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imaginary winged horse on which Muhammad is supposed to have made 'the night journey' from Mecca to Jerusalem. On the rock within the Great Mosque they show to-day the mark of the hoof of the horse as struck by it on mounting for the return journey, and it was to this part of the Temple Court or Mosque of Omar that the designation was always given. The attempt to transfer the name to another site for evidence purposes can only be regarded as a proof of insincerity. But, as we have indicated, the claims made are quite modern, their ground is intangible, and the evidences are mere assertions.

#### CONCLUSION.

From the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 the Jew could not, and cannot, enter the Temple Court. As a substitute for that ancient shrine he has used all down through the past nineteen centuries the one accessible, convenient portion of the Western Wall. Through all the centuries his Claim of Right in that meeting-place as the Central Shrine of his Faith has been unchallenged. In times of local tyranny he was sometimes forbidden to approach

even the city itself, and we learn of his being sometimes compelled to secure access by payment. There can be little doubt, however, that this was a despotic imposition, and if modern claims of this nature were made, it ought to be made very clear what was the nature of such a tax, and whither the money went. There seems to have been in former times a greater free space around the wall, as indicated by our quotation from 1495. That seems to have been encroached upon, and it is worthy of note that the Moslems dwelling around, and who are playing so great a part in this movement, are themselves immigrants as their name, Moghrabiyeh, or Westerns, indicates, they having come from various places in North Africa during the nineteenth century.

The Western Wall, or Wailing Place, is the most ancient and most sacred devotional shrine of the Jew. He possessed and worshipped at it centuries before Islam came into existence. He has a prescriptive right of nineteen centuries' duration in it, and what man can show a better claim than that to anything on earth? Every principle of righteousness and honour requires the recognition of his unique claim.

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## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

#### A Temperance Talk.

BY THE REVEREND F. J. ASHLEY, JOHANNESBURG.

'It biteth like a serpent.'—Pr 23<sup>32</sup>.

'Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.'—Eph 6<sup>17</sup>.

IF we could get rid all at once of the things we don't like, how good life would be! There was a Roman emperor long ago who wished his enemies had but one neck so that he could kill them all with one blow. But then, he forgot one thing, that he would have had to kill himself as well, for he was his own worst enemy. He was an example of what we mean when we say that men's worst enemies are often their own desires, such as stealing, cheating, lying, gambling, and drunkenness. I want to talk about this last one, for he has been an enemy of man for ages and ages. So great and strong is he that we can't help wishing he had only one neck, and then, even if it were the neck of a dragon breathing fire, we could soon find a

George, or Patrick, or Ian, or David who would set out and make short work of him. But it is difficult to talk about enemies you can't see, and so in olden days, to help their imaginations, men gave forms to them. Chief of them all is Satan, who is the father of all sins; but nobody has seen even Satan walking about the streets, and so men thought of some terrible beast by which to describe him, and St. Peter tells us the devil is a roaring lion going about seeking victims to devour.

Here drink is likened to a snake, and that is a creature even more feared than a lion. 'Look out, a snake!' I don't know any cry that makes a man jump more. Most white people living in the wilds keep a snake-bite outfit handy, as thousands of people die from snake-bite every year. Remember it has been so for thousands of years, and then you can understand why it is instinctive with us to shudder when we see one, and why, when the old Hebrew writers wanted to tell how sin came into the world, they were sure it must have been through the creepiest and most cunning creature.

Else, why was the snake so feared and hated? You see, a lion or tiger or elephant is big enough to be seen, and you generally know when they're about; but a snake! It may be in the long grass, among the stones of a kopje, or curled round the branch of a tree, or under a bush, or anywhere; it may even get into a house unknown. And wherever it is it sees you first and is ready for you if you blunder on it.

