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doubt based on the assumption that Clopas, in John, is an alternative Greek form for Alphæus, in the Synoptists. But that assumption is almost unavoidable. The Evangelical tradition is of one voice in associating Mary, the mother of James, that is, 'the other Mary,' most closely with Mary Magdalene, as together witnesses of the Resurrection. The Sinaitic Syriac Version makes כלפי the equivalent of Alphæus. Dr. A. H. McNeile seems to have no hesitation in accepting Clopas as an alternative for Alphæus. Regarding, then, this assumption as well-founded, I am inclined to say that our Mary is present in John, even if we must add, in submerged form; as one to whom the Lord showed Himself alive after His passion. John, indeed, makes much of the witness of Mary Magdalene to the resurrection of our Lord. But when he records (20[2]) the Magdalene as saying: 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and *we* know not where they have laid him,' it is reasonable to think that the Magdalene was including another with herself in this *we*. It is surely not a plural of majesty, it is hard to regard it as an instance of the literary plural. That being so, we seem justified in identifying the appearing of our Lord recorded in Mt 28[9. 10] (R.V.) and that recorded in Jn 20[11-18] as one.

(*b*) It is worth while drawing attention to the character of the women of whom the Evangelists are so careful to make mention as witnesses of the Crucifixion, of the Burial, and, in some cases, of the empty grave, and of the post-Resurrection appearings of Jesus. For, I believe, they are not introduced into what is, after all, a compressed narrative of the greatest tragedy and the greatest triumph on record, save with a profoundly significant and intelligent aim. They are regarded by the Evangelists as first-rate sources of information. And why should they not? They are not giddy young girls, nor hysterical women. They are, for the most part, elderly married women, and women we may well believe of the strongest character. It is not possible to associate the idea of a questionable quality with the mother of our Lord, or with the mother of Zebedee's sons, or with the mother of James and of Joses, and, may I not add, of Matthew. And even with regard to Mary Magdalene, of whom it is recorded that out of her had been cast seven devils, the idea is a legitimate one, that the expression referred to invites us to think, not only of how foolish she had been, but of how sane she now is.

(*c*) It is not absolutely certain that Matthew made use of Mark. Zahn and Springer have a firm conviction in another sense. Even Cadbury would scarcely affirm more than that it is the more probable view. Yet a conclusion in that sense, and order of dependence, has approved itself to so many scholars of all schools that, at the least, one is bound to regard the conclusion with respect. But what one feels bound to protest against is the inference that, if Matthew made use of Mark in the Crucifixion and Resurrection narrative, Matthew should no longer, in this region, be regarded as an independent investigator. It is not in that way that 'the most important book in all the world' could have been written. His own mother may very well have been his source in scenes that he did not himself witness—such as the Crucifixion, the Burial, and the empty grave of Jesus.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Silver Paper.

By the Reverend W. J. May, Ilkeston.

'He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.'—Ec 3[11].

What is the good of silver paper, anyhow? You get silver paper round all manner of things nowadays. They wrap it round Daddy's cigarettes, round Mother's chocolate biscuits, round those wonderful little Tangerine oranges that smell as nice as they taste, even round the toffees which you buy for birthdays and special occasions. And what is the good of it all? The oranges have not a nicer flavour or the chocolates a better taste because they were wrapped in silver paper. Yet somehow it makes things look nicer, you say. They may not taste better or be worth more, but you are glad of the thing that looks better.

Have you ever stopped and thought how fond God is of silver paper? He is always wrapping nice things up in nice wrappers so that it does us good to look at them as well as to have them. Our

Heavenly Father loves to give us beauty as well as food, silver paper wrapped round the chocolate biscuits. I suppose that wheat would make just as good bread if fields of corn were always green or if the ears were black instead of golden brown when they are ripe. But how much we should miss if we never saw the wheatfields all golden in the sun with the wind running through them making new waves of colour, new curves of loveliness. That beauty is the golden printed silver paper in which He wraps our daily bread. And the world would still go on if there were no skylarks to pour out a flood of song in the sky, and if robins wore no red waistcoats and were as dingy as sparrows, and if goldfinches and blue-tits were as black as crows. But the world is much nicer and brighter because God wraps the goldfinch and the blue-tit in coloured silver paper and makes them so splendid to look at as well as to hear. He has made everything beautiful in its time.

