. And you notice there are prisons in all these illustrations—the dark prison of blindness, the stony prison of deafness, the prisons of sickness and infirmity, but out of these have come the furtherance of poetry and music and invention and discovery.

These greater records in the story of faith have their own message to ourselves. In the end the greatness of life for all of us depends upon how we

deal with that little phrase, 'the things which happened unto me.' Are we to be the victims of what happens, whether it be good or ill? Then we are among the defeated. Circumstances paint their image on our little lives, and the world has no gain from our living. Or are we conquerors, moulding conditions to our will? Then the world does gain.

Faith is not an explanation of things, but a spirit of life. It is not a key to the puzzle, but a great venture. In that spirit of life, in that venture there is the clearest light we can get upon the meaning of things? Is it not true that the light we crave upon this puzzling world is the reward, not of detached thought, but of great living?

We are not supplied with a definite creed at the beginning of the journey. The Master's call is 'Follow me,' and as we follow we begin to learn. Every day's life in His service adds something to our creed. Our views, as we call them, spring out of the things we have actually seen in our journeyings. Our beliefs rise from the things we have lived by. And so, slowly but very surely, we come to our own assurance.¹

¹ S. M. Berry, *The Crucible of Experience*, 169.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Greek Catenaë on the Pauline Epistles.

In his erudite article on 'Greek Patristic Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles' (Hastings' *D.B.*, Extra Vol., pp. 484-531), Dr. C. H. Turner acknowledges that no great advance can be made in the study of the Catenaë 'until more of the material that exists abundantly in the MSS has made its way into print.' Dr. Karl Staab, of the University of Munich, has already given the results of his examination of the Greek Catenaë on the Catholic Epistles in a volume published in 1924. He has recently laid students of the New Testament under further obligation by a comprehensive work on the Greek Catenaë on the Pauline Epistles.¹ He has had

¹ *Die Pauluskatenen* nach den handschriftlichen Quellen untersucht. Von Dr. Karl Staab, Privatdozent an der Universität München, pp. viii. 284. Mit sieben Tafeln in Lichtdruck (Roma: Verlag des päpstlichen Bibelinstituts).

access to other MSS than those which are found in the libraries of Rome, and claims to have made use of 'at least three-fourths of the available material.'

The Catena Commentaries, which Dr. Staab has examined, are classified in two divisions and are named after the principal MS in each. Two types are recognized, the first being represented by MSS grouped under the three headings, Vaticanus, Monacensis, and Parisinus; the second by MSS grouped under the three headings, Nicetas, Œcumenius, and Theophylact. In each section there is a scholarly appreciation of the characteristic features and the value of each type, with a discussion of age and authorship. The Vatican Catena 762 (cf. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 521) is held to be 'the most valuable as regards contents and form, and the most trustworthy witness to the text of the Pauline Epistles.' But Staab differs from Turner in his estimate of Vat. 692, which he regards as 'an offshoot from Vat. 762.'

The genuineness of the Œcumenian Catena on