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

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

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

Prophet and Martyr in Early Christianity.

IN a brochure of some seventy-five pages, bearing the title *Prophet und Märtyrer*,¹ Dr. Otto Michel submits to a fresh examination the ideas centring round the conception of the prophet or witness for God in late Judaism and in Early Christianity, and establishes results which have important bearings on the historical understanding of Jesus and of the New Testament religion. While maintaining a certain reserve on the question of the extent to which the Deutero-Isaianic figure of the Suffering Servant can be held to have influenced the subsequent development of ideas regarding Messiah, prophet, and religious community in Israel, Dr. Michel thinks it certain that in late Judaism, the Judaism of Maccabean and post-Maccabean times, the conceptions of prophet and martyr for God had become definitely identified, and contends that it is from the standpoint of this identification that we must approach the mind of Jesus both as regards His own calling and as regards the calling of His followers. The basis of Christianity, indeed, is not prophetic only, but supra-prophetic, yet at this supra-prophetic or Messianic level the essential features of the prophetic ideal were retained and brought to supreme affirmation. Suffering and death, the necessity of witnessing for God by deed as well as by word, would be *a priori* elements in our Lord's consciousness of His calling, and therefore Dr. Michel dismisses, as historically worthless, the arguments customarily brought against the authenticity of Jesus' references to His impending martyr-death. That Jesus should drink the cup of suffering, undergo a baptism of blood, lay down His life as a 'ransom,' and that He should require His followers to face similar suffering, were conceptions already given in the very nature of His office and task. An inward and *a priori* necessity

¹ C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh; M.2.

prescribed the *via crucis* both for Master and for disciples.

The influence of this fundamental association of ideas upon the apostolic and communal mind of Early Christianity is traced by Dr. Michel through the pages of the New Testament and of the Apostolic Fathers. A new light is thrown upon the 'martyr-consciousness' of St. Paul and his words about bearing in the body the dying of Jesus, making up what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ, sharing the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, wearing the marks of the Lord Jesus. But even more illuminating is the new point of view with regard to writings like Hebrews, First Peter, and the Johannine Apocalypse, where the task is to persuade whole communities to accept a martyr-destiny. Hebrews is intelligible only as a martyr-epistle: 'It concerns an Italian community which wishes to draw back under the protection of Judaism in order to escape a threatening martyrdom.' The other New Testament writings, Ignatius, Hermas, and the Didache, reflect features of the same martyr-theology. In the Fourth Gospel, indeed, and in the First Epistle of John the conception of 'witnessing' to Jesus parts company with the primary idea of suffering, possibly because the great head of the Johannine school, though prophet and disciple, had been specially exempted from being a *μάρτυς* in the strict sense of the term. Dr. Michel has much that is of value to say on such questions and on the closely connected element of asceticism in New Testament Christianity. Jesus (Mk 2^{19f.}) did not set His followers free from asceticism, but only from asceticism as an external law. He made them free not from, but for asceticism, a point to which modern Protestantism in its anti-Roman polemic has failed perhaps to do adequate justice. Dr. Michel's book marks a distinct contribution to the science of New Testament theology.

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In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Conkers.

BY THE REVEREND GORDON HAMLIN, B.A.,
CARDIFF.

'We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.'—Ro 8³⁷.

ALL the boys know what conkers are, and I expect some of the girls do, too. You know they are the

fruit or seed from the horse-chestnut tree. For ever so many years boys have played a game with them in the autumn when the winds (or a few well-aimed stones) bring down the conkers from the swaying branches.

But, do you know, I can remember the time when we had no games of conkers in the autumn because they had to be gathered in earnest and

not in fun. It was during the Great War, when the Government sent out an appeal to all the schools in the country asking the teachers to organize their children and to collect as many horse-chestnuts as they could. No less than four thousand five hundred tons of conkers were collected; and for every ton of them half a ton of grain was saved for our food in that time when all food was so short. The Queen and Princess Mary shared in this collection; for they gathered over a ton of conkers in the grounds at Sandringham.

But that is all a thing of the past, and we hope it will never, never come again. We can play conkers to our heart's content now. What an interesting game it is! If one boy whose conker has mastered three plays another boy whose conker has mastered four, the one who wins the encounter reckons seven.

When three conquers four
Seven is the score.

Now, I think the word 'conker' is really a way of saying 'conqueror.' That is what we all want to be, and when we gain the victory over our temptations and our difficulties, then, our Bible says, we can become 'more than conquerors.' That is just what happens in the game: when you break the other fellow's conker you do not add *one* only to your score, but *all* those he has conquered are added to swell your total.

If three conquers four,
Seven is the score.

Jesus loves to help us do the same in all our contests. He makes us not only conquerors, but *more than conquerors*.

You all know how they kept John Bunyan in prison at Bedford because he would not promise to stop preaching in the open air. So he was shut away from his home, and you know how he grieved at this cruel absence from his little blind daughter. But Bunyan was brave. He had been a trooper in Cromwell's army; now, however, he faced a bigger fight. He had to master his loneliness and his moods of depression. He conquered; but Jesus was with him in this fight and made him more than conqueror. For He inspired that preacher in prison to put his preaching gifts into a book. By means of that book he has preached to millions. It has been translated into over one hundred languages. So you see that what his enemies planned to do when they shut him up in prison was exactly reversed. By preventing him from preaching to hundreds on the village green

they helped him to preach to millions in all parts of the world.