The natives of Africa and India and South America, walking barefoot, are likely to step on snakes, and, being bare-headed, they are often struck from above. But they have even a more deadly enemy than snakes or lions, and that is strong drink. A wise old native once said to me, 'Drink is the snake in the grass for my people. It steals away their brains.' Now that sounds like a mixed metaphor, and if you wrote it at school in a composition exercise, it would probably lose you marks. Yet he knew what he was saying, for when a man is bitten he feels his brain going to sleep—the effect of the poison as it runs through his blood swiftly numbs him. And there could not be a better description of the nature of drink and the way it steals a man's senses, especially because, when he recovers from his stupor, he wants to take it again. He becomes its slave. Now a missionary friend of mine who grew up amongst African natives told me of a very interesting way his boy friends dealt with a very dreaded snake, the green mamba, a snake so deadly that it is a matter of honour to kill one whenever it is seen. Sometimes the boys would see one high up in a tree, and then they would hollow out a pumpkin, one would fit it tightly on his head like a helmet, take a stout stick in his hand and climb up towards the snake. The snake gets angry, of course, and sways its head about ready to strike, and then, as soon as he is within reach, the boy stretches up his head and the snake strikes! Just what the boy wanted it to do, for the fangs stick fast in the pumpkin and the snake is helpless. One blow of the stick, its back is broken and pumpkin and snake go hurtling to the ground, where the other boys, dancing and yelling, soon finish off the snake. Now, can you picture a better illustration of St. Paul's helmet of salvation and sword of the Spirit? The boy was armed for defence and attack, but I often marvel at the nerve of the first boy who tried that trick.

Every Christian should be armed for defence and attack, for Christianity is not merely dodging the things that may harm ourselves, but making our lives a crusade against evils that harm others.

### Rudders.

BY THE REVEREND S. GREER, M.A., AYR.

'My father, thou art the guide of my youth.'—Jer 3<sup>4</sup>.

A funny thing, isn't it, that a rudder can make a huge liner go where it likes, and without a rudder it can't go anywhere.

That was what happened to the S.S. *Raa* some winters ago, and they had to send out a wireless warning to shipping: 'Dangerous to navigation. The *Raa* with engines still running. Position, four miles south of Folkestone.' The *Raa* had got into collision in the Channel, owing to the fog, and was abandoned by her crew. Unfortunately they forgot to stop her engines, so she went racing about the Channel, and the tugs which went out to take charge of her were unable to find her in the fog, and had to give up the search in case they should be rammed by this monster of the sea. By and by she fortunately sank. But you can imagine the horror of this ship, rushing through the water, her propellers whirling, yawing from one point of the compass to another, and all in a dense fog. Power in her engines, steam in her boiler, but no guiding hand on the helm. Here was power without direction, strength without control.

There is one man in the Old Testament whom that phrase just exactly describes—'strength without control'—'Samson' his mother called him, meaning 'The Sunny boy,' because I expect he lay in her arms with a smile which looked like a captive sunbeam, and gurgled with content. He grew up impulsive, overflowing with high spirits—killing a lion, and then making a joke of it. What energy there was in him, what untamed power, what roystering feats he carried through! But of control Samson had none. Power in the engine, fuel in the furnace, but, alas, no hand on the helm. One of the gladdest stories in the Bible, and one of the saddest.

What splendid powers there are in you young folk. How sure you are of yourselves! What uncurbed energy, mocking at barriers! What a sense of mastery, what adventurousness! How much you can make of life, and how far you can go—if you have a rudder. Now *we* fit rudders here, in church and Sunday school; big rudders for big folks, and little ones for little folk.

Some stupid people talk as if it were dull to keep always a straight course. They think it is more exciting to run loose, and go as they like. I wonder if they ever tried to steer a straight course on a river? If they did they wouldn't talk of

going straight as dull. Any one can yaw about from side to side, and bump into everybody. It takes a good man to go dead straight—keen eye, cool nerve, and a steady hand on the tiller.

There's a signal, given with two flags at the mast-head, which a ship flies when she enters a great river, and wants a pilot. Seeing that signal a boat darts out from the pilot-station, and presently the pilot is aboard, and the ship proceeds under his control. What about having the Lord Christ as your Pilot? What a sense of confidence you have when you feel His strong brave presence, and know that His hand is on your helm.

### *The Christian Year.*

#### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

##### **How what's in comes out.**

'For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.'—Mt 10<sup>26</sup>.

