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Messiahship, but of one who 'went about doing good,' regardless of the special forms that His compassion might take.

The truth is that the idea of Christ as a Wonder worker or as the Messiah working Miracles in support of His Messianic claims are secondary accretions, added by the writers of the stories, but in no way representative of the more primary and fundamental idea in the consciousness of Christ, that He had come to serve humanity in its deepest needs.

Perhaps, the greatest insight into the Miracles, yielded by our Classification, is the fact that it does not isolate the nominal Miracles from the whole miraculous background of the New Testament. The Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the Miracles and

the saving of souls through the preaching of the Word are one great corpus of miracle, based on one fundamental motive. The Parables, too, must be included; for the whole activity of Christ is one great *kenosis*. How strangely this great doctrine has been abused! It does not rightly imply the ignorance or helplessness of Jesus, but His application of knowledge and power in such a way that He can meet the manifold needs of men. In the Parables we saw it exhibited in the way He presented the claims of God to the various audiences which came to Him; in the Miracles we have seen how He stoops to meet the needs of humanity in all their variety. His whole life is a movement towards us, for whom 'He is the wisdom and power of God,' mighty in word and deed!

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Good Morning!

BY THE REVEREND R. OSWALD DAVIES, LEICESTER.

'The first day of the week at early dawn.'—Lk 24¹ (Moffatt).

DID you hear the story of the American musician whose name is Mr. Walter Damrosch? He is famous for his broadcast talks on music, especially to schools. One day Mr. Damrosch was paying a visit to a certain town in Florida; and whilst he was there he was invited to visit a school whose pupils had been listening-in to his talks and concerts. I should tell you here that whenever Mr. Damrosch came to the microphone he greeted the children with the words: 'Good morning, my dear children!'

On his arrival at the school, the headmaster suggested that he should greet the children in this familiar way instead of being introduced to them by name. So they entered the Assembly Hall. The children saw a rather elderly-looking gentleman, but did not seem to be very interested. The headmaster said: 'Now, children, here is a friend of our school who has come to say a few words to you.' This was followed by a general shuffling of the feet. Then Mr. Damrosch got up and said: 'Good morning, my dear children!' That was all. But those few familiar words simply electrified them. There was shouting and screaming, cheering

and applauding. Mr. Damrosch had not expected such a rousing reception and was quite taken aback. In the end, he managed to say, 'Children, you don't know me?' 'Yes, we do! yes, we do!' they cried. 'You are Mr. Damrosch! You are Mr. Damrosch!'

That, I think, is a rather remarkable story. Here was a man whom those school-children had never seen in their lives. Yet, when they heard his voice and his familiar greeting, they immediately recognized him.

1. Let me first point out that the day arrived when Mr. Damrosch came to see those pupils himself—when he paid them a personal visit. For three years he had spoken to them from distant New York over the wireless. Now he was standing before them in the flesh. Not only could they hear his voice and his familiar greeting, but they could see his face and know him entirely for themselves. No wonder there was shouting and cheering; for they were all thrilled with his actual presence.

And is it not so with the Lord Jesus? At present, you hear a great deal about Him. Your parents talk to you about Him. You read wonderful stories of His life in the Gospels or in Bible story-books. You are taught about Him in school. All this means that Jesus, to your minds, is Someone who lived in Palestine over nineteen hundred years ago. Just as Mr. Damrosch spoke to his pupils from New York, so does the Lord Jesus speak to

you across the centuries. But the day will come when He will pay you a personal visit. You will then know that He is alive—not far away but near—and you will be thrilled with His actual presence.

2. Again, as those pupils recognized Mr. Damosch by his voice and familiar greeting, so it was on the first Easter Day. The Lord Jesus had been crucified on the Cross, and His body lay in the tomb. Early on the morning of the third day Mary Magdalene and a few of her friends went to the tomb with spices to anoint His body. To their very great surprise, they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty! Two shining angels appeared to them who told them that the Lord had risen—that He was not dead but alive! But Mary could not understand it; she sat down by the graveside and wept. Just then she heard footfalls behind her, and, without looking up, believing it was the gardener, she said, 'Oh, please, sir, if you have taken His body away, tell me where you have laid Him.' Then a voice said, 'Mary!' It was the voice she knew so well—the voice of the Master! 'Rabboni! Master!' she cried, and clung to His feet.

It was only Jesus who said 'Mary!' like that—in that gentle, tender way. She knew Him by His voice and by His familiar greeting.

Do you know Jesus by His voice? The Good Shepherd 'callesh his own sheep by name . . . and they know his voice.' You must learn to know His voice. The voice that tells you to think good thoughts, to perform kind deeds, to do right, and to live good lives—that is the voice of Jesus.

Listen, then, for His voice; learn to know His greeting. Then the great joy of Easter will be yours.

3. What a friendly greeting this is: 'Good morning, my dear children!' And this is our Lord's greeting on Easter. Surely, Easter Morn is the good morning of the world. For on this day He rose again and thus conquered Death itself and brought the great hope of life to men. It was so with Mary and the disciples. They were in the depths of despair. Jesus, their Lord and Saviour, was dead! But he appeared to them alive again and greeted them with a glad 'Good morning!'

