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we show in particular individuals and the services we render to them that our love of humanity shows itself.

For the rest, love is adequate both for the life which now is and for that which is to come. Prophecies and tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away, but love is a principle of eternal value,

and shall endure for ever. As love is a component of the eternal life realizable here and now, so it enters into the eternal life which shall be realized beyond the veil. As even in the present we pass out of death into life because we love the brethren, so in the future we shall find a heaven of moral opportunity, of wider horizons, of larger and enlarging service.

The Words from the Cross.

III. 'Woman, behold thy son! . . . Behold thy mother!' (Jn. xix. 26, 27).

BY PROFESSOR A. J. GOSSIP, D.D., GLASGOW.

If the editors will chivalrously give me leave to say so, frankly I dislike and shrink from sermons upon the Words from the Cross—have never yet, I think, been guilty of them—and, if my copy of this magazine fell open at this page, would never dream of pausing at it, but would hurriedly pass on to something else; which, with all gravity, I advise you too to do.

For if in some august cathedral, with memories of mighty spirits and momentous happenings brooding in every corner, and the air athrill and instinct with the very presence of the Lord God of our fathers, the soul is jarred and outraged by the breaking in upon these sanctities of the inane comments of some loud and far-carrying Western voice, is rudely dunted back to earth by the mechanical prosing of the guide's recital, which may be true enough, but none the less is horribly inadequate and deadening and soulless, how much more out of place is it to conduct parties over Calvary, to point and whisper there, to break that awesome silence in which the Master's agony is deepening to its tremendous climax with our poor superficial comments upon sayings that are not meant, as I feel, to be taken into our hands, and turned round, and examined in cold blood, but rather to be heard upon our knees, and with hearts hushed and tensely still.

Rupert Brooke had an unspiritual nature. But once the magic of the woods laid hold on him, till the key to the solutions of this baffling life of ours seemed fairly put into his hand. Another moment,

and, the closed door open at last, he would be at the vital heart of things, he felt. And just then, most inopportunistly, there came a crashing through the branches, and the swishing of a skirt, and, the key lost for ever, 'a flat, clear voice' was mouthing 'cheerful, clear, flat platitudes.'

You came and quacked beside me in the wood.
You said, 'The view from here is very good.'
You said, 'It's nice to be alone a bit.'
And, 'How the days are drawing out,' you said.
You said, 'The sunset's pretty, isn't it?'

By God! I wish—I wish that you were dead!

I am uneasy and unhappy lest my intrusion also is a profanation; lest, fingering these most holy of things, I dim for some their lustre, belittle them, and hide their deeps for some unwary souls; lest outraged spirits, goaded beyond endurance, turn on me, crying out in a fierce, sheer pain, 'If not for our sake, then for God's sake, and in common decency, keep quiet here.'

Every one knows that Jeremy Taylor has two treatises, one upon Holy Living, which is still popular, one upon Holy Dying, of which nowadays little is heard. And that is symptomatic. For the centre of gravity of things has shifted notably from death to life. Once on a day men's hearts, if they were serious at all, looked forward very solemnly to that tremendous moment, surely waiting for us all, when for us life will be over, and, the dear faces round us fading from our dimming eyes, we must rise up, and go our lonely

way, leaving this homely earth with its familiar ways, adventuring forth into that vast unknown, where all we thought and did and were is waiting for us, like a lovely maiden or a repulsive hag, so Zoroaster thought, to lead us to our natural destiny.

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,
Unwilling, alone we embark,
And the things we have seen and have known and
have heard of fail us.

Or, if it is not as bad as that for a Christian man—Why should it be? How can it be?—at least all life, thought Plato, ought to be, and for a wise soul is, a long and careful preparation for that epoch-making hour. But there has come reaction. 'There is nothing,' says Spinoza, 'on which a free man lets his thoughts dwell less than on death: for true wisdom is a meditation, not on death, but on life.' The modern mind applauds that loudly. And indeed timid souls were wont to let themselves become not a little fussy and fidgety and unhealthily self-centred in this matter. Goethe, for his part, remarking that ever-recurring reminder on innumerable gravestones *Memento mori*, thought it over-grim, and psychologically unsound and pernicious. Rather be you sure you are really alive, he counselled. Not unwisely surely. For, because the evening is certain to fall, why should we not use the hours of generous sunshine now? Death must soon knock upon our door. But meantime here is this rich life that God has planned for us; let us use it eagerly and heartily and thoroughly: and here this world of men and women round us whom we can befriend and help, let us be up and at it then; and so when for us the end here comes, pass over to the other side, eager for what God's loving-kindness has ready and waiting for us there. 'Death doesn't count,' wrote Nettleship. By which I take it that he meant—here is this chapter of our life: and by and by there will result another out of it. And who bothers about the little space of blank white paper between the two? And that is all death is. It is the story that matters. Let us get on with it, and make it a brave tale. And there is truth in that.