I wonder if St. Paul knew anything about silver paper. He knew the difference it made in the look of things, and he wrote people asking them to use silver paper to wrap their good things in. 'If you show mercy,' he said, 'wrap it up in the silver paper of cheerfulness.' I think that that is the sort of silver paper that is printed in red with gold stars, don't you? It sounds like the wrappings you see on the chocolates you get in the boxes that come only on birthdays and at Christmas time. You smooth out the silver paper just for the pleasure of looking at it. And if your forgiveness is wrapped up in cheerfulness, it really does seem better, doesn't it? We are not really very glad for the chap who says, 'I'll forgive you, but I'm only doing it because I know I ought to forgive and I wish I hadn't.' He has forgotten the silver paper of cheerfulness.

St. Paul said the same thing to the people who gave. All of you who are missionary collectors like calling on Mr. Cheery, don't you? He teases you a bit and asks about the footer or the hockey and smiles at you, and says, 'Well, here is mine and I wish it was more.' And you go up the street feeling that he has given you something more than his subscription. It was only a penny but it was wrapped in silver paper. You pay the penny to the secretary, but you keep the silver paper of his cheerfulness. God loves people like that, too. 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver'—the man who wraps his gift in silver paper.

Lately we have been making a discovery. We have found that silver paper is valuable. People have been collecting it, and they find that silver paper will do all sorts of wonderful things. It will build hospitals and feed little, neglected children, and make sick children well, and put crooked limbs straight so that crippled children are able to walk. The Silver Paper Fairy is one of the busiest and most wonderful fairies that ever was. So the silver paper is not done with when it has wrapped your toffee or your orange. You can do some one else some good with it. God wraps His gifts in silver paper of beauty and gladness that we may use it to cheer some one else.

A lad stood on a railway platform some years ago in real trouble. He had lost the return half of his ticket. He had spent all his money, and he could not see how he was going to get home again. A gentleman who was passing saw his distress, and asked what was wrong. As soon as he was told he laughed. 'We'll soon put that right,' he said. So he took the lad to the booking office and bought another ticket for him. 'Let me have your name and address, sir,' the lad asked, 'that I may repay the money you have lent me.' 'No, do something better,' came the quick reply; 'years ago I was in trouble and someone did me a kindness. When I wanted to repay it he said, "Instead of paying me wait till you find someone else in trouble and pass the kindness on." Will you do the same? Pass it on to someone else.'

That is the way to use silver paper; that is the way God wants us to use His silver paper of kindness and love, pass it on.

Do you known the hymn about silver paper?

Have you had a kindness shown,
Pass it on.

'Pep.'

By the Reverend H. Bunce, B.D., Halifax.

'I can do all things through Christ.'—Ph 4^{13}.

If you, boys, could go to America and watch a football match, what do you think you would hear the men shouting? Whenever things seemed to be going slowly you would hear the crowd shouting 'Put some pep into it.' And a boy who liked to stay in bed in the morning and was inclined to be a little slow or lazy, well, as the Americans would say, 'He wants pep.' We English people mostly think of the Americans as people who have lots of money to spend, but we are told that if we were to ask an American the secret, he would say that the reason is because the Americans have more 'Pep.' I wonder what they mean? I wonder if

'Pep' is short for 'pepper'? You know your mother will tell you that when you put pepper on things it gives them a savoury taste. It makes them nicer to eat, and I suppose that is what boys mean when they say So and So is 'Hot Stuff.' He is one of those people we like to see or hear, because he does things well.

I remember once during the war a man was making soup, and he asked me to taste it. 'What does it taste like?' said he. 'Like pepper and water,' I replied. 'Well, I've put an onion in it,' he said. He seemed to think that an onion in four gallons of water would make soup. So he thought that if only you used an onion the soup would have some 'Pep.' Perhaps it was an onion that was lacking to the soup about which a Chinese boy was talking to me once. He said, 'Three pieces of macaroni and a pot full of water won't make soup.' *That* soup would not have much 'Pep' in it.

Well now, an American, Colonel William C. Hunter, has written a book to tell us all about 'Pep,' and he says Pep means Poise—Efficiency—Peace, and if we want 'Pep' we must gain those three things.

Poise. Being able to stand fast—being able to balance. Not like a 'tumbler'—the glass of water we are always knocking over because the top is bigger than the bottom—but being able to stand firm upon one's feet, and no matter how one is pushed and pulled, to be able to stand fast, and when other boys are trying to persuade us to do things which we know are wrong, being able to say, 'No,' and to stand firm and steadfast.

Efficiency. That's a long word, but we know the word 'effect,' being able to work with effect. That means being able to do things well. Not like a man who is sent to find a leak in the waterpipe, and makes another while he is looking for the first. Able to do things well and to finish what we have started to do.

Peace. We know what that means. If we can be firm and steadfast, and can stick at our job, do it thoroughly, then we have no need to bother or worry or get excited. We can be at peace, and according to Colonel Hunter that is what it means to have 'Pep.'

