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is in harmony with the Divine Law, and by practising it, as an ascetic discipline, one attains to that Divine Law. Here Porphyry develops his favourite views on abstinence. 'The veil of flesh hangs dark between Thy blessed face and mine' is not really a Christian but a Neoplatonic sigh. 'It is one great proof of wisdom to keep the body in thraldom,' *i.e.* to crush the passions of fear and desire; he becomes eloquent on this point, particularly as he seems to remember Marcella, 'Never trouble yourself whether you are male or female, never regard yourself as a woman, for I did not approach you as a woman.' Our relationship, he means, has had nothing of mere sex about it. 'Avoid all that is womanish in the soul, as though you had the body of a man.' The teaching here is what is to be found in his other writings; what makes it sound strange is the fact that he addresses it bluntly to his wife. The morbid reaction against the flesh, which was already deflecting monasticism as it was afterwards to deflect some types of mystical religion in the Middle Ages, is already voiced by this Neoplatonist saint and sage. In last century poets like Swinburne were fond of shouting protests against the 'pale Galilean,' as though Christianity had been responsible for fear of the red blood in human nature and suspicious of the powers of vital passion. History in the third century tells a very different tale. Gnostics and Neoplatonists alike were disparaging the body. It was Christianity that had to maintain, by the doctrine of the Incarnation, the reality of human nature. The interpretation was often inadequate, for current tendencies swung many Christians into inconsistent practices and principles, until it seemed as though one ought to be ashamed of the body as one was spiritual. Yet the fundamental principle of the Incarnation was never wholly lost sight of. It was the teaching of lofty souls like Porphyry which turned human nature into a pale phantom. Perhaps there is no clearer proof of this than the letter which we have been surveying.

Yet let us leave it with appreciation of its ethical teaching. The unhealthy idealism or spiritualism of the letter need not blind us to some admirable counsels in this exhortation to Marcella from her husband. Some of these have been already noted. Here is another, of permanent value. 'It would be absurd to exhort you to worship God, as though that admitted of any question. And we do not worship Him aright by doing this rite or by holding this or that belief.' It is not that Porphyry rules out religious rites. Indeed, he leaves it free to people to worship the deity as their particular national customs dictate. It is not that he disparages even right beliefs about God. What he means in this sentence is that neither outward forms nor intellectual beliefs are equivalent to real worship. It is his way of saying what had been said by the Christians whom he scorned so heartily: 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' And in conclusion—this happens to be the very conclusion of the letter: 'It is not possible for any one who injures man to honour God. Consider the love of mankind to be the basis of your religion.' Whether Marcella needed this counsel or not, others do, even at the present day. How Porphyry intended to develop this argument, we cannot tell. He certainly did not mean that religion was to be resolved into anything like humanitarianism; he was far too genuine a Platonist to take this line. But, for all his disconcerting indifference to human love as a sphere for Divine love, he did not dream of identifying religion with any form of contemplation which sat loose to human duties. The moral conditions which he postulated for spiritual religion involved strict abstinence from bodily passions; yet he was evidently careful to recognize that selfishness in any form was fatal to the perception of reality.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

The Tail-Waggers.

By the Reverend E. W. Price Evans, M.A., Pontypool.

'I am among you as he that serveth.'—Lk 22^{27}.

During my last summer holiday I met a dog. He was a handsome terrier, well-bred and friendly. His early home was in Penmaenmawr, North Wales, but when I met him he had settled down in a new home near London, and was living on excellent terms with his new mistress. You will not be surprised to learn that his name was Taffy.

Now Taffy was a gentleman, and, like many gentlemen, he was a member of a Club. I was a bit surprised at that. A Club for dogs! It sounds

funny, doesn't it? But there is such a Club, all the same, and a very respectable Club it is too. It is called 'The Tail-Waggers' Club.'

This Club has a badge and a motto, both inscribed on a metal disc which each member carries on his collar. Thus the members remind themselves and tell others of what they are, and of what they are trying to do. The badge consists of two crossed tails and the motto is a very fine one: 'I help my pals.'

There is a connexion between the badge and the motto which I want you to think about. When a dog wags his tail he helps his pals, and when he helps his pals he wags his tail. It is a great privilege to help our pals.

Of course, there are many reasons why a dog wags his tail. There are wags *and* wags. There is the wag of exuberance—wagging the tail from sheer joy of life. It *is* good to be alive, says the dog, and to be young is very heaven. So he wags his tail. He can't help himself. It almost wags of itself. Then, there is the wag of friendliness, and this is what I want to talk about more especially. See two dogs approaching each other. How their tails wag! They are, as it were, taking their hats off and shaking hands, smiling politely and hopefully. While they are getting to know each other their tails are still wagging. Then, perhaps, they trot off together—two friends.

The more their tails wag the friendlier will dogs be. No wag means no friendship. The still tail spells suspicion and even something worse. Happy is the dog whose tail wags.

