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is to be found the real tragedy of many a home. Gambling by the poor and those who know themselves to be on a dead level of existence is overwhelmingly tragic. Who dares to censure when circumstances are thus? Over and over again the winning of a huge prize appears as the one and *only* way of escape. Not covetousness but desperation is the motive here. It does not condone the practice, but merely accentuates the evil. Seldom do the prizes go to the most deserving. The question of need operates not at all in their distribution. All is pure chance. But those who can least afford to lose are losers on the largest scale.

There is room in this for pity; a large-hearted pity. Censure must be reserved for the promoters of such concerns as promise tremendous rewards for comparatively insignificant stakes. Is any reprobation too severe for those who exploit the pressing need of thousands to their further and graver impoverishment? It is a cause of wonder how the winner feels about it when he reflects that a very considerable proportion of the money paid to him is veritably the life-blood of those who have been drained of it. But, no doubt, they do not think. The evil of sweepstakes, betting slips, and the like, a social evil of the first magnitude, therefore needs to be brought home to every one. It is a tragic evil when half the world is poverty-stricken. It is a moral evil in the light of its repercussion upon character.

As a practical measure (not with this end in view, but taking things as we find them) the remedy of a hair of the dog that bites us is sometimes rather attractive. The experiment of including in

huge organized sweepstakes some benefit to all whose income is below the poverty line, as well as the hospitals, might have interesting results. The plan would necessitate a scheme by which the beneficiaries received a much larger proportion of the sums subscribed than they do at present. But probably it is a remedy that is no remedy at all, but productive only of anthrax. In that case we have to look elsewhere.

And then, it would seem, the really important plan is to produce a widespread sense of shame. If promoters as well as winners could be shown the truth, if they could be made to realize the effect of organized gambling schemes upon those in dire poverty, they might indeed be roused to a sense of shame. If the Press, with all its enormous power, could change its tactics so as to give us the private and intimate details of the home life and general circumstances, not of the winners but of those who lose, some result might follow. A vivid and detailed account, culled by some experienced and up-to-date reporter from the home of an unemployed docker, describing his reaction to and future plans determined by, the news that he had drawn blank; photographs of himself and his surroundings; a supplementary interview with his wife; something of this sort, multiplied by as many skilled investigators as an important industry can supply, would do much to bring home to a wide public, large-hearted and generous as it is, something of the essential tragedy that lies behind this exploitation of suffering which is masquerading under the sacred name of charity. And it would, surely, fill promoters and winners alike with a sense of honest shame.

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## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

A New Gospel.

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

'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'—Jn 6<sup>63</sup>.

QUITE recently there came from Egypt to the British Museum in London two torn bits of paper, centuries old. Experts have examined them, and have decided that the writing on them belongs to

a date not later than A.D. 150. But the really startling thing is that on both of these scraps of paper the name of Jesus occurs several times; and the writing, when deciphered, reads just like a passage from a Gospel. Only—this is the difficulty—it is not a passage that occurs in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. There are resemblances, but that is all. Now we know that once upon a time there were a good many more Gospels in existence than the four that have survived to us to-day. (If you want proof of this, read the first four verses of

Luke.) So it is more than likely that these two shabby and discoloured bits of paper, now reposing in the Museum in London, are a fragment of a lost Gospel; and what gives them their extraordinary value and importance is that they are of an earlier date than any manuscript of the New Testament ever yet discovered.

Is it not sad to reflect that hundreds and thousands of Jesus' words have been lost, and never recovered? Think of some of the glorious words that have survived—how much poorer we should have been without them! 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' How many weary folk would have gone weary all their days, if they had never heard Jesus saying that! Or the story of the prodigal—how many sinners would never have dared to turn their faces home, if it had not been for that! Or the Sermon on the Mount—how much of our religion would have got on to the wrong track, if we had lost that! And yet—thousands of Jesus' sayings must have disappeared and left no record behind.

But now—think of the excitement there would be, if we read in our newspapers one morning that a hitherto unknown play by Shakespeare had been discovered! Think of the interest, if a new batch of Wordsworth's letters came to light! Think of the rush to buy volume three of the *Pilgrim's Progress* by Bunyan, if such a work were ever found! How much more exciting must it be to recover lost sayings of Jesus! For 'the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'

And yet, there is something better than unearthing buried words of Jesus from the past, and that is to hear Jesus speaking to-day. We sometimes feel like Matthew Arnold:

Oh, had I lived in that great day,  
How had its glory new  
Fill'd earth and heaven, and caught away  
My ravish'd spirit too!

It is not necessary. Richard le Gallienne heard mocking voices declaring that Christ was dead, and His day done, and His voice silent; but he was not perturbed at what they said:

I hear, and to myself I smile,  
For Christ talks with me all the while.

Better than any rediscovered sayings is the living voice that you yourself can hear.

Think, too, of this. Here is this old Gospel that has arrived at the British Museum—a mere fragment, torn and tattered, decipherable only with

the greatest difficulty. What about our hearts? What about Christ's gospel there? Is not the writing on our souls often defaced—spoilt by sin, torn by temptation, a mere fragment of what it might have been—so blurred that no one, looking at us, can read it?