Now the Bible is full of stories about people like that. People who were steadfast and strong, who turned neither to the right nor the left, and knew what they had to do, and who did it, and who did not show anxiety, but were in peace and quiet; and the Bible gives us the reason. It does not say they had 'Pep,' but something else. Listen! 'And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, and strengthen me.' 'And David said unto the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord.' And if we will only try to do the things that please God, to speak the truth, to 'play the game,' and try to follow Jesus, then we too may have the strength of the Lord, and we too can have these three things which we are told give a man 'pep'—we can have poise, efficiency and peace—and like Paul we shall be able to say, 'I am able for anything through Jesus Christ.'

The Christian Year.

Second Sunday after Easter.

Colloquy with Mansoul.

'Return unto thy rest, O my soul.'—Ps 116^{7}.

'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease.'—Lk 12^{19}.

One of these men is complacent in prosperity; the other is in straits of distress. But each of them feels that it is needful and desirable that he should hold some conversation with what he calls his 'soul.' It is the complete contrast which these two men exhibit to which we shall mainly ask attention; but to begin with it is to be observed that two men, so opposite in their ideas and, as it may be supposed, in their character, should at least agree that there is such a thing as the soul, and that its concerns have to be reckoned with in the ordering and audit of life.

'There is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty has given him understanding.' This is the account the Scriptures give of man, and we cannot get much closer to reality. Men have speculated and guessed, often nobly, about the soul and its origin. There is the guess man has made of its pre-existence, as Plato speculated, Wordsworth following. There is the guess of the pantheist, with whom God is All and All is God, and the soul is no more and no less than yonder cloud with the evening sun falling on it, part of the Soul of the Universe. Man will guess on, and rightly, for it is the most fascinating and indeed vital of all themes. But behind the guesses there is always the conviction, so constant as to look like a primal instinct, that it is out of the life of God that man in his deepest and most real self has come.

When, therefore, we can find men having close dealing with the soul, they are worth our ob-

servation. Two of them are here. Having taken note that they are one in a concern for their souls, it is the contrast between them which may instruct us.

1. It is *a contrast between Reality and Illusion.* The first man instantly and directly connects the satisfaction and rest of his soul with God: 'Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous.' The second as instantly connects the satisfaction of the soul with material possessions and enjoyments, and God is not in his thoughts. We suspect that these two are not really meaning the same thing when each speaks of his soul—which is the fact. And in the parable it is the tragedy of a life. It seems an incredible thing that a man should hold a colloquy of this kind with his soul, inviting it to satisfactions so incongruous, and Jesus deliberately made the incongruity as vivid as words can express it. But the incredulity disappears when we reflect that it is an actual thing that men and women can so concentrate endeavour and desire upon possessions and appetites, that they are under the impression that these things are inseparable from their deepest and most real selves, and absolutely identified with their well-being. This is the illusion which a practical materialism imposes upon the mind at last.

In the little world the materialist is successfully manipulating the things he worships as almighty. 'Of the residue thereof he maketh a god.' We gather from the instinctive and incessant turning of his mind to these things that in them the real reverences of his life are centred. We may talk to him of books, but he will get round to business; we may discuss a principle, but we become aware that it is the rate of interest that is in his mind; we may speak of architecture, but he is really interested in furniture; we may want to talk of music, but he will bring the conversation round to money.

In contrast to this self-confessed materialist the other man is reaching out to reality. It is certain that he has laid hold of resources immensely trustworthy and adequate. He says, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.' This is not the speech of one who must needs go precariously, lest he step through an illusion. He has a comrade in another psalm, who, being likewise in sore straits, suddenly found his soul, and out of profound misgivings stood alert and confident. So sure of reality was he that he cried, 'Yet will we not fear though the earth be removed.' It was the spring of a new daring, and the spring's source was no other than the discovery of the adequacy of God for every need of the soul.

What is religion but the homing instinct of the soul? 'Blessed,' said a Swiss mystic, 'are the homesick, for they shall reach home.' This devout man of the psalm is expressing the thought of Jesus, when He describes the return of the prodigal as a turning back home. The homing instinct is no delusion, and the first contrast of these two men of the texts is the contrast between illusion—pitiful, tragic, humiliating; and reality—secure, abiding, and sufficient.

2. It is *a contrast between Cultivation and Neglect.* Man has to grow a soul, and no man can ignore its needs persistently, and then at the end find it there, unstarved, unharmed, unchanged. Science has its great story of the making of the universe. 'Some call it evolution, and others call it God.' At the crown of this process is man. But the drama of creation is not ended. It is no longer matter but mind, no longer physical life alone but spirit, that carries on the unfinished evolution. The world is the expression of Spirit, and it exists for the further development of spirit. It is, as Keats called it, 'the vale of soul-making.'