Dogs have much to teach us if we are humble and bright enough to learn. Let me tell you a story which Sir Kenneth Mackenzie told some time ago. It is about a police-dog which had been trained to go out every night in search of wounded soldiers in the Great War. One night he found a poor man, badly wounded and caught in the barbed-wire entanglements of 'No-man's land.' In spite of the whistling bullets, the dog released the soldier's clothing, dragged him to a large shell-hole, and carefully put him down on the bottom of the crater. Then, finding his way to an Ambulance Station, he reported his need of help by barking and jumping round members of the corps. His insistence induced two men to follow him, and he led them straight to the shell-hole, where the soldier was found, exhausted but alive. That dog was a friend indeed. A V.C., I dare say, has been given for less.

'I help my pals' is a good motto for boys and girls. But we must not be too narrow in our choice of 'pals.' The police-dog helped men as well as dogs, and we must learn to help all who are in need. Our 'pals' should be not only members of our family, or school, or church, or town, or country, but anybody or everybody who needs help. For this we require a big heart, and who is there in all the world who can enable us to attain but One whose own heart is full of love for *all* men, even Jesus Christ our Lord? There is nobody else. And He says: 'I am among you as he who serveth.' The more you help your 'pals'—the more you serve—the happier and the better will you be.

The Sanctuary Light.

By the Reverend John G. Morton, M.A., H.C.F., Chatham.

'O send out thy light. . . . Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.'—Ps $43^{3,4}$.

'The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.'—Lv 6^{13}.

Some years ago, in time of war, there was in Spain, as in other places, a lack of many things needful, but what the people needed most and missed most were matches. It was no use for a Spaniard to say to his neighbour, 'Lend me a match, will you?' for his neighbour had not got any matches to lend, which really means—to give. These country people had so long used matches that they had quite forgotten how their forefathers got light from flint and steel and a box of tinder; and though perhaps some of them had read, as you may have, how the shipwrecked sailor on the desert island got a fire by which to dry his sea-soaked clothes from a conflagration kindled by lightning in the jungle grass, and so was saved from death, yet they were not able any more than James and John to command fire to fall from heaven: lightning is not at all obliging; when it comes it comes very quickly, but it doesn't come when you call it.

What did these poor peasants do then, when they came back to their homes at night from their work, and found them all cold and dark, with no fires and no lamps lit? Every night they all went out with their lamps and their candles to the village church, and there they lit them at the lamp which always burns upon the altar, and which is never allowed to go out. Then the happy lamp-lighters joyfully returned home, carefully shielding the borrowed flame, and from it they lit their other lamps, and kindled the fires upon their hearths.

How grateful those poor Spanish villagers were for this free but so very precious gift of the light! So cheap—it could be got for the going—yet so priceless! How their hearts glowed and kindled

with gratitude for that little faithful gem-like flame on the church's altar! Every household in that village was in debt to their church for the light which brightened their rooms and for the warmth that made them so comfortable. It was that flame on the altar which set the home-fires burning, and lit the kindly lights which shone so cheerfully through their curtains into the night.

No need to ask why those Spaniards went to church. They went for what they could get there, and to procure for nothing—without money and without price—what they could not get anywhere else in the village, even for gold.

And that, too, is just why people go to church here and everywhere, and why they always have gone. They go to God's house and bring back home with them a light to lighten their darkness. They meet God there, and they meet those who love Him there, and as flame kindles flame so 'One loving heart sets another on fire.' The lamp of love, the candle of faith, if they have gone out, as sometimes they do, are lit again. When we go to church and receive the light of God's love into our hearts, our homes are all brighter when we return, and the very atmosphere in which we live and move is far more comfortable.

A great writer, Thomas Carlyle, was brought up in a small village in Scotland, and of its small church he afterwards wrote: 'That poor temple of my childhood is more sacred to me than the biggest cathedral could have been; rude, rustic, bare, no temple in the world was more so: but there were sacred tongues of flame which kindled what was best in one, what has not yet gone out.' In sweeter, simpler words the Psalmist said, 'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.' He was glad because there he received the 'gladsome light.'

And when with us the home-fires of faith and the home-lights of love go out, we too know where to go to have them kindled anew; it is where Jesus went—to His Father's house, to our Father's house.

For like a child sent with a fluttering light
To feel his way across a gusty night,
Man walks the world. Again and yet again
The lamps shall be by fits of passion slain.
But shall not He who sent him from the door
Relight the lamp once more, and yet once more?

That, too, is why the sweet singer of Israel first wrote and then sang the prayers of our texts:

'O send out thy light. . . . Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.'
'The Lord send thee help from the sanctuary.'

The Christian Year.

QUINQUAGESIMA.

The Idealism of Jesus Christ.

'And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.'—Rev 4^{6}.

'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.'—Rev 21^{1}.

1. That the kingdoms of this world can become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ was the assured confidence of the man who wrote the Book of the Revelation in times that were considerably darker than our own. The value of his message and his vision is not impaired because his identity is impossible to determine; and indeed, as Emerson observed, the nobler the truth or sentiment, the less imports the question of authorship. He was an exiled Christian believer who, because of his faith, had been banished to the lonely island of Patmos. And there, in the solitariness of his isolation, he had the heroic courage and splendour of faith to compose this majestic conception of a victorious Christ.