But what gave the Museum scholars the clue was the name of Jesus on the manuscript. And if the name of Jesus is still there on our hearts, something can be made of us yet. Something of the message can shine through. And it may be that one day, if not here then hereafter, God Himself will find the lost bits, and piece together all the torn bits, and make our life—even ours—a complete and perfect gospel, to the praise and glory of His name.

#### Temptation.

BY THE REVEREND T. GREENER GARDNER,  
MATLOCK.

'There hath no temptation taken you but . . . a way to escape.'—I Co 10<sup>13</sup>.

One of the common sights in the country, especially in the summer, is to see numbers of people, dressed in a special dress, carrying a pack on their shoulders and trudging along the country roads. Sometimes you find people who look very happy and thoroughly enjoying the experience, and at other times you find some who look as if they were having a very bad time. We call these people 'hikers.' The Dictionary says 'hike' means 'to hoist, or shoulder,' and the description is true of a large number of them, for they shoulder their pack.

The other day I was at the railway station, and saw a notice which said: 'Special fares for hikers.' I stood and looked at the notice, and then I smiled, for I have met people who are all dressed up as hikers dress, looking the part, but doing the journey in a train. It is the easier way to do a journey, and they had 'special fares.'

They remind me of a hymn I heard sung when I was a boy, 'Should I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease?' I imagine that there are numbers of people who would like to go to heaven without having to meet trouble, but I am sure that, just as 'hikers' are walkers who shoulder their pack, so those who get to heaven must face up to the difficulties of life on the way, knowing that for every trial there is a way of escape. The way to overcome difficulties is to face up to them.

We are all fond of games in these days, and I like to watch boys play games. I watch them play cricket in summer, and football in the winter.

Recently I was watching a friendly match of cricket, and the boy who was bowling was sending down some very fast balls. The boy who was batting shouted out, 'Don't bowl so fast!' The bowler was a good-tempered boy, and so he sent down what might be called 'Googlies,' and after a couple of that sort, the batsman shouted again, 'And I don't want that sort, either.'

The few people who were looking on smiled, and the bowler continued to send his 'Googlies,' then one of the onlookers shouted, 'Go out and meet them'—and out went the boy and began to knock them about. 'Go out and meet them,' that is good advice when the troubles of life come—we do not solve our troubles by sitting still and requesting that we should be relieved from certain types of trouble, hoping that we might be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. Go out to meet the troubles and show yourself big enough to face up to difficulties.

The school near where I live play Rugby football in the winter, and some of the boys do very well at the game. There was one big boy who got quite a reputation for scoring tries. One day when he was in special form he got the ball and went off towards the line, evading the bigger boys, and keeping the smaller ones off with his long arms. He scored twice, and it looked as if, whenever he got the ball, he would be able to score, but the third time he was stopped by quite a small boy. Down the line the big fellow was going, when one of the masters shouted to a small boy: 'Tackle him, Jones, tackle him!' and Jones didn't stop to think how much smaller he was than the other boy, he simply took a flying leap and gripped the other boy around the legs, and down they came. Having done it once successfully, he tried again and again, and the debacle was stopped for that game.

Sometimes we are apt to accept some difficulties as too big for us to tackle, and we look on with fear. Well, there is a voice which is saying to us, 'Tackle your difficulties, for there is no trial but there is a way of escape,' and most often it is by tackling them. The Apostle Paul, who had told the Corinthian Church about trial and temptation and the way to meet it, had found his way of escape. He had taken Jesus Christ at His word, and found such leadership and such strength for the trials he had to meet that on one occasion he said, 'I am more than conqueror.' So if you will remember that you have Jesus on your side, you can, under His guidance, go out to meet your difficulties and tackle your troubles, and you may know just what

the Apostle Paul meant when he said he was 'more than conqueror.'

## The Christian Year.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

### The Eternal Will.

'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.'  
—1 Th 4<sup>1</sup>.

Life at once begins to gain in content and volume when it acquires a distinct point of view. We believe, with Coleridge, that 'To him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favourable; neither can he who has not yet determined at what mark he is to shoot, direct his arrow aright.'

This of course amounts to asking, 'What is the will of the world and of God—especially what is the will of God for us?' If there *is* a will expressed in this world, aided and buttressed by the obvious laws of life, then it will be only common sense for us to lay our course in line with it.

In his two Thessalonian Epistles, Paul is led to make a practical definition of the will of God as he understood it. By a displeasing chance, his earlier teaching had been much misinterpreted. He had preached powerfully, perhaps mistakenly, of Christ's second coming, but his readers had misunderstood his application and had begun to think that Christ would come immediately—to-day or to-morrow. Such an expectation led to all sorts of disorders. For instance, some argued that if Christ were to be expected on any day or at any hour, what good was there in working and slaving at ordinary toil? As a result, many unbalanced people broke away from the healthy restraint of work and duty.

And so here and later, beginning, as Jesus would, with all that he could find to commend, he passes to the hard side of his letter, the fault-finding. The test, he says, is, 'What is the will of God.' Forget for the moment all about Christ's coming, for after all that is in other hands. Think of what God's will in the present would be, *whether Christ came or not*. Is not the will of God that a man should live justly, quietly, soberly, and godly?