And all this teaches us that the religion of Jesus Christ is a 'good morning' religion. It is a religion of hope and joy and life. As Easter Day comes in the springtime when the flowers appear on the earth, the trees are in leaf, and all is full of life and hope, so is the religion of our Lord. It comes as the springtime, and brings with it new gladness and beauty and life.

Out of that—this!

BY THE REVEREND CHAS. M. HEPBURN, B.D., MOULIN,
PITLOCHRY.

'Which was dead, and is alive.'—Rev 2⁸.

A small boy was telling me recently about a party he had been at, and how excited he was because there was a conjuror. Certainly a conjuror is a most mysterious person. He has such remarkable skill. He can take a number of cards out of your pocket, after he has told you to hold it closed tightly. He may even draw money out of it, when you thought you had spent all your pocket-money. Possibly one of his best tricks is to bring out of an empty hat a real rabbit. I never could understand how he did it. Altogether a conjuror is an exciting person.

But there is some one a great deal cleverer than any conjuror—Mother Nature. Nature's performances are much more difficult and much more mysterious. Indeed, she does what no man can do. Only think, for example, of some tiny speckled egg, which you could crush between your fingers. Could one imagine anything much being in it? Well, out of such can one day come a baby lark, that later on goes soaring and singing up into the sky. Or at this season there is another branch of Nature's wizardry that makes us all wonder. Suppose you had a bulb in your hand. One would say it was quite dead. You could cut it up and peep inside it and you wouldn't see much of interest, merely some thin layers like those of an onion. But Nature waves a magic wand, and out of the bulb there comes a daffodil. If you hadn't seen it before you would never have guessed what could come out of it. A bulb that looked as though it were lifeless, and lo, a lovely golden daffodil is born out of it.

O little bulb uncouth,
Ragged and rusty brown,
Have you some dew of youth?
Have you a golden gown?
Plant me and see
What I shall be:
God's fine surprise
Before your eyes.

But, of course, the name of the real wonder-worker there as the poet says is not Nature, but God. God brought all these wonderful things to pass.

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful—
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
 Each little bird that sings—
 He made their glowing colours,
 He made their tiny wings.

It was He who decided that the egg should become a bird. It was He who arranged that the bulb and the seed should produce the flower and the fruit. It was He, again, who fashioned us from the dust of the earth. So don't you think when He does marvellous things of that sort He can do something more marvellous yet? He can, and He did. When Jesus' enemies crucified Him on the Cross and said to themselves, 'Well, that will be the end of Him now,' God said, 'It will not.' And it was not. Because He made His Son alive again. 'Which was dead, and is alive.' Jesus came back, and was seen and heard by His disciples and many others. And that is the wonderful work God did on Easter Day.

The Christian Year.

EASTER DAY.

If Christ be not Risen!

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

'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead.'—1 Co 15^{17, 18, 20}.

The most pathetic sentence ever spoken by human lips was spoken, surprisingly enough, by a hard, cold-blooded, cynical Roman, a man who had power and was proud of it, the last man you would imagine becoming pathetic. Pontius Pilate was his name. They had been badgering him about the necessity of doing something—now that Jesus was dead and buried and finished and put away in the tomb—to make sure that there would be no tricks at the grave, no rifling of the sepulchre, no concocting of tales by His friends to the effect that He was not dead. 'You must do something, Pilate,' they said, 'you must take precautions.' And so it came, this most pathetic sentence ever spoken. 'Ye have a watch,' said Pilate, 'go your way, make the tomb as sure as ye can.'

If you were to see a man one day going out in the grey of the dawn and shouting to the sun, 'Stop! You shan't climb the heavens to-day!' or if you saw him, when the tide had ebbed and had begun to return, standing on the shore, drawing a line in the sand, and then crying to the waves that were heaving their shoulders for a new advance,

'Halt! You shan't pass the line!'—what would you say of him? You would say the man was mad. What, then, will you say of this pathetic Roman who thought he could barricade the tomb of God?

But wait! It is Eastertide again. *Is this thing true?* This victory, this miracle, this Resurrection—did it happen? If—ah, if—by any chance—we have been mistaken, off the track, deluded! If Pilate perhaps was not quite so pathetic after all! If—Jesus—never—'Oh, stop,' says some one. 'Don't think of it! Don't mention it. It makes us shudder. It is a dismal, horrible, hideous idea!' I know. But what if it is Christ, speaking through His apostle here, who compels us to think of it? 'If Christ be not risen,' he says—forcing that upon us.

I know there is a shudder in it. John Henry Newman has one memorable passage in which he imagines what it would feel like to look out into the world and see no trace of God at all. That would be, he says, 'just as if I were to look into a mirror and not see my face.' Think of it—that sudden, almost terrifying suggestion—looking straight into a mirror and seeing only a blank! It is that same shudder of the soul that Paul's words here create—'If Christ be not risen.'