Down the vistas of the future roved his piercing eye. He saw the vast political and military fabric of the Cæsars crumble into dust, but the Carpenter of Nazareth rise enthroned to a kingdom which would have no end. He visualized the eventual advent of a condition of human society purified, perfected, and irradiated with the spirit of Christ, in which man at last would be emancipated by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit from his follies, sorrows, selfishness, and sin, and would thereby be freed for ever from the saddest and most desolating of mortal experiences, which is the pain of separation.

He is obsessed by the sea. To him it has no beauty. It exiled him from everything and every one. It cut him off irrevocably from his old familiar world. To the eyes of this isolated watcher it symbolized nothing but the yawning chasm of separation. Never at peace—dark, mysterious, homeless, wandering—it was so like the restless yearning heart of humanity. His mood, however, is not constant. He looks upon the sea with varying emotions. At one time in his dreams it still remains before the throne of God, that loathed waste of waters, but it has become clear as crystal, its enigmas at last unravelled in the light of God's revelation of His ways. At another, and perhaps in an hour of more acute loneliness and depression, there can be no more sea in his vision.

2. Let us then first consider his dream that before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal. The sea is still there among the ultimate things, but it is calm and transparent and clear as crystal. The veil is lifted from off the face of all things, and God's whole purpose is at last revealed. It is grey no longer, that strange cold sea that ravages and divides our human life. You can see through it to its very depths and understand all that it has concealed.

Can those of us who long for the sound of a voice that is still, or who have failed in some cherished enterprise, or who have been beaten or disappointed or thwarted in our hopes, or who have become disillusioned, not having found in life what we once expected to find—can we not see, and seeing take fresh courage, the vision of that crystal sea before the throne 'where the obstinate questionings of the mind will be answered and the heart find rest'?

There are moments when the staggering problems of existence rise up before us and seem to quench the flame of faith. The mind falters before such things as the prosperity of unrighteousness and the many adversities which so often are endured by the children of light.

There is too the mystery of evil. We need not think we can explain it, for neither the formulæ of theologians nor the theories of the philosophic schools afford adequate or satisfactory explanation which man can wholly fit in with his own faith and experience. Back in the mists of antiquity some unknown writer penned the beautiful idyll of the Garden of Eden in order to demonstrate the facts of sin, temptation, and the redemptive power of God. And though we may say that the theory of evolution is biologically and historically more accurate, and that the Ascent of Man is more true than the Fall of Man, neither the one nor the other is fully explanatory of the existence of evil in a universe whose fundamental principle, so Christianity believes, is the law of Divine wisdom, goodness, and love. Did God create evil, or if omnipotent why does He tolerate it? The mystery of evil with all its attendant havoc in the lives of men baffles us and defies our speculation. Here we are, like the man on Patmos, encircled by a silent sea of mystery. Evil exists; yet in our hearts and by our experience we believe and know that God is good.

There is also the problem of pain. And death! How men have longed that some one would come back from that shadowy bourne and deliver up its secret! This indeed is a world of wearying contradictions and baffling enigmas. But we are compelled to believe that it is a just and righteous world. There are moments of strangely vivid certainty when, as afar off, we seem to catch the gleam of that crystal sea before His throne, and with a faith deeper than all finite knowledge we know that, in spite of all that seems to be, the things of this world are working for each brave and faithful spirit an eternal weight of glory, that the purposes of God are good, and all is well and will be well, and that those who endure unto the end will somewhere and some day find it to be true.

3. But later on the writer of the Book of the Revelation will have no sea at all.

The analogy which to this man's mind appeared between the waters of the Ægean and mortal experience is not far-fetched. Dr. George Matheson, in one of his suggestive meditations, has observed that human life has more sea than land: that it is not a connected continent—a brotherhood of souls—but a multitude of little islands divided by stormy waves. There is a great truth in such a statement. And indeed our own personalities rarely achieve an ordered harmony. The discords of division and separation invade them. We stress so much that is unimportant, and frequently lay but little emphasis on much that matters everything. Nor is our life in its social aspects a community of brethren bound together by the ties of mutual interests and common purposes.

But the man on Patmos, who knew what human loneliness could be, dreamed a dream of a grander future. He saw the separating waters assuaged. Man drew near to man, and each with a wondering gladness recognized in the other not a potential enemy but a brother and a friend. The misunderstandings were removed, the old suspicions and enmities were stilled. The mountain of the Lord was established above the hills, and classes and nations, relieved from the stultifying limitations of their selfish insularity, flowed together unto it, for there was no more sea.

4. Do we complain that this is simply idealism run riot? Well, it is the idealism of Jesus Christ, and He maintained it to be practical. When we look around us and see 'man's inhumanity to man,' and the catastrophe and suffering that are the fruits of selfishness and passion and utter lack of principle; when we see class antagonisms and racial hatred shouting unashamed—we are forced to recognize that the angry sea that breaks up the unity of men is still, after twenty centuries, very much in evidence.

But across the years rings out the confident cry from Patmos, 'There shall be no more sea.' In the character of Christ, and in the example of every

faithful and unselfish spirit, we have evidence enough of the inward beauty to which the individual can rise. What others have shown to be possible cannot be rejected by us as beyond our powers. That which has been done can be done again, and the heights of moral and spiritual loveliness which men and women have scaled we dare not classify as unattainable by ourselves.