The argument is that the highest expression of the Will of God is that a man, by the leading and strengthening of the Holy Spirit, should gradually grow in likeness to Christ. That is the plain meaning of the word 'sanctification.'

It is the claim of the Apostle that this renewed

life is the direct will of God for every man. It might even be said that creation itself moves towards that. The Bible's outlook is that the world was made for man, and man was made for God: man is the fulfilment of creation, and God is the fulfilment of man. God has willed many things—we could name many—but He has willed nothing just so much as this, that man should seek Him and find Him and become like Him. It is an awful moment for us when we realize that *we* are the will of God, we are the objects of His planning, and His will is centred and pledged in the fact of our sanctification.

It is wonderful how akin that rich Bible doctrine is to the cream of modern thought. For a while it was imagined that the results of modern science and discovery were hostile to the accepted Christian position of man's supremacy as the goal and highest product of creation. It seemed at first as if modern thinkers were pulling man down from his pedestal, linking him on, in point of origin and nature, to the lower animals. But the tendency of thought to-day is not to detract from or depreciate man's position or nature, but to exalt them. Is there a thinker of any repute who would deny (even on the basis of man's lowest origin) that reasoning, self-conscious man is the finished product of creation, the goal of every evolving process—or that there can possibly be anything higher than the human spirit, or dearer than the human soul, or more precious than the good man who has imported God into his life? That is what the world groans and travails to produce. It is the apex of all creation.

It is not possible for us to conceive of anything greater than the perfect human soul, the soul made glorious in Jesus. Could God, such as we know Him, be as well pleased in anything as He was in Jesus, who was the perfect Son of Man, to whom we are called to approximate? 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' There is nothing quite so great in this world as the thinking human mind, nothing quite so eternal as the human soul, nothing quite so much the will of God as our daily growth in sanctified living. Holiness is indeed the cream of creation, purity is the object of the universe. How this great doctrine should deepen the responsibility of our living, and link goodness to eternal foundations!

Let us now try to show what light is cast on two things by this conception of sanctification as the purpose of the world and the will of God.

1. The first of these is Jesus Himself and His mission. A common criticism is that of the man

who says that the means of salvation provided in Jesus is altogether out of proportion to the worth of mankind. The thing is the invention of a diseased religious egotism! Is it possible that God could narrow down His eternal will to such a paltry attempt? Can we and our affairs be of any intimate concern to Him whose power keeps the spheres in poise? 'What is man that thou art mindful of him?' But it all comes from a wrong point of view.

A speck of conscious life is worth millions of dead worlds. If there were no self-conscious life except on this earth, then, in spite of all solar systems, this planet would be the centre of the universe—man would make it so. **Man** is the highest expression of the will of God, the one thing for which all others exist.

If that be so (and it *is* so), if God's will be our sanctification at all costs, can one fail to see the natural place that the strange cross of Christ holds between God and man? It is no longer something to be surprised at, for who can be surprised at love? It is no longer a miracle. It is not even startling. It is just the natural outcome of God's passion to obtain that which He most desires, the sanctification of man. If we accept the evidence of our senses and the testimony of our spirits, we shall find it harder perhaps to disbelieve than to believe in the mission of Christ. If the will of God be really for goodness, we can understand Him doing anything to get it—*anything*. If the will of God be human perfection and sanctification, ought He not even to have given Himself to effect it? God so willed and desired the sanctification of mankind that He gave Himself in Jesus. Christ is only God's natural attempt to work out the one thing that He willed.

2. Again, this great doctrine of God's passion for our sanctification throws a needed light on another thing, one that is a source of common worry and restiveness. Who has not been puzzled by the mishaps, the ups and downs, the waywardness, the mysteries of joy or sorrow of which life is so full? Again and again, the best of us are puzzled how to square facts with theories, how to find a place in our faith for the cruel, bitter truths of actual living.

Here it is worth remembering that God's will was none of the things we think it should have been, but was purely a spiritual end, the evolving of tried, purified, tested, triumphant human souls. The test of usefulness to such sanctification is the only test by which we are entitled to try life—for that is the end of life.

Our sanctification and the will of God are one. We are false to God's purpose and our own destiny if we do not follow on to know Jesus. We fall short of life's aim and life's crown. It is a crown of which no one can rob us but ourselves, for we and the Holy Spirit conspire together for our growth in grace. Let that conspiracy begin to-day. Defeat not the will of God, frustrate not His grace; but by dying unto evil and living unto good, let us obey the will of God, even our sanctification. Beside that, nothing else counts.<sup>1</sup>

### THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

#### An Uncharted Journey.

'Ye have not passed this way heretofore.'—Jos 3<sup>d</sup>.

We must be willing to consider great problems from the Christian point of view, and deal briefly with three of them, as they are likely to meet us in conversation or in our reading. The three problems are: The social question, marriage and the family, and Christian belief.