You remember, too, that the man who first used that splendid phrase 'more than conquerors' was shut up in prison at Rome. Some of Paul's old friends were worried about him; but he wrote to them saying Jesus was helping him to turn what seemed defeat into a wonderful victory. What happened to Bunyan at Bedford was what happened to him in Rome.

That is the sort of thing Jesus loves to do. Are we His? If so, then He is ours. Courage and Christ mean not only victory, but a splendid victory.

I know that we two
Shall surely win through,
Jesus and I.

He never gives in
So we two must win,
Jesus and I.

A great man once said: 'No precipice is too steep for two.' That is always wonderfully true when the other one is Jesus.

A Better Use for Gunpowder.

BY THE REVEREND P. N. BUSHILL, B.A.,
ORPINGTON.

'They shall beat their swords into plowshares.'—
Is 2^d.

'Please to remember the Fifth of November!' Not much chance of forgetting it! Whizz! Bang! Ph . . . ph . . . eugh! . . . right up into the skies. Oh, the crackers, the 'boy scout rousers,' the 'war in the air,' the rockets! And the beautiful Catherine wheels and Roman candles. Then the bonfires lighting up the skies. Why, what a day it is! A day for boys and girls . . . and I think their fathers, too, like to share in the fun of the fireworks. Let Guy Fawkes' Day teach us one or two lessons.

1. *We do a lot of things without knowing the reason.* Why do we celebrate 5th November? Some have a vague knowledge that it has something to do with Guy Fawkes: but probably most of the boys and girls enjoying the fun give little thought to the historic episode from which it springs. It is just a custom, and a very welcome custom, once a year. Most people do not remember how, three hundred years ago, Robert Catesby determined with a number of conspirators to blow up that unpopular King James on the occasion of his opening Parliament, how the plot was hatched,

and how Guido Fawkes was employed to do the ghastly deed, how Robert Catesby had a friend, Lord Mounteagle, whom he wanted to save from destruction, to whom he sent a secret letter, how that letter miscarried and the plot leaked out, how on 5th November Guido was discovered in the vaults of the House of Lords with his lantern, and with fuse all ready. There is quite a lot of history attached to the story, but little thought is given to that as boys and girls give themselves to the enjoyment of this exciting evening. How possible it is to do things by custom! Why do you come to church? Do you recognize a connexion between this service and that day in history when Jesus died upon the Cross? Do you realize why we desire to meet together to remember Him, and to thank Him, and to learn His will? When boys and girls go home and sometimes at dinner are not able to remember anything about the children's address, or the hymns, or anything that they did, does it not seem that they have been just observing a custom—doing something without knowing the reason why?

2. *It is possible easily to be misled into wrong.* We think of Guy Fawkes as the culprit of the gunpowder plot, but as a matter of fact Robert Catesby was the ringleader, and poor Guido Fawkes was his willing tool. But Guido had to suffer, for after he was discovered he was executed. Perhaps he hardly realized all that he was doing. It is so easy to be misled by others into wrong-doing, and sometimes boys and girls fall quite innocently into the trap. A suggestion of stealing is made, or a suggestion of doing something shameful; perhaps you trust that bigger boy, or that bigger girl, and it is so easy to be misled. Beware! One step in the wrong direction leads on to another. Say, No, at once! 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not' was the sound advice of Solomon in the book of Proverbs (1¹⁰).

3. *We can turn our troubles into laughter.* This gunpowder plot was really a very serious thing: if Guido had not been discovered, what a dreadful disaster would have happened! And yet our English nature is such that we can now look back upon it and make it a subject of laughter and merriment. Is that not a good way of dealing with trouble? Not all trouble, of course, but much of it can be dealt with in that way. Laugh when you are hurt! When things don't go right, be thankful that they are not worse. Be like the poor old woman who only had two teeth left, but was thankful to God that they were opposite one another! Is that not what our soldiers did in the

Great War? You have heard their song: 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile! smile! smile!'

4. *Most important of all, it is better to use gunpowder for fireworks than for bullets.* We are celebrating Armistice Day at this time, and wouldn't it be better for all the nations of the world to turn their gunpowder into fireworks? A few years after the Gunpowder Plot (in 1609) Galileo invented the telescope—a wonderful instrument—and the leaders of Italy wanted to use it for the improvement of their armies, to help them in fighting their enemies. . . .

Whereat old senators, wagging their white beards,
And plucking at gold chains with stiff old claws
Too feeble for the sword-hilt, squeaked at once:
'This glass will give us great advantages
In time of war.'

War, war, O God of love,
Even amidst their wonder at Thy world,
Dazed with new beauty, gifted with new powers,
These old men dreamed of blood.

Thus Alfred Noyes describes it in a poem, 'Watchers of the Sky.' But, as Sir Frank Dyson, in a lecture recently, said, Galileo turned it on the skies—and what wonders he saw there, the handiwork of God.

Our text describes the same thing in the days before gunpowder was known. Swords were the instruments of war, and the prophet foresees the time when the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares. Let the nations to-day learn to turn their gunpowder into fireworks! What a grand display we might have next year if they did! And what a Peace, to have the instruments of war abolished!