5. Baron von Hügel tells us that the Christian faith is a contagious thing. It is more caught than acquired.

Let us be practical and begin, but not end, in revising our whole attitude to those who compose our own intimate circle. Christianity begins at home, and no attempts to put it into practice outside can give people the right to call themselves disciples of Jesus who at their own firesides and amid the circle of their personal friends are being selfish and self-centred and causing strife and dispeace. The Christian will also evidence this spirit in the wider affairs of corporate life. He will in business be honest and fair, just and upright, remembering his duty to those who serve him and whom he serves, and that no Christian dare exploit or deceive those for whom his Saviour died.¶

He will remember too that the problem of peace—peace among the nations and peace among all classes and conditions of men—is the critical problem with which the statesmanship of the modern world is faced and upon the solution of which the future of the world depends. Thus he will hesitate to support aught that is calculated to embitter public opinion, benefit one section of the community at the expense of another, foster antagonisms, inflame passion and prejudice, or accentuate those divisions which separate men from each other.[1]

First Sunday in Lent.

The Finality of the Cross.

'Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more.'—Ro 6^9.

1. The Crucifixion can never happen again. Is it possible to enter, with some faint degree of imagination, into what this meant for our Lord Himself? Sometimes a man is haunted, it may be for days and years, by some ghost which refuses to be laid. Some dreadful possibility lurks in the skirts of circumstance, and he is never sure at what moment it may leap out upon him. But by and by the man finds that his deliverance has arrived. The man who was whetting his dagger against him passes to a world where his enmity is impotent for ever. Or the set of circumstances which conspired against him is dissolved by the touch of time. Or the painful experience comes upon the man in the worst fulfilment of his fears, but this is a revolving world, and the scheme of things is a moving scheme, and the hour of extremity passes as other things pass, to return no more. The words *No more* in such circumstances are very sweet. They turn into 'a slow contented song.' In such an hour it is possible to appreciate the music of that trumpet-voiced *No more* in the story of the Exodus. 'And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again *no more* for ever.' Men of later days in other senses have had Pharaoh hot upon their heels. But the hour comes when peril is definitely left behind, and their hearts cry 'No more' with infinite relief and with passionate thanksgiving.

But we are considering the case of our Lord Himself. The Cross did not come upon Him entirely as a surprise. The Holman Hunt picture which shows the shadow of a cross falling dark upon the Nazareth workshop is more than an artist's fancy: it is a transcript of history. As far back as our records take us into the earlier life of Jesus we find the shadow and suggestion of the Cross. We link together the phrase of His boyhood, 'I must be about my Father's business,' and its glimpse of a dominating necessity, with that later glimpse of the ruling imperative, 'The Son of Man must go into Jerusalem, and suffer, and be killed.' The same shadow seemed to steal even into the brighter moments of the earlier ministry, when He and His disciples together were glad with the gladness of the spring-time. 'Can the children of the bride-chamber fast,' He asked some of His sour-hearted critics, 'while the bridegroom is with them?' But even into this circle of sunshine the shadow stole, dark and cold and threatening. 'The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away.' There is no need to recount how prominent the same thought became as the years went on, not only in His own mind but in His repeated lessons to His disciples: the experiences of His life and ministry became more and more clearly milestones on the way to the Cross.

We love to think of the Resurrection from the point of view of the disciples, the surprise of it, the overwhelming gladness it brought, the new world it created, just to be on this side of the Cross and the Tomb. But we may put a little reverent imagination into the conception of what this meant to our

[1] C. L. Warr, *Scottish Sermons and Addresses*, 14.

Lord Himself—to have the Cross behind and not before. The poverty and discipline of this mortal life were over. The buffeting at the hands of men and all the bitterness of death were left behind. His flawless offering was accepted of the Father, and the narrow, local task was merging into the world-wide ministry to which all power in heaven and on earth was promised. It is not written in the immortal story, yet faith and love bid imagination do its poor best to picture it—the new light that was in His eyes, and the new royalty in His mien, and the new gladness in His voice, as He came again into the circle of His friends to say, 'Peace be unto you.' Peace was in His own heart, peace unutterable yet overflowing, such peace as those know who have crossed their Red Sea and won their land of promise. For the cup was drained: the burden was borne, and the Cross could never be repeated. 'Christ being raised from the dead *dieth no more*.'

2. Yet in this passage the glorious finality of the Cross is viewed more from the standpoint of the Christian than from that of the Christ. The passage reads as though, even after the Christ Himself had travelled past Calvary and all its woe, the Cross were left standing in its socket beside the highway to mark the definite ending of one great stage of experience. Itself final, it is an emblem of finality. The Christian, like his Lord, leaves behind an experience which is negative, humiliating, and in the strict sense mortifying, that he may pass on to one which is positive, enlarging, and vitalizing. Dr. Moffatt thus renders the fourth verse: 'Our baptism into death made us share His burial, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live and move in the new sphere of life.' In that phrase about sharing His burial we can see a whole pageant of self-oblation: the dying and entombment of the Lord are to the Apostle's eye not a solitary fact—he sees an endless company of believing men following in the same hard way and learning the same stern lesson. Yet the pageant of that sombre road moves on into the sunshine and becomes a pageant of self-realization. As the Apostle watches his Lord coming forth to a new day of power and joy, he sees that for believing men also the negative stage, the disciplinary stage, the crucifixion stage is not the end—they also come on to the 'new sphere of life,' where they almost forget the crucifixion of the flesh in the liberty of the spirit, and cease to reckon what they have parted with because they rejoice so greatly in what God bestows.

