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even in the Church than it is in Great Britain. The Confessional Church does not desire to be a free church in our sense, although it desires independence in the present circumstances for the preservation of the gospel. It no less desires to be a *Volkskirche*, only its method is different from that of the 'German Christians.' It believes in evangelization, making the nominal real Christians. Recently a proposal was made that in each congregation the real Christians should form, not a separate church, but a living nucleus around the pastor, from which life might be spread to the great dead mass of the indifferent. One hears with gladness that all over the country the people are rallying around their pastors; and there is reason for hoping that the motive is not an evanescent interest in the controversy merely, but an enduring influence of the gospel, which is being preached with greater fidelity and fervour, and that an abiding good may come out of a passing evil. The 'German Christians' hold that to win the people the Church must conform to the world around it. On the doubtful assumption that the whole nation has gone Nazi, and favours the policy of the Government, it is argued that the Church should use its influence in support of that policy, and even use the force commanded by the State to compel conformity. How far this party is prepared to go in this compromise may be seen from one instance. The 'Aryan' policy of excluding all who are of Jewish descent, or married to those of Jewish descent, whether professing the Jewish religion or not, from public office should, it is urged, often with very sophisticated reasoning, be applied to the ministry of the Church on the ground that in its organization as a human society the Church should adapt itself to its environ-

ment, and adopt as its own the practice of the State. No wonder that the Confessional Church is suspicious of the paganizing tendency of the 'German Christians,' despite all their recent assurances to the contrary.

There is an abundant literature advocating many varied types of paganism, varying from extreme hostility to Christianity, mainly on account of its association with Judaism, to a moderate tolerance. So ephemeral in value is this literature that it does not merit closer scrutiny. The churches are not failing in their duty to provide the antidote to this poison. The 'mythical' character of this German faith is being exposed, and the historical character of Christianity is being vindicated, especially as a creative factor in the history of Germany itself—how little it owes to its assumed pagan German ancestry, and how much to the religion of Christ, which these movements are assailing. To sum up briefly the content of the current theological literature, there is a recognition of the danger of an open paganism; there is a reaction to the distinctive types of the Reformation, Lutheran and Calvinistic; there is a greater interest in the conception of the Church, and there is a closer scrutiny of the relation of Church and State. These ideas have a more vital, crucial bearing on the future of Christianity in Germany than had the scholarly researches and expositions of former days.

This article is not based specially on any book or books, but is a general impression formed in reading not only some books, but numerous pamphlets and articles. The churches in Germany, with their theology, are out on a very stormy sea, and all Christians should pray and hope that the Pilot will steer His bark into the desired haven.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

King's Messengers.

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

'So the posts went with the letters from the king.'—
2 Ch 30⁶.

IN Bible days of long ago the posts to begin with were the King's messengers, and the only letters carried were the King's. But in time the King let them carry other letters, and the earliest to

allow them to do so was, I believe, King Cyrus of Persia. At first they were foot-runners, but later on they rode on horseback and passed on their letters to the next horseman in the relay.

In our country likewise the earliest posts were King's messengers and only bore the King's letters. But in 1635, three hundred years ago last year, King Charles I. signed a decree permitting them to carry other correspondence, though they are strictly still the King's messengers and wear his badge. We still call the Postal Vans the Royal Mail. In

those early days there were not, of course, as many posts or messengers. Arrangements were made to deliver each day 4000 letters, whereas each day now the number is 20 million letters. In olden times, too, a postman's work was often dangerous. The mounted messengers and mail coaches were sometimes robbed by such desperadoes as Dick Turpin. Often also they were exposed, and still are, to terrible weather. A postman recently received a medal for tramping forty-five miles in the snow. I remember hearing of another postman who made his work a good deal easier. He was post in a village near Hastings a century or so ago. He would wait until Sunday came round, then look in at the church, see if the people he wanted were there, and when a hymn was being sung go round the pews and give them their letters. He would have pitied another postman whose job was an exceedingly hard one: Big John the Post was what they called him. He lived about 1850 and had to carry all the letters for the Island of Lewis, plus those round the Gairloch on the mainland. Miles and miles he had to tramp over steep hills and heathery moors. On one occasion an inspector came all the way from London to go round with John and see all was well; but the road was so long the poor man fainted, and Big John had to carry him and the mailbag too. But the postman's task is easier now. Still, postmen do deserve our thanks for being so faithful, and whether the weather is fine or foul going smilingly on their round.

I like to say a word in praise of Postmen,

Who tramp our streets in every sort of weather.
In many walks of life though I like most men,
I find that I like Postmen altogether.

In another sense, though, we ourselves are messengers, King's messengers, appointed to bear the message of a gracious King. He sent out His posts in days of old to take the good tidings of His love to all lands and peoples. He depended on them to be His postmen years ago. Now He is depending on you. You are the messengers of your King, Jesus Christ. Your job it is to help to carry the Good News for Him. I know that like our friends the postmen you will try to be faithful.

We have heard a joyful sound,—

‘Jesus saves!’

