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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

his noble dream. Now, as before, he is striving to secure in Christian life the predominance of the spiritual and practical element over the doctrinal or ecclesiastical one, being persuaded that it is in a common programme of spiritual and social action, and not in a common dogmatic formula, that the Church of Jesus Christ will find real union.

Sometimes, when talking intimately to his friends, Monod tells with a smile how, as a young student, he fancied himself mounting the pulpit of Notre Dame at Paris, which would be open in future to evangelical preachers. It is only at Canterbury that this dream has been partially fulfilled, and even then his experience was less sensational than he probably expected, for the venerable prelate requested the French Calvinistic pastor to speak from beneath the vaults of the cathedral. But in the work that he is now undertaking, with the object of bringing the various types of Christian faith nearer to each other, the thinker who has found in Calvin and Pascal his two chief guides, does not feel himself sustained merely by the outstanding Christian leaders who have influenced him in his own Church and whose lives have been moulded by the Reformation: he is really supported by the faith of the universal Church and especially by the spirit of Him whom alone he has always been anxious to serve. By means of his love and faith he finds at the foot of the Cross those whom the Churches, the spirit of dogmatism, and the habits of people would separate from him. With deep joy he understands that they are Christians like himself, the only difference being that they are accustomed to worship the common Master under other intellectual forms. In this work his heart and life find a veritable sphere of expansion. The vision of the grace by which he has been called to the new life and to the ministry of the Spirit has broadened out so as to embrace all those whom God has called; and he is thus realizing the prayer of the Master, which he took as a motto and inscribed at the beginning of his ministry over the entrance to the Church which he helped to found: 'That they all may be one, as Thou and I, Father, are one.'

In the splendour of this prayer, the gracious activity of Wilfred Monod will continue to spread beyond French Protestantism, over the whole Christian world, during the years that God will permit him to live among us, and even onward during the next life.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

The Christmas Rose.

By the Rev. John Macbeath, M.A., Leytonstone.

'I am the rose of Sharon.'—Ca 2^1.

I tried the other day to get some Christmas roses, but failed. They were ordered in advance, but the florist failed to get them. She wanted longer notice next time. The Christmas rose is a lovely white. It has been called the Rose of St. Agnes. The story goes that when St. Agnes was only fourteen years of age, the son of the Roman Emperor wanted to make love to her, but she said she already loved some one else. The Emperor sent to have her brought to him, and after long questioning she confessed that she loved Jesus Christ. The Emperor was angry and said her life would be taken, but she would not be moved from this love of her heart. He surrounded her with people who tried first to tempt her, and when that did not work they tried to force her to yield, but the brave girl held her ground. The Emperor ordered her to pour incense in worship of himself, or she must suffer execution. She refused heathen worship, and was taken away to be put to death. She spoke kindly to the executioner, and he wished he had not to do the deed. But she bravely died.

Long afterwards a church was built near the place of execution. Her body was believed to be under the altar. Every year the feast of St. Agnes is observed. Two lambs are consecrated and then carefully nurtured until Easter; then their wool is taken and made into a little white coat or cape with a red cross, and is worn by archbishops. The Church of St. Agnes is about a mile from the Holy Gate, one of the gateways of Rome. To her memory was consecrated the Christmas Rose.

It is a flower of lovely whiteness. It recalls the courage of the girl who kept her soul white from falsehood and evil.

Gardeners have called it the Black Hellebore

because the root is covered with a black skin. Out of that dark-skinned root comes the pure white rose. It is a miracle, but miracles like that are always happening. There were people who thought that no good could come out of Nazareth until Jesus came out of it, a pure white rose from a dark and unfriendly soil.

One of the surprises we often get is to see how well some people get on, how good they become, when we had thought there was nothing in them. It is never right to discourage others or to be ourselves discouraged. It is possible to grow the white flower of a blameless life wherever you have to live.

I love the courage of the Christmas Rose. In a cold and wintry world, when the snow lies on the ground, the rose bravely pushes its way to the light and air. Sometimes we want to change places with those who seem to get an easier time and more pleasure than we get where we are. People who were once carried away into exile were asked to sing some of their native songs, but they replied, 'How can we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?' The land of their captivity was not a country to sing in, they thought; but there are brave souls who can sing anywhere, who will not allow their cheerfulness to be silenced because the weather is sloppy, or the times are bad, or lessons are difficult. Remember the birds that sing in their cages and be brave.

There are not many flowers at Christmas time, and so *the Christmas Rose is lonely.* It has not the gay company that roses in June enjoy. There are lonely people in the world. The men on the lighthouses and the lightships round our coasts. I am glad these lonely men have got the 'wireless': in their houses and ships they can 'listen-in' to every variety of entertainment. There were very lonely men for whom there was no 'wireless' speech and song to cheer them. They were lonely, not because of duty, like the men on the lightships, not because of misfortune, like Robinson Crusoe or the Ancient Mariner. They were often lonely because of their goodness. Elijah believed he was the only good man alive, but things are never as bad as that! Daniel dared to stand alone for righteousness in the wickedness of Babylon.

