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(*The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, iii. 5) that we live again in our children, or to the doctrine that the only resurrection is the spiritual truth of baptism—the rising again to newness of life—which was a tenet of Gnostic teaching. In opposition to all such heresies, Timothy is exhorted to hold fast the teaching of Scripture with which he had been familiar from childhood, and which can impart saving wisdom by faith in Jesus Christ. Here the Apostle makes the most definite statement to be found in his writings of the inspiration of the Old Testament, and of its authoritative value to the Christian minister. It is the preacher's text-book. Outside of it he need not go for his subjects, and to it he can always turn for instruction and guidance in his ministry. The point which Paul stresses is that the Scriptures testify of Christ, and can lead men to a knowledge of the truth which was fulfilled in Him.

In words of solemn earnestness, Paul gives a last charge to the young Timothy, to keep before him, in all his work, the image of the risen Christ, who will judge the living and the dead, and to preach as in His presence. The faithful preacher will never be off duty, in the sense of relaxing his efforts, whether the times seem favourable for presenting his message or otherwise, because opportunities are dwindling, and the days will come when men will not listen to sound doctrine, and will go after other teachers who tell them what they like to hear.

This final exhortation, sounding the solemn note of urgency, must have come home to Timothy with peculiar force, knowing that his revered master was writing with the shadow of death upon him. It certainly has its effect upon the general reader, for it is the situation in which the writer finds himself, and the spirit in which he supports it, that overshadow every other interest in the Epistle. It presents him as the prisoner of the Lord, awaiting death at the hands of men, as though he had been a felon. His last hour is at hand. Already his life-blood is being offered like a libation poured out, but not a word of complaint escapes him. Paul regards the prospect of laying down his life for Christ as the seal of his apostleship. He realizes now what Ananias had told him of the service for which he was chosen—'I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake' (Ac 9^{16}). Reviewing the record of the past, he acknowledges that the Lord had stood by him and strengthened him for the task to which He had called him, and he has no doubt that his reward is sure. Looking into the future with prophetic gaze, he foresees that grievous times are appointed for the Church when many will profess a pretentious piety in place of practising true godliness. But the firm foundation laid by God will stand secure against all assailing change, and His Kingdom will come in power and glory. Thus the life of sacrificial service that began in the bewildered questionings, 'Who art thou, Lord? What wilt thou have me to do?' is passing out in trumpet blasts of affirmation, 'I am not ashamed. I know whom I have believed.'

It is the chief Apostle's last and greatest message to the Christian Church, for it tells us that though it has been hard living and contending for the faith, he finds it easy to die in it. He who knew but one fear, lest when he had preached to others he himself should become a castaway, has overcome the last enemy to his peace of mind, and has won his way into the persuasion that Christ is able to keep him until the day of His appearing.

> Yea, thro' life, death, thro' sorrow, and thro' sinning
> He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed.

The condemned cell is here transformed into the ante-chamber to the heavenly places, and only the Christian faith and hope can do that.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

An Easter Sermon.

By the Reverend S. Greer, M.A., Ayr.

'Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.'—1 S 3^{9}.

Not long ago a blindfolded pilot brought a ship into Newhaven harbour. 'Blindfold?' you say. 'How could he find the channel, or watch for the buoys to steer by?' Well, it was this way. He steered by ear instead of by eye. The harbour authorities had put a sounding-horn on each side of the harbour mouth, one horn giving two sharp blasts every quarter-minute, and the other sending out one long note at the same intervals. The

blasts were so timed that when the ship was exactly half-way between the two sides of the entrance channel the long note came in the middle of the two short notes—'short-long-short'—and then the pilot knew that all was well. When two notes sounded together, or they came in the wrong order, he knew which way to steer. You can see how useful this device would be in times of fog, to enable vessels to *hear* their way into harbour when they could no longer see it.

Wonderful, isn't it? But something is more marvellous. Many folk do nothing important without listening for signals. They often don't see very clearly what they're going to do, but they listen. And the wonderful thing is that the signal never fails to come, and never leads them wrong. Who guides them?

Long ago some people learned the secret. On the first Easter morning they ran about telling one another the joyful news. Their Lord, whom they had seen put to death, wasn't dead at all. Rather His spirit was 'let loose in the world.' He had spoken to them, and had promised them that, even though they couldn't see Him, He would be near at hand, and would guide them. They found it was true, and millions since have found it *is* true.