The Christian Year.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Christian Way of meeting Temptation.

'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; . . . think on these things.'—Ph 4⁸.

We men and women are all beset by temptations. We are tempted, first and foremost, to be selfish—to think, first, of our own comfort, profit, ease, pleasure, and security. That exposes us to the danger of being complacent and satisfied so long as things are all right with us, and of being inconsiderate towards others, and even indifferent to their sufferings.

We are tempted to the mean sin of jealousy—to envy others because they have what we have not, and so to the danger of trying to belittle them and their achievements. We are tempted to be conceited; in carefully concealed ways this attacks people to the end of life. Some are tempted to be proud and overbearing; some to be just lazy, when life calls them to be doing many things. Many are tempted to be deceitful—to deceive themselves and, if possible, others.

Then let us face the plain fact that great numbers of us are exposed to temptation through our bodies. We are tempted to take much thought for food and drink and bodily ease, and to indulge ourselves. We are tempted to cherish unclean thoughts, or to read unclean books, or to various bad habits which are connected with our sex natures. We are tempted to love money, and to judge men and things by money values. And some of us are horribly tempted to give way to temper, or to surly, sulky, morose moods. We are tempted to be cowardly and timid, and to run away in spirit from the challenge of life. We are all vulnerable somewhere. The people who are in most danger are the people who do not realize that, or who will not admit it. They are the people who go on carelessly until, some day, disaster overtakes them with a crash. 'Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.'

There is a right way of meeting temptation, and there is also a wrong way, and some of us are failing to overcome because we are not trying in the right way. We might almost say that the New Testament message about resisting temptation is—'Don't resist, think about something else.' How very seldom Christ said, 'Don't do this or that.' There are almost no negative commands in His teaching. He talked very little about sins, and such miserable things. But He talked a very great deal about the positive direction of thought and energy. Go! do! be! give! love! serve! seek the lost! fight the world's evil! It is true that a certain honest wish to renounce evil, and overcome temptation, is the very foundation or starting-post of true life. But once the honest wish to overcome evil is there, then the word of Christ to us is always a positive one.

Modern psychology has been rediscovering for us the laws about the human mind on which Christ's whole method rests. The psychologists tell us that thinking about wrong things strengthens the hold which they have over us, even when we imagine we think about them only to repudiate them. Especially do fears bind us to our enemies. This

even applies to prayer. Many people pray much to be delivered from particular sins, but find that in the process their thought is fixed on those sins again, and so they get back into the world of their fears. The really helpful prayers are the prayers of praise and thanksgiving, which fill our minds with great thoughts of the beauty and the love of God, and so lift us up above the world of mean thoughts and soiling deeds.

There is more, however, in psychology that helps us at this point. It has pointed out that in us all there are many instincts, to each of which a certain amount of vital force is given. And the real problem of life is just the problem of finding the right ways in which to use and express these instincts. What we call sins are usually just the wrong ways of releasing instinct.

There is the instinct of curiosity. It may lead to mischievous prying into other people's affairs and so to becoming a social pest. But it may also be used in scientific research, or sociological research, and so may bring forth useful fruits. Or take pugnacity—a very strong instinct in most boys and in some girls. It may lead to constant scrapping and the development of a rough and cruel nature. But in a wise educational system it is given other outlets. The pugnacious boy is taught to play for his whole side at football, and then perhaps for his whole house or school. And so he may develop into a true citizen and spend himself in fighting the evils which make thousands miserable. There is a place for redeemed pugnacity in the work of the Kingdom of Heaven. And then there is the sex instinct—a tremendous force in nearly all men and women. To pretend it is not there is neither purity nor refinement nor wisdom, but simply stupidity. The right direction of it is probably the main problem of most lives. It is the essentially creative force in the world. At the right time it expresses itself, through creative love, and leads to parentage and the continuance of the race. But it has far, far wider uses than that. It is the source of abundant energies which can be employed in creative art, in craftsmanship and in many forms of personal service, such as nursing, teaching, and friendship. Its splendid power can be turned towards hard brain work, or hard muscular work, or hard organizing work, and so on. But outlet it must have, else it produces strains and stresses which spoil life.

This is not to say that there is not a necessity in life for such a thing as definite conscious self-denial or renunciation. Of course there is. Again and again we have to say No to ourselves. But there

can be no useful self-sacrifice in any one direction unless it becomes self-expression in another. Mere negative living is always ugly living.

This leads us, in conclusion, to one special point. What are we to say to those people who say, 'We have tried prayer in our times of need, and it did not help us.' Or, 'We have tried religion, and it did not save us'? Some of them are genuinely surprised at the failure of religion in their case. But need we be surprised? They are not religious people, and do not want to be. But they do want God to interfere in their lives as an occasional convenience—to save them from gross sin. They want to be worldly until sorrow comes, and then to experience the comforts of God. They want to live gaily for self and pleasure until temptation becomes so strong as to be dangerous, and then they want God to step in and take away the temptation. Does it not only need to be put in that way for all of us to see the absurdity of any such treatment of God?