St. Paul speaks somewhere of 'the goodness and severity of God'; the Gospels leave upon our minds a sense of the goodness and severity of Jesus. For a long time now and very properly, we have all been dwelling upon those aspects of His teaching which are merely generous and benevolent. Or, if we recalled any words of His which are severe and threatening, they have been words which apply to those who act harshly towards their fellow-men, and so even those severe quotations strengthened the case for Christ's general benevolence. And yet, no one can read the Gospels without encountering words like that of our text which take us back to the Hebrew tradition of moral retribution, reminding us, with the tone of many a passage from the Psalms, that we live in a world where things are related one to another, actions to reactions, deeds to consequences, and thought to life.

These words become all the more serious when we perceive that our Lord in using them is not uttering a threat, but is simply stating a fact. A threat: why, that is something which we may avoid. Something may turn up in our favour to save us from consequences which, we may admit, are the usual consequences. Whether or not a mere threat will come true depends upon circumstances, upon time and chance, and any one of the necessary conditions may fail to act at the right moment, so that the work of retribution may be delayed for a time, or spoiled altogether. But it is quite different in the case of a fact. A fact is a fact. A fact is

a thing which has already happened, though we may have to wait for a time before we realize all that has happened.

In these severe words of Jesus, our Lord is saying in effect that what is in comes out; that we are all of us steadily becoming what all the time we are; that our deeper self is all the time gaining upon our more obvious self. We are apt to think that what we are becoming is the effect upon us of circumstances, but that is never quite the case. Before circumstances can have any decisive effect upon us something within ourselves must co-operate or assent.

When that wild man, Shimei, the son of Gera, cursed David and threw stones at him, it made Joab, who heard him, furious; but it made David, who also heard him, gentle. For a moment the voice of David took on the very tone which we hear on the lips of Stephen as he sank under the stones, the very tone of the voice of our Lord Himself, as His life ebbed from Him on the Cross. 'Let me go over and cut off that dog's head,' said Joab. 'No, no,' said David, 'let him alone. He is doing me good.' The difference in the two expressions had its source in the difference at the moment in the souls of the two men. In each case, what was in came out.

In the New Testament it is a frequent prayer, and forms one of the great benedictions, that Christ Himself would come and guard the heart and mind of those who are seeking to obey Him and to hold their ground in this actual world. And again and again an Apostle, writing to a group of Christian people, especially to those who have just begun their Christian life, will urge them to take care of their thoughts, promising that their actions will take care of themselves. And indeed an action is just a thought made visible. So we may even say that every day we live is a day of judgment for each of us; for it is a day of self-revelation. We can none of us help giving ourselves away. At the Final Judgment it may very well be that there will be no need for God to pronounce judgment upon us. Standing there we shall betray ourselves. And so Francis Thompson has a profound prayer that in the Great Assizes God may judge us not with our eyes but with His own.

It is quite true that we have all the power to a certain extent to check the tendency of our private life to betray itself. We may have sudden impulses which we may as suddenly control, driving them back into the chambers of our spirit. There are many influences round about us which help to keep our interior life in check, so that it expresses

itself as we choose it shall. But it is not a sound condition for any of us to be in when we have to rely upon our own second thoughts, or upon the retributions of society, to save us from ourselves. Surely the only honourable condition for a man to be in is that condition in which he has nothing within him to conceal, when the deepest and truest thing about him is something of such a kind that he would not mind the whole world knowing about it.

We know what a haunted life a man leads whose affairs rest upon no honourable and sound basis, whose good name in the eyes of the world is dependent upon the favour of this one and the silence of another, so that each day is occupied with plans and subterfuges for avoiding detection. That is not life at all; and the great dramas of the world's literature are so many cases to illustrate that rather than endure such a condition for more than a season a man will prefer to die. Like Ajax, he will ask for light, though he perish in the light.

It is a thing not to be questioned, further, that as we get older we lose the power of keeping back the true expression of ourselves. It may be, that as we get older we seem to ourselves to be beyond the reach of criticism. People, we suppose, have not the power now to harm us or to hinder us such as they had when we were younger. This may explain how it comes to pass that men are apt to break down not when they are climbing, but when they have reached the object of their ambition. But, quite apart from that, it is enough to remember that we all have ourselves as we use ourselves. If, in secret, we have been sowing to some lower way, later on the miserable harvest appears. Happily, the converse is also true. If in the days of our sowing, the days of strong passion, of ideals, of youth, when our nervous system, which is the body of our true spirit, was susceptible and creative—if in these days we maintained the good fight and contested with the devil every inch of space in those inner chambers, then at evening, it is promised, there shall be light.