It may be granted that St. Paul was an idealist. A stronger word might be better—a word less intellectual and more warmly human. It might be wiser to call him a great believer—a great believer for others as well as for himself.

3. If modern men are to make anything of this Pauline idealism, they must put their wills into it. It is not enough to leave it upon the cold printed page and study it with admiration and surprise. Did not the Lord cry an exultant *No more* to the dominion of Death when He came forth into life on the Resurrection morning? So the believing man by all the desires, intents, and purposes of his consecrated heart will cry *No more* to the dominion of evil in the hour of his self-surrender—a joyful *No more*, a defiant *No more*, a firm and resolute *No more*: 'I am not thine, but free and for ever hate thee.' That is the meaning of St. Paul's charge to his readers: 'Reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin.' Even if it be not in the full sense actually so; even if the volcano still slumbers beneath the ashes of its former fires; even if the old life still sometimes rises from its grave and fumbles with the latch of its sepulchre—'reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin.' Act as if it were so. Act as if the ideal were the real. Live up to your better selves—not looking back or turning back. That is the appeal. And all things are possible to the hearts that loyally respond to it, for the power that raised Christ from the dead is at their service, to turn their visions into realities and their purposes into fulfilments.

For men who put their wills into this high task must put their faith into it too. Paul will have it that the idealism of this passage, and indeed of all his letters, is not his own idealism but God's: 'the glory of the Father,' shining through Cross and Resurrection, glows through all these counsels and hopes. Christian men may sing:

> Lo! between our sins and their reward
> We set the passion of Thy Son our Lord.

Yet they can only set between their past and their present that arresting, decisive, transforming sign, because God Himself has set it there, and made it impossible for them to get behind it or to live as though it had never been. And when they answer with faith and resolution, He has His great *No more* of promise with which to answer the *No more* of their detachment from the world and attachment to Himself. Are they darkened by their ignorances and misunderstandings? 'The sun shall be *no more* thy light by day, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.' Does the earth-life on to its close seem haunted by limitations, failures, and regrets? 'He shall wipe

away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be *no more*; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the former things are passed away.' Thus, with Redeeming Mercy behind them, around them, before them, the children of promise move onwards, from the Cross to the Crown.[1]

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Severity of God.

'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness.'—Ro 1^{18} (RV).

'And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.'—Mt 25^{46} (RV).

There is a marked tendency to-day to neglect the severer side of Christ's teaching about God and judgment to come. A century ago the doctrine of eternal punishment, which was interpreted as everlasting punishment, was in the ascendant. Appeal was made for support of missions to the heathen, on the ground that the unconverted heathen went to hell. A change has come over our thought since then, which is certainly in part due to the following reasons. First, all theological dogmas are increasingly being brought to the bar of conscience. Dogma is being ethically criticised, and any dogma which is felt to contradict the verdict of the moral sense is rejected. It is obviously unfair to condemn to everlasting punishment men who have never had a chance of knowing the truth as it is in Jesus.

Secondly, scholarship has done much to recover for us the background of Jewish thought about the future, against which Christ's utterances on judgment to come must be viewed. A large number of those utterances are quotations from Jewish apocalyptic books current at the time, and the language used is pictorial, and is not to be taken literally. Criticism has raised the question, which has seriously to be faced, whether the genuine teaching of Jesus about the future has not been coloured and heightened by those who committed the record of His life to writing.

Thirdly, the stress rightly laid upon the duty of the Christian to be up and doing in the service of humanity, the loud call in an age which is interested in social and economic problems to share the common burden and spend and be spent for others, have tended to weaken the sense of sin, and make men think that what they are doing for humanity is more important than what they are in themselves.

Lastly, one of the most notable features in the recent development of theology has been its emphasis on the Fatherhood of God. This is due to the recovery of the historical Jesus, as He lived and taught in Palestine. Jesus the pitiful, the humane, the sympathetic, fills the canvas. We are bidden see Him trying to establish on earth the Kingdom of God, setting us an example of service and self-sacrifice, and using none of the traditional theological vocabulary about sin.

Now in trying to appreciate any system of teaching, we must, if we are to be fair to it, take the whole of it into account. Can it be denied that in the teaching of Jesus there is a terribly severe side? Whatever allowance may have to be made for the possibility that some of His teaching about the future was coloured by those who wrote the Gospels, we cannot strike out all that He said about judgment to come. Nor do all His severer sayings occur in the apocalyptic sections of the narrative. It is only a subjective criticism which has run riot that will refuse to admit that He spoke in the gravest terms about the fate of the impenitent. Consider the tremendousness of such sayings as these: 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.' 'Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' And, though the language is pictorial and symbolical, consider the emphatic gravity of the terms used to describe the exclusion of the impenitent from the Kingdom—'the unquenchable fire'; 'where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched'; 'eternal punishment'; 'this place of torment.' Jesus plainly contemplated the shutting out of the wicked from the Kingdom of God. He spoke of the possibility of sinning 'an eternal sin,' and asked, 'What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?' It is certain that He spoke of judgment to come, and said that judgment would be according to character.