Jesus was lonely because of the loftiness of His nature, and because of the solitary greatness of His work.

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.

The Christmas Rose has a wonderful influence. When the feast of St. Agnes is being celebrated, the people go in procession to the rose plot, collect leaves and petals and roses, and then scatter them in the rooms of the house and in the places where they work and play, to consecrate every place to goodness. So flowers are often silent preachers of goodness. Their purity and loveliness and perfume make us want to be pure and lovely too.

There was a woman of wild nature, and of evil life, whose nickname was 'the bluebird of Mulberry Bend.' She was a terror to everybody. But a lady gave her a lovely white rose, which Delia put on a shelf in the saloon where she slept; and she forgot all about it. Some days afterwards she saw the yellow withered remains of the rose that had been white. She felt it was like her own life; once rose-like in grace and goodness, but spoiled and wilted now. But the giver of the rose told her of One who could give new beauty and purity to her life. And Delia's life was made beautiful again. But I would rather be a rose that never lost its whiteness—a rose that kept itself for the breast of the King. I would rather come to Him in the morning so that I may spend the whole day in His Vineyard, than come in the afternoon of life when I can only give Him the little that is left of the day. That is surely the better way.

Hidden Treasure.

By the Reverend R. Parkes, M.A., St. Albans.

'He could not be hid.'—Mk 7^{24}.

How we love to play hide-and-seek! Out in the open on summer days it is great fun to hide ourselves in all sorts of places and wait until we are found. And just as great fun in the house during the long, dark winter evenings. We hide in the cupboard, or under the stairs, or behind father's long coat in the hall. We scarcely dare breathe lest we should give ourselves away. Then, just as the one who is searching comes near, we sneeze, or we giggle, or we simply must move because we are so cramped, and we give ourselves away. We could not be hid.

It is said of Jesus that He could not be hid. At times He sought the quiet hillside away from the multitude, or He went into the house of Peter or some other friend, because He wanted to rest for a time. Whenever He did so some one was sure to find Him and to tell others where He was.

It is still true of Jesus that He cannot be hid.

Not long ago I was reminded of this when visiting Cleeve Abbey. For many centuries the monks had taken care of their abbey, making the buildings as beautiful as they could. Then there came an evil time, and the buildings over which they had laboured with such care were taken from them. In course of time they were used for other purposes, even as barns for hay and stables for horses. Over floors which had been laid with tiles by the loving hands of the monks, horses and cows and stable-boys walked, until at length the tiles were cracked and covered with refuse.

Later, the abbey came into the hands of a good man who loved old buildings himself and knew that other people would be interested in the monks and their abbey. He set to work to remove the rubbish and to restore the buildings as far as he could. While the workmen were busy several discoveries were made. One wall, which had been white-washed, was cleaned and underneath the white-wash a painting on the wall was discovered. When the soil was removed from the floors many of the beautiful tiles could be seen.

It is about the most interesting discovery of all that I wish to tell you. The eastern wall of the refectory, the room in which the monks had their meals, had become covered with a heavy growth of ivy. This ivy was pulled down and it was seen that underneath there had been a painting of the Crucifixion. It was only possible to tell this, however, because of the peculiar action of the ivy. Where it had clung to the wall there was left a green mark, *except on the figure of Christ.* That stood out untouched by the ivy. Although painted centuries ago and covered for so long, the Master was now revealed once more. 'He could not be hid.'

We cannot hide Jesus from the life of the world to-day. Every church with its spire pointing to heaven, every hospital with its band of healers, every good law which men make, every Christian act we do, show to the world the Jesus who could not be hid.

It was because of His goodness that Jesus could not be hid. It is something else we try to hide. We try to hide our badness, but it is useless to try. Just as we give ourselves away when playing hide-and-seek, by a giggle or a sneeze or a movement, so we give ourselves away when we have done anything wrong. It cannot be hid—which is really a good thing for us after all. For in our hearts we would rather that it should be our goodness, like that of Jesus, which could not be hid.

The Christian Year.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Authority and Inspiration of the Bible.

'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: . . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed.'—Ro $1^{16.17}$.

I suppose that most thoughtful religious people at the present day feel a good deal of perplexity about the Bible, its authority and inspiration. I think, therefore, it will not be out of place on this, the second Sunday in Advent, when the collect of the day associates itself with the Holy Scriptures, to consider what change of attitude towards the Bible is necessary, whether we can continue to feel for it the same reverence as in the past, and what we are to say about its authority and inspiration.

1. Perhaps the simplest method of approaching this question is to give a new definition of the authority of the Bible and then explain it and justify it. We recognize that we cannot in general apply the ideas of infallibility and inerrancy to it. We recognize, again, that the attempts, which were fashionable some thirty or forty years ago, to try and prove that the science of the Bible and the teaching of modern science are really the same, or to conciliate historical statements with the apparent discrepancies of ancient authors or modern archæological discovery, are not satisfactory. All those methods are really wrong because they concentrate our attention not on the important but on the least important points in the Bible. They make its authority depend on its correctness in what is really subordinate.