Now and then we are shocked to learn that some one who stood in the general opinion for all that was honourable, has suddenly collapsed. Good men hearing such things are silent. For a moment our own personal security seems to shake. How did such a thing happen? We cannot say. This, however, we know, and we must believe it, not indeed that we may judge others, but that we may stand upon our own guard—an action, however sudden, is never really irrelevant or discontinuous to our habitual life. Every action had its secret

preparation. We judge no man, but we are here to judge ourselves; and the use to which we ought to put those tragic failures which are suddenly announced, is to see to it that we have no perilous stuff lying about the chambers of our soul, such as a sudden spark might kindle, overwhelming us in the glare.

The fact is, there are all sorts of things coiled up within each of us, and we are not safe until we have an absolute Master in the depths of our spirit.

'The heart aye's the part aye That mak's us right or wrang,' so said Burns.

'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of the heart are the issues of life,' so said a Psalmist.

'Whatsoever things are pure, true, honourable, lovely, . . . keep thinking on these things and the God of peace shall be with you,' so said an Apostle.<sup>1</sup>

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

#### The Shadow Christ.

'The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.'—Jer 1<sup>11</sup>.

There are classic men as there are classic books. The classic man is one who, speaking to his own age, strikes a note so deep, and true, and haunting that it sounds for ever; and such a man is the great prophet. Isaiah and Savonarola may deal with civic affairs, St. Paul and Luther with the freedom of the soul, Ezekiel and Augustine with the outward altar, St. John and Bunyan with the passion for perfection; but underneath all diversities of gift and testimony they bear witness for the Eternal, uniting the two tokens of a god-illuminated man. They turn the hearts of the fathers to their sons, and the hearts of the sons to their fathers; that is, they dispose the old to moral forwardness, to reverence for the new, and the young to spiritual wisdom, to reverence for the age-long values of the past. All who truly speak in the name of God, and as for His will, unite a profound piety with an unconquerable hope.

No other race can show a nobler dynasty of moral genius than the Hebrew; and in their long, troubled, revealing history there is no figure more heroic, none at once more tragic and triumphant than Jeremiah. Unfortunately, a shallow wit has misread his life, making him appear as a lachrymose weakling, tender and tearful, and so he is portrayed. He was, indeed, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but he was no more a 'weeping prophet'

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Hutton, *Our Ambiguous Life*, 106.

because he may have written the Lamentations that bear his name than Tennyson was a weeping poet because he wrote 'In Memoriam,' or Milton because he wrote 'Lycidas.' If his head was a fountain of tears there was reason for it, because he was doomed to the saddest fate that may befall a great, true-hearted, clear-minded man—the fate, that is, of living in an age of decay, ruin, and disaster, seeing it all, warning his people against it, but powerless to stay or avert it. History knows no darker tragedy, and therefore no figure grander, more lonely, more pathetic than the Suffering Servant of God.

All spiritual experience is mysterious, but with the prophet-soul the mystery deepens because his nature is more open to the Unseen—as we may see in the call of Jeremiah. In Palestine the almond-tree puts forth its buds early, and is the first tree to prophesy the coming of spring—the Hebrews called it the Watchful Tree. One day, stirred in spirit, the young Jeremiah walked in the fields, drinking in the early beauty of the Flowers of Watchfulness, and there flashed into his mind the thought of God as the Great Watcher. In a mood dross-drained and holy, wakefulness to natural beauty lifted him into the presence of One who never sleeps nor slumbers, and the prophet plighted his faith in a vision that never faded amid all the dark confusions of his life. Times came when the inequalities of life, the welfare of the wicked, and the downfall of his nation, forced upon him keen questionings; but if his life was wintry, like the watchful tree he kept always the prophecy of spring.