Don't we need the help of this Friend? For we're all skippers, and sailing our own boat. Are you one of those people who must have everything their own way, or down their brows come, black as thunder? Has it always to be *your* choice of game, or *your* turn first with the new toy? Look out for rocks ahead, Captain! Or is there somebody here who won't ever get a move on, push them though you may? They dawdle through dressing, and loiter through lessons till a snail would blush for them! Beware the mud-flats and sand-banks, Skipper! Watch out, or you'll never get off with the morning tide!

Listen for the signal from the shore. Here's a lad, and he's not very sure what to do. A choice has to be made, and he feels that the right way isn't always the easy way. Or it's a matter of conscience; something to be said that is going to be very hard to say. But he whispers, 'Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth,' and soon, listen!—short-long-short, the signal! Steer your course just where that voice directs; Christ will help you to be big, and brave, and true.

Here's a Spanish coin with a curious design: two upright strokes, a scroll across it, and some words. The uprights represent the Pillars of Hercules, one of which was Gibraltar, and the other Abyla, on the African coast, and the words on the scroll used to read '*ne plus ultra*' (nothing more beyond). The ancients thought there was nothing beyond the Pillars of Hercules—that ships venturing farther would drop into the abyss! Then bold mariners sailed through, and on, and on, and discovered other lands, so the Spaniards changed their motto to '*plus ultra*' (something beyond).

Jesus went through the grim barred gates of death to show us that there is something beyond. In the Gospel we read how people once 'found him on the other side of the sea.' So may we. Across the troubled waters His voice comes to us. Won't you try to catch His signals and obey them? You really haven't begun to live until you do. How His words put heart into us, and help us to live a strong, and a brave, and a happy life! Is Easter just to be a lovely story of olden times, or is it to mean Christ's guidance in your life now? My picture of a Christian boy isn't that of a hard-pressed fighter with his back to the wall, but that of a happy adventurer with his face turned to the skies, seeing always 'Something beyond.'

The Whispering Gallery.

By the Reverend Sidney H. Price, Farsley, Leeds.

'Where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth.'—Pr 26^{20} (R.V.).

Not long ago I went into St. Paul's Cathedral. I had often been there before, but I had overlooked an interesting part of this great Cathedral, and so I went to see it. Right away up in the dome there is a gallery. You may step outside and get a remarkable view of London, but it is about the gallery inside that I want to speak to you. It is known as the Whispering Gallery. Now many churches have whispering galleries—at least, that would be a good name for them, but I do not know another quite like this in St. Paul's. If you speak in a whisper your words will travel round this gallery and other people may hear what you have said. Now that might be very awkward. It means you will have to be very careful what you say if ever you visit the Whispering Gallery. Your own words may even come back to you if you listen carefully. They travel all round the gallery.

If we lived in a place like that, perhaps we would cultivate the habit of saying only those things that we would not mind others hearing. It would be wise for us to do so, wouldn't it?

As a matter of fact, we do live in a world very much like a Whispering Gallery. What we say in

England to-day may be heard in France or Germany or India and other countries within a few minutes. Important news is sent by wireless, and that means nations have to be careful what they do or say. In olden days, if we quarrelled with China, it took so long for messages to travel that we had time to think calmly while waiting for an answer. To-day, the message can travel so quickly that we hardly have time to think. So you see we are living in a world very much like that Whispering Gallery, and nations, like men and women, must be careful what they say.

If you could send a message to people in other lands, what would your message be? As Christian boys and girls you want others to know that God loves them, and that Jesus is their Friend and Saviour.

Now I know a lovely way in which you can turn this great world into a huge Whispering Gallery, so that you can send just that message to others. Every Sunday, the Missionary Box is passed round your class. When you put your offering in that box, will you just say to yourself, 'I am whispering to the world that God is love and that Jesus is Friend and Saviour of all men'?

We need have no fear of whispering a message like that.

The Christian Year.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Transfiguration of the Cross.

'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.'—Jn 12^{32}.

There is no doubt that the transfiguration of the Cross began in the mind of the Master Himself, even before the Cross was past, and while He was still confronting its intolerable pain and darkness. The Epistle to the Hebrews alludes to 'the joy that was set before him.' He was too wise not to understand the meaning of the spiritual victory which lay hid in apparent failure. He saw too far into the nature of things not to understand the peace of those who at any cost did the Divine will. But perhaps the main element in the gladness that reached Him was His assurance of the attraction that lay waiting in the Cross for the souls of men. The clearest illustration of this was at the time of the visit of the Greeks who desired to see Him, when the outsider, it seemed, was eagerly knocking at the door, and when His kindled imagination saw vividly the Kingdom that was to be and how it was to be. We must not despise this word 'imagination'; it sometimes carried within it a meaning equivalent to faith and hope—the vision that pierces the shows of things and the mists of time. It is a great thing to speak with imagination: none could do that so powerfully as He who gave us the parables. It is also a great thing to watch with imagination the drama of human life. Was it not said of Sir Walter Scott that he made a discovery—the discovery that our ancestors had been in their day as much alive and real as ourselves? That was an act of imagination—of the historical imagination which quickened again the things which were forgotten, and recalled to life and warmth and speech the people who had passed out of sight. Our Lord used His imagination in that great way, or rather in a greater way than that. He listened with imagination to the sound of the world's happenings. He watched the crowds, and saw them 'as sheep scattered abroad, having no shepherd.' He watched the sparrows, and saw around their little fluttering life a Heavenly Father's care. He watched sinners turning to God, and heard angels singing their songs of welcome. And now, when the Greeks desired to see Him, His imagination was stirred: it became within Him the dream of a prophet, the vision of a Saviour.