Now I would suggest to you, in contrast to such methods, the following definition: 'The Bible is a record, delivered through human hands, of a Divine but progressive revelation.' First of all, it is delivered through human hands. This has always been God's method of dealing with the world. The Incarnation itself was a revelation of God to man through human nature. The spread of the gospel has always been carried out through the medium of human beings, often very imperfect in their work. If this be true, it has, I think, three main results.

The first is that the literary form of the work will be in accordance with the times at which each separate portion was written. Take, for example, the record of the law of Israel. In the old days we thought it all came from Moses; now we know that the originator was, in all probability, a great legislator whose inspiration was the first

starting of the marvellous history of Israel; but the law itself represents a series of successive codes put forward at different times in the history of Israel. Yet by a literary custom which is not confined to the people of Israel, but belongs to other nations also, it is all spoken of as the work of its first inspirer.

2. We must not expect from the Bible an historical accuracy which we do not find in any other ancient writings. When we come to examine it we find that the historical records vary greatly in their value. Some are the work of those who were contemporary, or nearly contemporary, with the events that they record; others were written some centuries after the events. It is obvious that the historical value of the two will be very different. In many cases we have a later compilation containing considerable fragments of early and contemporary writings. Now all these are exactly the same phenomena we find in any study of ancient history.

3. Then, further, the scientific teaching of the Bible is in all cases the scientific teaching of the times, and this applies to everything. This applies to their knowledge of astronomy and geology. It applies to their psychology; to their economic teaching; to their scientific criticism. Now, if we think a moment, was anything else possible? There was a time when people thought the Bible was intended to teach us many things besides religion. They attempted to show that the teaching of Genesis (for example) harmonized with the teaching of geology. But the geology that they tried to correlate with Genesis fifty years ago was different from what we teach now, and what we teach now is very different from what will be taught a hundred years hence in our schools. Do we really think that the teaching of the Old Testament or of our Lord was something that should harmonize with the particular scientific theory which prevails at the moment when we are writing?

4. Our first point was that the Bible was the record of a revelation which is progressive. That means a somewhat altered attitude with regard to its authority to what has at times prevailed. It has often been the custom to look upon all the books of the Bible and every text in it as of equal value, and to make use of texts divorced from their context in order to prove particular dogmatic standpoints.

In contrast to that I would suggest that we should look upon the Old Testament as a preparation for the New, and should see in the Old Testament the gradual training of the people of Israel so as to be ready for the higher revelation in Christ.

We may illustrate this by the conception of God. In the earlier parts of the Bible we have quite clear evidence that at one time the people of Israel thought of Jehovah very much as the surrounding nations thought of their gods. There was an element of anthropomorphism. They speak of God 'walking in the garden in the cool of the day.' They speak of sacrifice as the 'food of God.' Often they speak of God as one of many gods, only more powerful than others. But gradually, through the teaching of the prophets and the lessons of history, they learnt a far more elevated view of what God means. The old anthropomorphic conceptions were condemned. They thought of God as exalted in heaven; they thought of Him as God of the whole earth; and so gradually the way was prepared for the still higher revelation of God in the New Testament.

The question, perhaps, may be asked, If there is this distinction between one part of the Bible and the other, how am I to know what the Bible teaches?

It seems to me that a quite clear rule of interpretation is to interpret everything in the Old Testament in relation to the New. That must be your standard. The end of the Old Testament is Christ, and in Christ's teaching, and in the interpretation of His teaching by the Apostolic Church, you have a standard which you must apply in your judgment of what has gone before. As St. Augustine tells us, the New Testament lies hidden in the Old Testament, the Old is revealed in the New. Always judge the Old by the standard of the New, and make that the principle on which you decide the regulation of your own conduct.

5. Having considered the qualifications that we have to make in any theory as to the inspiration of the Bible, there remains the final and fundamental question, 'Are we able to speak of it as a Divine revelation?'

To this I would answer quite definitely that history shows that it is. To any one who believes in God, to any one who accepts a lofty spiritual and ethical conception of what God means, that is what it is. As an historical fact it is the Old and New Testaments which have taught the civilized religious world what they think about God.

Turn to the Old Testament. It taught in a way quite different from any other preacher or thinker the belief in one God, and every religion in the modern world which is built up upon monotheism owes its teaching to the Old Testament. It taught, again, in a way which had never been realized

before, the righteousness of God. The gods of the ancient world were not righteous, they reproduced the failings and sins as much as the virtues of man. Jehovah, the God of the Jews, was a God exalted in righteousness, and to that teaching we owe the intimate association of religion and morality which has been the inheritance of all those religions derived from Judaism.

And then it pointed forward and prepared for, in a remarkable way, the consummation which was to come. And what is true of the Old Testament is even more true of the New. It revealed to mankind a higher conception of the life of man and the nature of God. For the many imperfect moral systems of the ancient world it substituted the full Christian morality of love. The Old Testament had taught a righteous God, it taught of a God who exercised providential care for mankind: the New Testament summed up the teaching and the being of God in the words 'God is love.'