Yet death is too majestic by far to be shouldered aside as a mere triviality. And, however I may slip in minor things, I covet to carry through that great event with dignity and honour. And who can teach, or can inspire, us so to do like Jesus Christ, our wonderful Lord, who was perfection lived; aye, and perfection died? Dear

old Epictetus tells us that he had his wishes about death. Among them these. 'I should like best,' he said, 'that it should find me busy at something noble and beneficent and for the good of all mankind.' And did not Christ die for the world; and has He not, so dying, lifted it up bodily far nearer holiness and God? 'But, since that is but little likely to befall me,' adds the wise philosopher, 'I should choose next to go out rendering what is due to every relation in life.' And here is our amazing Master, saving a world and yet remembering the welfare of His mother, thinking out a home and future for her, after He was gone. So true is it that, wherever you come on Christ, and whatever test you may apply to Him, He is what the next greatest to Him only dreamed and hoped and longed to be. For think out the background of these sayings—the body racked in every limb by an excruciating agony all but past bearing; and worse, far worse, that horror of gross darkness enveloping His very soul: this whole great world's salvation hanging in the balances, dependent on His faith, tested there to the uttermost, with nothing left for it to clutch at or cling to, yet still audaciously believing. And even there, and even then, in that appalling responsibility, He had a mind lifted above Himself, serene and calm enough to think and pray, and plan for others! 'Father, forgive them.' 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' 'Woman, behold thy son! Son, behold thy mother!'

Let it be granted to me in dying to have a spirit after that mighty type; unflustered, when the darkness falls, because too sure of God to dream of doubting Him; not fidgeting about itself, but lying confidently in His loving hands; not hurriedly preparing, feverishly stamping in one's goods, but packed, and waiting for the tide, with heaps of time for others; unselfish even through that last and trying scene, when even the poorest of us for once holds the centre of the stage; and with a courage big enough to smother the pain down into the silence of one's own being, to smile, and enter eagerly into the happiness and interests of those about us to the very end, thinking and planning about them, and not ourselves, after our Lord's brave way; and so prove death is not a squalid or a pitiful thing, but brave and gallant and enviable.

And how is this to be attained? Only, so I suspect, by putting on the Lord Christ now, and learning to practise His unselfishness in the small nothings of our daily living.

For does a crisis ever do more than reveal a man: does it ever really make him? Perhaps sometimes

it may. That same Rupert Brooke had a nasty mind, and dirty fingers that soiled even the loveliest things he touched. Yet the war came, and, like a garment that fell from him, suddenly he stood there a clean soul, ardent for self-sacrifice.

But, as a rule, it is the habit of a lifetime that flames into vividness in the hot flames of trial. So was it with our Lord. All His days He had gone about doing good, in sheer forgetfulness of self; and so, even when they had nailed down His hands and feet, so that they could do nothing more, the habit of His life still held; and His heart, left free, ran out in its accustomed way to needy, desperate, sinful folk. And you and I, so shabby and self-centred and unlike Him, had better kneel and cry, 'Dear Lord, grant us Thy faith in God, Thy courage, something of the splendour of Thy nature, that we may learn to live and die like Thee.' And if we really mean it, and will take it, He will grant us even that.

There are those who tell us these days that our morality is a quaintly obsolete affair, a garment so preposterously old-fashioned that up-to-date people would blush to be seen wearing it: that the recognized sanctities, like marriage and the family, have had their day, and ought now to be left behind, like other barbarisms that we have outgrown: that our natural affections are only a subtle selfishness, a loving of our own, and must now be replaced by something wider, and less personal, and much more catholic. So a noisy clique keeps shouting, some of them to attract attention (still practising the stale old trick that Tolstoi pilloried forty years ago), some of them generalizing from their own mean souls or unhappy experiences without any warrant, some of them mistaking the fusty atmosphere of the divorce courts for the free air of God, all of them fancying themselves as big and very fine, and quite unconscious that the average man, fixedly regarding them, has thoroughly made up his mind they are a grubby company, and so turns home to watch his wife with the old pride, and toss his bairn with the old happiness, with no more intention of raising a hand to demolish these blessed things than of flaying himself alive from head to foot; though certain timorous souls are badly scared. Barth, for example, who is always shouting something at the full pitch of his voice, bawls this too hoarsely, with his leather lungs, that the old ethics are down, and gone!