Truly he was a man of like passions with ourselves, as all the great ones are, albeit endowed with the sorrowful and great gift of prophecy, responsive to God as an Æolian harp to the wind, and eager to discover and obey His will. He saw clearly the hardships, the persecutions, the ostracism, and the defeats that awaited him, as they await every great and sane soul in a day of insanity. He was keenly aware of qualities in himself that hindered rather than helped his work, the questioning that weakened action, the hunger for a fellowship denied, the feeling of helplessness in the presence of his task. Yet he walked a straight course through a long, dangerous career, kept his faith in God, and became one of those sons of the Spirit whose influence never dies.

What wonder that this tormented man made discoveries of the power and possibilities of prayer, such as no one had made before? None before him had so clearly passed beyond perdition into

that larger, deeper field of fellowship with God. Jeremiah asked little; he prayed much. He was the father of that truer, profounder prayer which does not ask for things, but for God; not for gifts, but for the Giver. It was this mastery of the uses of prayer that made him so clear-sighted a leader, who did not mistake a reformation for a regeneration, or the form for the reality. Out of sorrow, out of ruin, out of defeat he rose victorious and became a prophet of the Eternal Religion.<sup>1</sup>

In Jeremiah's mind there were two opposite beliefs. The first was belief in God's justice and holiness and hatred of sin, and therefore he believed in the destruction of Israel. The nation was rotten at heart. He saw that corruption was the prelude to death. Israel must be scattered and winnowed as in a threshing-machine. Yet along with that strong moral conviction there was faith in God's promise. Their history, he was assured, would not go for nothing, and therefore he believed in the future of Israel. But how? How reconcile these two beliefs? The problem to Jeremiah was not the Exile, but *the sin*. God could bring back Israel from exile. But what good would it do to bring back Israel if it be the same Israel? The seeds of ruin are in them and can bring forth nothing but death. Brooding lovingly over Israel, he had revealed to him Israel's hope. He gained spiritual comprehension, and saw that the Israel of the future would not be an Israel of kindred blood but of kindred souls. Israel henceforth would be a Church rather than a nation. He saw that instead of the old covenant which God made with their fathers, there would be a new covenant which God would make with every soul that would meet Him.

The first step in this great revelation was the knowledge that morality is an individual concern. God and the human soul is the watchword. 'In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth, his teeth shall be set on edge.' The inevitableness of sin breeding sin had formerly oppressed Jeremiah. But now he sees that at each point there is a possibility of breaking away from the power and doom of sin. He sees that morality is individual, and that God judges a man not for the sins of others, but for his own sin.

That was but a step. It did not solve the problem, How can the possibility become fact, and a sinful people become holy? Then in the despair of love he arrived at this great climax of prophecy.

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Newton, *The Sword of the Spirit*, 160.

The old covenant was broken, but (and this thought, so familiar to us, was the wonderful thing that came to the prophet), 'I will make a new covenant, saith the Lord. I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' And as for the problem of sin, there will be a new beginning altogether, the past shall be put away, obliterated, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.' This is the great revelation which cheered Jeremiah. It is one of the beginnings of that closer relationship between God and man which Christ brought. Here are the germs of the full salvation. Here are promised the forgiveness of sin, the reign of grace for the reign of law, God winning men by love, man serving God for love. Jeremiah's eye caught the first rays of the light, saw the foreshadows of the new covenant that was to be. He saw that religion in its essence was a personal relation between the soul and God.<sup>1</sup>

Here is the New Covenant to the fulfilment of which Jesus gave His life, and thus it is that Jeremiah is so often associated with Him. Jeremiah, lifted by his sorrow into the shadow of a mighty, redeeming love, became, so to speak, 'the almost Christ, the Christ of the night—a shadow Christ.' Just so we must bear about in our hearts, yea, even in our bodies, the marks of the Lord Jesus, that we may show forth the sacrifice of Christ till He come—each in his own way, and in his own degree, a Shadow Christ.

Most sincerely  
 Let me follow where Thou ledest;  
 Let me, bleeding where Thou bleedest,  
 Die, if dying I may give  
 Life to one who asks to live,  
 And more nearly,  
 Living thus, resemble Thee.

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SEPTUAGESIMA.

**Increasing the Values of the World.**

'Be fruitful.'—Gn 1<sup>28</sup>.