Yet is not that what many of us do? It is true that God can and will save us—to the uttermost. It is true that He can and will deliver us from evil, and rout our temptations. But this is His way—He will fill us with Himself instead. There is no other. And some of us don't quite want that yet. We do want to avoid evil, but we don't want as much of God as that would mean. Of course, that is because we do not know what God really is. Nobody shrinks from Him who really knows Him, except those who deliberately prefer evil.¹

The thought of this text is illustrated by Jesus in a short parable in Mt 12, which is full of psychology. The unclean spirit returns to the heart of man from which he had been driven, and finds nothing there, no evil at all, less indeed than when he was there before, but equally no good. With seven other spirits more evil than himself he returns into the man's heart, whose last state is worse than his first. This is horribly exact psychology. Evil suggestions from environment will inevitably enter the mind of man; they may be ejected at first, but the invasion will be overwhelming unless he has countered them with suggestions which are positively good and inspired by the Holy Spirit. He must engage the energies of his instincts, the interest of his mind, the will and desire of his heart, with that which is positively good. It all sounds so simple, and it is so very hard. It means opening the heart without reserve to the presence of Christ; where there is any

reserve, any corner into which we do not admit Him, evil suggestions will find a home and start their activities. To open the heart wholly to Christ will mean sacrifice, self-denial, isolation, poverty, loss of friends—any of these. It will also mean joy, power such as we have never known, and peace.²

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Forgotten Truth behind 'Purgatory.'

'Unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead.'—I P 4^o (R.V.).

'He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.'—I P 3¹⁹.

The Reformed Churches hitherto have repudiated the whole idea of purgatory as horrible. They have regarded it as a terrible weapon in the hands of priests for the enslavement of the fearful and the ignorant. They point to the shocking abuses which it has engendered, and they regard it as entirely opposed to the spirit of Christianity and to the simplicity of the gospel. But during several decades a change of view has been slowly taking place. The old orthodox views of a static heaven and hell were seen to be impossible. The Roman doctrine of purgatory remained as great a horror as ever, and as impossible of belief. But, as an eminent Free Churchman of our time phrased it: 'There is a truth at the heart of the Catholic dogma which we must disentangle from the falsehood with which it has been associated and restore to its proper place in Christian teaching.'

The underlying question is, of course, this: *What happens to our departed?* Where are they? In what conditions do they live? We cannot avoid these questions even if we would. There are too many freak religionists abroad for that. Evangelical Christianity should be able to set forth some definite and demonstrable principles concerning the life beyond which avoid the extremes of mere traditionalism or antiquated literalism.

1. Let us begin, then, by placing ourselves, in thought, in the presence of death. How still are these bodies which a moment before were marked by the energy of life! In the sight of men all is over. Now what has really happened? According to Christian teaching the spirit of that person—old or young—is suddenly shut off from the material world with which, hitherto, it has made contact. The earthly body is discarded for ever. The spirit enters a new environment in a 'spiritual body' fitted for it. So much the majority of Christians

¹ A. Herbert Gray, *Jesus, and the Art of Living*, 50.

² T. W. Pym, *Psychology and the Christian Life*, 115.

of all churches would probably accept as true. But now we go beyond the creed of many in affirming further that *death makes no change whatever in our character*. There is a widespread belief that it does, and that in some magical way the physical act of dying holds within itself some mysterious moral dynamic. What evidence is there of this? There is nothing in the New Testament or in reason, or in the nature of things, to support the theory. On the contrary, everything is against it. The personality remains unchanged by any such physical act as dying. Our essential life is one and the same wherever we live it. Wherever we go we take ourselves for good or evil. Surely we may take it as settled that we begin in the spirit world as we end in the material world. But while death makes no difference whatever to the continuance or to the character of our personalities, it ends one period of our life. And since life is a stewardship, what can be more natural or fair than when one phase of it has closed, a verdict should be pronounced upon it and that that verdict should determine our situation in the next phase of life? The very idea of a stewardship carries with it the principle of examination, judgment, and either degradation or promotion following the verdict. But the very fact that each 'receives the things done in the body . . . whether good or bad' carries with it the most obvious conclusion that all cannot possibly fare alike in a static heaven or a static hell. People die at various times in life and in various moral conditions. Some go hence at one with God; others in a state of discord. Some pass with a life filled; others with a life wasted. Many have never had a fair chance of living a true human life; they were, as General Booth said, 'damned into the world.' Some have deliberately shut out the Light of Life, because they loved the darkness better. Others have been driven into the darkness by cruel and irrational dogmas and by caricatures of Christ. Some have left the world in infancy, some in youth, some in mid-life, and some at the end of a full term. How is it possible that all these, so diverse in many ways, can fare alike? To ask the question is to answer it. Humanity has never really believed it, and Christianity pure and simple has never taught it.

2. The further question then arises, Does death *fix* the conditions of the spirit? Are infant spirits to remain infants for ever, or will they grow up? Are the persons who have had no chance here below still to have none? Are the undeveloped to remain undeveloped? Upon our earth plane we have seen the backward develop, the scoundrel

become the saint, the handicapped set free to run a full course with joy. There is nothing finally fixed here below. Are we, then, to believe that within the same universe, in which the moral law is one, there will be, on the next plane of existence, a mysterious reversal of the principles which operate upon the present plane? What spiritual principle in the New Testament warrants it? The word 'eternal' does not enter into the question at all, since it is not a time word but a word of quality. Orthodoxy once said dogmatically, and now says somewhat falteringly, that man's everlasting fate is fixed at death. The Bible never says that.