Such revolutionaries gain no manner of support from Christ. Assuredly He underlines that there are calls of God that must come first, that take

precedence of the claims even of father and mother, even of wife and child. But, on the other hand, it looks at least as if, with His heart on fire to save a world, He delayed the opening of His mission till the family duties God had laid on Him were fully met, until some other of the brothers was ready to take up His task at home. And certainly on Calvary the claims of natural affection were conceded to the full. There were many women there; but one among them was His mother, on whose lap He had heard of God, at whose knee He had learned to pray, whose love and care had filled His childhood, and of her He thought first and specially. D'Alembert alleged that he preferred his family to himself, and his nation to his family, and humanity to his nation. Which pompous saying I take leave gravely to doubt. In any case, it was not our Lord's method. Rousseau prates of the rights of man, and yet denies the plainest and most fundamental of them to his own offspring, sneaking through the dark to leave his babies on the doorstep of the foundling hospital: and with that the whole man grows suspect. For if he failed his flesh and blood, obviously he is not dependable towards any, at a pinch, whatever their rights be. But Christ, far from abolishing the natural affections, strengthened, deepened, consecrated them, and so made them a basis upon which to stand and reach out towards something wider and more general. To Him a friend is not a mere acquaintance with whom one passes the time, but one who opens his whole mind to you, and is prepared to give his life for you. That is how we are to bear ourselves towards every one. But we learn it among our friends. To Christ a grumpy brother is an abortion and monstrosity. We are to be real brothers to our fellows; and what that means ought to be taught us in the Christian family. With the responsibility of a whole desperate world's salvation weighing upon His heart, our Lord put first the simple homely duties of a son; and if we are forgetting these, can we be true to Him? Yet, as a generation, are we not so doing? Now that the door out of their old cramped life stands open, it is natural for a young woman to crave an independent income and the interest down at the office, but if her invalid mother's days are long and very dull, I wonder how Christ judges that! To vote and attend meetings and the like is for some quite exciting, but is it really patriotic to do only that, and selfishly decline to bear the burden of the next generation, with the result that there are rows and rows of bungalows each with its little garage, and its little

car, and not a pram, or hardly one, among the lot ; which, of course, means race suicide. Churchiness is for some a hobby, and the more meetings the merrier. But what about the folk at home ? If John had reached the heavenly places, and explained that he had been so busy working for Christ and His kingdom, that he had had no time to bother about His mother, I do not think that Christ's ' Well done ! ' would have been very hearty. The little duties are often the hardest ; yet a religion that breaks down at home is a vain thing.

The primal duties shine aloft like stars,
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of man, like flowers.

And we had better not forget that, if it was in the thick darkness upon Calvary that there flamed out the mighty constellations by which ever since humanity has steered, the homely virtues too, flower bravely on that bleak hillside. They also are a real and an essential part of Christlikeness. ' Woman, behold thy son ! '

But, perhaps, in fairness this ought to be given a wider application. We are looking a little uneasily at one another in the Church these days, because we are divided into two parties, with aims dissimilar, or not quite parallel. The one lays the full emphasis upon the culture of the soul, and the upbuilding of a Christian character, thinks that, according to the standard of the Master, material things are so insignificant, that it is less than loyal to Him for His Church to spend itself to secure bigger wages or shorter hours or increased comfort for the folk around it, that while it is well enough, imperative indeed, that each of us, face to face with Christ, should feel that we must catch His spirit, and live and spend ourselves and share with others, far more than we do, it is not so well that these others should gather upon Calvary as at a kind of Hyde Park, where the disaffected air their grievances, and claim their rights, forgetting that that solemn symbol in the midst speaks, not of rights, but sacrifice ; so smothering the very spirit of Christ's movement, and changing Him, against His will, into a social leader, a political reformer, anything, everything, but what He was, choosing it with deliberation over against these other things that were eagerly thrust on Him then too, a healer of the individual soul. And there are Scripture passages, whose meaning is unchallengeable, upon which such minds can found.

While the other section is so hurt by the grievous wrongs of men and women and bairns round them,

by the mean streets that are their world, by the stunted existences that are their portion in this hugely fascinating earth God planned for them no less than us, crowded with interests in most of which they have too small a share, by the deadly monotony of their unchanging days, luring them into foolishness and sin which might, they think, splash some touch of colour into the dead drabness of it all, by the feeling that these who are God's children ought to have more in this that is their Father's house ; and with that they leap up, and, in a clean burning anger, demand, in the name of Christ, that it must all come down, this impossible way of things, and be rebuilt really upon His law of love ; like Tagore shrinking from our Western civilization as ' a thing of the devil,' beautiful upon the surface, marvellous in its mastery over mechanism and the forces of Nature, but deadening and choking to the soul. And they, too, can confidently call as witnesses Scriptures that stare at us out of both Gospel and Epistle.