1. Historically, it is quite untrue that Christ came to preach an economic revolution. The gospel is a message of spiritual redemption, not of social reform. Some of the Old Testament prophets plunged into the turbid waters of political agitation; Christ walked over them dryshod. He did not even discourage the apocalyptic dreams which meant so much to His disciples, and which almost destroyed their interest in the future of society. It is as vain to look in the Gospels for political guidance as it is to look in them for any idea of an institutional Church. We should perhaps have been glad to find such help in the Gospels, but it is not there. The plain truth is that our Lord was quite indifferent to all forms of government, ecclesiastical and civil; that He disclaimed any concern with questions of distribution; and that He despised all the paraphernalia of civilization, beyond the very simplest comforts and necessities.

The violent language often used about our industrial civilization is to be deprecated strongly—with all its faults it is so far the highest achievement of co-operative effort on a large scale. As Bishop Westcott said, 'the honourable purchaser and the honourable seller meet in business for the work of citizens. Their interest is the same—the right support of life.'

The best way of looking at our class struggles is that they are a scramble for the enormous unearned increment created, not by capital, nor by labour, but by the new machinery. It cannot be said

to belong to anybody, and that is why it is fought for, as two hives of bees will massacre each other for a lump of honey lying between them. The amount of this unearned wealth would be colossal if the possessors of it had not squandered most of it in fighting, a kind of folly which the Church has hitherto failed to stop.

Has Jesus Christ nothing to say to us as employers or employed? Whosoever will be chief among you, He said, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. The Law of Service is the Christian Law; and it is a law which our generation is increasingly willing to accept. The word 'Service' may become unreal or wearisome; but it embodies the true message of Christ to the business world. Every one of us has to find out what God meant him to do with his life—in what way he may employ his five talents, or two, or one talent, best; and then he ought to choose that career, without thinking too much whether it is lucrative or not, and to put his best work into it, without thinking too much whether he is getting a full return for whatever he puts in.

Though the gospel refuses to give us any rulings about distribution, it has a great deal to teach us about consumption. The importance of right spending has been much underestimated by social reformers. If we thought more frequently what our money is worth in terms of human labour—if we remembered that to waste ten shillings is to waste, to render nugatory, a whole honest day's work by somebody or other, a great deal of vulgar and selfish expenditure would be stopped.

That which in our best moments we desire for ourselves—that our work shall be something which we feel to be worth doing—must also be our ideal for those who directly or indirectly work for us. We have no right to waste the honest work of anybody, and no right to set anybody to do for us work which it is degrading to a free man to have to do. This principle will carry us a long way.

2. We pass to the second group of problems, those connected with marriage and the family. Periods of Puritanism and of licence seem to alternate; we are now in a period of licence, in which the principles which have held society together since a time earlier than the dawn of history are too often set aside as irrational taboos. And yet no nation has ever prospered in which family life was not held sacred. Our imaginative literature is now deeply corrupted. There is nothing for which Englishmen have more reason to thank God than for the purity and wholesome-

<sup>1</sup> J. Black, *The Burthen of the Weeks*, 50.

ness of English fiction, from Sir Walter Scott to Anthony Trollope. It is true that the romantic movement exaggerated the part which sex plays in a normal human life; but it was a sublimated eroticism, purified and idealized. Now, in the new books which are being read to-day, the element of sex is much more exaggerated, and degraded to rank sensuality.

But these books are not a true picture of human life. The large majority of marriages are faithful and happy. A happy marriage is the best thing in human life, and it is within the reach of almost all of us. God is love; and the love of husband and wife brings us nearer to the heart of reality, the knowledge of God, than any other experience.

3. We come to the third and last of the three topics—the position of the Christian religion in the world of to-day, its message to the present generation, and its prospects for the future. Christianity, it may be, has reached the adult, no longer the adolescent, stage. The transition from authority to experience is in progress; the spiritual life, as Eucken is not tired of saying, is and must be autonomous, bearing with it its own credentials and its own progressive verification.

In holding this view of revelation as a progressive spiritual enlightenment we are not false to the history of Christianity. We look back to those very bold pioneers, St. Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel, who surely, as compared with the Palestinian Church, were the progressives of their day. We think of Clement of Alexandria and his picture of the Christian 'Gnostic'—he is not yet afraid of the word; of the fruitful labours of the other Greek Fathers to interpret Christianity in the terms of the philosophy of their time; of the Aristotelianism and Platonism of St. Thomas Aquinas and the other great schoolmen; of the great German idealists and the independent work of British philosophers on the same lines.

We shall be false to the spirit of these pioneers if we take their results as final; it is their method, their confident faith, their intellectual honesty, their forward view, which we should take as our models.

The progressive forces in religion to-day come partly from the Renaissance tradition, partly from mystical experience, the religion of the inner light, and partly from the individualism, liberty and zeal for social reform which characterized the sectaries, those step-children of the Reformation, who obtained a short and troubled supremacy under Oliver Cromwell, and whose ideas are now very much in the ascendant.

There is nothing really new in the idea of a Church of the Spirit, which beckons us on by untried paths. It is an attempt to gather together and twine into one threefold cord, not to be quickly broken, three of the threads which can easily be traced throughout Church history.