Wesley did not believe it. 'Some imagine,' Wesley says, 'that we are to be judged immediately after death. There is no passage in all the oracles of God which affirms any such thing.' Could God the Father and Christ the Saviour ever be 'satisfied' with that? Could we? The thought is intolerable. But if this doctrine of the fixity of fate at the hour of death is felt to be untrue, equally untrue is that opposite, easy-going and thoroughly unscientific doctrine of pure sentiment—the sentiment which makes what is called 'love' all in all, a love which ignores law and discipline and order, and is destitute of every strong moral quality. We can accept neither the falsity that proclaims death as the final hardening of human fate, nor the sentiment which makes of God nothing more than easy-going benevolence. An epoch that has learned to render homage to law in all the working of the universe cannot tolerate the negation of law in the making of the character of man. We have to find room in our conception of the future life for both law and love. We can find it in the largely forgotten truth of what is called the 'Intermediate State'—a truth of which the Roman doctrine of purgatory is a caricature.

3. Into that State our Lord passed on Good Friday. To the thief on the Cross He said, 'To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.' He did not explain what Paradise was, for He used a word which conveyed a certain definite idea to the man who listened to Him, and there was no need for an explanation. The Jewish people had come to believe in an after life, the happy part of which was indicated in a word they had borrowed from the Persians. Jesus used the word in its common acceptance, and so offered to the dying man at His side the consolation he most needed. On the Resurrection morning Jesus told Mary Magdalene that He had '*not* yet ascended to heaven,' while He told the thief on Good Friday that He was going to Paradise. Then Paradise is *not* 'heaven.' We

know little about it, and all speculation is quite idle, while dogmatism is impossible. We have one glint of light, however, which is too precious to avoid. It is conveyed in a hint here and there in words full of mystery, and chiefly in the statement of St. Peter that Jesus, immediately after His death, preached to the spirits in prison, and in the further statement that 'the gospel was preached to the dead.' The plain hint is that in the spirit world Jesus continued His mission of preaching the gospel to men who in their lifetime had no chance of hearing it. And the plain inference is that this work of mercy is always going on.

Two things follow which are at once harmonious with the spirit of the gospel and the nature of things. The first is that the love and redemptive action of Christ remain unaltered. He remains the Good Shepherd, the Saviour of man, the Friend of sinners. He makes continual 'intercession' for us. And that, to serious men who love their fellows, means more than words can tell.

The second thing is that the law of spiritual progress remains unaltered. The aim of Christianity is to reproduce in human character the likeness of Christ. In St. Paul's phrase, we are 'to be conformed to the image of the son.' The notion that salvation is a simple escape from the anger of an outraged God and an immediate entrance, at death, upon an eternity of unalloyed happiness, is removed by leagues from the solemn grandeur of the idea of salvation as set forth in the New Testament. Even a St. Paul could say, towards the end of his great life, that he had not yet 'attained.' Some have never seriously attempted to reach it. And some have made a pitiful failure of life. What is to happen to all of these? They must either be cast to the void or still be submitted to the inexorable law of progress. If the former, then the majority of mankind will perish, and man 'made a little lower than God' will be worse off than the beasts. There remains, then, but one other alternative, and that is submission to the law of progress. All progress costs. To enter through the straight gate we must 'strive.'

To achieve success in anything we must begin early. The person who defers learning until late in life adds enormously to his difficulties. But should he suddenly awake to what he has missed, especially if it be through his own fault, and desire to enter the world from which his idleness has excluded him, he will find his way very painful. There must be suffering, remorse, discipline, and a hard way to tread before the goal is reached. But the pain will be within and not without the Spirit,

The path of progress will be easy or difficult, as here below we choose to make it, or as beyond we choose to make it. There, as here, law reigns, and love with law.

Let none say that this 'cheapens sin,' or removes from the gospel the note of urgency. Once realize that there is no escape from the rigorous conditions of the law of spiritual progress, and that the longer these are disobeyed the more bitter and painful will be the pathway, then the note of urgency becomes intense.¹

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Armistice Sermon.

BY THE REVEREND J. S. STEWART, B.D.,
ABERDEEN.

'They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'—Mic 4³.

It is a relief to turn away occasionally from the gloomy, faithless voices stubbornly declaring that war was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be; and to consider for a change the signs of hope. Real, blessed signs of hope there are, if only we care to look for them. And Christ said, 'With God all things are possible.'

1. The first sign of hope is this: the world, in its deep heart, is utterly sick of strife, and weary for a better way. 'Everywhere,' said J. L. Garvin, that shrewd judge of men and affairs, 'the revolt of human feelings and reason against war is a movement incomparably more powerful and systematic than civilization has seen up to now.' It is coming to this—that we can say definitely that war is outside God's scheme of things for mankind, and that Jesus Christ has His face set against it. There was a time when to say such a thing would have been to run the risk of serious misunderstanding and opprobrious criticism: there may be some quarters where such a statement would be resented even yet; but we can thank Heaven, and we can take it as one of the most hopeful signs of the times, that the universal conscience of mankind is changing. They never said a couple of generations ago that war was the bankruptcy of Christianity and the collapse of religion: they are saying it now, and the fact that they are saying it means that the tide has turned and we are moving on to a better, saner, happier day. Here is one of the points where the religion of Jesus in the Church simply must speak with an unequivocal voice; and even

¹ F. C. Spurr, *Does God Care?* 67.

if there is still some risk of being misunderstood, it must accept the risk, and go right ahead and proclaim it—that war is outside God's plan and purpose, and that Jesus Christ has His face set against it.