Jesus said very little to satisfy our natural curiosity about the next life: His teaching on that subject is marked by a great reserve. But two things He made plain: first, that man lived on beyond the grave; secondly, that this life was a period of probation, and that according to our use of this life, so would be our destiny in the next. Do not our own spiritual intuitions confirm the verdict that a moral judgment awaits us? The ethical argument for immortality has always been a strong argument. We feel, not only that the

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The Tree of Healing*, 176.

moral values of character have permanent worth, but also that justice requires that in the next life the good and the bad shall receive different treatment.

What will be the nature of the judgment? We cannot take literally the pictorial language in which the judgment is described. No material flames will scorch the unrepentant sinner. It will be a spiritual judgment, spiritually administered. Here we may ask whether any punishment can be worse than that of remorse? To have brought home to one in a world where no blurring of moral issues is possible one's true spiritual condition? The point, however, to be emphasized is this, that our final state, whether of weal or woe, can be nothing but the necessary completion of our growth here. The finally completed character will be the exact expression of the sum total of all the choices by which the character was gradually shaped. Hence it is profoundly true to say that every day we are passing judgment on ourselves, and making our own heaven or hell. A man's daily choices make plain his character. The process is continuous. When the end comes the man will have made his own destiny. We have only to picture him brought into God's presence, brought, that is, into such a clear spiritual light that no excuses and no disguises are possible, to see that he inevitably becomes his own judge and condemns himself. He could not be happy in heaven because his nature is not heavenly. This is his punishment; he inflicts it on himself by his own act.

Yet it is true to speak of it as God's punishment of him, because the moral order under which we live is of Divine appointment, and it is God who has ordained the law that what a man sows that shall he reap. God's method of punishment can hardly be thought of as belonging to the type of personal intervention. God is not a magnified man. He acts through the moral order and through the working of man's nature. But since sin is more than the violation of the moral order, since it is an offence against a Personal Spirit of Holy Love ('against thee, thee only, have I sinned'), the consequences which follow upon sin may rightly be regarded as bearing on them a personal imprint. They are God reacting as a Personal Being against human transgression.

We are considering the severity of love. God's love is a holy love; God's character is one of perfect moral goodness; and His purpose for man is to form in man a character of the same kind as that which belongs to Himself. Such a love must be severe. God's purpose for man would be defeated, if there were no principle of moral judgment in His governance of the world. But it is we who call out into operation the severity latent in God's love. At the heart of that love lies the readiness to forgive us, the desire to take us into fellowship with itself.

It is no part of our purpose to discuss at any length the many problems connected with the future destiny of the wicked. We are faced with difficulties which we have no adequate means of solving. Some have held that at the long last all men will be saved; that the unrepentant here, will hereafter, through much remorse and suffering and bitter spiritual discipline, climb gradually back to a state of reconciliation with God. Others hold a belief in Conditional Immortality. Only those survive who are qualified to survive, who have the necessary spiritual survival value. We may speculate without limit; we cannot know the certainty of these things. But if we take the teaching of Jesus as a whole, two principles stand out clearly. There is a continuance of personal life after death; and there is a judgment to come, a judgment by character. Jesus plainly taught that upon this world's choices depend issues which reach out far beyond this life; and that man is the maker of his destiny.

The love of God surrounds us, and calls to us to respond to its appeal. Sin is the refusal to respond, and sin persisted in must alienate the sinner from God.

The love of God, how strong and tender it is! Time and again have we thwarted it, but it is still there, ready to welcome us back again. Let us bring our lives out into the sunlight of that love, see ourselves as we are, and as we may by God's help become, and, if we have wandered from Him, go back to the Father as His children who come to Him because they know that He loves them.[1]

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

What's Wrong with the World?

'Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.'—Jn 1^{48}.

1. There sits Nathanael under his fig tree, in the solitude of his soul, resting, brooding, wondering, when the curtain of the New Eternity rises upon him. He sits apart. He is as Augustine was in that garden in Milan; he is as Bunyan was as he went aside among the willows by Bedford town;

[1] V. F. Storr, *The Living God*, 153.

he is as Howie was as he sat within his bleak little arbour in the kailyard at Loch-Goin in Fenwick parish. All these, likewise, found Christ, or were found of Christ, or were restored to His nearer communion, as they went apart from the press of life, and so gave themselves to meditation.

Christ has faded for many because the fig tree is faded, because the habit of holy retirement has dried up and is well-nigh dead. It cannot be that our life remains entwined with God's, if our days are rooted less and less in the soil of tranquil thought, within green pastures of quiet prayer, and beside the still waters that come from the gentle effluence of the Holy Spirit. Not even Christ Himself could maintain the vitality of His superabundant soul apart from those descents and ascents of blessed solitude. William Penn says of this: 'Christ Himself was an example of it. He loved, and chose to frequent, mountains, gardens, seasides. It is requisite to the growth of piety, and I reverence the virtue that seeks and uses it, wishing there were more of it in the world.' And Whittier, as he lay aside at Chalkley Hall, said of this:

Here, while the market murmurs, while men throng
The marble floor
Of Mammon's altars, from the crush and din
Of the world's madness, let me gather in
My better thoughts once more.