Spread the gladness all around:

‘Jesus saves!’

Bear the news to every land,

Climb the steeps and cross the waves;

Onward!—’tis our Lord's command.

Jesus saves!

The Compass Adjuster.

BY THE REVEREND R. OSWALD DAVIES, LEICESTER.

‘Obtain from him a straight course.’—Ezr 8²¹
(Moffatt).

1. The other day I read of a ship's captain who was taking his ship out to sea. He was standing on the bridge, and noticed that his compass showed he was travelling North. ‘That is strange,’ he said to himself, ‘because, as a matter of fact, I am travelling East. My compass is wrong, and that won't do.’ So there and then he tied his ship up at the buoys, and sent for a compass adjuster. What had happened was that his ship had been loaded with a cargo of scrap-iron, and as it had been loaded by means of a magnetic grab, the whole cargo had become magnetized in the process. This had seriously affected the correct working of the compass, and had really made it quite useless. So there was nothing to do but tie up his ship at the buoys and call in the compass adjuster.

We are like a ship, and we carry within us the precious cargo of life. This cargo can be deeply influenced by this world; it can become earth-magnetized. And when that happens the compass of our life goes wrong. Our hearts point in the wrong direction, and we go astray. If that ever be so, we can do nothing better than tie up the little ship of our life, and call on board the Compass Adjuster, whose name is Jesus Christ. For if He comes aboard, we know that He will set us right again.

2. But who and what is the compass adjuster? He is an expert workman who has been trained for the delicate and important task of adjusting ships' compasses. All kinds of compasses have to be dealt with, but he is able to adjust and correct them all. And when he is called aboard, the ship's captain knows that he will be able to set the compass right again.

And when anything goes wrong with us, isn't it well for us to know that there is One who knows exactly what to do with us? Once, perhaps, you were very ill, and your parents did not know what was really the matter with you. A specialist was called in, and immediately he placed his finger on the spot where the trouble was. He knew. So the Lord Jesus, when He is called in, is always able to place His finger on that spot in your life where the trouble lies. Because He knows all about us—the strange ways of our hearts and lives—He also knows how to deal with us. His is the master hand that is able to perform the delicate work of correcting and readjusting the compass of our life.

3. Again, the compass adjuster is always at hand. He is within call of any ship's captain who may need his services before putting out to sea. He may be ordered to attend a ship at any hour of the day or night. Indeed, when he reaches the ship, he may find that for some reason or other, he is too soon, and must wait an hour or two. But he doesn't mind; he is very patient, and is always prepared to wait.

This is, indeed, a wonderful truth about our Lord. He is always at hand, even to the poorest and lowliest. Sometimes His disciples tried to keep the people away from Him. One day they tried to stop the children from being brought to Him. 'He didn't want to be bothered,' they said. But Jesus said, 'Let them come to me by all means'; and He took them up in His arms and blessed them. And we, too, can turn to Him at any time, and find Him waiting for us. Yes, He is even prepared to wait in patience for us, if, in the end, He may be called aboard.

4. The work of the compass adjuster is, however, very hazardous work. In fine weather it is very pleasant and interesting. But in winter, when the gales are blowing and the heavy seas are raging, it is very different. For, while adjusting the compass, he is exposed to the wild elements. He has to climb down the side of the ship along a rope-ladder sometimes even in the dark, with the ship rolling and the boat rising and falling below, and jump for the boat. It is very hazardous work.

I don't need to tell you that the life of the Lord Jesus was a hazardous one, and all for our sakes. He made enemies; He was scoffed at. He was called a devil. He was arrested and sent to a cruel trial; and, in the end, was sent to the Cross to be crucified. And all because He was good, and insisted on being good. He faced all that, and even death itself, because it was the only way of setting the world right again and of helping each of us to steer the right course in the world.

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good.

5. Finally, the compass adjuster goes about his work in a very interesting way. He takes the ship out to the open sea where there is ample room to 'swing' or turn the ship about. He gives instructions to the captain to steer the ship in one course; then in another. Or he may keep the ship turning round and round in one direction and then in another. And while these manœuvres are going on, he is busily adjusting the ship's compass. But it must be done, not in port, but in the open sea.

And when Jesus comes aboard our lives, the first thing He does is to take us out to the open spaces of God. He leads us out of the port of our own selfish little ways where we so easily become magnetized by the things of the earth. He takes us to the open sea of God's goodness, love, and truth. And there we are manœuvred by Him into the ways of serving others, of good friendship and comradeship, and of sacrifice for others. Soon we forget our own little selves; we are properly adjusted and steer our right course in life.

Call, then, the great Compass Adjuster of life on board, and 'obtain from him a straight course.'

The Christian Year.

SEXAGESIMA.

The Dream of Dominion.

BY THE REVEREND R. J. JONES, B.A., B.D.,
CARDIFF.

'But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus.'—He 2^o. 9.