2. Another sign of hope is this : the false glorification of war, the old familiar narcotic phrases about its ennobling influence, its purifying antiseptic powers, its toughening of the moral fibre of the peoples—all that is now exploded. Boswell records how Dr. Johnson once replied to the statement that war was a good thing occasionally, as it called out so much valour and virtue. 'A fire,' said he, 'might as well be thought a good thing; there is the bravery and address of the firemen in extinguishing it; there is much humanity excited in saving the lives and properties of the poor sufferers; yet, after all, who can say a fire is a good thing?' That argument is as cogent as ever. War does bring a great outburst of latent valour and virtue: but if valour and virtue need war to elicit them, there is something wrong. You might as well say that the institution of slavery should be defended on the ground that the harsh treatment may develop a noble endurance in the downtrodden slave. You might as well say that bullying in school ought to be encouraged, to teach hardness and courage to the bullied. It is all utterly wrong-headed and mistaken: and the glorification of war, the talk about its ennobling influence and so on, will not stand the light of day, or the light of Christian common sense, for a moment. Any good in the thing is far outweighed by the evil of it—not only its economic evil, though we know now how desperate that can be; not only its evil of desolated homes and broken, weeping hearts; but its moral evil, its perversion of moral standards, its flagrant arrest of decency, its dragging of spiritual things in the mud and slime of the pit. Robert Bridges, the late poet laureate, was a true patriot if ever there was one: but here, in *The Testament of Beauty*, is his final verdict:

War fallen from savagery to fratricide,
From a trumpeting vainglory to a crying shame,
Stalketh now with blasting curse branded on its
brow.

And the fact that men in every nation are coming to see that is our second sign of hope.

3. A third sign of hope may be mentioned, namely, that men are beginning to realize that peace is not a cold, negative, bloodless thing, but that it ought to be and can be every whit as thrilling and exciting and romantic and adventurous as

war, as full of zest and self-sacrifice and nobility of soul. That eager prophet of a former generation, William Morris, used to say, 'It is not enough to preach peace by talking of the horrors of war; for men are so made that they prefer horrors to dullness. You must persuade them that peace means a fuller and more glorious life if you would make them desire it passionately.' And there Morris was right on the mark. It is not a case of destroying the fighting instinct in human nature: it is a case of sublimating it into something noble and productive. Micah in our text does not say, 'They shall beat their swords and spears into scrap iron, and destroy them.' He says, 'They shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruninghooks'—they shall make something good and useful of them. For God never meant the fighting instinct to be destroyed and men left tame and weak. He meant the fighting instinct to be conserved and brought into the royal service of the Prince of Peace. We do not need war for heroism and self-sacrifice and moral passion—Christ can give all that in full and splendid measure.

There are, then, those signs of hope to cheer our souls to-day. But we must press beyond hope to action. We must work for peace. We must make that an integral part of our Christian programme. We must realize that this is the call of Christ to our generation; that it is not a thing we may interest ourselves in or not, as we choose, but that every one who names the name of Jesus is pledged to it as a plain duty. And it is a duty in three directions.

(1) There is, first, our duty to the dead. The writer to the Hebrews, closing his great roll-call of the men who died for the faith, declares—'These received not the promise . . . they without us should not be made perfect.' And that is true of our dead to-day: without our efforts now the thing they gave their lives for may go unrealized for ever. The great European cathedrals were all built in faith, one generation trusting the next to carry on the work begun. So the dead are trusting us. At Edinburgh Castle, when the sun goes down, four buglers blow 'the last post' across the ramparts. Once, long ago, one of the buglers was murdered; and still to-day, they say, after the echoes of the living bugles die away, a ghostly bugle can be heard through the gloaming—the bugle of the dead. God grant that our ears may never cease to hear across the years the bugles of our glorious dead, calling us to nobility of life and duty.

There is an American play called *Sun Up*, in which the scene is laid in the wilds of the Far West ; and there an old woman meets one day the son of the man who long ago had killed her husband. With a fierce, sudden hate mounting in her heart, she seizes a rifle to kill the lad. But just at that moment she seems to hear something, and dropping the rifle, bids the lad begone. 'What was it you heard?' he asks. And she tells him that it was the voice of her own son, who had died in the war ; and what the voice said was—'While you go on hating, my wounds will never heal.' While we go on hating to-day—or even while we go on drifting and failing to work with all our heart for peace—the wounds of our dead will never heal. Our duty of peace is first and foremost a duty to them.

(2) But if there is our duty to the dead, there is also our duty to the unborn. The imaginative pictures which are given us from time to time of what the next war, if there were a next war, would be like, err probably in the direction of understatement rather than of overstatement ; and even if there are men who lack the will to rise and banish the possibility of that threatening calamity for their own sakes, surely they will do it for their children's sakes ! Maeterlinck, in *The Blue Bird*, has a passage where the unborn generations, radiant with all the gifts of beauty and science and song which they may make to the world's onward and upward progress, are seen thronging the gates of birth, all waiting for the porter Time to come and open the gates and let them through into history. And if there is a cry from the dead behind us, surely there is also a cry from the unborn generations before us—'For our sakes, make a warless world !' As the Psalmist, in a very deep saying, puts it, 'Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children' ; give us the toil and sacrifice for peace, give them its blessed realization ; ours be the labour, theirs the reward—Thy work for us, Thy glory for our children. Our duty is to the dead, but it is to the future generations too.