His heart leapt out to welcome not only those that were already coming, but those who were yet to come out of all kindreds and peoples and tongues. Like the hunter in Olive Schreiner's parable, he heard the coming multitudes climbing on the steps that he had cut, mounting by the stairs that he had built. 'My soul hears the glad steps coming, and they shall mount, they shall mount.' So not only with willingness but with triumph He faced the Cross which was the royal road to that ingathering. 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This spake he, signifying what death he should die.'

The Cross, which was so transfigured for the Master, was no sooner past than it began to be transfigured also for His disciples. There is no part of the New Testament which does not bear witness to this—above all, the note of doxology on page after page. The hymns of the Christian Church, from the *Te Deum* onwards, are an unending witness to the same fact. And the place of the Cross in Christian art and architecture derives all its significance from the fact that it springs out of this experience and this thanksgiving. The experience is so deep and many-sided that it defies analysis or summary—yet a brief analysis may be attempted by saying that the Cross attracts the

strong by its appeal to the heroic; it attracts also the weak and the weary by its revelation of the everlasting Love.

Under the spell of the Cross man has risen above the clay of which he is made and has taken to himself, however brokenly and intermittently, a nobler and more majestic stature. For the Cross brings to us this message, that the Highest of all is also the Bravest of all. Dora Greenwell turns in one of her poems from the voices of life, so confused and unintelligible, to ask that death will speak with plainer speech:

Now let death speak with me, *Thy* death, my God.
Thy words upon the Cross were plain and few;
It is my brother's blood that from the sod
Cries out of better things than Abel knew.
Through dark decay it pleads, through sullen care;
It wins a triumph over earth's despair:
It turns to truth Life's failing prophecy,
It tells us that the Lord of Heaven was brave
And strong, and resolute in love to save
The world that He had made.

Yet the Cross would have been but imperfectly transfigured if it had turned itself merely into a new and sublime commandment, hard and high and challenging, which, like the rest of the Divine commandments, men were unable fully to obey. So the second and even greater part of the transfiguration of the Cross arrived when men came to read it as the supreme appeal of the infinite compassion, when it was found that it provided not only a pattern for the brave and aspiring, but a secret of rest and healing for the weary and the sinful. *John Inglesant* has familiarized a great multitude of readers with the contrast between the Apollo and the Crucified—the Apollo, magnificent from the physical standpoint, beautiful, strong, and radiant, speaking of self-development carried out to its most perfect completeness; the Crucified, marred and wounded and broken, the incarnation of self-sacrifice and self-surrender, telling only of pain and of pity and of

the love that overcame
Through simple skill of loving to the end.

It often seems as though we had to make our choice between the two ideals, and at a certain stage of life the contrast presents a real perplexity. Time becomes our teacher. We learn by failures, falls, and needs. We know that strong Apollo fails of the strength that can save us. We know that only the weakness of the Crucified is mighty enough to help us. The Apollo may stand in the museum or the art gallery, and we can rejoice in an occasional glimpse of his splendour, but it is the Crucified whom we take with us along the dark and miry ways of sorrow and sin.

Once that radiance is felt and acknowledged, there is nothing more wonderful about it than the way in which it attracts souls of the most opposite and different types. We think of Francis in the ruined Chapel of San Damiano, praying before the image of the Crucified, which, with eyes not closed in suffering but open upon the worshipper, seemed to be saying, 'Come unto me.' 'Little by little,' his biographer says, 'it seemed to him that his gaze could not detach itself from that of Jesus: he felt something marvellous taking place in and around him. The sacred Victim took on life, and in the outward silence he was aware of a voice which softly stole into the very depths of his heart, speaking to him an ineffable language. . . . This union marks the final triumph of Francis. His union with Christ is consummated.'