We are here to help God to complete His creation of us. We do not know what it can fully mean to win complete possession of our souls. We can only turn to Jesus Christ, the one completed soul, and what we see there tells us that it means to enter into unbroken fellowship with God, to be no hired slave, but son and co-worker with Him, sharing the knowledge of His holy plan. For this is the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

If it be said that this centring of concern upon the soul is a refined form of selfishness, the subtle possibility of this is not to be wholly denied. But it may be observed that it is the materialist of the parable who is the self-centred man. 'My barns, my goods, my fruits, my soul,' but never once, 'my neighbour.' It is a fatal forgetting. No man can afford it, if only because the spheres of benevolence and service are the training-grounds on which character is made.

3. It is *a contrast between Gain and Loss.* The first of these men is in the way of gaining his soul when he calls it back to God. The word of Christ stands with this, that in the moment of the soul's turning to God it finds itself. And the nearer the soul comes to God, the surer it grows of itself. The more intimate its communion with God be-

comes, the more certain does it become of its own individuality and worth.

The second man reveals, with dreadful clearness, the possibilities of abusing the gift and the undoing of the soul. One of the very pitiful sayings to be found in the Scriptures comes from this man, though he himself spoke it with a smirk of self-conscious pride: 'I have no room.' It was tragically true. He meant it of his barns, but it was the truth about himself. He had no room. You feel that he is a man cramped, cabined, confined. He died of it. In physics a vacuum is another name for a crushing pressure from without, and nothing within to meet and resist. This man had allowed the pressure of outward things to grow, and there was no inner life of the spirit to resist the pressure. Nature abhors a vacuum. So does God, of this kind, and one night the self-complacent man went where the pressure of the temporal is felt no more. He went to learn in eternity what he had not known in time, that he was a self-made pauper, that life had a thousand meanings which had not dawned upon his intelligence, a thousand melodies, and not one of them had he heard, charged to the full with significances he had never perceived, enriched with wealth he had wholly missed. It is a story of nemesis—the nemesis of the self-centred.

We may stifle those high and holy thoughts and aspirations which are the soul's true sustenance, and seek to satisfy it with material possessions. We may think thereby to gain the world. It is the world that has gained us. This is the losing of the soul, the wasting of its powers with interests which crumble and pass. And what shall it profit?

The man whose recurring prayer is, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee,' is not a man whose lips are fated ever to shape so pitiful a cry as, 'I have no room.' Progressively finding and possessing his soul, he is come into a broadening life and a freer air. Answering him, the Lord sets him in a large place—'With thee, O God, is the fountain of life.'[1]

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The True Investment.

'And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.'—Lk $16^{8f.}$.

This Parable has probably caused more discussion and perplexity than any other. One of the early critics of the Christian faith made use of it to prove that Christianity was subversive of morality. But its key is, of course, the well-known precept that we must not stretch the point of a parable beyond the range Christ meant it to cover.

This unjust steward was a very familiar figure in Palestine. He was a kind of factor who managed his master's estate, and it was a normal thing for such men to make a bit for themselves by overcharging. He had probably a big secret commission—a thing not unknown in our own day; but the master became suspicious and demanded a statement of account. The steward realized that the game was up, and that he could not avoid dismissal. What was he to do? He sat down to think, and the plan suggested itself to make friends with his master's creditors. This plan he carried out; not, as it might seem, by further cheating, but by the simple process of writing off his own secret commission. Jesus does not commend the man's dishonesty, but the man's prudence; and it is perfectly possible to do the one without the other. Most people who are sincere with themselves have a secret admiration for the skilful burglar, though they do not commend either his practice or his character. What they admire are his dexterity, his bravery, his scorn of risk. If only in the Kingdom of God we had half the spirit of adventure, took half the risk, and showed half the abandon of some of the people we call worldly, Jesus might take the hearts of men by storm. This is the kind of thing He is pointing out. We will never bring in the Kingdom until we are ready to show the same spirit of enterprise as does many a commercial man, or even as does the gambler in the pursuit of gain, or the prodigal seeking pleasure. 'The children of this generation are wiser than the children of light'; and Christ's point is that we should enlist the qualities of the man of the world in the service of the Kingdom which is not of this world.