Or think of this. Suppose that one day this earth were suddenly to break out of its own orbit, were not to go circling round the sun any more, but were to fly off at a tangent, farther and farther away out into the cold immensities of space; and men waited wonderingly for the coming of the spring and it never came, waited with weariness for the birds' return and the buds on the trees, and there was never a sign of it, only deeper and ever deeper winter; and they said, 'Surely to-morrow it will come! We'll wake to-morrow to a breath of springtime!'—and still nothing happened—no spring, no summer, but only that growing cold, gripping the earth's heart as it whirled farther and farther away; until at last the truth broke on them, and there was a great, bitter cry—'We are doomed!' It is the same wild shudder of the soul that meets you here—'If Christ be not risen.'

'Don't think of it!' we say. 'But,' answers Paul, 'you must! You have to look this in the face. Else your belief is just a coward belief.' Here Paul himself looks it in the face, and compels those Corinthians to do it. You can picture the congregation in Corinth that Sunday when the Apostle's letter to them arrived and was read aloud in their hearing; you can see something passing

over them like a wind over a field of corn—that swift, nameless shudder. Challengingly, bluntly, Paul sets it down; and then goes on to draw the consequences. ‘If Christ be not risen’—what then? Three things. And it is these we are to consider now.

1. First, this. ‘If Christ be not risen, *your faith is vain.*’ All the trust you have ever put in God—one huge mistake! All the brave confidence you have cherished—smashed, torn to shreds, blown into thin air! Your faith in God is gone, finished.

Now why? Why is that involved in it? Ah, you can see why. For here was Jesus, who had lived an absolutely perfect life—crucified, dead, buried, and that was all! Here was Jesus, who all His life long had trusted that God would deliver Him, that God would ‘not leave His soul in hell, nor suffer His Holy One to see corruption’—and God did nothing. You can’t trust God after that, says Paul, neither His love, nor His power.

You can’t trust His love. There is a woman in Mary Webb’s great story, *Precious Bane*, a poor woman with a huge heart of love; and one day—‘If I had been Mary at the Cross,’ she cried, ‘I couldn’t have kept my hands off the centurion who was crucifying my Son. I’d have leapt on him, and torn him!’ That is love. But if God did nothing? One day long ago some one read the story of the death of Jesus to King Clovis, who was a barbarian, not a Christian; and suddenly, as the story went on, his hand reached for his sword, and drew it, and ‘Oh,’ he cried, ‘if only I had been there with my Franks! We’d have charged up the slopes of Calvary, and smashed those Romans, and saved Him!’ That is love. But if God, watching Calvary, did nothing—left it at that? Then we are back where Huxley was. ‘I cannot see,’ he said, ‘one shadow or tittle of evidence that God is love.’ Your faith is vain.

Moreover, you can’t trust His power. For the clash you see at Calvary was not only between Jesus and His enemies: it was between God and the devil—the two great world-powers grappling there, locked in wrestler’s grip. And if the Cross finished things, then down in the underworld that night there must have rung a savage cry—‘We win! We win! God is blotted out.’ Power? says Paul. If Christ be not raised, don’t tell me God is power. Your faith is vain.

Well, does it matter? For us? Is our faith in God such an important thing that it would matter to us to lose it? Would it make any difference? Perhaps in some moods we think

not. Our faith is not much of an asset. We are rather vague and indefinite about it. It is not all-important. Perhaps we think that. But I know this, that if that faith of yours were one day threatened with extinction, if life wanted to take it away, you would be on your feet in a moment, crying, ‘No! Leave that! Anything else you like, but for God’s sake leave me that!’

It does matter. You cannot live without it. There was a great German who drew a terrible, imaginative picture of Jesus coming back to earth one day and confessing that all His teaching about God had been mistaken, that He had discovered there was no Father God behind things after all, and that He had thought it best to come back and tell men so: and all the world, hearing that, was broken down into tears. It does matter. You can’t live without it. And if Christ be not raised, it is gone.

But if Christ be risen from the dead—ah, then faith in God is crowned, justified, vindicated! Then, in the blackest days, your life is safe, knowing that the God who did *that* will assuredly see you through. Then you can sing your ‘Magnificat,’ like those priests in Alsace in the War who sang it through the crash of bursting shells. ‘Tell me,’ said one of Luther’s enemies to him sneeringly, ‘tell me—when the whole world turns against you—Church, State, princes, people—where will you be then?’ ‘Where shall I be then?’ cried the great soul. ‘Why, then as now, in the hands of Almighty God!’ And if Christ be raised from the dead, you and I can be Luthers too.

Let troubles rise, and terrors frown,
And days of darkness fall;
Through Him all dangers we’ll defy,
And more than conquer all.

2. So much for the first consequence Paul draws. Turn to the second. ‘If Christ be not risen, *ye are yet in your sins.*’ All the talk about being forgiven—pure delusion. All the noble words about God putting sins behind His back, or drowning them in the depths of the sea, or making the crimsoned page white as snow again—all mere mockery. Ye are yet in your sins, gripped, prisoned, slaves for life.

Now why? Why is that involved in it? Ah, you can see why. Because Christ’s brave, pathetic attempt to be a Saviour failed. Because the sins of men that slew Him had the last word. Because Jesus, seeing the drift of this hateful thing across the ages, carrying its poisonous miasma with it, flung in His own body to try to break and stem and

arrest the drift ; but He did not break it—it broke Him, and rolled on over His dead body unheeding. So that there is no escape from the clutching hand of the past, no deliverance from the downward drag of our own souls. Ye are yet in your sins.