It may be with us as it was at times with the children in Christ that Moffat won in the Kuruman Mission. It was their habit to pass into the bush to pray, by paths which their pious feet had beaten out. At such times as their father in Christ thought that their prayer had become irregular, or had ceased, he would say to them: 'The grass is growing on your path to prayer.'

2. What was Nathanael thinking of as he sat there alone? Day-dreaming, was he? If so, it was of a Day of days for himself and his countrymen that he dreamed. He had the mind of a Nationalist; or so we may surmise from the salutation Jesus made towards him—'an Israelite indeed!' He loved his country. That was his chief devotion; that, and to know the will of God concerning her. But the times were out of joint. Policies were involved in perplexity. A score of schemes battled for the allegiance of this quiet and 'guileless' spirit.

Our own country to-day abounds with this man Nathanael—quiet thoughtful folk who lack what Nathanael lacked. *They need to come face to face with Jesus Christ.*

3. Let us catch the breath of Christ Jesus, savour the soul of Him, let our heart inhale the spirit He is of; then shall we feel and know, with a conviction that is higher than all argument, what is wrong with the world, and what shall set it right. First of all, we shall find that He holds the *secret* of all this present turmoil of vagrant counsels and broken pacts. What is that secret if it be not this, that we have smudged, or we have never really known, our native and universal birthright as sons of God and brothers of one another. Again, we shall find that He holds the *solution* of it. What is that solution if it be not this, that we, simply and humbly, and of firm and established will, return to the vision of that heritage, and cease not from this fight, nor let sleep the sword of the Spirit until Jerusalem be pitched with her heavenly pavilions throughout this green and riven land. But, also, this Christ is more than the revealer of this solution or that secret of our discontents. He is Himself the *stand-by* in all we seek to tell men of this advent of the Realm of God among us, and all we do in order to bring that accomplishment to pass.

Here is a treasury untouched by thousands, even of those who have been brought into the King's palace. *Just through there*, there is waiting for us that power of the Grace of the living Christ by which mountains can be lifted up and cast into the midst of the sea. The glory and the marvel of it are diminished by saying that it is 'waiting.' Too often we picture Christ as standing off, aloof, with sad, disappointed, and averted look. In reality, He is to us what He was to Nathanael. He sees us under the trees. He knows our thoughts. He comes to us, saying, 'Lo, I have been looking for you. Come with me; I will stand by you; we will do it together.'[1]

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Idle Word.

'And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement.'—Mt 12^{36} (RV).

Despite the difficulty of the saying, it is really quite unambiguous. It should be noticed that just previously Jesus has been saying that it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh, as if speech was not always to be a matter of a deliberate draught from the well of wisdom, or the restrained utterance of the reason, but was more valuable when it was the expression of superabundant feeling, the spontaneous overflow of the heart. And then comes this word. We must not

[1] A. Boyd Scott, *The Twelve take Stock of us*, 61.

try to get out of the difficulty by translating 'idle' as 'harmful'; the word *means* 'idle.' It is used of a field lying fallow, of a tree not bearing fruit, of the Sabbath because it was free from work. It is expressly distinguished from 'logos,' which always means rational speech, a purposeful word endeavouring to manifest truth; it is mere utterance (*rēma*, a word that just flows out). Therefore an idle word means not only a careless word, but one deliberately so. Jesus is referring to that type of speech when we let ourselves go, when we are purposely speaking freely, jestingly, without serious intent. But it is, then, very essential to notice that such speech is not thereby condemned as wicked without further examination; it is an utterance of which a reasoned account is to be given at the Judgment. If we explore the context farther back, we shall find the difficulty will completely vanish. The Pharisees had been affirming that Jesus cast out devils by the Prince of devils, and Jesus had said that if such a judgment was only directed against Himself personally, it was forgivable; but if it meant that they were going to judge anything to be good or evil, not by its manifestation, but by like or dislike of the agent who performed it, then they were in danger of committing the unforgivable sin, because they were confusing darkness and light with personal prejudice. There may have followed in reply some protest that they were not speaking so seriously as that, or Jesus Himself may have felt that He must allow that they were not making a considered judgment; and so He added this saying.

Four points might be made about the idle word.

1. *There is often revealing power in the careless word.* It is only recently that we have come to understand how entirely true this statement is. We can trace this dawn of its meaning, perhaps, first of all in Dr. Glover's comment in his *Jesus of History*: 'The idle word is to condemn a man, not because it is idle, but because, being unstudied, it speaks of his heart, and reveals, unconsciously but plainly, what he *is* in reality.' If we question whether 'condemn' is not too strong, the comment must be confessed to be a welcome illumination. A dazzling light is thrown on its meaning in Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, where the unconsidered, unintentional word becomes of tremendous importance because of what it reveals of the unconscious mind. Once again Jesus has expressed in simple, vivid terms what it has taken centuries to discover is a scientific fact.

Sometimes the mere slips that we make in speech, when our words actually misrepresent the intention we had in our mind, may reveal what is actually struggling for expression. A man will speak of himself as a 'scholar' in a certain subject, when what he meant to say was a 'student'; and he will hurriedly and perhaps with confusion correct himself. But the slip may betray what his real opinion of himself is, which he must yet conceal out of deference to the prevailing idea that one should be modest about one's attainments.