More than that. In its doctrine of the death of Christ and the meaning of the sufferings of Christ it taught a new conception of human life. The life of sacrifice which each man is called to live in some way, was no longer to be thought of as a sign of defect in human life; it represented the highest moral attainment. It had been exhibited, so Christianity teaches us, by the life of Christ on earth, which was a representation to mankind of the being of God. It was the way in which men might fulfil most completely the command to love one another. It was therefore the ultimate revelation both of the nature of God and the destiny of man. To any one, in fact, who accepts the superiority of the spiritual over the material, of the ethical and moral over the utilitarian, of the religious over the worldly aspect of life, that collection of writings which we call the Bible bears on its face the marks of being a Divine revelation.[1]

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Alms.

'Give for alms those things which are within.'—Lk 11^{41} (R.V.).

1. *Giving.*—Giving is contrasted with extortion. Broadly speaking, men do fall into these two classes: those who live to give, and those who live to get. The first are the creators, the discoverers, the lovers of men. Often selfish, often complaining querulously of the world's neglect, often losing the way in a maze of organization; failing constantly, for many a spot defiles the robe that wraps an earthly saint; yet the main motive, the thread which unites the many-coloured beads of action into a pattern and a whole, is the idea of giving.

The second are those who cultivate useful friends, friends who, in our Lord's quaint saying, can give them dinners; those to whom money and position are sacred things, holy, untouchable, Molochs of many human sacrifices; the men of the world—the men of business. Often unselfish, often generously self-effacing, often neglecting advantage through the stirring of sympathy—for, thank God, few consistently seek self—yet when the pattern is made it is different from the other; no chaos here either, but a pattern strung upon a thread, and that thread is self-advantage.

Here lies one of the two greatest problems of the age. Getting is necessary, capital must be preserved, yet the thread of man's life must be giving, not getting. Evidently, in the long run, man's aptitude for amassing wealth must be directed to the amassing of wealth for the common benefit, not his own; the capital increase must be devoted to the industry alone; the prize-money, the interest, or profit, be divided, not equally no doubt, but pro rata, between the captain, officers, and crew. But the time is not yet. There are business men to-day who hold and work for this principle, and there are workmen who hold it too, but it will be long before the majority of the one or the other see clearly the goal towards which they must press. Yet Christ's words are clear enough. Not extortion, but alms—alms in the old sense of free, loving, sympathetic sharing of possessions—not getting, but giving.

2. *The Gift.*—Give for alms, for love and sympathy. But what? Ah, not only gold! Christ takes it deeper than that. The Wise Men gave gold, as the least gift, first. Give for alms those things which are within. It is hard to part with money; it is far more hard to part with love, with inward thoughts and aspirations. As a nation we pride ourselves on our reserve. Reserve is good; it is a safeguard on the one hand from sentimentalism, on the other from the offer of false coin when the real is exhausted. But a reserve which is too proud to show that it is trying to follow Christ; a reserve which will not proclaim upon the house-top that Christ is the Way and the Truth and the Life; that He gave and sought not gain for self, is an ungenerous reserve. It denies to the world what the world has a right to know.

[1] A. C. Headlam, *The Building of the Church of Christ*, 195.

It is a cowardly reserve. Because of the frequent failures which mar the life, it is ashamed to reveal that for which it stands. It is a faithless reserve. It does not believe that with Christ all things are possible, and looking round on the evil of the world, it dare not trust itself to utter prematurely a full trumpet-voice.

The world is full of people who want help, not gold, but other gifts. Men need strength; the courage that comes of knowing that others are fighting the same battle, the old battle between God and Mammon; the assurance and fresh confidence that comes of knowing that what they believe worth more than all, yet doubt their judgment, others too believe worth more than all.

But if we are to give for alms the things that are within we must be very sure of ourselves that the inside is clean. How can we be sure? We know that the inside is not clean, but full of foul and rotting stuff mixed with that which is good. How can we, how dare we, give alms of that? That doubt, too, Christ answers. Give for alms those things which are within; and behold all things are clean unto you. In the very giving the inside is cleansed. Call it shame; you cannot let others see the garbage; you throw it out secretly. Call it self-contempt; you cannot fall so far short of the high calling to which you are called as this. We prefer to call it love. We cannot injure others by giving them rank poison. We think about them, not ourselves.

To how many comes the bitter, bitter experience of going back in the Christian life! The heart grows colder; disillusionment casts its grey shadow upon the world; effort grows less; doubt, not sane, wholesome intellectual unrest, but lazy doubt whether it be not the part of wisdom to take the cash in hand and leave the rest, dulls us to inertness; prayer becomes formal, or ceases; visions pass to a blurred memory, and then are forgotten; old sins, sins which we believed dead, show their heads again. To how many comes this experience? When it comes to us, let us just see whether this has not happened—that the stream of giving has become choked; that insensibly we have become a pond, not a fountain any longer. If we make the effort, and clear the outflow, giving alms of whatever good things are within, the stagnation will disappear with surprising quickness; fresh springs will break beneath the surface, and all grow clear again.