1. There are two things clear about the man of this story. In the first place, he looked ahead. He began to provide for the future by the possessions of the present. He began, in other words, to make investment. If the farmers decided to live upon their seed-corn or store it up, there would be no harvest, and finally universal death. Investment of some kind is the law of life. This is used by Christ with effect as an illustration, again and again. Think of the Parable of the Talents. The spiritual

[1] T. Yates, *The Strategies of Grace*, 71.

man must be an investor. That is Christ's view as to how life should be spent. Are we exchanging our capital, our lives, into the coin of the spiritual country? There is a phrase which is best translated, 'Be ye good money-changers.' If we are going to another country to live, we have to change our money into the coinage of the country to which we are going, or we shall starve. There is a country, says Jesus, in which the money of this world or the materials of its life will not go far. It is the spiritual Kingdom into which He introduces us, and for which we are here to train. The prudent man will invest his life in the treasure of that spiritual country, just as a man who, going to France, buys francs.

The eternal world is a realm where the demands on us will be greater, where the opportunities of service will be larger, where love is the medium of exchange, where righteousness is the law of life, where graciousness of character is true beauty, where the power of service is the real wealth. What are we doing to fit ourselves for this new world? We may scorn this way of looking ahead as a kind of selfishness, and it has often been so. There are people for whom religion is no more than a way to escape from the fears of their own hearts that attack them as they look into the future. For Jesus it was never that. Religion is a preparation for life. It is not a way of escape from the fear of death, but a way of equipment for the demands of life. Religion is contact with the centre of reality, and it is no more selfish to prepare for that new world than it is selfish for a boy to look ahead and prepare at school for the day when he will be a man.

2. There is a further suggestion here. Christ not only bids us look ahead and invest our lives in spiritual treasure, but He gives us, also, a hint of what that treasure is. It is the treasure of friendship. 'Make to yourselves friends.' Some people would find friendship in industrial relationship a distinct embarrassment. But this man saw that, out in the cold world, the only thing he could count on was the friendship of these people, so he invested money accordingly.

Did not Jesus mean this, that the real treasure of the Kingdom is the treasure of personal relationship? Love is the real wealth of life; and what we can do to create love in the world, and promote those ties which bind man to man, by which our lives are redeemed and become redeeming, is the true way of spiritual investment. Invest your lives, then, in what makes for friendship. Fellowship with others is the thing that endures. Whatever brings us together in love, that is what lasts—the living structure that abides when the temporary scaffolding of mere business and social contact has passed away.

A great business man who died lately began an address to his Association with the words, 'The true function of modern business is the making of men.' Jesus would go further, and say that the function of all social contacts is the creation of a society of friends. We are learning to-day that the true secret of success in business, as elsewhere, depends on the enriching of human values, on what makes for the construction of personality. It is coming home to us that all soulless work, work which treats men only as machines, and never permits our sympathy to pass out through business contacts to kindle the sense of brotherhood, is a bad investment, even for the money we spend on it.

In a great book by Dr. Schweitzer, he asks the question: What is wrong with modern civilization, and how can it be put right? And he comes to the conclusion that the true motive of a new civilization is what he calls reverence for life. It is the very message of Jesus.

There are many ways in which we can invest our lives in human treasure. If our work does not give us opportunity, we can invest our leisure. There are social agencies of all sorts in which we can take an interest. The whole movement towards social reform, better housing, better conditions, is part of this spirit of reverence for life. The creation of fellowship by international sympathy is another. The promotion of goodwill by a new outlook and attitude in industry is another. The work of the Church both at home and abroad, with all its opportunities for contacts with people, is another method of investing our life in making friends. As Schweitzer puts it, 'Reverence for life does not allow me to appropriate my own happiness. At moments I should like to enjoy myself without a care, but it brings before me thoughts of the misery I have seen or surmised. An uncomfortable doctrine prompts in whispered words, "You are happy, therefore you are called on to give up much." Whatever you have received more than others in health and talents, in ability and success, in harmonious surroundings, all this you must not take to yourself as a matter of course. In some way or other we must all live as men for men. Open your eyes and look for some man, or some work for the sake of men, which needs a little time and a little friendship, a little sympathy, a little sociability. Perhaps it is a lonely person, or an embittered person, or an inefficient person, to

whom you can be of help. Who can reckon all the ways in which that priceless fund of redeeming impulse is capable of exploitation? Therefore search and see if there is some place in which you can invest your humanity.' It is the very word of Jesus—'Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness.'

Let us think how Jesus spent His life. There are no limits to the career that might have been His when we think of His amazing qualities. It was a real tribute to Jesus that they wanted to take Him by force and make Him a King. But He was content to take twelve men, ordinary average men, and in quiet talks, and in all the other traffic of friendship, to put Himself into them, to redeem their personality from drift and futility, to help them out of their faults, to show them how to build their nature around the new centre of loyalty to Him. He gave Himself to them, and was content to make that the investment of His life. To this same kind of task He calls us in various ways. The life to which Christ calls us means sacrifice of leisure, of time, of money, of comfort. 'For if you stop to be kind, you must often swerve from your path.' But who will think of sacrifice in face of what the children of this generation fling away upon the things which perish? Who will think of sacrifice that looks at the Cross and what it meant for Jesus—and then at the Resurrection?