A quite good and unquestionably moral man will often reveal a most unexpected preference for stories which border on the vulgar or the unclean; and this may possibly indicate that underneath all his convictions and professions he has that lack of reverence for the sanctities of sex which is the root of sensual indulgence. Or, again, a favourite and oft-repeated story may play with ideas of cruelty which, when speaking seriously, a man would not tolerate; and this may expose the existence in himself of some unrecognized unconcern for suffering.

2. *The diagnosis may go too far.*—The unconscious may contain a number of different elements: it may consist of things which we have heard or read, and which we have refused to accept; they remain among the lumber of the rejected. It may be mere memory, where things are stored which have perhaps never penetrated consciousness at all, and, just as in insanity, memory will unroll itself beyond control, and these things will find utterance. The value of anything of this showing what is the soul's real desire is not only nil, it is utterly false and misleading. Again, sometimes things will slip from us which are due to what we might call the still unregenerated elements in our natures. No one of us who knows himself, even when he has consciously and consistently reshaped the ambitions, the aims, and the desires of his life, and has really transformed all his values, will be surprised to learn that there linger in the depths of his being certain elements which have never yet yielded to this new direction of the conscious life. It is from this area that there will proceed many of our worst temptations. There will be the stain and strength of past sins still colouring the mind and pestering the will for expression. Anything that reveals the existence of such a state will tell us nothing new, and while it informs us that there is much to be conquered, yet it does not disclose any unsuspected secrets or show that at root the nature is rotten. But sometimes the unconscious may reveal what we repress not because we ourselves dislike it, but because it is not considered polite, or allowable in good society, or

sanctioned by religion. Such things reveal the real state of our hearts, and we have to take stock of the disclosure. Therefore it is wise for us to take account of our off-duty moods, to note the things we say when we are off our guard.

3. *Mere repression of the idle word is useless.*—There are many people who maintain a considerable renown for wisdom by keeping solemnly silent when others are flowing over with talk, who preserve their dignity against betrayal. But we never know these people through and through, and they may lose some valuable opportunities for knowing themselves. It is not even enough to control one's temper, though the expression of certain feelings in speech does tend to give those feelings more possibility of action and even increase their violence, while repression has the opposite effect. Mere control is, however, exhausting, for it leaves feelings internally still struggling for expression.

Nothing more is accomplished by going in dread of the Judgment Day. That old fear which kept so many tyrants from their worst deeds and kept many a villain within the bounds of ordinary behaviour, while useful socially, is useless individually; because the Judgment Day is to reveal all the hidden hates and secret lusts of the heart. The man who has a passion for holiness and a real hatred for all sin will welcome the premature and unintentional disclosure of what there is in him precisely that he may get rid of it.

4. What has to be sought is *a cleansing which fears no exposure.* We ought to be able to laugh and jest, to join in some boisterous battery of witticism, and find that we had said nothing unseemly, given utterance to nothing that left a wound, revealed nothing, even when our nature was churned up from the bottom, when every form of utterance was left unchecked, of which we have to repent. Thomas à Kempis says somewhere that we often return from company feeling worse than when we went into it. In a saint this might be due to a feeling of defilement from without; but with most of us the defilement is that which comes from ourselves; and we are miserable merely because we have betrayed ourselves.

What we have to seek is such profound purity of nature, such an overflowing of goodwill, such entire humility, that we can trust ourselves to speak without always keeping a watch upon the door of our lips, that even if we were delirious or lost our rational control, there would be nothing revealed which would condemn us to any right and discerning judgment. No lesser standard will leave us safe.

We shall need for that an inner cleansing. There must be the constant opening of the heart to the gaze and the habitation of God; there must be the welcome within of that cleansing stream which Christ opened on Calvary for all pride and hate, for all false ambition and coward fear. Inmost of all things in our being we must build a shrine for the Holy Ghost. Our most intimate interior companion must be the Christ, from whose radiant, spontaneous, freely flowing goodness we must hope to borrow something by intercourse, communion, and love. There must spring up within us something more than cleansing; a fountain of new life, a radiant holiness, an all-transforming love; for not until the very essence of one's being can freely express itself can we reckon to have attained the glorious liberty of the sons of God. How much prayer and meditation, what discipline and examination, how much seeking of personal union with our Lord there will have to be before this can come to us those who know themselves will dimly guess; but we can all be thankful for this warning given, and we can set ourselves to make it no more needed, but ready to render an account of even the idlest word.[1]

[1] W. E. Orchard, *No More War*, 100.

The Purpose of Deuteronomy, Chapter iv.

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Even a casual reader cannot fail to note the absence of unity in this chapter. Outwardly and inwardly alike there is no cohesion among the fragments which compose it. The narrative passes suddenly and unaccountably from 2nd sing. to 2nd plur. in the form of address. It whirls the reader from events at Beth-Peor (v.[3]) to the theophany and the giving of the law at Horeb (v.[10]), only to bring him back to East Jordan by inserting a list of asylum towns in that district (v.[41]), and to end by an