The first chapter of the Book of Genesis is full of the sense of God's joy in His work of creation. Once and again we are told that God saw that it was good. And His will that the world should be a world of rich productiveness is vividly declared. 'Be fruitful' is the word which expresses God's purpose for the world. We seem far enough from

<sup>1</sup> H. Black, *According to my Gospel*, 96.

the idyllic picture suggested by these ancient words. But it is still true that the fundamental matter in our existence is the matter of productiveness. To advance in every way the fruitfulness of the world is a high and most worthy calling. The producer is the fundamental benefactor of the world.

1. There is the matter of production in the material world. The man who co-operates with Nature and, as a tiller of the soil or a herdsman, is a worker for the fruitfulness of the world, is still our fundamental man. He provides us with food to eat and with clothes to wear. All civilization rests at last on agriculture.

The man who brings forth the treasures of the mines and bends the forces of Nature to his purpose is a producer to whose work we all pay toll. Every time a new and effective machine is invented, the world is a more potential place in which to live. And the machine is to make possible a republic where every man can be a ruler. The world of material things has come to be a bewildering world. And in the midst of it all man moves the master of the forces which he has released. The worker who understands the significance of it all has a great pride in this amazing fruitfulness of the human mind. He has his great dream of a world where in the noblest way every man is a producer and where the values of the world are increased by the labour of every human being.

The fundamental duty of being a producer, of having a share in the fruitfulness of the world, cannot be stated with too much emphasis. John Ruskin put it powerfully once when he said, 'No man has a right to eat a meal which he has not earned.' The problem of a true man is the question of finding the fashion in which he can be the most effective producer of the most important values.

2. Mankind is responsible for mental production as well as for material production. The normal world is not a world where the vast multitudes are productive in the material realm, and only a few in the world of the mind. Mental fruitfulness is to be the portion of every man and every woman and every child. And, where it is not, one can only say that society has failed to function in complete and adequate fashion.

There is one mind which every man can bring to fuller power and larger value all the time. And that mind is his own. It is also true that while he is doing this he will be affecting other minds and making it easier for them to reach their full capacity. There is always danger that a clever man may suppose that adroitness is real mental power. But it is the mind which is a sure and dependable in-

strument for the finding of the truth, for coming into understanding contact with reality, which is the mind actually attaining the highest value to its possessor and to the world.

Here it is important to realize the difference between manipulation and production. When a man invents an instrument which humanity needs, and as a result secures large returns, he is receiving the reward of actual productiveness. When a man applies his mind to making the largest use of existing instruments of value he is in effect adding to their number. But when a man by deft manipulation secures such control of the market or such a relation to certain stocks that he secures a return without rendering a corresponding service, he is not a producer. In a very ignoble sense he is a manipulator. The world really has a harder lot because he is living in it, and all his gains have an odour about them which the real producer recognizes with distaste. The man who is choosing his life-work must face the full significance of this fundamental distinction. Does the work of which he is thinking involve a real and necessary service to the world, or is it merely a matter of becoming a participant in the battle of wits as to who shall be able to get control of the largest amount of the spoil?

To be sure, the realm of production is a large one. On the mental side it includes the securing, and the interpreting and executive activities, of a system of wise laws. It includes all necessary tasks of organization and administration. But it does not include any activity which is a method of obtaining values without rendering a corresponding service. The man who is a mere manipulator is one of the most sinister, and in a fashion one of the most pitiable, figures in a world where God intended every man to be a producer.

3. There is a great enterprise in relation to moral fruitfulness in the world. A wise man once declared that the purpose of humanity was to propagate life and character. The fruitfulness of humanity finds a particularly happy expression in the social spirit. And this social spirit, although it has to do with many men and women and many little children, must find lodgment in particular minds and hearts. There is no brotherly feeling which floats about in the world at large, sweetening life, without having any contact with particular lives. The new society is produced as individual men are saved from the selfish mind and become possessed of the social mind. When a man commits the Golden Rule to his life, and not merely to his memory, he is producing, as far as his own character

is concerned, the social spirit. Most people are very happy to apply the social spirit to their own circle, but there are masses of people all about them who simply never come within that circle. When Thomas Mott Osborne said he wanted every criminal to come to the place where he would think of all other men as his pals, he was setting forth an ideal which would have transforming effect outside our penal institutions. The social mind considers all other minds significant. It is ready to offer to each a real quality of comradeship. It is ready to find in each something to love. And it thinks of human nature as the most wonderful land in its perpetual possibilities as regards the discovery of new and glorious and unsuspected treasures.