3. Finally, there is one other thought which really summarizes, or rather gathers up into one greater whole the two ideas of giving and the gift. It is a commonplace that God reveals Himself to men, but only so far as they are ready, through their own search, for that revelation. We could not know God if He did not reveal Himself, but neither could He reveal Himself without our seeking to know Him, and being prepared to receive that revelation; for He has made us free, and cannot take back or impugn that gift. We cannot know Him without His revealing Himself to us. What is this revelation?

It is just the gift of the things that are within; the communication of the inward self. When the time was come, God revealed Himself in Christ, and those who were ready revealed themselves to Him, became His friends, stood by Him, and went throughout the world, and still go, to tell others what the revelation of the love of God meant to them: what friendship with God was. But others would not, and still will not, reveal themselves to Him, and to them He was, and is, powerless to reveal Himself. The powerlessness of love is one of the eternal truths, and makes love what it is, the greatest thing in the world. Love has given up compulsion. God cannot reveal Himself to us unless we will reveal ourselves to Him; but step by step He gives the things that are within as we give in return; and those things constitute His love, His friendship.[1]

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Transformed Ambition.

'Wherefore also we make it our aim.'—2 Co 5[9] (R.V.).

Our available translations reach by stages and with a curious reluctance the real significance of such a text. The A.V. mildly and inadequately gives us, 'Wherefore we labour'; the R.V. salvages some of the lost meaning and reaches something of the real pointedness of the remark with its 'We make it our aim.' But it is the marginal reading that gets rid both of inadequacy and of circumlocution with the one sharp right word, 'ambitious.' Our theme opens fruitfully for us with this word, which is so great in human speech because it stands for a thing so vital in human history. It is the characteristic motive of the strong, and Christ's religion must make something of it, or prove itself inoperative and futile against one of the mightiest working forces in human nature.

Christ's religion had this problem to handle when it laid hold, as with mighty hands, on the man

[1] S. A. McDowall, *Creative Personality and Evolution*, 98.

Saul of Tarsus. 'I will show him what great things he must'—so ran the message to the blinded Saul. For good or evil this man would be doing great things, for he was large built. The message might have run, 'I will show him what great things he must *be*,' and this would have appealed to Saul. It might have run, 'I will show him what great things he must *do*,' and this word would have captured him, for he was ever a doer of deeds. But the message went, 'I will show him what great things he must *suffer* for my name's sake.' This is greatest of all; it was the touch on the quick, and in the sheer unexpectedness of that word, Saul's ambition was transfused as in a white heat, and the whole man rose to the call of the heroic.

Before we look closely into this changed ambition let us think of the necessity of this quality in the godly life. One who devotes himself to Christ does not thereby lose the instinct which bids men climb, but finds it made to subserve the greater glory of God. Where ambition is not, there is so much less to consecrate. It costs so little to be one of the innumerable nonentities of the world. It comes to most of us quite naturally. Dr. Arnold used to speak at Rugby of the temptations of dullness, and indeed they are great. If it is said that though the ambitious soul may accomplish more, the unambitious soul is safer, we take leave to doubt it. When a *Titanic* comes to disaster, or a *Lusitania* is foully destroyed, the magnitude of these catastrophes rouses attention and grips the imagination. But the big liners are safest, at least in peace-time. It is among the small craft that most shipwrecks happen. The people who are ever in most danger are the people without ambition, who have not way enough on them to sweep aside bad customs, but are swept by every tide as it ebbs and flows around them. To kindle a spark of aspiration and ambition, to cultivate a mind and heart with an upward and onward move in them which at least will balance the downward forces of the world or the inert mass of its indifference, this is part of the mission of Christ. The reason why many make a poor show in the life of religion is that while Christ holds their appreciations, their reverence, their affections even, He has not become master of their ambitions.

Three times does the Apostle Paul use the word 'ambitious,' and thrice gives us sight of the quality and character of his transformed ambition.

1. First is ambition with an upward look to its supreme Judge and Arbiter: 'We are ambitious to be well-pleasing unto him.' The ambition of Paul might always have been phrased thus, but as a Christian his ambition had a new content and was consciously judged by a new standard. He knew that his old ambition had been motived from wrong ideas about God. It was not true that God set a price on forgiveness; it was not true that He cared for sacrifice; that He had favourites; that He approved some and hated others. It was not true that a man had to do anything to make God love him—God is love, the Father over all and in all and through all. Hereafter this held and dominated Paul's ambition; at any cost of self-discipline and endless watchfulness he must live his life so that no shame should be his when he thought of the love of God in Christ Jesus his Lord.

Bring to the light one by one the ambitions which last week consciously or unconsciously moved us. What have *we* been really keen about? Set the naked truth in the light of this commanding ambition: 'To be well-pleasing unto him.' This may be wholly consistent with many lesser ambitions and may well include them all—that is, if they *are* lesser in our estimates of them and in the place we give them. But it does reveal the contemptibleness, poverty, and fatuity of many things which we are foolish enough to allow greatly to count.

2. Once again does Paul open to us the secret of his ambition, and this time it is in the way of exhortation to others. To the Thessalonian Christians he writes: 'We exhort you that ye be ambitious to be quiet.' Here is ambition with its aim bent upon a certain quality of the inward life.