For this small hand in mine I take
 Shall never grow to grasp a sword ;
 But build the house we could not make
 Fit for the living Lord.

(3) Finally, there is our duty to Christ. Rosegger, the poet, once had a dream. He saw the Almighty on His throne ; and in front of Him all the great ones of the earth were passing. First came Moses, and God from the throne addressed him. 'What did you bring to your people?' He asked. And Moses answered, 'The Law.' 'And

what did they make of it?' continued the Almighty, And Moses answered, 'Sin.' Then Charlemagne appeared. 'And what did you give to your people?' 'The Altar.' 'And what did they make of it?' 'The stake.' So He asked one after another ; and always the reply was that men had taken God's gracious gifts and perverted them. Then, at last, God turned to His own Son. 'My Son, what did you bring to men?' 'Peace,' was the answer. 'And what did they make of it?' And Jesus, covering His face with His pierced hands, sobbed 'War !' Christ came to be the Prince of Peace, and our work for peace is our plain duty to Him. The man who does not believe in peace, who thinks that patriotism means his country before all others, his rights at all costs to be upheld even though it should involve trampling the rights of some one else beneath his feet—that man is not only keeping Armistice Day unworthily ; he is making the Cross of Christ of none effect. For it was on that Cross that Jesus died for peace. Ever since that day we have been in honour bound to work for this thing.

And that's not done by sword or tongue or pen :
 There's but one way. God make us better men.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Injury and Pardon.

'And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.'
 —Mt 6¹².

'If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him.'
 —Lk 17³.

'Forgive us our debts.' Yes, debts is a good word ; the right word in the right place. It helps to place us in our true relation to God. It suggests that all sins may be resolved into a failure to fulfil our due undertakings towards Him. Forgive us our unfulfilled duties ! Forgive us our unpaid bills in goodness ! It is a better word than trespasses ; for trespasses suggests only the definite acts against the right with which conscience charges us. Debts suggests all our dropping below the true ideal.

But then, 'forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' What a striking addition to our prayer that is ! 'Forgive us in so far as we have not done all we should towards Thee, in the same way as we forgive them who have not done all they should towards us.' Not 'in the same proportion,' but 'in the same spirit.' And, indeed, behind this prayer there lies the psychological fact, that, unless we forgive, we cannot realize our debt to God, nor realize, therefore, what His forgiveness

means. If we go to God with hate in our heart, or enmity, we cannot know His pardon.

Again and again, in our Lord's teaching, He emphasizes the need of a forgiving spirit and the misery of an unforgiving one: endlessly forgive. It was the *attitude* of forgiveness, as a permanent attitude of spirit, that He wanted us to have.

1. Let us come down to facts, as we have to face them. This forgiving duty of a Christian is extremely hard; and even, sometimes, does not seem reasonable. At any rate, it is very hard. When the disciples heard of it they said, 'Lord, increase our faith.' That it is hard, take the evidence of any community of persons. Take churches, acquaintance circles, families; and see the separations, distrusts, developing dislikes, behind-back severity of criticisms, arising out of alleged, or imagined, at any rate believed, injuries and slights of a thoughtless moment of long ago. The fact is that there is that in the natural man that wants its own back. There is a certain restlessness of spirit, until a man that thinks himself injured can cry quits. It is a kind of spirit, which, directed into proper channels, is not without its uses in the world. At the same time, it is a spirit, which residing as it does in all of us, makes it exceedingly difficult for us to do anything like turning the other cheek. We feel that there is a certain duty to ourselves and to our honour not to be put upon.

So it is that injuries and slights produce their crop of resentments and of estrangements. Sometimes the original cause is so ludicrously inadequate to the result in anger. A tactless phrase, an accidentally averted head, a foolish jest, a momentary neglect, a too-pointed criticism are what we call our 'injuries.' On these we base our antagonisms. Really, it is very ludicrous, when we think of the light they throw on our own self-love and self-esteem, that we can make so much fuss about so little; ludicrous, when we contrast them with real injuries, that are done by cruel men in this world of ours.

For real hurts—cruel, calculating, stabbing hurts—are not unknown amongst us. Some there are that stand out clear for men to see; as when one gains a heart in its confidence for the amusement of a summer's day and then flings it aside to break in lonely bitterness, when the pastime is ended. Or when one takes innocence and makes it the slave and instrument of lust; or gains friendship, and then, with studied sneer, slays a reputation from behind. Some there are not so vivid, but as real; as when a man picks his brother's brains and grows fat thereon, while he struggles on, as best he can

to the end of the day, alleged a failure. These are things that hurt a man and bring something of redness before his eyes. And yet, Christ says, unto seventy times seven. 'Lord, increase our faith.'