Well, does it matter ? For us ? ‘The modern man,’ said Sir Oliver Lodge, ‘is not worrying about his sins, still less about their forgiveness.’ ‘Forgiveness ?’ cries Bernard Shaw, sweeping the whole thing aside as of no account, ‘forgiveness ? That is a beggar’s refuge ! We must pay our debts.’ Normally we do not trouble much about sin and forgiveness—morbid fictions, perhaps we think them. But I know this—once see what is really at stake here, once see that if forgiveness goes, then peace goes, and freedom goes, and happiness goes, and heaven goes—once see that, and you will cry with the very passion of despair, ‘You shan’t take that away ! You shan’t ! You shan’t !’

It does matter. You cannot live without it. There is a dreadful passage in Carlyle where he imagines a man trying to run away from his own shadow ; and ever and again he turns round, and it is still there, that black thing, dogging him ; on and on, flinging himself wildly away from it—and round again, and it is still there ; and he is panting now, and dead-beat : ‘God, God, I can’t get away from it ! I can’t !’ That is sin—if there is no forgiveness. Continually a man is left wondering—‘That old, unhappy deed—when will it spring on me ? Where will it strike, and how ?’ King Herod slew John the Baptist in prison, and one day, months later, he heard about Jesus, and suddenly he trembled. ‘This must be John back again,’ he said, ‘the man I killed back from the dead !’ It does matter, the thing called forgiveness. It matters so much that you can’t live without it. And if Christ be not raised, it is gone.

But if Christ be risen from the dead—then sin is defeated ! It has met its match. It is broken, blotted out, and you are free ! You are like Christian, when the great burden he had carried on his bowed back to the Cross, fell off there, and rolled and tumbled down the hill, gathering speed as it went, until it disappeared into the empty tomb of Christ and was never seen again ; and the man stood there, stretching out his arms for the first time in his life in conscious and exultant freedom. All that—if Christ be raised. All that—for the spirits in prison. ‘Yes,’ cried Francis Thompson :

God’s mercy, I do think it well,
Is flashed back from the brazen gates of Hell.

Blessed be His name—‘delivered for our offences, raised again for our justification !’

3. So much for the second consequence Paul draws. Turn to the last. ‘If Christ be not risen, *then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*’ Those that we are accustomed to call ‘the blessed departed’—obliterated, annihilated. Blown out of existence, as you would blow a candle out. ‘Cast,’ said Tennyson, ‘as rubbish to the void.’ Never to be met again. Perished.

Now why ? Why is that involved in it ? Ah, you can see why. You scarce need to ask. For if Jesus never rose, how should they ? If the one finally perfect life that has ever appeared on earth did not get through this thing called Death—how should any one else ? They are perished.

Well, does it matter ? Ah, don’t say that ! Don’t mock us. Does anything else matter ? As long as love is love, as long as one human heart cleaves and clings to another, it matters all the world !

You can’t live without it. There was an old Welsh saint of a former generation, a great soldier of Christ—Christmas Evans they called him—and when the day came for him to die, he bade his friends at the bedside farewell, and turned his face to the wall ; and in a little while, suddenly they saw him wave his hand triumphantly : ‘Drive on ! Drive on !’ he cried, as if he were seeing Christ’s chariots come to take him, ‘Drive on !’ And so he died. What if that were just delusion, and there were no chariots there ? ‘The angels,’ cried a young boyish Covenantor on the scaffold in the Grassmarket, just before the axe of death descended, ‘the angels ! They’re come to carry me to Jesus’ bosom !’ And so he passed out. But what if that last cry were mistaken ? What if Macbeth were right ?

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !

What if the Venerable Bede’s image of our human life were all that could be said about it—a bird flying in out of the dark into a brilliantly lighted banqueting-hall, flying across that brilliance for a moment, then out at the other window, out into the night again ? Then we can only tell God that it is cruel of Him to put such love in our hearts, and snap it in the end ! There is a picture by a great artist which shows God in the act of making His world. And as the vision of human life, with

all its tragedy and loss, begins to shape itself out of chaos, a figure is seen starting up and crying to the Creator, 'God, if it is a world like that you are going to make, stay your hand! Don't make it at all!' That is how we should feel if death finishes love and destroys forever. And if Christ is not raised, it does.

But if Christ be risen from the dead—then they that have fallen asleep in Christ are alive, are ours, are here! 'Is there no one,' said Cromwell, as he lay dying and looked round on the faces of his weeping friends, 'is there no one here who will *praise the Lord?*' That is the new note. Grim, portentous, solemn Death—you thought you would rob me, did you? You were wrong.

O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

So Paul here has looked the grim thought—Christ not risen—in the face, and challengingly has drawn the three inevitable conclusions—faith gone, forgiveness gone, immortality gone. But then, while the shudder of it is passing over his readers' souls, comes his sudden burst of triumph. 'But now,' he cries, and every word of it is a trumpet-note, a shout, a battle-cry—'but now is Christ risen from the dead!'—and with that he sweeps the horror from his soul. 'Now is Christ risen!'