Somehow life has got to be spent. It is the greatest mistake to imagine that sacrifice is only demanded of the Christian man. In some way we all give life up. The real question is: Are we burying it in a grave, or are we sowing it in a field in which it will spring up into life eternal?[1]

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Great Adventurer.

'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'—1 Jn 4^{10}.

The phrase—'the propitiation for our sins'—sums up the meaning, and gives the valuation, of that career of Jesus of Nazareth in which Christians have believed, and maintained that they were able to discern the working of the living God who is their loving Father. It is borrowed from the language of ritual custom and sacrifice, which no one can afford to neglect who wishes to understand the genius of religion. Not one of those great representative writers who in the books of the New Testament have given to the world the classic presentation of Christianity but resorts to the same circle of ideas. The Epistle to the Hebrews, which moves from beginning to end among the analogies of the Mosaic covenant, is, of course, built upon the theory that the Levitical sacrifices were types in a conventional and representative system of what was actually accomplished in the world of reality. But St. Paul and St. Peter, though their minds are not confined to these narrow grooves, are no less emphatic in the use of sacrificial language to describe the work of Christ.

It is the cross of Jesus in which historical Christianity is centred. Nothing else but this could have suggested these analogies. Nothing else could have made the Son of Man, not the exponent of a religious system, but Himself the focus of religious worship, the new and living Way through which, as His disciples believed, they had access to God. However true it may be to say that Jesus left us an example that we should follow in His steps, however lofty the teaching of Him of whom it was declared that 'never man spake like this man,' the phenomenon which for nineteen centuries has been called Christianity rests upon the death of Jesus, conceived as a reconciling act through which the children of men are brought into fellowship with the Father. 'What is Christianity?' we ask with Dr. Harnack of Berlin. And with him we answer that the primitive community called Jesus its Lord, recognizing Him, that is, not primarily as a religious teacher but as the object of a religion, the channel through which they were actually brought into living fellowship with God, because He had sacrificed His life for it, and was even then sitting at the right hand of the Father.

We have only to make this clear, and at once we cut athwart some of the most cherished misconceptions of religion which have too often obscured the view even of those who pass for thoughtful men. It is regarded, not as the active response of the spirit of men to a work wrought on their behalf by a God who reveals Himself in action, but as the recognition of a spiritual Being, existing in a condition of static and unchanging repose, from whose nature and attributes the veil has now been lifted. Revelation is the disclosure of the Divine portrait, and, if miracles were wrought by Him in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, this was only to arrest attention and to convince the beholder that when he saw Jesus he was indeed gazing upon the Eternal God. And for those who, like ourselves, have inherited the habits of thought which result from the constant application of the scientific method, and who are

[1] J. Reid, *In Touch with Christ*, 182.

impressed with the uniformities rather than with the eccentricities of the physical order, the tendency to interrogate the spirit of Jesus in order to discover the ideas of God for which He stands, rather than to invest with precise and objective values even the salient events of His career, increases rather than declines.

Now, if there is one thing that the experience of life ought to teach us, surely it is this. Revelation of character, like happiness, is a by-product of existence, and not its object, a reflex result of action, and not its conscious purpose. A spider taught Bruce perseverance, but it would have astonished the spider to be told that this was its proper function. 'The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.' God does manifest Himself to the faithful and true heart in the facts of life. But they are the facts of life, not a cleverly constructed device for the conveyance of a special revelation. God does disclose Himself in the human conscience. But conscience is the judge and guide of men in the practical affairs of their daily conduct, not a private wire by which they receive intimations of the Eternal. Life is the chief concern of whatsoever lives, and thought is but that criticism of life by the aid of which they who are capable of its exercise are enabled to live more perfectly. If we would see God, we must watch Him as He works.

The first impression which the world conveys to the mind of him who observes it is that it goes on. It never continues in one stay. The second is, that in some sort this movement is a rational progress. However aimless our own lives may be, we are nevertheless engaged, moment by moment, in doing something, in using the material which surrounds us to give concrete reality to purposes that have their birth within the darkness of our own spirits. Life, as we know it, is neither the arbitrary exercise of unimpeded will, nor the stern, unbending operation of necessary causes that mock self-conscious personality under the guise of freedom. It is the construction of the future by the aid of a past progressively known and understood.

Such a view of the action of creative consciousness is not in the least invalidated by a full recognition of the stubborn resistance which the nature of the material affords. 'Even the gods cannot change the past,' said the old Greek poet. And this fact, hard as it may have been for human nature to learn the lesson, serves only to ennoble and enhance the value of persistent and persevering effort.