First, there is the friendly understanding with Humanism and Science, which was broken off by the disastrous wars of religion, and has never been cemented again. We ought to recognize that the life of the Spirit is one, and that God is now revealing Himself by means of the astonishing discoveries which are being made every year in the natural order. We have much to learn from the scientific temper, pure, dry, and bracing, like mountain air. But the nature of God is admittedly reflected very imperfectly in the human mind. Why should we think that it is mirrored more completely in external nature? The throne of the Godhead, as was said fifteen hundred years ago, is the mind or spirit of man.

The Church of the Spirit must make friends with Humanism and Science. For the primary ground of its faith, it must rest on the second of the 'three threads,' on what it is the fashion to call 'religious experience,' but which our forefathers called 'the testimony of the Holy Spirit.' This means not only the life of prayer, though emphatically it does mean that; it means also that we must respect the conscience of our age when it acquits or condemns us for actions which ecclesiastical tradition perhaps judged rather differently. There are real changes in Christian ethics. We must not let it be said that the Church is reactionary in these matters. The Church is really in danger when its teaching causes a moral revolt in candid minds.

Lastly, we may learn from the despised sectaries of the seventeenth century, not only the duty of toleration, which we have assimilated already, but to throw aside all claims to a monopoly of grace for any institutional organization.

We cannot, however, remind ourselves too often, when we say, 'we walk by faith, not by sight,' that stress should be laid on the verb. Faith is a way of walking, not a way of talking, or, as Benjamin Whichcote put it, Christianity is a divine life, not a divine science. If we only talk, we shall very likely come to the conclusion that Christianity is played out. If we try to live in such a way that Christ would approve our life, we shall certainly not think that. 'Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' There are some permanent acquisitions of the human spirit,

from which it cannot go back, and of these the Christian revelation is the greatest. It is a principle of life, and it can therefore change, as only the permanent can change. But to us, as to past ages, it can be and will be the guiding light which we may follow over the uncharted country through which our path lies. But unless we follow the gleam we shall soon see it no longer. Faith begins as an act of will, 'the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis.' 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.' Explain it how we will, that is the condition of spiritual vision. It makes the popular talk about the decay of Christianity sound very trivial.

It was a saying of Renan, which proves the fundamental frivolity of his outlook upon life, that in order to understand a religion one ought to have believed, and then to have ceased to believe in it. Far truer are the words of Otto: 'He who professes to stand outside religion, and to view all the religions of the world in impartial detachment, will never understand any of them.' Christianity can only be understood from inside; and those who are inside know Him in whom they have believed. 'I am persuaded,' says St. Paul, 'that neither death nor life, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, can separate us from the love of God which is through Christ Jesus our Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

#### FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

##### The Miracles that did not happen.

'He himself knew what he would do.'—Jn 6<sup>4</sup>.

'He could there do no mighty work.'—Mk 6<sup>4</sup>.

'How often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!'—Mt 23<sup>37</sup>.

1. From the records of Christ's life there blaze forth again and again, with arresting brightness, simple but convincing accounts of altogether miraculous doings. Nothing is more impressive than the fact that He performed these miracles quite naturally, in no sense theatrically. He had no purpose of attracting attention to Himself; as witness, indeed, His prohibition of any report in respect of some of His most beneficent works. He did not even seek by means of miracle to confirm before an unbelieving world His declared relationship with God. His aim was plainly rather to help men realize that God was in the midst of their human lives. He sought to make it plain to them that His power was available for the relief of their necessities. He laboured to

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Inge, *The Gate of Life*, 40.

convince them that the material is never the true nor the final value in any issue. The miracles of Jesus were just effective ways of showing God to men in relationship to their common and recurrent needs, to their hunger and sickness, their fears and strengthlessness, their defilement and despair. And they served, as nothing else could have done, to make God a really felt and calculable presence in the home, the Temple, the countryside, the city, on the sea, in every variety of circumstance and emergency. And that to every class in the community, alike to the rich, the poor, the young, the strong and vigorous, the convention-bound, the sorrow-stricken, the fear-haunted. It was His aim to convince men that they lived in a heaven-invaded world; in other words, that they could actually count on God. He summoned them to that higher allegiance in which they would find not only rest unto their souls, but a vocation also worthy of the inherent possibilities of lives created and capacitated for His glory.

But impressive as Christ's miracles are, it is a matter of conjecture, not of irreverent curiosity but of reverent adoration, as to whether the miracles He did not do—of which in the Gospels there are hints and even more than hints—because the human conditions of reception were not fulfilled, would not have gone far beyond anything He actually did.

The point of this reflection is that if He was hindered then it is possible He may be hindered now.

Let us have no uncertainty about this. It is only the Christ of miraculous power who is adequate to meet our moral and spiritual need. We may have succeeded, in this enlightened age of ours, in dispelling from our minds many of the shadows of ancient superstitions. And that is a gain. Are we so sure that in accomplishing this we have not also sacrificed the desirable sense of mystery and miracle? It is all to the good that we should be emancipated from the bondage of every misdirected loyalty. But the loss of awe, of reverence, of faith in the God whom Christ revealed, is very far from good. It was the glory of His earliest followers that having nothing they yet possessed all things. It is too often our shame that having all things we yet possess nothing.