We think of the humble chapel where Charles Haddon Spurgeon was converted and where the same essential experience is met. The sermon was on the text, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved,' and though there was no crucifix or outward symbol to help the contact between the soul and the Saviour, this was how Spurgeon summed up the experience of that illumined hour: 'I looked at Christ, and He looked at me, and we were one for ever.'

When the servants of Christ find their Master's Cross so transfigured before their eyes it is small wonder if they learn how to transfigure their own crosses also. If we turn the pages of religious biography we come upon them again and again in the act of doing this. Teresa tells how in a vision she saw herself wearing the black cross on her rosary. Christ came to her and took it into His own hand, and when He gave it back to her it was covered with precious stones more lovely than diamonds. Samuel Rutherford puts the same message in his own characteristic way: 'God forgive them that raise an ill report upon the sweet Cross of Christ. It is but our weak and dim eyes that look on to the black side that make us mistake. Those who can take that crabbed tree handsomely upon their back and fasten it on cannily shall find it such a burden as wings unto a bird or sails to a ship.'[1]

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The Tree of Healing*, 100.

PALM SUNDAY.

Crucified by Stupidity.

'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'—Lk 23^{34}.

From New Testament days until our own, the Cross of Jesus has been closely associated with the problem of sin. It was because of sin that Jesus had to be crucified, it was by sin that He was crucified. On the threshold of another Holy Week, at the centre of whose memories the Crucifixion stands, we would set beside that long association between the Cross and sin another association. Jesus was put to death not simply by sin, but by stupidity. It was stupidity that cried, 'Crucify him.' Indeed, the Master Himself said that. 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'—numberless times those words from the Cross have been repeated, and yet how little have we seen into their depths! Generally we have interpreted them as an expression of the magnanimity of Jesus, who had taught His followers to love their enemies and to forgive seventy times seven.

That interpretation clearly is true, but look at the words again, not now from the standpoint of the Master's magnanimity, but from the standpoint of the men who crucified Him. Looked at from the standpoint of Jesus, those words mean one thing; looked at from our standpoint, there is little comfort in them. To crucify Christ stupidly, when we know not what we do—that is an epitome of the most terrific tragedies of individual experience and human history.

Surely this thing needs to be said, especially in the churches. How often have we heard men talk as though to be kind-hearted and well-intentioned would solve the spiritual problems of mankind! To see that this will not do, one need only look in history at those things of which mankind always will be ashamed. The Athenians who made Socrates drink the hemlock, far from being bad, were among the most earnest, conscientious, religious people of their day. But they stupidly thought Socrates an atheist because his idea of God was so much greater than the popular opinion. So, in intention, the Crusades were not so much wicked as stupid; the people who threatened Galileo with torture were not wicked but stupid; the judges at the trial of Joan of Arc were not bad but senseless; and over the most shameful tragedies of history, as over the Cross of Christ, the judgment stands: 'They know not what they do.'

When one looks not at history but at our contemporaneous public life, one sees the same fact. The men who cry up war and all its noble consequences are not wicked but stupid. The people who think our economic system can go on without deep-seated changes in the interests of all the people are not wicked but stupid. The imposition of the Versailles Treaty on the conquered Germans, binding them to economic servitude, was stupid, and now the Hitlerite reaction against the servitude, with its anti-Semitism, has stupidly stolen from that nation a great deal of what it has been regaining in fifteen years.

We cannot, however, stop with history or with contemporaneous public life. This road leads straight into a man's own soul. Let a man in some hour of honest penitence face those things about which he is most sorry and ashamed, and of what does he accuse himself? Is it not of folly? To many people this way of putting it does not seem especially Christian. Listen to Jesus, however. Some people called sinners, He called sinners too. They were bad. Others called sinners, He called sick. 'They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.' And many more He called foolish, stupid, blind. 'Every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand.' 'Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup.' 'If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.' 'Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish.' 'God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee.' What Jesus said from the Cross was not a solitary judgment. Throughout His ministry, the tragedy of His life came from people who knew not what they did.

Let us test this truth by applying it to daily life.

1. For one thing, there is the familiar stupidity of the small, closed mind. That is what crucified Jesus. The Pharisees, with whom from the beginning He had His major difficulties, far from being bad people, were strict moralists, earnest religionists, men of profound conscientiousness. It was not so much badness that nailed Jesus to the Cross; it was goodness, determined conscientiousness, driven by small, closed minds. That is not ancient history. Take determined, devoted conscientiousness anywhere—put it at the disposal of small, closed minds, and you have about the most dangerous force that ever has been let loose into the world.