What is science but the patient study of things as they are, that Nature may be conquered by obeying it. The mighty forces of the world—the waters that devastate, the fires that consume, the angels stationed at the gates of Eden to keep the way of the Tree of Life—shall, indeed, become the observant ministers of human need; but they are not to be summoned with the clapping of hands. Dædalus will scale the heavens, but many an Icarus must fall headlong from the clouds with bleeding body and broken wing before the chariot of man's undismayed endeavour rides triumphant upon the wind. That is the story of creation from its first page until now. Have we any right so to define omnipotence as to leave no problems for God?

This, at any rate, is true; that Christianity proceeds on no such assumption. The record of Scripture is the story of how God has grappled with a great spiritual problem. Every man who knows anything of the plague of his own heart is aware that the most immediate, the most insistent, the most appalling problem that confronts the children of men is the problem of the human spirit. 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' is a cry wrung from the lips of thousands to whom the story of Adam is as mythical as that of Hercules. Nor will it be appeased by soothing assurances of a merciful Providence, which the facts of experience too often seem to deny. When we look at Jesus Christ we do not see in Him any answer to the great metaphysical and moral difficulties which underlie existence. We hail Him, not as our celestial philosopher, but as our Divine Redeemer. He is the response, not to our intellectual curiosity, but to our spiritual need. We see Love persistent until love prevails, winning its way to final triumph through failure, and opposition, and defeat, as the river cleaves its passage to the sea. We see obedience enslaving death itself, that vanquisher of love, and turning it into the means and instrument of its victory.

> Over the mountains
> And over the waves,
> Under the fountains
> And under the graves;
> Under floods that are deepest,
> Which Neptune obey;
> Over rocks that are steepest
> Love will find out the way.

Yes. God is the Great Adventurer. Christ is the Pilgrim of Love. The quest was none of His seeking. The problem was none of His setting. But He fainted not, neither was discouraged, till

He brought forth judgment unto victory. That, in briefest compass, is the faith of a Christian. Does it seem to some that such a religion moves in a narrower orbit than they would fain have assigned to it? Let us remember that the serviceableness of each instrument of human advancement is measured, not by the variety of the uses to which it may be put, but by the thoroughness with which it accomplishes its proper work. The days are not far past when men claimed for the methods of science that they would enter all doors in heaven and earth. Now that experience restricts it to a less ambitious path the sovereignty of science is none the less secure. So is it with religion. Christ is the Redeemer. He is 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.'[1]

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Stumbling-Blocks.

'Gather out the stones.'—Is 62^{10}.

The prophets of the Old Testament were men who spoke the mind of God for all time. The needs of men, their sins and sorrows, joys and hopes, recur through the generations. These ancient spokesmen of God teach lessons for us to learn.

Here this unknown prophet is rejoicing in the prospect of the return of a penitent people to the holy city of God. Jerusalem, that little city in a remote and tiny land, has become for all saints and seekers the type of the home of God, decked by the imagination of a seer with jewels and gold and pearl. And still the prophets of to-day are watching and working for the return of pilgrims and penitents to the home of God from which they have erred and strayed. To us comes the voice, for *we* are a people who walk along the highway towards the City where faith is the pearl of the gates and righteousness the gold of the streets.

Now, Eastern governments have never realized the value of permanent good roads. In the days of the prophet, as indeed is the case under Far Eastern rule to-day, whenever there was to be some great procession or some royal progress, all haste had to be made to prepare the worn, deep-rutted, dusty, stony track for the traffic of the important day. An army of workmen was sent out to prepare the way, to fill up the hollows, to make level the hillocks, to drain the pools, or to gather out the stones which would wound and weary the tender feet.

[1] J. G. Simpson, *Great Ideas of Religion*, 120.

For this preparation God's herald cries for men to go before, who shall take out of the way every stumbling-block, everything that can discourage or wound those who have set their faces to return to their God.

1. 'Gather out the stones.' That is the duty of each one of us who ventures to take on himself the name of Christ.