It seems a surprising counsel to come from one so strenuous as the Apostle, but in truth the lives most active and creative in Christian history have been marked by a steady determination upon keeping a central quiet. It is a discovery one makes about the mystics that the quality of quietness upon which our observation of them concentrates, in the greatest of them went in company with a capacity for sustained effort and toil, and a great practical effectiveness; as witness St. Teresa of old time and Gordon in our own. That the best things do not come to us by striving but by receiving was a hard lesson for Paul to learn, and in the teeth of all his temperament and training, but he learned it, and all his writing throbs with the discovery. Grace, a gift; power, a gift; faith, a gift; love, a gift; and the things we most want—light, grace, power, peace, hope—they are for us to take. God's best things are His gifts,

and the grace of receiving is the fruit of an inward quiet.

> Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
> Of things for ever speaking,
> That nothing of itself will come,
> But we must still be seeking?
>
> Come forth, and bring with you a heart
> That watches and receives.

So sang Wordsworth, and his doctrine of a wise passiveness will in itself always set him among our teachers and benefactors.

3. A third time does this word fall from the pen of the Apostle, and this time it is ambition scanning the range of serviceable activity and selecting its desired field. To the Romans he writes: 'Being ambitious so to preach the gospel, not as where Christ is already named.' He means that he is keenly intent upon witnessing for his Lord where witnessing is most difficult, where the ground is unprepared, where he has the honour of standing alone for his Master.

To how many of us is that also a genuine ambition? There are many who deplore deeply that they have to live and work in non-Christian surroundings, and that those they meet most neither know Christ nor have any affinity with the deepest things of their own convictions, experience, and affection. If in such circumstances we are carrying ourselves resentfully or diffidently as Christians, then certainly we are in danger, and are no match for our difficulties. But if we had opportunity to pour out our distresses to this Apostle he would hear us with a kind of wonder, and he would astonish us by saying, 'How splendid! I myself was long ambitious for such a chance as is given to you.'[1]

CHRISTMAS DAY.

The Name Wonderful.

'And his name shall be called Wonderful.'—Is 9^6.

Let us this Christmas season dwell for a little on 'The Name Wonderful,' selecting, from the many volumes in which it may be studied, the Book of the Gospels, the Book of History, and the Book of Personal Experience.

1. One fact appears in response to even a cursory examination of the gospel records, which is, that wherever Jesus appeared He impressed. If the Gospels tell us anything, and suggest anything to the devout imagination, it is that during His ministry His companions went about with Him in open-eyed amazement. There were no two days alike. They pilgrimed in an enchanted land. They never knew what He would do next. The atmosphere was electrical with all manner of possibilities. From a situation in which they found themselves He always emerged by a way which they would never have guessed. When, in their dealings with people, they would have been indulgent, He was severe; and, when they thought to do right by being censorious, He was personified love. And yet they never felt in this the slightest inconsistency, never a shadow of incongruity. Thinking of it afterwards, they admitted in their hearts that in every way He was just what He ought to have been, and not many days of that ministry were required in order to bind them to Him in indissoluble ties. Is it to be wondered at that, when the crucial question arose, as sooner or later it was bound to arise—'Who is this wonder-Person?'—it could be answered in only one way adequately.

(1) Christ is wonderful as a *Counsellor*. He came from the poorest class in the community. He was born in a stable and cradled in a manger. He had little schooling. Yet it is from such a spring that there has issued a stream of thoughts the noblest, and of ideals the highest, that have ever inspired the mind of man. From that humble stock there have issued conceptions of life and duty which have moulded the counsels of men in every age and were never more influential than they are to-day. Lord Rosebery has spoken of libraries as being largely cemeteries of dead books; but while that is an exaggeration, it is true to say that all their books are dead and all their authors crumbling into dust compared with the life that throbs and the influence that thrills in the words of Jesus Christ.

(2) Again, this Child may be called Wonderful not merely because of the words He spoke, but *because of the deeds He did*. Think of the mighty power that slumbered in that humble child of Mary, as He lay weak and helpless in the cradle of Bethlehem. Think of the power which in three centuries conquered the mightiest Empire of History. Think of the courage which inspired His followers to meet unflinching the scorn of Greek Philosophy and the puissance of persecuting Rome. To accomplish that was surely a wonderful feat, as Gibbon has freely acknowledged and tried to explain away in his *Decline and Fall*.

(3) Once more this Child is no less wonderful when we look away from His words and works to *the Personality into which He afterwards grew*.

[1] T. Yates, *The Strategies of Grace*, 86.

Greater than all He said and did was what He was. What is remarkable about Jesus was the union in His character of gentleness with strength. There was nothing weak in the Man Christ Jesus. See Him as with scathing denunciation He lays bare the hypocrisy of Scribe and Pharisee. See Him as with whip in hand he drives the false traffickers out of His Father's house. Yes, but along with this there was a tenderness, a compassion such as the world had never seen before. Who is this that takes the children in His arms and blesses them one by one? Who is this that takes the fallen woman by the hand and raises her to a new undreamed-of purity? Who is this that stands and weeps at Lazarus' grave?