2. There is much to search us in even the merest consideration of those occasions, as recorded in the Gospels, when He to whom all power was committed was halted in His beneficent intention by causes which even He could not overcome, except by invading the realm of human will and thus

denying that respect for individual personality which was part of the impulse of His redemptive mission.

There had gathered to Him, drawn alike by His personality and His message from their ordinary interests, a great crowd in a desert place. As evening drew on the spell-bound people still lingered. And it became evident that they must either be summarily dismissed to their homes or some provision for their material needs must be supplied.

What He did was, of course, an amazing and unprecedented thing. Yet one cannot resist the thought that what happened was obviously not what He first had in mind. Great as was the miracle wrought on the hillside that evening, there was possibly a greater lying in the womb of His purpose. But it never came to birth.

Another instance of the same kind happened at Nazareth on His return there after the first announcements of His mission and demonstrations of His power in other parts of the country. Amongst His own folk He could do no mighty works, no miracles, because of their unbelief.

Toward the end of His brief public life, when the shadow of the Cross already rested upon Him, He uttered what are perhaps the most poignant words which ever fell from His lips. 'Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not.' What a miracle He evidently had in mind had the city's attitude toward Him not been alternatively indifferent and angrily hostile! By what means could He have changed the current of Jerusalem's life to direct it God-ward and peace-ward? This He did not say. Yet, looking back upon the life by which His words are interpreted, we know that if Jerusalem had but listened to Him He held the secret which would have ended all its woes, its strife, its sin.

3. What does all this mean to us? What have these records of the might-have-beens of Christ's day to say to our generation? Just this. His power is not exhausted by His earthly record. He is 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' And, if we will, He can do in these our lives, to whatever level of moral unimportance they may have declined, the unprecedented miracle. Perhaps the greatest miracle of all those that did not happen in the days when Jesus was here among men was that to which we have already indirectly referred—the breaking down of the human will in order to create for Himself the moral co-operation

necessary to the liberation of Divine power. Nor in this respect has He changed.

Come, come to His feet; and lay open your story  
Of sorrow and suffering, of sin and of shame;  
For the pardon of sin is the crown of His glory,  
And the joy of our Lord to be true to His Name!

If we do so we shall then go out into the world under an adequate constraint, no longer wandering casually and aimlessly among the moral obligations of life, but determinedly taking the high road of discipleship and service with the urge of an indubitable experience of His abiding companionship and control.<sup>1</sup>

#### PASSION SUNDAY.

##### How Christ prepared Himself to die.

'Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.'—Heb 12<sup>2</sup>.

We must not hesitate to take these words as meaning precisely what they say. They tell us that the deep motive of our Lord's suffering, the thing which carried Him through the desolateness of Gethsemane and Calvary, was the joy of a prospect that lay on the other side. For a long time now, we have rather shrunk from attributing to Jesus any such motive or emotion. We have allowed ourselves to suppose that somehow it would be more worthy of Jesus to say of Him that He endured the suffering of life and the agony of death out of a sheer sense of duty, not permitting Himself at any moment the alleviation of a prospect. In this way, without intending any such thing, we have really brought about our own minds the same evils as have come upon the Church as often as it has laid the emphasis exclusively upon the deity and unintelligibility of Christ's experience, passing over too lightly, or neglecting entirely, the rich and human aspects. We must not hesitate to affirm that anything which makes the experience of our Lord unintelligible is something which He Himself would not approve.

Now we know how much it helps us—and this not in our worst hours, but in our best hours—to be able to look forward and to foresee the day when we shall be able to lift up our heads and look round about us in peace. And it is to make our Lord not divine at all, but merely inhuman, to suppose that He did not share with us this human and tender necessity. For far too long now, we have been speaking as though our Lord was a sad victim of life. The New Testament is against that view.

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Holden, *A Voice for God*, 47.

On the way to Calvary when the Cross was making Him stoop, the women who beheld Him could not keep back their tears ; but He, wishing to comfort them, and also to correct their superficial estimate of what was passing in His soul, said, ' Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves.' It is the language of one who is far more vividly aware of the glory of His position than of the pain of it.

We think far too little of our Lord from that point of view. We think of Him as depressed, as defeated, and—this in spite of all our protests—as sad. We think of Him as if it had pleased God to deprive Him of that irreducible minimum of the spirit which we call hope. By doing this, we separate our Lord from all the brave souls that went before Him, and from all the brave souls that have come after Him. For through all the ages the great sufferers have had 'meat to eat that the world knew not of.' It would work something not short of a revolution in our whole religious life, if we could believe what the New Testament appeals to us to believe, what Christ repeatedly in set words asks us to believe, that for those like Himself in the matter of fidelity, for those who take His way, though life may do to them what life did to Him, it is all worth while ; it is cheap at the cost.

It is because we have not this New Testament and Christian way of considering our Lord's Passion, that we have all fallen into the sad way of considering death amongst ourselves, even when it comes most beautifully. Indeed, in our sadness, we are accusing ourselves of having nothing in our lives so beautiful and good that it would be a fine thing for us were God to call us to show our love for the beautiful thing by laying down our life for it.