4. The highest of all the values of the world are the spiritual values. And our fruitfulness is by no means complete until it includes the realm of the spirit. Most of us have known some people who somehow gave us a sense of spiritual altitude. It is not that they were posing. It is not that they were conscious of spiritual height. The charm and the wonder were just their entire unconsciousness. They were all the while assuming that other people looked at the world from their own lofty position. And in an astonishing number of cases people rose to the demand. It is tremendously hard to disappoint sincere spiritual expectation. We all know, when we stop to think of it, that the people of spiritual height are the great people in any enterprise. The command to be fruitful comes to a climax of meaning in this field of spiritual values. Jesus was the supreme example of spiritual worth. And He has kept imparting great secrets of spiritual productiveness to men these twenty centuries. The consciousness of the nearness of God and the consciousness of the commanding reality of spiritual things, alive in a human being, are really the greatest wealth to be found in all this world.

In all these ways each generation is to increase the values to be found on this planet. It is to be richer in material values because we have lived. It is to be richer in character because we have walked the ways of the earth. It is to be richer in mental power and in attained knowledge because we have used our minds. It is to be richer in social interest and consecration because we have moved among men. It is to be richer in the sense of beauty, in the possession of beautiful things, and in the possession of the invisible beauty which speaks through material things, because we have lived to love the things which have clean beauty and

noble grace. It is to be a world richer in all those attributes of the spirit which come from an awareness of God, and all the realities which lift this mortal into the realm of immortality. In every way we are to be producers, and add to the values of the world.

It is with almost a shock of recognition that we realize how deeply productive was the life of Jesus in all these fashions. He released forces which increased every sort of real value there is in the world. In this deep sense His was the most productive life of history. The triumph of His kingdom means the conservation of every noble value in the life of this world, and the attainment of every completion of value in the world to come.<sup>1</sup>

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SEXAGESIMA.

**Then came Jesus.**

'Then came Jesus, the doors being shut.'—Jn 20<sup>26</sup>.

All the doors by which any might find access from the outside were carefully barred. The shutters were closed: none might know what was passing behind those doors. For the thoughts and words of the men within were too bitter and dark for the mocking world without to know and scorn. The only way to escape awkward questions and the piercing glances of a cruel world was to bar the doors and shut out the past. And the doors were shut, shut against the outer world, shut also in the face of the possible return of Christ.

1. Strange it is to reflect that the door of entrance was first closed against the coming of Christ, not by His enemies, but by His professing disciples. It was the first, but not the last, time that the doors were closed in the face of the Church's Head by the heads of the Church. Over and over again have blind and faithless and ignorant Church leaders closed the door, seeking to deny the presence and comfort of the Christ of God to all save such as they thought fit to grant it to. Sometimes these arrogant ecclesiastics have been jewelled and mitred popes and prelates excommunicating some faithful believer who claimed for himself and his little flock only the right to worship their God according to the dictates of conscience. And sometimes they have been black-coated Free Churchmen gathered in General Assembly, who with smug and unctuous piety have condemned the man who would not adopt their narrow and complacent creed, or who refused to surrender his

<sup>1</sup> L. H. Hough, *The Renaissance of Religion*, 109.

Christian liberty and intellectual honesty in order to purchase an unworthy peace.

And must I back to darkness go  
Because I cannot say their creed?  
I know not what I think; I know  
Only that Thou art what I need.

And though they have shut fast every door against the honest man, Jesus has come to His disciple, as He always does.

That is a great announcement in the Gospel of St. Luke, the knell of arrogant orthodoxy, of self-satisfied traditionalism, and all manners and forms of religion that have not the stamp of freedom and fearless truth. 'In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.'

No matter how tightly barred the doors, no matter how bare the desert, the eternal Word of God comes where there is a true and honest heart to receive Him. He comes through all the doors which the hand and will of man have closed, and speaks to the faithful His own word of peace.