(4) Christ's name is Wonderful because of '*the unspeakable gift*' *He has bequeathed to man.*

Of all the many gifts with which Christ has dowered the human race, the best of all is peace. He made that clear by mentioning it alone in His last Will and Testament. 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' 'There is no joy but calm,' says the poet, and there can be no permanent happiness where peace with God is not its centre and foundation. But this peace is to be won by faith in Christ. Multitudes found it so when first they looked to that Cross and 'being justified by faith' found peace with God, and multitudes have found it to be so since. 'He is our peace'—peace with God, peace within ourselves, and because of that peace with our fellow-men. 'For there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free . . . ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'[1]

2. The same story as that of the Gospels is told in the larger Book of History, the same record of sustained wonder. All through these nineteen hundred years men have not ceased to wonder at Jesus, and to subscribe to the name which Isaiah, by anticipation, gave Him. Nor is this surprising. What changes these centuries have witnessed—wars, reformations, revolutions, world-shaking cataclysms! The treasures of the world have been steadily augmented, and to man's untiring intellect the universe has yielded up many of its secrets. A newer, softer spirit has been breathed into the higher civilizations, and many projects for mankind's benefit have been carried into effect. And yet it is the bare truth to say that over all the bewildering complexity of these nineteen centuries, above the storm as above the calm, one Figure presides in serene, majestic isolation. 'If Christ had not come'—would literature, architecture, music, painting, education, the theory and art of government—would anything have been quite the same?

3. But it is in the Book of Personal Religious Experience that Jesus appears most wonderful of all.

Knowledge is of various types, but the highest is that which is built up on personal experience. Religion is in a sense knowledge, and it lays down personal experience as an absolute condition. In other words, a man may have a very fair knowledge of Jesus as He appears in the Book of the Gospels, and a more than fair acquaintance with Jesus as He is met on every page of the Book of History, and yet be without that knowledge of Jesus that alone matters. The indispensable condition of being sealed to the brotherhood is that a man know Jesus at first hand. He is to 'say these things of himself, not because another hath told it concerning him.' Against this law annoyance and stormy protest are of not the slightest avail. The faith is reached by one road only, that of personal experience, and such experience always implies an attitude of devotion on the part of the soul to its Lord.

How wonderful Jesus is in the way in which He keeps hold of the heart that has once loved Him! How wonderful He is in the progressive revelation of Himself to those who company with Him! There are people one meets for a chance half-hour, and in that brief space you seem to have learned all there is to be known about them. They are like the isolated hillock, which you locate, and measure, and walk around. But Jesus in the myriad features of His personality, as unfolded in the experience of the Christian, resembles a great mountain range. At the beginning of his adventure the disciple is merely among the foothills, but as he steadily follows the ascending pathway of obedience and service, one mighty mountain mass lifts itself above another.

There is comfort in the word. We look at Jesus, and although always spell-bound, we are sometimes nonplussed, mystified. We know now that it is all in the plan, that it was never intended that we should fully understand our Lord. If we understood Him, He would cease to be wonderful; and if He were no longer wonderful, He would not be 'He that should come,' and we would 'look for another.'

There is salvation in the word. These are days when all the artificial buttresses of the faith are crumbling. But if we would be safe, here is the central pillar of the edifice, here is the link that will not snap, the anchor that will not drag, the

[1] W. M. Mackay, *Days of the Son of Man*, 47.

fort that no assault can ever overwhelm, the Wonderfulness of Jesus! Let us renew our sense of wonder at the manger this Christmas Day.[1]

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

Past and Future.

'But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people.'—Ezr $3^{12, 13}$.

Ezra begins with an account of the release of the Jews from captivity in Babylon, and their return to Palestine. When the great Babylonian empire fell, Cyrus, the conqueror, with wise statecraft, sought to conciliate many sections of his subjects by allowing the deported populations to return to their native land. Permission to return to Jerusalem would have been nothing to the Jews unless they were permitted to make the holy city once more the centre of their religion. So the object of the return is expressly stated as 'to go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build . . . the house of the Lord God of Israel, which is in Jerusalem.'

The enterprise called forth the energies and the latent patriotism and religious enthusiasm of the best of the people. Their liberality kept pace with their enthusiasm. 'They offered freely for the house of God, to set it up in its place.' These Jews with their old-world problem before them, to rebuild a Temple worthy of their God in a ruined and impoverished land, made thus a good beginning. Without Solomon's opportunity, they had to rival Solomon's achievement. Ultimately the builders laid the foundations of the Temple. This was made a great occasion, a religious act with impressive ceremonial. At the moment when the ceremony was completed, the people rent the air with a mighty shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

How like that crowd to the many crowds which have gathered since for similar purposes! Notice the chief constituents of that crowd. They were broadly two—the young and the old. That classification, of course, may be made elsewhere, but here it has a special significance. Years ago the Captivity had taken place. A new generation had grown up, to whom the old country and the old institutions were traditions. They heard of them as in a dream. This section, the greater part of the crowd, looked upon the proceedings as eminently satisfactory. They were rejoiced at the good beginning, and were full of hopeful eagerness.