One sees our truth evidenced in the churches. Narrow, sectarian Christians with small, closed minds are not bad people. Upon the contrary, they are often very good people, but they are something else which is just as ruinous to the cause of Christ as being bad—they are stupid. As Paul said long ago concerning those who fought against his life-work — an inclusive Christian church that would take Gentiles in—'I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.'

2. Again, there is the stupidity of false choices. Jerusalem that last week, like all the rest of us all the time, was confused by competing interests—the financial interests of the money-changers, the orthodox interests of the Pharisees, the concern of the Sadducees to keep on the right side of Rome, the fanaticism of the Zealots against Rome, and then Jesus Himself, apparently at odds with all of them. Something had to be eliminated. Some of those interests had to be sacrificed to others. So they dropped Christ. And at last, at the most dramatic moment in Pilate's court, they found themselves choosing between a murderer and Jesus, and saying, 'Release unto us Barabbas.' Wicked? Yes, but stupid. Nevertheless, let any man look deep into his own soul and regard those things which shame him most and see if they are not associated with such choices. To have some Christ in our experience where we might have welcomed Him and stupidly to choose some Barabbas instead, and then, when it is too late, to wake up to see what fools we have made of ourselves—that is a familiar tragedy.

There are many things in life which we call wicked, which we might get rid of if we had sense enough to see that they are stupid. Who can look at war in this modern world and not see that it is stupid? Who can look on economic methods doing to us what our economic methods have been doing and not see their stupidity? As for personal character, we would plead with the young not so much against wickedness as against stupidity. You have a great chance. Your reputations are not smirched. Your character is still sound. You have not yet said, Release unto me Barabbas! You have not yet crucified your Christ. Stay your hand if you are tempted to. To build a strong character, to live a high life, to undergird your soul with great faiths, to dedicate your life to noble ends, to keep your Christ and let Barabbas go—that is not simply being good, that is being intelligent. 'Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock.'

3. Once more, there is the stupidity of the short look. The essence not only of character but of intelligence is involved in a man's ability to sacrifice an immediate gratification for the sake of an ultimate satisfaction. What calamity falls upon us because of our stupid refusal to do that! You remember how the Master put it on that Palm Sunday long ago, when He had heard Hosannas from the crowd, but, looking on the Holy City, saw clearly the shadow of His Cross upon it: 'If thou hadst known . . . the things which belong unto thy peace!' One often says that, when a man comes to him for confession after trouble has taken possession of the field. Of course we all feel the lure of the immediate. Immediate sensation, immediate gain, immediate explosion of emotion—from a youngster eating green apples to an old fool whose green apples take on a more mature form, every son of man knows the terrific lure of the immediate. Probably it is the chiefest single cause of human folly.

At any rate, Jesus was right about those men who crucified Him, was He not? Indeed, they did not know what they did. Nearly two thousand years have passed since Calvary and He who hung there has become to millions of us the Lord of life.

Would that we could see that Cross. When Lincoln's body was brought from Washington to Illinois it passed through Albany, and, as it was carried through the street, they say a coloured woman stood upon the curb and lifted her little son as far as she could reach above the heads of the crowd, and was heard to say to him, 'Take a long look, honey. He died for you.' Let us take a long look. He died for us. But with all our gratitude, there is warning there. He was nailed to that Cross by human stupidity. They knew not what they did.[1]

Easter Day.

Easter Day in an Era of Transition.

'That I may know . . . the power of his resurrection.'—Ph 3[10].

Easter dawns on a troubled world and we have our home sorrows, but *Christ is risen*. The news rallies like a bugle call. 'Why are you afraid like this?' 'Have faith in God.' 'There have been times before this when human society seemed to be putting a knife to its own throat. But something has always stayed its hand, and always will.' There

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *The Hope of the World*, 267.

have been hours in individual experience when nothing seemed left to live for. But the shadow has always lifted, and lo! earth was beautiful once more and heaven very near. Courage! open the windows of your soul and let the light come in.

Let it fall on all the sacred home sorrows. Think of Paul's great word, 'Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light in his gospel.' We shall all die, but we shall never be dead. Man at his best and highest always hoped that might be true, but there was nothing to make it sure until these first disciples saw their living Lord, and discovered to their joy that in His case nothing essential had been changed. They who loved Him saw Him again, and found that death had not broken the thread of continuous life, or cut the cord of memory, or dimmed the light of love. He was the same glorious Master and Friend who had said, 'Let not your hearts be troubled,' who bade them, 'Fear not them which kill the body, and have no more that they can do,' who had declared that if they loved Him they would rejoice that He was going to His Father—His Father and theirs, as He put it to them now. 'Little know we how little a way a soul hath to go to heaven when it departs from the body: whether it must pass locally . . . or whether that soul finds new light in the same room and be not carried into any other, but that the glory of heaven be diffused over all, I know not, I dispute not, I inquire not. Without disputing or inquiring, I know that when Christ says that God is not the God of the dead, He says that to assure me that those whom I call dead are alive.' So wrote John Donne—sometime Dean of St. Paul's—contemporary of Shakespeare—'whose prose and poetry alike place him among the immortals.' And we can leave it at that. Alive they surely are, and—we may add—in all that made them lovable, unchanged. That is our comfort, and it has been made sure for us by Christ.