This verse of Scripture, occurring where it does, fortifies us in the view we take of the spirit of it. Strictly speaking, it forms the close of the eleventh chapter. And what is the subject of that chapter but an appeal, to every one who believes in God, and in God as we know Him, to bear with great happiness such sorrows as life may involve us in ; that far from thinking ourselves forsaken or ill-used or defeated by the world, we are to think of ourselves as of the great company of those who in every age and through all the ages have kept God's flag flying in this universe ; and that all such fidelity can never be in vain !

All faithful souls, indeed, are invited to believe that their fidelity has joined itself to the fidelity of the Son of God ; that it is God's generous way of looking at things to see all our human fidelities within the fidelity of Christ ; and that we who

have shared our Master's human experience will share His everlasting glory—' who for the joy that was set before us, endured.'

One can see what it is we were contending for when we rather shrank from saying that our Lord endured for the sake of some joy which lay in front of Him. We were wishing, and quite rightly, to defend the purity of our Lord's achievement from the imputation of merely worldly rewards or dreams. The joy which Christ saw before Him was a real thing ; but that is not to say that it was anything material. We need not mean that it helped our Lord through His Passion to look forward to a day when that Passion would be completed. The joy that He anticipated was not merely or not at all the joy of a change or a reward. Why should we not believe that our Lord foresaw what was coming to Him ? Indeed, we know that He did foresee it. In so many words, He declared to His disciples that if He laid down His life in love for man, the human heart would never be able to forget Him, or to forget Him for long ; and that the human heart which did forget Him for a time, would come back to Him with the greater passion because of the interval of distance and forgetting.

And so, why should we not believe that the thought in our Lord's mind which the writer here describes as ' a joy that was set before him ' was just this : that our Lord foresaw that through all the ages the human heart would turn to Him.

Let us feel how idle, how trifling, how destitute of any token of immortality, is any life lived here in this world which has *not* at its heart communion with that victorious Passion of the Son of Man.

The meaning of Christ's suffering and death which the Holy Spirit would bring home to us one by one is this : that we do wrong to think of it all in a sad or disheartened way ; that we do wrong to think of it as a triumph for the world. We do wrong to think of our Lord as merely a victim of the world. Rather are we to see in it all the supremacy of spirit, the greatness of love, the excellence of fidelity, the reality of God.<sup>1</sup>

#### PALM SUNDAY.

##### The Glory of the Cross.

BY THE REVEREND W. ERNEST BEET, D.LITT., HYTHE.

' But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'—Gal 6<sup>14</sup>.

So said St. Paul ; and his words are familiar enough to all of us, and do not strike upon our

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Hutton, ' *There they Crucified Him*, ' 1.

ears with any sense of strangeness. This, however, was far enough from being the case in the ears of the overwhelming majority of the contemporaries of the Great Apostle, Jew and Gentile alike. Nay more, to speak of glorying, or exulting in the Cross was to use an expression practically indistinguishable from a contradiction in terms.

It is perhaps a little difficult for us to realize the peculiar detestation and horror with which the Cross was regarded throughout the Roman world. It was not that the death on the Cross was one of exquisite agony, for there were other forms of death indescribably excruciating; it was rather in the idea which it expressed, whence the Crucified was considered to have sounded the very lowest deep of degradation possible to human kind, a veritable abyss of infamy and shame. As vermin was nailed to a barn door as an object-lesson to which other vermin would do well to give heed, so human vermin was conceived of as being nailed up between earth and heaven, to scream and pray, perhaps for days, before a gaping crowd, for death to come and give release from agony beyond all bearing—a warning to his moral kin among the lookers-on to consider their ways and be wise. It was no feeling of humanity which induced Rome to exempt her own citizens from the death of the Cross; it was simply one of self-respect. However criminal a citizen might be, his citizenship saved him, not from suffering—he might be made to feel in other ways—but from the degradation of the Cross. St. Paul's great outburst thus presented a supreme paradox to the men and women of his own time.

In view of contemporary feeling with regard to it, it was a masterpiece of human policy on the part of Annas and Caiaphas and those who acted with them that they were able so to contrive matters as to bring the object of their hatred, hatred not untouched with fear, to the Cross. It promised to be, from their point of view, a completely satisfactory end of the whole business. It was not merely that they had killed Jesus; but, as no doubt appeared to them to be the case, they had absolutely made an end of Him and all for which He stood. By contact with the Cross He seemed to have passed beyond pity, and beneath contempt; and no one would ever dare to breathe again the dishonoured name of the Crucified. Overwhelmed with utter shame, He had disappeared into forgetfulness, the outer dark of complete oblivion. So the victors of the moment flattered themselves.

The phrase 'irony of history' is not unfrequently met with, for history has many ironies to show.

But among them all there is not a single one so absolute as that presented by the contrast between the intended and the actual result of the Crucifixion, between the anticipation of the enemies of the Divine Victim, and what, in fact, eventually took place. Christ was brought into contact with the Cross; but that contact did not work according to plan. The shame of the Cross was for ever shamed away; for the Cross did not avail to drag Christ down, while He availed to lift it up from the abyss of degradation and contempt to a place supreme among all the symbols of love and honour known to man. So far from its infecting Him with dishonour, He set it ablaze with His own glory, and exalting it to heaven, firm fixed it as a shining beacon light of hope and a promise of victory for all the aftertime.