Of course, it is really a question of where to lay the emphasis. With Aristotle's mean, ' the nicely calculated less or more,' our faith would seem to have nothing to do, because it is a passion, an enthusiasm, that adventures everything, and flings its very life away unreckoningly. And yet one has to pick one's path through the extremes of things on either side, or else be bogged and hindered. Long ago Philo saw these same two parties tugging against each other, as they are doing now. ' There are some,' he said, ' who have attached themselves to one of these devotions, and neglected the other. For, being filled with a sense of piety, they have preferred that to all other interests, and devoted the whole of their lives to the service of God : while others have adhered simply to their connexion with men in social zeal, affording all alike the use of their possessions, and also, as far as possible, alleviating their woes. The latter you might properly call philanthropic persons, the former devout. But they are only semi-good, for those alone are perfect who have a reputation in both departments.' But when men argue that material welfare and material rights lie outside of the province of a society which exists to bring spiritual things to men's forgetful minds, and to induce them to give life to gaining these, here in this passage is proof, is it not, that at the most awful moment of the Master's life, or indeed in the whole range of human history, with the world's last desperate chance dependent upon Him, with God and the devil fairly at grips in the decisive conflict, even then our Lord thought of His mother's

comfort, planned a home for her; and if we haughtily pass by upon the other side, accounting social wrongs too trivial for our spiritual eyes to notice, may not the Christ who has told us that His followers are as dear to Him as mother or sister or brother, look at us sternly at the last, and say, 'It was Mine, yes, it was I Myself, that you passed by and left to manage as best I could alone. My brothers and my sisters, yes, Myself, you failed to help; I whom you pinned down to struggle in the mean streets, while you were praying to Me in your splendid churches; depart from Me, you who have shown you are no friends of Mine.'

Lastly, there is this to say that our Lord's mother had not made things easier for Him; had, indeed, hurt Him as no other ever did, not even the Baptist when he staggered, not even Peter when he failed, not even Judas when he fell. It was her hand that dealt Him that most cruel blow that busy day when there was a movement and a pushing out on the fringes of the crowd, and it was told Him that His mother and brethren had come for Him, were saying that there was no real harm in Him, that He must have gone off His head, but they would take Him home and keep Him safe, and He would never bother anybody any more. She loved Him, or she would not have been there upon Calvary: but she did not understand Him, at times thought that He was crazy. And He forgot all that, remembered only the old love, and the love that was breaking her heart now, and all the pain that He had had to bring into her life, and

looked upon her very lovingly, and even in His agony thought out and found for her a home.

We too have failed Him shamelessly, have hurt Him far more than we know, have been just inexcusable; and He forgets all that, and treasures the poor broken bits of faith and of affection we have sometimes brought Him, chose to go to His Cross for us. I hated Him, says Paul, I persecuted Him, I gave my whole life to the rooting out of everything that He holds dear, and 'he loved me, and gave himself for me.' 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,' He told that blundering little group who had so often hindered Him, and were upon the point of breaking altogether. I chose you, and I stand to it. And looking out at the Beyond, for Himself He asked only this, 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am,' knew He would miss them even there, had little wish for glory except that He might share it too with them.

And to us also He clings in that same unbelievably loyal way, loves on whatever we may do, will not be turned from that. And when at last we reach the other side, and stand there muddy and ashamed, and very conscious how unlike we are to all these clean and shining spirits round us, eagerly He will come to us, with outstretched hands and happy face, and let us see how much it means to Him that we are there. I know it, because I have proved it; because He has done that to me again, and yet again, and still again. And He is 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'

Literature.

MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

SURELY it is an unhappy fact that it is only now, nearly sixty years after his death, that there appears the life of Merle D'Aubigné. Had it been published fifty years ago, there would have been an uncountable public eagerly waiting for it. For the famous History of the Reformation simply swept the world, and ran like wild-fire through the earth, and cities were called after him, and Merle became a favourite name for children of both sexes, and people watched for the next number of the book as they did for the Waverley Novels, or the green monthly Dickens. But the world keeps moving on, and something else

is always happening to catch and hold the eyes, and one fears that the great time for this book is over.

It is well written, with the snap and sparkle and lucidity of the French mind, and not a little eloquence and skill. For Mme. Biéler, a daughter of the historian, has inherited a goodly portion of the family gifts. The title is, perhaps, unfortunate—*Une Famille du Refuge* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott; 5s. net). We are frankly informed that it was Galsworthy and his saga that suggested leading up to the main figure through the history of five generations of the family. It makes a stirring tale enough, swiftly put through; but there is only the