The Negro spiritual, 'Who will be a-living when I am dead?' has verse after verse on the brevity of life.

> Trees will be a-living and a-waving
> When I am dead.
> Birds will be a-living and a-singing
> When I am dead.

Then comes the climax, startling one with its joyous answer:

> Who will be a-living when I am dead?
> *I will! I will!*

On this Easter morning let us take the message to our hearts. There are no dead. Life and immortality, if we know Christ, are not things of doubt now. They are out of the shadow, brought to glorious light and certainty in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour. Into our hearts come stealing to-day the same wonder and joy which filled the heart of Mary when she found her Lord again, not in a darkling sepulchre, but out in the living world, walking amid the lilies and the red anemones and the green of the young grass.

But that, great as it is, is not the only message of Easter. The light that shines from the first Resurrection morning illumines all our human way and transforms all our human values. The things of earth are transfigured in the light falling on them from a higher world. It becomes a great thing to live.

Maeterlinck's saying, that we are only distinguished from one another by the communication we have with the infinite, is here seen to be sheer history. The Resurrection of Christ furnished the dynamic of a new era. It made the spiritual environment in which human life became once more a thing of price and infinite possibility. It quickened the intellect as well as nourished the heart. The Resurrection gave Christianity to Europe. It made sacred the things of home: put the protection of religion round personality; led to the renaissance, the birth of science, the revival of art and of great music, the discovery of printing; the outflow of the great human energies and activities that have created the modern world. The debt has not always been acknowledged, but it is there. If the West differs from the unchanging East, the reason of the difference lies basally and fundamentally in the quickening of the human spirit that came from the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Broadly, and as a matter of history, the old world was buried with Christ, the new rose with Him. And still the Cross, and the Resurrection which authenticated it, lead the generations on. The new values which make modern life glorious are the precious fruits of the first Easter Day. The new terrors which make it hideous are the penalties of our disloyalty and blindness to humanity's living Lord and only Saviour.

'Man is a tragic being, for the very reason that he cannot be said either to have turned from God or to have turned to Him with all his heart.' And this, as the same writer says, is what makes this human scene what it is at the present hour, a picture

not of unity, but of confusion. Some are coming and some are going, just as in the world of the first Christian days. In some the tide is setting away from God. 'We will not have this man to rule over us.' In some it is setting towards God, towards brotherhood and love. Also the movements are simultaneous, in the same human society, in the same nation, the same community, ay, sometimes in the same heart. And this is what makes the confusion neither, thank God, the calm of death as it would be if the drift were wholly away, nor yet, alas! the uninterrupted current turning Godward, 'the flowing tide of joy and love.' We stand this Easter Day, we and the whole world, at the place where two tides meet 'with clouds of foam and sound of many waters.' But—

> Well roars the storm to those that hear
> A deeper voice across the storm.

That deeper voice is in our ears to-day even amid the wash and welter of conflicting wills and aims. 'Lo, I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' Christ is risen *as He said*, and His other word will also be fulfilled. The love that has lifted man from the slime and the pit will yet show us greater things than we have seen. 'I will draw all men': draw, not compel. Already, in deeper ways than we know or can in the confusion see, Christ is at work. And in the end of the day the victory will be His. No Christian can doubt that. The weakness of God is stronger than men. The pull towards God is mightier than the drift away.

He shall reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. And God's enemies are not men, but the evils that destroy men. 'The eternal Love may take long, but will have us in the end.' He that descended is the same as He that ascended that He may fill all things.

That is the Easter faith; the marching music of the soldiers of the Resurrection. Only believe. Thou shalt see greater works than Galilee or Jerusalem saw, because Christ has gone to His Father. 'Why are ye afraid like this?' 'O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt.' 'The troubles of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' The Love incarnate which triumphed over death will yet triumph over sin, both individual and corporate, and out of the world's vast confusions bring harmony and peace. Christ is risen.[1]

[1] C. Allan, *The New World*, 20.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Modern Appeal of the Ancient Message.

'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.'—1 Jn 5^{12}.