And if you ask him, 'How do you know it, Paul?' he has two answers. 'Know it? Why, I have spoken with men who have seen Him! Peter, James, and John, and a hundred others, men who have had their whole life changed from top to bottom by the experience of seeing Him! Can you say that? Have you ever spoken to a man who had seen the risen Christ? Some one surer of that than of anything else in life? That is one glorious line of evidence.

But Paul had another, an even greater. 'Christ risen—how do I know it? I have seen Him myself, seen Him with these very eyes, seen Him with this very heart!' And if any one had dared to suggest to Paul that Christ was not really alive—'Not alive, man?' he would have answered, 'Why, He arrested me riding to Damascus, and He has been power to my life ever since! I have seen Him, felt Him—and I *know*.' Can you say that? Say it in all sincerity, and with no exaggeration at all—'It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me: and I have actually felt His presence and His power?' Then you have the evidence in yourself. You *know*. And you can say, with Savonarola, 'They may kill me if they please;

but they will never, never, never tear the living Christ from my heart!'

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Victorious Faith.

'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'
—1 Jn 5^{4, 5}.

Dr. Weymouth translates the fourth verse, 'The victorious principle which has overcome the world is our faith.' That is true in any realm. Nothing is achieved without faith, nothing is impossible with it. 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' Faith has conquered the sea and the air. It has tunnelled the mountains and brought the ends of the earth to our doors. Faith discovered the wireless, with all its modern marvels. 'Impossible,' said Napoleon, 'is not a word in my dictionary.' It is faith which enables any man to say that. In the world of discovery illustrations abound of daring and dauntless faith which has made miracles commonplace. Nowhere is this more clearly seen to-day than in man's mastery over Nature. But it was not of the natural world that John was thinking when he wrote, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' It had not then dawned upon men to wrest from Nature her secrets. John was thinking of the world which is hostile to God; the world, with its passions, its lusts, its pride, its selfishness, its sin. He was thinking of a spiritual conflict, 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life.' This world is conquered by faith in God. Faith in the ultimate triumph of right has led many a man to victory against overwhelming odds. Take one illustration. Twenty-five years ago there was a great outcry against the Congo atrocities under the rule of the late King Leopold. Missionaries, travellers, and commercial agents told harrowing tales of oppression. But there were strongly entrenched vested interests. Go back still a few years to the office of an English shipping firm which did a large carrying trade between England and the Congo. There was a young man named E. D. Morel, whose heart was stirred by the sufferings of helpless victims. He appealed to his employers to take the matter up and decline trade relations with those who profited by ill-gotten gain. But there was too much money in it. So this young clerk, unaided and alone, resolved to attack and overthrow this entrenched wrong. Money was poured out like water to overwhelm him. But it failed,

and in the end he triumphed. This is the victorious principle which enabled him to overcome the world, even his faith. We all need this dauntless faith in the final triumph of right.

But while all this is true we have not yet got to the heart of our text. It is worth noting that the word translated victory only occurs here in the New Testament, and this is the only occasion John uses this word 'faith' in his Epistles, nor does it occur at all in the Fourth Gospel. What St. John means here is fixed by the context. 'Our faith' is summed up in the confession that Jesus is the Son of God. 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

John was writing to people endangered by the Docetic heresy which denied the reality of our Lord's humanity. Docetism reduced Jesus to a figure on a stage, a shadow Christ. The Incarnation was thus an illusion, a sort of pious fiction. Against this teaching John protests vigorously.

'Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.' He bears his own witness. 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.' The advent of Jesus was real, and victory belongs to those who receive Him as the Son of God.

So here is the central thought of our text—faith in Christ, the Son of God, is the victorious principle which overcomes the world.

If we go back to the early Church and its struggle with Rome we can see this text proved up to the hilt. Said the late Bishop Westcott:

'It is, then, quite true to say that two empires, two social organizations, designed to embrace the whole world, started together in the first century. . . . But the two empires had nothing in common except their point of departure and their claim to universality. The Roman Empire was essentially based on positive law; it was maintained by force. . . . The Christian Empire was no less essentially based on faith; it was propagated and upheld by conviction; it lifted the thoughts and workings of men to that which was spiritual and eternal. The history of the Roman Empire is from the first the history of a decline and fall, checked by many noble efforts and many wise counsels, but still inevitable. The history of the Christian Church is from the first the history of a victorious progress, stayed and saddened by frequent faithlessness and self-seeking, but still certain and assured though never completed.'

Many people to-day lose heart when they look around and note the drift of the age, the unbelief, the godlessness, the spiritual apathy, the power of un-Christian and even anti-Christian forces. Or taking the wider view and seeing how strongly entrenched is heathenism, the task of winning the world for Christ looks impossible. But this is too superficial a view. If we look deeper we shall see that the spiritual leaven is working. Christianity is a greater force in the world to-day than ever it was, appearances notwithstanding.