2. These, then, are the facts. In face of them, what are we to do?

In the first place, we shall be entering into the spirit of Christ's teaching, if, in respect of the lesser injuries, we simply get rid of them altogether. Business men occasionally write off some of their debts as hopelessly bad. Cannot we Christian people get into the way of writing off some of the injury-debts, which we nurse so tenderly and are so careful to keep in our ledgers, as hopelessly silly and unnotice-worthy debts? For, after all, what do they amount to, these injuries of ours? They nearly always arise from what some one has said, or is alleged to have said, or is understood to have intended to say. Suppose they did say it, and suppose it hurt at the moment; it is cleaner-blooded and healthier-minded not to magnify trifles. And, besides, in this matter of slights, there is a great margin of error. We have to allow for hearsay evidence, the personal equation, ambiguity of speech, and our own self-esteem, which, very likely, is more than it ought to be.

It is certainly true that, in a Christian community especially, injuries and slights should never be given; but it is almost as true that they should never be received. It is incumbent upon us to seek the Spirit of Him who was full of grace. 'Despised and rejected of men, yet he opened not his mouth.' How poor, how mean, how silly our little vanities and bickerings appear in the light of Jesus Christ.

But there are the graver hurts. They stand in a different order. Towards them Christ would have us act differently. And His instructions are contained in this prayer, and in the sentence, 'If thy brother offend thee, *rebuke* him.'

(1) First, let the truth be manifest between you both. Jesus was a very great lover of reality; and He would have us carry reality into our relations one with another. After all, it is best, on the whole, to know where you are. It is always well to get away from make-believe. An effort to reach reality early may easily prevent an estrangement from becoming serious. It is possible, of course, that it may do damage, but that is often worth risking. At any rate, it is better than doing nothing. It requires courage, if thy brother offend thee, to rebuke him. There are those who say that Christianity involves an attitude which invites others to come and hit us. There is nothing of

that sort in this text. Rebuke him ; point out to him the facts of the case, that until there is grief shown, the hand of friendship cannot be offered. That is the kind of strong, virile action to which Christ invites us.

(2) Seek God's help to slay resentment as against the injurer himself. When we receive injuries, two emotions arise, woundedness and resentment. The former is unavoidable, as is pain when we burn our fingers. But the latter has to be slain. Can we rebuke and at the same time slay resentment ? Certainly we can, as far as act is concerned, but can we really obey, as far as the mind-state is concerned ? Christ knew we could, and gave us a hint of the kind of attitude He wanted, when He said, ' Pray for them that despitefully use you.' Develop that attitude which will enable you, in the great reality and solemnity of prayer, to ask God to give good to them that injure. So high does Jesus pitch His teaching.

(3) The moment the injurer repents, forgive him. Forgive and blot out and forget as far as we can.

Show that we have the Spirit of Christ, by acting forgivingly, at any rate, the moment that true sorrow is shown. This much is quite clear. Jesus is explicit. ' Yea, unto seventy times seven.'

If we still feel that we have been wounded wantonly, cruelly, that our anger is just, and that we will not forgive, let us think of this. The time will come when we will have to face Jesus Christ. And then, we shall know what the need of forgiveness means. There are the woundings we have dealt Him. All the long tale of it will come back. Imaginings, insincerities, undutifulnesses, all the long record of our heart-life will come back. This will be our prayer—and there will be an accent in it that has not been in it as yet—' forgive us our debts.' We cannot go to God and ask forgiveness for all the hurt we have done Him, when we have steeled our heart against our friend for this one wrong. We should be our own accuser, and our own condemner. Let us forgive as we would be forgiven.¹

¹ J. R. P. Sclater, *The Enterprise of Life*, 277.

The Doctrine of the Inner Light in the 'Apology' of Robert Barclay.

BY THE REVEREND J. BONNAR RUSSELL, B.D., PH.D., PAISLEY.

THE Inner Light is both experience and doctrine—and it was the former first : a transforming experience of wide and far-reaching significance. Like all experience, it has sought to formulate itself—an effort never unattended with danger and not wholly successful here. Its best expression hitherto has not been in intellectual forms—not even in the justly celebrated *Apology*—but in the lives, actions, and sufferings of a Society whose surface peculiarities, if in some sense the reflection of its founder's idiosyncrasies, are, far more, the index of a peculiar singleness and sincerity in serving Christ and taking up their cross.

I. GEORGE FOX AND THE SECTS.

Prior to the Reformation, there was, in England, as on the Continent, a great abundance of mystical religion, and a mass of mystical literature, the accumulation of centuries. It is not doubtful,

however, that the fresh discovery, and wide diffusion, of the Scriptures far outweighed all other literary influences. In seventeenth-century England their circulation was nation-wide, and their study unprecedented. This pre-occupation with Scripture was part cause, part effect, of the ecclesiastical situation, which may summarily be described as one of institutional liquidation. But on the personal, experimental side, religious concern stood at high-water mark. The experience of Bunyan, genius and man of the people, is typical. He had the Bible in his hand, and a great fear in his heart ; and he scanned the one to find relief for the other. The scrutiny did not yield the required reassurance. The oracles were equivocal ; the incidence of threat and promise, uncertain. A disrupted Church had no authority ; an internal Witness must speak. ' You must cry mightily to be set down by the Holy Spirit in the Word.' So, ' holy Mr. Gifford,' Bunyan's pastor ; and, in so saying, holy Mr.