This is one of those perfectly simple statements which are so deceptive. In this limpid statement the writer has given us the concentrated essence of his teaching, and yet there is not a theological phrase in the contrasted sentences: He, hath, the Son, life. In addition, as if he had anticipated modern thought and wistfulness, he fixes our attention on his description of the supreme good—life. He describes an experience and assures us of an effect of this experience—a permanent experience and a permanent effect.

Hath: that is the connecting word. It has proved too simple for two of our leading modern translators, for one has translated it by 'possesseth,' and another by 'findeth.' 'He that hath the Son hath life.' It is quite possible for us to confuse ourselves with such a simplicity, for 'hath' can take a dozen shades of meaning. A man has a father and friend, a face and hands, a house and an office, an influence and a memory and a temper. But we need not confuse ourselves, for we all know what 'hath' means. It is a bit of reality. It states a fact and it promises an effect.

The Son: that is the writer's name for a personality, the Son. We see immediately the effect of this word; it carries with it the suggestion of another, father. If a son is at all like his father, then in some measure he recalls his father, represents his father, expresses his father to us. If the relationship between father and son be at all close, then he recalls and represents and expresses the father to us in a high degree. If God be the Father and the Son be perfect man, then in a recognizable and discernible way the Son recalls and represents and expresses God to us. So this simple word brings God near to us, puts Him within reach, makes Him real.

Life: that is the word on which makers of definitions have spent their strength in vain. Dr. Flint, the robust writer of *Theism and Antitheistic Theories*, revises in successive pages the definitions of life attempted by the clearest thinkers, and rejects them all. Perhaps his own solution fails to find acceptance. Life is in the strict sense indefinable, but we know what it means. It means sensitiveness and awareness, energy and activity, it means growth, above all it means possibilities. 'Having the Son' is the experience, 'Life' is the effect of the experience.

We understand something of what the writer says to us. But mark, he repeats it negatively: 'He that hath not the Son, hath not life.' Is that restatement in a negative form merely for the sake of emphasis? No, it is a danger-signal. There are fictitious appearances of life, what looks like life, but is really inanimate.

We read his lucid sentences and feel an intellectual pleasure in the statement. In a moment, by a negative restatement, we are made to feel how searching his simplicity is. He is appealing from the mind to the conscience. There is that which looks *like* life but is dead. We may be tricked. That is the implication.

1. Any real religion must be an experience. 'He that *hath* the Son.' That means something real. It puts in the second place theory, tradition, observances. All these are only means to an end, the scaffolding. The writer is concerned with the building behind the scaffolding.

I remember conversing with a husband who had told his wife that he had given up belief in the Deity of our Lord. The conversation was at his wife's request. I failed to make any impression, and I deserved to fail, for I never asked him the one preliminary question which mattered: 'Did it make any difference when you felt that you had lost this faith? Did you feel that you had lost anything?' Reviewing the conversation, I do not recognize that he had any sense of loss. What did it matter whether he believed in the Deity of Jesus or not with his mind, so long as he had never *had* the Son? On the other hand, Stopford Brooke long after he had left the Church of England because of his unorthodoxy, recorded in a Christmas booklet his conviction that whenever a hand was stretched into the unseen seeking the hand of Jesus, it would receive an answering handclasp from that Lover of mankind. Orthodox or unorthodox, he understood. He 'that hath the Son' means a person affected by Jesus, succoured by Jesus, experiencing Jesus.

2. The effect of this experience is described by the large and alluring word, Life. The essence of that word is the presence of possibilities, the absence of finality. It may lack many things which the dead or the inanimate may have, either temporarily or permanently. It may lack beauty or strength, but it has something more precious. The dead are often more beautiful than the living, but decay, not growth, is their lot. According to the Malagasy proverb, 'A stone is stronger than an egg for it can crush it, but the egg is greater than the stone for it may become a bird.'

We know what life is, physical life, conscious life, mental life, moral life; and spiritual life too we can know. Spiritual life may be masked, just as spiritual death may be masked, but, broadly speaking, it is discernible.

It is precisely this endowment of vitality which men seek to-day. There was a time when people wanted most a gospel of mercy; it was their sins which troubled them. Again, they wanted most a gospel of the truth; it was honest thinking which occupied them. Now, they want a gospel of life. It is true in a good sense, as well as in a bad sense, that many to-day are not troubling much about their sins. We are passing, many of us, out of the sphere of problems—we know which way probability points. We are in the sphere of conflict. Can this life be lived is our question? Is there a fountain of moral and spiritual energy available? Can we find a new endowment of inward vitality?