What we need is a more daring and adventurous faith. A timid Church will not save the world. We think of missionary pioneers in China, India, and Africa who saw little result for all their labour and sacrifice, and yet held on with undaunted faith. The first missionaries to the Pacific faced enormous difficulties. The party numbered thirty. During the first twelve years they heard from home three times. Sometimes they almost starved. Revolts and tribal wars endangered their lives. The days of trial sifted their number, and some sailed away on trading vessels. Seven remained; of these two died, but in 1800 the faithful five dedicated the first Church for Christian worship in the Pacific.

'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?' Anybody can do that. 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.' 'Who is sufficient for these things?' 'He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.'

One day Jesus questioned His disciples. First He asked what other people said of Him, and they were all ready with an answer. 'Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.' They are all remarkable tributes, but Jesus was not content with the popular verdict.

'But whom say ye that I am?' Only one man answered—it is so much easier to be a reporter than a confessor: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

Jesus said, 'Upon this faith I can build a Church nothing can overthrow.' That is the victorious faith which conquers the world.

Brother, if your Christ be the Atoning Lamb,
The only begotten of the great I Am,
The Rock of Ages cleft for you,
And you say my Christ would never do,
Brother, follow your Christ, but give me your hand.

Brother, if my Christ be the great Ideal,
 The possibility of the race made real,
 The lowly Man of Galilee,
 And I say, your Christ would not help me,
 Brother, leave me my Christ, and give me your
 hand.

Brother, if our Christs both claiming the dear
 Name
 Turn out in the end to be one and the same,
 The love divine that bleeds for all,
 Would our hearts rejoice to hear His call?
 Brother, come unto me, and come hand-in-hand.¹

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Not in Vain.

'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'—I Co 15⁵⁸.

Those who follow this great Resurrection chapter of St. Paul through its fifty-eight verses of protest, statement, argument, and appeal, to its victorious close will note the repeated occurrence of the words 'vain' or 'in vain.' Five times the words recur in our English Version, translating three words in the Apostle's Greek. 'Except ye believed in vain'; 'Not in vain was his grace bestowed upon me'; 'If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain'; 'If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins'; 'Your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

St. Paul asserts repeatedly that Christianity as he preaches it falls to pieces without the Resurrection of Christ. The question of life's aim and goal, the question of sin, the question of suffering—all these things St. Paul interprets afresh in the light of the Resurrection. They mean something new, because Christ rose again.

And we in whom the Easter faith lives and burns to-day are one with him in that assurance. We know what a difference that faith makes to our spiritual valuation of everything that life brings to us.

It is this assurance of the truth of the Resurrection of his Master and all that goes with it that gives their strength and confidence to the words with which St. Paul closes his great argument. A modern translator, Dr. Moffatt, renders them thus: 'Well then, my beloved brothers, hold your ground, immovable; abound in work for the

Lord at all times, for you may be sure that in the Lord your labour is never thrown away.'

You may be sure! Never thrown away! A religion which claims to control completely a man's or a woman's life must have the power to strike its credentials very deep into the soul before it can justify that claim. Christian life, the kind of life we are called to live as those who believe in Jesus risen, is impossible unless we are assured that it is founded upon a fact and not upon an ideal dream. It must needs be full of mystery—how could it be otherwise?—but it must needs also stand up firmly, built upon eternal facts and not wavering in mist, like a cloud castle in the sunset sky. There is more than enough in life to develop within us a sense of insecurity and emptiness, which slowly leads on to the conclusion that it is 'in vain.' It is this sense of the vanity of living, evident in so many of the books we read and the plays we see in our theatres, that cuts the heart out of effort and is the most formidable barrier to the progress of ideal causes in the world to-day. Many, of course, are too intent upon amusing themselves to be conscious that their lives have no real meaning or purpose, except sometimes in those awkward pauses when the starved self within them revolts from the paltry diet with which they are feeding their souls. Then it is that they know the inevitable reaction of a spirit capable of the divine life against the attempt to live on the false level of an animal being, intent only upon acquiring from the world enough to satisfy its superficial needs. And when those pauses become frequent and such a man looks out over life, without Christ to help him to realize his best self in faith and service, he will be the first to cry out bitterly, as one did the other day, that 'life puts a bait upon a hook so that in our innocence we may swallow it and spend the rest of our lives impaled.' If he is a poet, he descants pungently upon the 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' and if a novelist, he will write, as Thackeray did at the end of *Vanity Fair*, 'Ah: Vanity of Vanities: which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied?—Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.'

This feeling may be due only to physical depression and overstrain; and if so, it is curable by the rest and recreation which repair exhaustion, or by quiet thought and prayer that revive the drooping spirit by bringing it into fresh touch with the springs of spiritual power. But it is often due to trouble much deeper down within us than our surface selves. There are times when those

¹ F. L. Riches Lowe, *The Simplicities of Religion*, 38.

who are anything but triflers are bitterly conscious that all their struggles for better things seem to carry them but little nearer to their goal. What of our failures in temptation? We make resolutions and form plans, good plans, and they go wrong and miscarry. Every one who tries to do good, disinterested work for others, comes up against that. It all seems 'in vain.' Or look farther afield into the great world. Evil flung back is always returning to the attack.