But some of the priests and Levites and people were ancient men, and had known and loved the old Temple. The thoughts and associations of those days surged into their minds, till a mist rose over the present. Oh those glorious days hallowed and consecrated by blest memory! The tears were in their eyes, eyes which had been tearless since 'by the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept when they remembered Zion.' And when now they were startled from dreamland by the great shout of joy, because the foundations were laid, it seemed a mockery, and they wept with a loud voice. 'The people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of weeping.'

Distance solidifies the past to us. The individual minutes and hours and days do not count; it is the artistic effect of the whole we see. Frozen motionless by distance it seems, but not so did it once appear to us. How different the impression when we were in the stream of life, hurrying with it, tossed by its ceaseless flow, dashing over the waterfall in it; on to the plain, and to the ocean. But now from the plain, creeping lazily to sea, look at that waterfall of life, over which it sped so breathlessly, gleaming radiantly fair in the sunshine. The past is beautiful, if we do not pry too deeply and minutely into the sections that compose it, if we let the imagination play on it, and view it as a whole.

1. *The Power of the Past.*—Thus, men are often softened by thoughts of the past, like those priests and Levites and fathers, who were ancient men. They were melted to tears by a memory. And so would many of us be, if we did not stifle our memory, if we dared to look back. In most childhoods, as in the childhood of the race, there is an early paradise with sweet memories and innocent affections. It is an appeal to that which often in after years can alone affect the heart. Too often our life is but a sleep and a forgetting. We forget the glories we have known. We forget all the way by which we have been led. We forget the love of the past, the high instincts, and noble aspiration, the prayer that brought God into our life, the early blessedness, the early faith, the early rapture.

> And customs lie upon us with a weight,
> Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.

Great spiritual good may thus come from a backward look. The very pathos of the past has a

[1] J. G. Burns, in *Advent and Christmas Sermons*, 120.

value. The tone and temper of these ancient men, which is the attitude of many at all times, especially the old, are natural in the presence of changes, and have a lesson for all of us, a lesson of tenderness and sympathy.

2. *The Danger of the Past.*—It is well that the boisterous, uncritical hopefulness of youth should be modified and toned down by the temperament of the ancient men. But perhaps more damage is wrought by the other extreme. There is a distinct danger that the past may be unduly magnified at the expense of the present and to the lasting detriment of the future. These ancient men, who wept with a loud voice, did not believe that the new house could ever be anything like the first, and their temptation was to think it hardly worth while building at all. An exclusive view of the past paralyses effort. Nothing can be done like what has been done, therefore we need do nothing. That is fatal doctrine.

And yet it is a doctrine often in our hearts, if not on our lips. We are always tempted to think the golden age somewhere behind us. But our Christian faith, the ever-young, the ever-green religion, makes it lie before us. It is not a worn-out ideal burnt to nothing like a fallen star. It is a yet unrealized ideal, shining clear and true, the master-light of all our seeing. We have a continual tendency to refer the Kingdom of Heaven to some past date—the days of the Apostolic Church, or the days of the early Fathers, or the days of the Reformation, or some signal time of blessing that lies back of us. It is a mistake. Never think that God has brought us thus far, to leave us guideless in the wilderness. Never dream but that He has larger purposes for us as a Church and for the land we love. Never doubt that He will lead His living Church on and ever on. We want in this our generation—and this is the lesson of the past—the spirit of our fathers, the faith in God, the strong sense of right, the love, the self-sacrifice, the loyalty to duty, which they displayed when they laid the foundations of the commonwealth and of the Church.

We cannot live on yesterday. We have to-day, because we had a yesterday, it is true; but we have to-day for the sake of to-morrow. We look back and see a track of light, for God is there; and we look forward and see a track of light, for God is there also. The past is an argument for faith. Only faith in God and His loving purpose will enable us to keep faith in ourselves and in our future. Christ is to us both the pledge and the promise of that purpose. He leads us out into a large place of faith and of service. If we to-day refuse to weep over a vanished past, but are ready to rejoice over a new future, it is because we believe this.[1]

[1] H. Black, *According to my Gospel*, 13.

Altars and Sanctuaries in the Old Testament.

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III.

Part II. Criticism and Counter-Criticism.

We have set forth in the first two articles of this series the line of argument taken by Wellhausen and modern scholars generally, and the conclusions which they arrive at. But those conclusions have been challenged by various writers, and by none more vigorously than by Mr. H. M. Wiener. He attacks with such vigour and self-confidence that those who have heard only his side are apt to believe that he has carried all before him. Wiener himself apparently believes that 'the Wellhausians' have, for many years, taken refuge in cowardly silence because 'they know that no convincing answer can be made' to his arguments, and that it would not be 'safe for them to permit him to deal with the questions involved in any periodical they control.' Their reasons for silence are far different from those which he imagines, but it seems well that his arguments should be examined, as impartially as possible, and this we now proceed to do. Considerations of space necessitate that we confine ourselves to specific criticisms of Wellhausen's *Prolegomena: Part I.*, which Wiener sets forth in his *Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism*, chap. vi.; *Some Fundamental Errors of Wellhausenism* (German translation in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Juden-*