Of course, no period is sharply separated from its predecessors. There are still people who do trouble about their sins. There are still people who do trouble about the truth of the gospel. They cannot accept Jesus until their reason is consciously convinced of the high probability that He is the unique Son of God. But, broadly speaking, what men and women hunger for is life, renewal and increase and expansion of their powers of mind and conscience and spirit. And here is the gospel for them: 'He that hath the Son hath life.' Can we preach it to them? Varying, intermittent, vague as our experience is, can we say to them, with authority born of our experience, we know it. We know the secret of life given, life renewed, life sustained. And for the whole of our being: spirit, conscience, mind, yes, mind too, was quickened; and body, body too, its power of endurance was renewed.

3. How begin this experience? How enter on possession of it? There are just two utterly important things to remember.

(1) We must desire it, desire it above everything we possess. We have spoken as if all of our generation desired it, but of course that is only true of awakened, striving people. There are plenty who don't want more vitality; their secret desire is for less—they want ease, comfort, security. They don't want to feel more, to think more, to do more, to be made fit for heavier burdens, larger tasks, because feeling and thinking and doing more seem to them to mean disturbance and loss of ease. This is the great untheological sin—evasion of life's fulness, fulness of demand and supply. Christ

can do very little for people who remain in this state.

But for those who desire life and desire Him as the source of life, He can do much. One of the fragments of Catherine of Siena's self-communings has been preserved for us. It runs like this: 'O God, what can we bring to Thine infinite perfection? I myself and my service are all unworthy. But this one thing I do bring to Thine infinite perfection, my infinite desire.'

(2) And secondly, we must act on the supposition that Jesus Christ, the Son, is fully aware of us and the waves of His influence already surround us. A friend of mine went to live in a rather remote rural district. He bought an old farmhouse and remodelled it, placing in every room electric wires and points and buttons. But there was no main cable within several miles. He could not face the expense of laying a private wire. That was beyond him. After some years, an extension of cable was laid in the road in front of his garden. He had only a hundred feet to connect up, then the light and the heat of electricity were his. It was a trifling expense. Did he hesitate?

The great Architect of our being designed us so that we can communicate with the Unseen. And we need not delay. The great current of life runs close to us in Jesus Christ, who is instantaneously accessible. We need only to recognize that and to respond to Him, to connect up. Then the great experience begets the great effect. 'He that hath the Son hath life.' [1]

[1] R. C. Gillie, *The Gospel for the Modern Mind*, 7.

Recent Gospel Criticism, and our Approach to the Life of Jesus.

II.

By Professor George H. C. Macgregor, B.D., D.Litt., Glasgow.

As a result of what has been said, three tendencies seem to emerge which will in the immediate future govern our approach to the study of the life of Jesus:

(1) There is a tendency first to emphasize the *thought* of Jesus rather than the sequence of His recorded acts as the key to the understanding of His life. Even Bultmann is much more favourably disposed to the words of Jesus than to their narrative setting, and the aim of his book—and here again is the Barthian influence—is to describe the message rather than the life. So, too, Dibelius:

Our quest is for the content of the revelation and not for the circumstances under which the revelation occurred. . . . Not the outcome of Jesus' life, but its content, is essential. Moreover, it is not the connexion and succession of events, . . . but His message, that is fundamental' (*loc. cit.* 185 f.).

This modern emphasis upon the message as the key to the reconstruction of the life seems to me fundamentally sound. One of the most firmly fixed elements in the Synoptic tradition is that Jesus was addressed by His contemporaries as 'Rabbi'; and one of the surest results of source-criticism is that the earliest 'raw-material' of the Gospels consisted of records of His *teaching*. Even in Mark at least twenty of the stories, even if we accept them as history and not merely as editorial setting, evidently owe their survival to the fact that they enshrine sayings—a clear proof of how mistaken it is to think of our earliest Gospel as exclusively interested in events rather than teaching. One may thus venture to say that the thought of Jesus will always be more accessible to us than the events of His life. From the negative side, too, though the inaccuracies in the Evangelist's outline of events cannot always be detected, it *is* possible to recognize a certain element in his report of Jesus' sayings which is only the projection into the past of the belief of the later Church; by its elimination we recover more nearly still Jesus' authentic thought. For in its simplicity and coherence that thought presents a highly individual character and bears a direct relation to a developing religious experience of which we can at least discern the dominant character. And it is, as we have seen, by co-ordinating the events with the various phases of this thought and experience that we shall best set about reconstructing a 'Life.'

(2) A second most valuable tendency is the fresh interest of gospel criticism in the life and thought of the Christian community in the generation preceding the beginnings of gospel-writing.