It is not always easy to respond to the call. Gathering stones out of the way while others are proudly keeping step in the advancing procession sometimes seems dull and unreasonable work. 'Why may we not simply be pilgrims? Why must we, who have already set our faces in the right direction, worry ourselves to increase the comfort or to ensure the perseverance of others?' Because a new spirit came into the world when God revealed Himself. When the first murderer heard the voice of conscience, he answered, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' But it was a murderer who said it, and the blood of his victim cried out against him. All the lessons which God in the Old Testament gave to that little Chosen People were to teach the duties of brotherhood. In his tiny area of farmstead and vineyard the Israelite was taught that if he saw his brother's ox or ass astray, he might not go his own way; he must in any case take the strayed beast and keep it for his brother. 'Thou mayest not hide thyself,' spake the Law of Moses. And Jesus Christ lifted up out of the limited realm of rustic agriculture the duty of self-sacrifice, and set the Golden Rule for ever in the light of His approval for the teaching of the world. That is to say, there is no such thing as an inert Christianity. As long as there are any difficulties in the road we have not only to walk along the road ourselves, but to look for the stones and take them out of the way of others.

The claim of God's Fatherhood and our Saviour's Brotherhood on us is to be keen of soul to see the special stone that will cut your neighbour's tender feet and swift and wise to take it away. Nor can we plead that it is sheer folly to be offended by such things. Our strength cannot be disdainful of the unreasonable fancies of a weakling. Christ, while we were yet sinners, unlovely weaklings, came and died for us. How terrible is His utterance to him who, instead of helping, casts a stumbling-block in the way of a soul! 'It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depth of the sea.'

2. In the prophet's days the gathering out of the stones was a very temporary process, and speedily the roads reverted to their old condition of morass

or desert sand. But Western skill has found a new use for the stones. Now we gather them out, then crush them, and finally, out of the crushed and conquered stones, we make the basis for the firm and smooth surface along which the carriage wheels of kings and the hurrying feet of children may go unhindered. There is no firmer foothold for a forgiven sinner than the crushed temptations of the past; no smoother road for the resolute penitent than the sins which the power of Christ has overcome. Our Saviour, when He sets us to gather out the stones from the road for our younger or weaker brethren, by His Holy Spirit not only saves from the wound, but gives afresh the power to go upon the way rejoicing. We rejoice to be the permanent roadmakers for our God.

3. And how is it all to be done? There is only one way, only one lesson with which every word of God ends.

We remember how one sad morning certain women were going with loving, bruised hearts to tend a body whose death meant despair to them. 'Oh,' said they, 'who shall roll away the stone for us?' and the gloom was even deeper than before. But when they reached the tomb, lo! the stone *was* rolled away. And when the stone was gone, they saw—no death, but an empty tomb, and a vision of angels, and, when they turned, a Living Lord. And life had a new power ever after.

That is the great stone to be gathered out of the road, the stone that hides the fact that Jesus Christ is alive to-day. How wondrous is the joy of rolling away that stone from the pathway of any soul, the joy of bringing a heart to the living Christ!

It is He always, He everywhere. And at last, when we stand before that Throne, where the results of life are made clear, what a joy to hear, as we look on some whom we have helped, that it is He again: 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me.'[1]

[1] W. T. A. Barber, *The Morning of Life*, 68.

The Rivers of Eden.

By Lieut.-Col. K. L. Stevenson, Scarborough.

In an article in The Expository Times of last June I endeavoured to show why Eridu should be considered as the site of the Garden of Eden; but in all the attempts that have been made to identify this site, the main difficulty has always been to locate the four rivers mentioned in Gn 2. Many solutions have been put forward, including rivers so far apart as the Ganges and the Nile; but none of them carries conviction, and the problem has been rather given up as insoluble. A great difficulty lies in the fact that the rivers are mentioned in a definite order, and previous solutions either ignore or fail to give any convincing reasons for this order. Nevertheless, if my arguments as to the site of the Garden be accepted, I think that the rivers fit into the theory very simply and logically.

One must remember that, in ancient times, the Gulf stretched very much farther inland than it does now. Eridu was close to the mouth of the Euphrates. Ur, Erech, Larsa, Larak, etc., were scattered along the coast-line, or very near to it. The Tigris and Euphrates did not meet, as they do now, but flowed independently into the sea. The main channel of the Euphrates was along the bed of what is now known as the Shatt-el-Kar: the Old Tigris along the bed of the Shatt-el-Hai. Both the Shatt-el-Kar and the Shatt-el-Hai now lose themselves in the marshes; but in ancient times they entered the sea at a point just south of Tel Abu Shahrain, and just north of Nasiriyeh, respectively.

In endeavouring to follow the description given by the author it is important to seek out his point of view. This, I think, is given by the manner in which he describes the land of Havilah. It is the country where one can purchase certain precious commodities. Either he was a trader himself, and had first-hand knowledge of Havilah from a trader's point of view, or he had obtained his information from traders who had been there. The text states that: 'A river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads—Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates.' If Eridu be the site of the Garden, the river which watered it is clear. It was the Euphrates. Its dried-up estuary may still be seen passing close to the mound of Tel Abu Shahrain.

Now, as to the four heads or mouths. If we