Evidence of the place held by the Cross in the heart and thought of mankind may be gathered on every hand. In the quiet Gardens of Sleep, where rest those whom we love, but who are with us no longer, among the memorial signs which affection has erected to mark their last earthly home, the sign of the Cross is easily supreme. The badge which indicates the mission of mercy of those whose kindly task it is to salve the wreckage of the battlefield or some great upheaval of Nature is the same familiar symbol. The stars which glitter on the breasts of Kings, and which the most exalted and worthy are proud to wear, often as the reward of valuable public service, various in form as they may be, are after all but elaborations of the sign of the Cross. The insignia of the knightly orders which non-Christian courts have adopted from Christendom, though sometimes in disguised form, pay their unwitting homage to the Cross. This is suggestive enough, as a reminder that, whether men recognize the fact or not, the honourable and kindly associations which the Cross, in its almost bewildering variety of forms, has taken to itself in the modern world, is simply and solely due to the fact that Christ was crucified, and affords an amazing illustration of His transforming power. This result, when contrasted with the intention of the doers of the deed, as already pointed out, reveals the irony of history raised to the highest power.

Many of us have stood at the foot of Ludgate Hill and have seen glittering in the blue, as though raised aloft in the hand of some giant angel, the golden cross of St. Paul's. It may be we have watched the shadows lengthen, and have seen them fall upon the buildings beneath. That lengthening shadow is in some sort a parable, a

reminder that at dawn and sunset, at the beginning and at the end of the day, there rests upon the very heart of the greatest city in the world the shadow of the Cross—and the same is true of practically every great city in Christendom. The Crucified verily brought the designs of His would-be confusers to confusion, laying His hand upon the intended instrument of His degradation He lifted it up to a place of honour far above that occupied by any other symbol known to man. It soars high above our cities, its shadow rests upon our streets, upon our places of business and our

homes; all-pervasive, it enters into the lives and relationships of men, even though they know it not. Paul's paradox is a paradox no longer, but a statement of sober truth, which we to-day take upon our lips with proud affection, and with the prayer that not his opening words alone but the complete utterance of the Great Apostle may be, in ever-growing measure, the expression of our own personal experience: 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'

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## Repentance—Metanoia.

BY F. P. SHIPHAM, M.A., HOVE.

COLERIDGE, de Quincey, and Matthew Arnold all maintain that 'repentance' and 'repent' are mistranslations of 'metanoia' and 'metanoieite.' They are quoted by an American writer in a book he published in 1896, entitled *The Great Meaning of Metanoia: An Undeveloped Chapter in the Life and Teaching of Christ*, to which I am greatly indebted for facts and thoughts embodied in this note.

De Quincey, it appears, 'was irritated by the entire irrelevance of the English word, and by something very like cant,' in the word 'repent,' and insisted that 'metanoia' . . . bore *no allusion* to any ideas whatever of 'repentance.' The idea of 'metanoia,' he continues, was made to bear 'simply upon the noetic or intellectual faculty.' John the Baptist appealing to the noetic faculty! Saying to publicans, soldiers, and common folk, who confessed their sins, and to the 'offspring of vipers' who didn't, 'change your minds, get a new outlook, and bring forth fruits worthy of a new outlook'! The reference in de Quincey is found in the *Autobiographical Sketches*, vol. i. p. 434.

Matthew Arnold also suggests that 'repentance' is a mistranslation of 'metanoia.' 'Of metanoia,' he says, 'according to the meaning of Jesus, the *lamenting one's sins was a small part*; the main part was something far more active and fruitful, the setting of an immense *new inward movement* for obtaining one's rule of life. And metanoia, accordingly, is:—a change of the inner man.'

Jesus, Matthew Arnold said, was above the heads of His reporters; but that does not justify Matthew

Arnold in raising the reporters' words to the level which the reporters failed to reach.

The etymology of the Greek word has a peculiar fascination, for which some cause must be sought. Even Coleridge suggested that the literal meaning was the essential meaning, and suggested 'transmutation' as an equivalent.

Dr. R. F. Horton in his book on *The Commandments of Jesus*, writes, 'the simple meaning of "metanoia," which is rendered "Repentance," is afterthought or change of purpose. And the essential idea is a reconsideration of facts.'

Repentance becomes still less sorrowful, if regarded as an after-thought, an oversight, or a forgotten factor.

By making reconsideration of facts the essential idea, Dr. Horton isolates, and thereby magnifies, the intellectual faculty and minimizes, if not eliminates, the moral. Where are the flashes of conscience in hearts little aware of any reconsideration of facts, only too well aware of no need to reconsider, of no need but to repent?

*Peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, et opere; mea culpa, mea ipsius culpa, mea maxima culpa.*

Reconsideration of facts may in these days be more potent for amendment of life than repentance. Let the prophets decide. The linguist considers, not the reality of repentance, but the history of the word, its meaning throughout the ages; and if he looks for an alternative single word might approximate not with 'reconsideration,' but with 'surrender.'