This is just where the Easter gospel breaks in upon us as a veritable message from God Himself. Like nothing else that has ever been told to the souls of men, it gives the lie to the seeming vanity and the apparent failure of human things. One of the surest evidences of the truth of that Easter gospel is the fact that it stands out against such a dark background. If ever men and women seemed to have good reason for saying 'in vain,' it was when Jesus lay dead at the foot of His Cross.

Out of their utter defeat those weak men and women rose up to face the world with a faith and courage that were more than a match for anything that it could spring upon them. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' How do we account for that wonderful optimism?

How were these first believers able to live continually as if Christ's victory were an absolute certainty and with such a sense of power, when all the other sources of inspiration we know are unable to kindle anything like the same creative fire of assurance and hope? To such inquiries there is no answer which is not incomparably more difficult to accept than the simple explanation of the new birth of Easter faith that the New Testament gives us: 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.'

So does Easter come to reassure us in the belief that God and goodness are winning through to their final victory. 'Not in vain.' The resurrection of Jesus is God's guarantee of the soundness and worth-whileness of life, and that all things work together for good for those who believe in Him. Faith and hope and love cannot be misplaced in a risen and living Lord. Whatever life may bring us, it cannot bring us defeat, if we fight with Him. Our poor prayers, our scattered and uncertain efforts after goodness, our dim intuitions into a spiritual order which as yet we can hardly see, our feeble strivings to help forward the Kingdom of God, our work for Christ which seems to accomplish so little—because Jesus lives they are 'not in vain.' And as for death; in the

light of Easter, both for those whom we lose out of sight, and at last for ourselves, it ceases to be a dissolution and becomes a transformation, a passage through dark waters to a farther shore where there is a perfect fulfilment of all the best that we have discovered here. Like Bunyan's Mr. Valiant-for-Truth, who went down into the water saying, 'Death, where is thy sting?' and as he went down deeper said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' we pass on, and 'all the trumpets sound upon the other side.' For Christ is risen! And 'ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'¹

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Balaam.

'And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.'—Nu 24¹.

The story of Balaam is one of the most fascinating in the whole of the Old Testament. It is so picturesque, so full of dramatic and moral interest, so replete with perplexity, and therefore with instruction, because perplexity sets us thinking, and it is a good thing for us to be made to think. The apparent inconsistency in God's treatment of Balaam consists in this: that while Balaam seems to be scrupulously keeping within the limits of God's commands, God is angry with him. Balak, King of the Moabites, had sent to Balaam to bribe him to come and curse the Israelites. Balaam had asked God's leave to go, and God had refused to grant it, and Balaam did not go. Balak had then sent a much larger offer, and Balaam again endeavoured to learn God's will, protesting all the while that, even if he were allowed to go, he could utter only what God told him to say; he could not promise to utter a curse. This time God told him to go, but to speak only the word which God put in his mouth. Upon that Balaam started to go to Balak, and forthwith we read that 'God's anger was kindled because he went.'

What was the wrong thing that Balaam was knowingly doing? The answer to this question brings us to the inconsistency in the conduct of Balaam himself.

Balaam was of heathen descent and dwelt among heathen, and yet had an extraordinary knowledge of the true God, whose will he interpreted to his fellow-men. Balak thought that he could be induced by royal commands and gifts to curse the

¹ F. B. Macnutt, *From Chaos to God*, 51.

people of Israel, just as the King of Syria thought that Elisha could be induced by royal commands and gifts to heal Naaman of his leprosy. The elders of Moab and Midian came with the rewards of divination in their hands, ready to pay this great wizard (as they regarded him) for uttering a destructive spell. Ought not Balaam to have dismissed them at once? He knew that when he spoke inspired words the words were not his, but God's; he says so himself. Ought he not at once to have rejected the idea of taking money for such words? But he does not at once reject the idea. He entertains it. He would like to have the money. Possibly it will be God's will that the Israelites should be cursed. He tells the elders to stay all night, and he will inquire of God. And God said: 'Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.' And Balaam told the princes of Balak in the morning that God had refused to give him leave to go. That way of putting it shows the man's heart. He had not simply wished to do God's will, whatever it might be. He had tried to bend God's will to his; had tried to get leave to do something which he ought to have known was contrary to God's will.

The situation is illustrated by two beautiful stories in Herodotus in which the oracle is consulted about a plain matter of duty. In one the people of Cymae ask the oracle whether they are to give up to his enemies a man who has taken sanctuary with them as a suppliant for protection. In the other a man named Glaucus asks the oracle whether he is to give up a sum of money which had been entrusted to him. After a lapse of many years the sons of the man who deposited the money had come and claimed it. Need he surrender it? The inquirers are told by the oracle that to ask such questions is in itself a crime; indeed, is as bad as committing the very crime about which they have inquired. They may go and commit the wickedness which was in their hearts, for they have already incurred the guilt of it. Something very like this happens in the case of Balaam.

No less than five times does Balaam try to bring God over to the side which he knew was against God's will. He does this twice in his own home before setting out for Moab. And he does it three times more when he reaches Balak. He thinks that the will of God can be changed by elaborate sacrifices. Three times over seven altars are built at his desire, and a bullock and a ram are offered on every altar.¹

¹ A. Plummer, *The Humanity of Christ*, 155.