2. And there are other doors—doors which a man has shut with his own hand, barring them against any who would come in to disturb the brooding of his inmost soul. Perhaps we too harbour a sense of disappointment, a feeling of failure, and of loss. We too knew that Nazarene in wonderful old-time days, when His presence gave us peace and His word assurance. But we let them take and crucify Him. We let Him go out of our lives, and now we know not really whether He be alive or not.

But He comes. The doors being shut, Jesus comes.

Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,  
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,  
A chorus-ending from Euripides,—  
And that's enough.

Through every apparent obstacle—material, intellectual, moral—Christ finds His way. If through fear of consequences, or borne down by the difficulties of belief, men seek refuge in temporary expedients, sooner or later they find themselves face to face with Him. In the crises of individual souls, in the strange vicissitudes of human history, over and over again when it seemed that men had

done with Him, 'then came Jesus, the doors being shut.'

Do not let us delude ourselves into thinking that His coming means nothing. It will mean a big change in our lives and destiny if we let Him abide, and it will have an eternal issue if we do not. Sometimes we wish that we could flee from His presence and ignore His demands. The Cross comes to every man with a challenge; and there is no escape from the response. Jesus stands in the midst—a Presence that is not to be put by. The late George Tyrrell, in a letter written before one of his controversies with his ecclesiastical superiors, said, 'How glad one would be to get out of it all! but there is that strange Man on His Cross who drives me back again and again.' Often and often we are like crying out, 'What have I to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to torment me?' But a thousand times worse the torments and tortures of the life that tries to keep Him out! Endless and unavailing the doubts and fears and uneasiness till a man has settled this business between himself and God.

3. 'Then came Jesus, the doors being shut.' It was the time of the disciples' greatest need, the hour of their deepest perplexity. *Then* cometh Jesus.

Jesus waits till the recognized and acknowledged hour of a man's need. When all the doors of earthly hope and wit and invention are shut—then cometh Jesus. It is that experience which the Psalmist records in his picture of the sea-going men. They know a good deal about the handling of their craft—up to a certain point. But when the biggest storm of all arises, and they are 'at

their wits' end, then——' then what? 'Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble'; and even if the waves had been no stiller, the hearts that looked out at them were. The thought of Him who holdeth the sea in the hollow of His hand brought them composure. 'Then are they glad because they are quiet.' 'At their wits' end, then——' then God!

If doors did not have the habit of closing, we should feel no need of God. We need to be brought to the end of wits in order that we may come to the beginning of faith. We need to have every door closed in order that Christ may enter.

Unbelief and sin and failure did not prevent His coming. We are not told that He swung those doors open: He came *through* them. Many of the doors leading out into a larger and a fuller life we have closed through our sin and carelessness and indifference and folly. The Lord Christ does not swing these misdeeds of ours miraculously out of our way. All their days some men will have to live behind doors which they have closed for themselves, doors of usefulness and hope and opportunity and good health. But though Christ does not remove these things He comes through them. Through the heaviest and most impenetrable obstacle He comes to us in our need. Through the darkest, heaviest, most iron-bound, sin-bolted door, His white presence can come to set us free.

Behold Him now where He comes;  
Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,  
But the light of our hearts, of our homes,  
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. L. Simpson, *The Nameless Longing*, 280.

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## Contributions and Comments.

### Again the Magnificat.

WHEN I wrote recently a brief communication to **THE EXPOSITORY TIMES** under the heading 'Mary or Elizabeth,' I had no intention of dealing with the whole question of the sources of Luke in his first chapter, but only of rectifying a single word in the textual tradition. The correction of a single wrongly transcribed word looks innocent enough, but it loses the appearance of innocence when it involves not only one's judgment as to the possible

correctness of what is known as a Western Reading, and equally as a harder reading, but also the intrusion of the textual critic into the region of ecclesiastical psalmody and the correction of the heading of the most popular and most generally received of New Testament Psalms. We have had our troubles over the traditional authorship of Old Testament Psalms, and are well aware that when David is quoted for the authorship of songs which he never contributed, the problem raised is of greater moment than appears when the question is first started.