Bishop Butler, in what is, perhaps, the most famous sermon in the English language, has pointed out the amazing inconsistencies in the character of Balaam. But at the same time he warns us that such characters are not uncommon. There will always be people who shrink from flagrant transgressions of God's laws, and yet cherish great wickedness in their heart—wickedness which they intend to enjoy whenever they can persuade their consciences that the enjoyment is not really very wicked. Such people reflect with satisfaction that there are many sins which they never commit. As for the indulgences which they do allow themselves, they are, perhaps, not so very wrong; and, even if they are, they will make atonement for them, and they quite mean to give them up some day. In this spirit manifest duties are considered and reconsidered, until they are explained away; and the confused and baffled conscience at last gives wrong judgment, or ceases to speak at all. All of us have something of this self-deceit to guard against.

In the words of the text we see Balaam in one of his better moments: 'He went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.'

As he looked down on those rows of weather-beaten tents, arranged with military regularity and precision as Moses the great general of the Israelitish host had instructed them: 'as gardens by the river-side, as lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted'; as he looked upon those men with the dust of the wilderness clinging to the folds of their garments; as he thought of the long march they had made, carrying the symbols of a great idea through the trackless desert; as he realized how these men had freed their souls from slavery as well as their bodies from the house of bondage, something of the wonder and the truth and the infinite possibility of it all smote upon his soul, and leaving all the muttering and the mumming, the mystifying and stupefying incense of his seven altars, he headed for that desert and its great silent spaces and pure, austere winds.

Some such crisis as that comes to many of us in the course of our lives. Maeterlinck, in one of his essays, shows how there is a kind of instinct driving us at times to seek for reality in the only place where we shall probably find it—on the sharp peaks of pain. All those legends about the nightingale pressing its breast against a thorn in order to be able to pour its deathless music forth into the night; of the pelican feeding its young with drops of blood from its own breast, bear evidence to the fact that

mankind has always had an instinctive feeling that the world of sentient things could never come to its highest expression apart from some revelation of sorrow or suffering.

The mark of rank in nature
Is capacity for pain ;
And the anguish of the singer
Makes the sweetness of the strain.

Man's way is to build stone altars ; God's way is the wilderness, with its revelations of burning bushes and kindled imaginations. Man's method of fighting social and moral evil is to go for it direct. God's way, Christ's way, is to hide a little leaven or bury a tiny seed—and wait. When we stop building our trim little altars, and get out into the great unmeasured spaces of God's temple not made with hands, we begin to understand.

But the tragedy of Balaam consisted in just

this, that though he went so far he stopped short of the highest. This man with his hot temper and his rich vein of poetry ; this man who went out to curse the organized religious forces of his day, and who, in spite of himself, was moved to see the beauty of the thing they stood for ; this man with his tragic end closing down upon those purposes of good which were ever forming in his heart but never came to full fruition—he is one whom we know well.

Israel needed a poet such as he, yet he is less famous than his ass. And from poor Balaam we must turn to that other Rider upon an ass who also set His blessed face toward the wilderness ; who for the joy which was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and hath given us not only an example for our guidance, but salvation for the asking.¹

¹ H. L. Simpson, *The Intention of His Soul*, 36.

The Third Gospel: A Hidden Source.

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CANON STREETER has worked out in detail the theory that Mark was not the author's original framework ; that this was to be found in a document (Proto-Luke), probably written by Luke himself, combining Q—written in Antioch about A.D. 50—with E, the typically Lukan material—collated in Cæsarea about A.D. 60. If proved, this theory is of considerable moment, for it gives us an independent source of the Gospel history, written as early as that of Mark, and yet owing nothing to it. The evidence for the authenticity of the Gospel history is increased twofold.

The following experiment in source-criticism may serve to strengthen that evidence still further, and from an unexpected quarter. In the story of the man sick of the palsy, there is, in Luke, a tell-tale verse (5¹⁷): 'And it came to pass . . . as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem.' The detail is in Luke alone. Mark has to bring in the presence of the Pharisees as an afterthought (2⁶). Luke, therefore, gives a new fact. He reveals a widespread interest already being shown in Jesus by the Pharisaic party.

From the first, Jesus was watched. Great popularity, combined with the dangerous nature of His teaching, made it imperative that supervision should be exercised. Luke alone is so early aware of this fact.

There are three passages in 'The Great Interpolation,' where for a little there is a parallel with Matthew, but where, nevertheless, the explanatory verses are in Luke alone (Lk 11³⁷, 45, 53). Clearly, Matthew would not have omitted these verses, had they been found in Q. Nor would Luke have added them at random, or out of his own head. They must have come from another source on which he was drawing for this part of the narrative. In all three cases the introductory verses give a *Pharisaic setting*. My opinion is that the *source* also was Pharisaic. *A Gospel source among the Pharisees?* Can this be established?

1. It cannot have been general synoptic tradition, floating vaguely in the minds of the Christian community. Two great passages alone rule out that possibility—the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. If once these passages had been brought into the synoptic tradition, they could never have fallen out again. They must have been known only to