The history of man has been the progressive realization of the wish to be master of all. Even in periods of decline and retrogression he does not forsake the urge to be lord of creation. It is true that contemplation of the expanse of heaven with its myriad stars forces him to the conclusion that his own planet is but a speck in a seemingly boundless space, and that the testimony of the rocks speaks to him of millions of years in comparison with which the span of human life is only a fleeting moment.

Such reflection cannot fail to produce a feeling of insignificance; but such a mood does not last long enough to extinguish the urge which makes for dominion. It has been expressed in many ways, but never with greater simplicity and clarity than in the words of the Psalmist of old: 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.' One is tempted to suggest that the Psalmist spoke better than he knew. Is that not inspiration? I take the view that this utterance is a prophecy of man's ultimate triumph, rather than a description of what he had already attained. All that I have heard and felt of the love of God constrains me to believe that He has destined man to be monarch of all he surveys.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews shares the Psalmist's faith in man's capacity for dominion; but this does not prevent him from realizing that

the dream had not as yet come true; 'But now we see not yet all things put under him.' It seems as though the facts of the present are offering a challenge to the aspiration of faith. Such a conflict is as real to-day as it was at any time in the past.

Man's conquest over Nature is patent to all. To see this we have only to think of the way he has explored every quarter of the globe from the heart of darkest Africa to the arctic regions; and from the summits of snow-clad mountains to the distant islands of the sea. Wherever he has gone, he has returned with the satisfaction that the world is becoming more and more his own. Nor has he been content to remain always on the surface: he descends deep into the bowels of the earth where he finds means of tightening his hold upon his world; and dives into the depths of the ocean which yield to him both secrets and treasure. The romance of discovery is truly wonderful; but it becomes still more wonderful when we see how discovery means an extension of man's dominion.

Besides all this, there is invention. What man has done in this direction, even during one century, would seem incredible if it were not true. Man's power of invention—surely an image of his Creator—has put into his hands a host of instruments which proclaim his kingship far and wide. The roar of the lion is silenced by the grunt of the motor-car, the man-made leviathan laughs at the mighty monsters of the sea, and the miracle of aviation has all but annihilated distance. We have only to add to all this the marvels of radio and television to be convinced that no limit can be set to man's creative restlessness.

If this were all, man would indeed be the unchallenged master of the world; but what we see around us is a forcible reminder that 'now we see not yet all things put under him.' While we rejoice in better means of production, travel, and transport, the machines we have made are not completely under control. This is what Sir Alfred Ewing had in mind when he, an old exponent of applied mechanics, confessed that the pageant of discovery and invention found him disillusioned. The engineer has worked well. It is not his fault if his inventions are not put to their proper use. Much of our present helplessness is due to the fact that moral progress has not kept pace with the advances in science and engineering. This unpleasant fact has to be faced squarely if man is to be master in his own house.

The discovery of fire, for instance, marks an important step in the history of the human race; but it took man a very long time to appreciate its

proper function. What is a blessing when it is used to cook a meal or to bring cheer to the hearth becomes a curse when it is made to burn Savonarola or to destroy beautiful cities. We have only to recall that James Young Simpson gave us chloroform, and that Ronald Ross made it possible to stamp out malaria, to see that the energy and talent now spent in the production of poison gases may be enlisted in the cause of human welfare. This change, however, cannot be effected unless the followers of Christ strain every nerve to dominate the minds of men and women with a virile and robust Christianity. There never was a time when man stood more in need of a power to deliver him from himself.

What was done with the printing press affords a good example of what can be done with these later inventions: good men in the early days of printing saw in it the means of bringing the choicest literary treasures within the reach of the people. It is extremely important that some such direction should be given in our day to the radio and the cinema. The formation of the Christian Cinema Council, belated though it be, is a step in the right direction. A task of greater magnitude, however, confronts the modern world which is rapidly becoming air-minded. Having had our aeroplanes, what are we to do with them? Are they to be agents of death, or messengers of life? This is a challenge which we have to face if these newest devices are to be the servants of man.

New as these problems seem to be, they bring us back to the same old problem—man himself. To-day as of old, if the dream of dominion is not to be shattered, man must learn how to keep his own energies under control. This can be achieved only to the extent that he acknowledges a Power strong enough to dominate both his reason and his instincts.

The Christian answer to this challenge is the proclamation of the divinity of service which in turn becomes the most effective form of sovereignty. This is the paradox of true authority. The price of dominion is sacrificial service. As man bought dearly his lordship over land, sea, and air, Jesus of Nazareth, acclaimed by millions 'Lord of all,' purchased His authority through pain and suffering. The dream of dominion seen in the light of such a life of power is more than a dream; it is a fact.

If man is to realize this dream of dominion, he must needs follow the Master along the path of discipline and purity, service and sacrifice. There is no other way.

QUINQUAGESIMA.

Blessed are the Meek.

'Blessed are the meek.'—Mt 5^b.

The Beatitudes are so beautiful and some of them are so clearly true that it is rather a trouble to many people that they cannot think they are *all* beautiful or *all* true. One that strikes certain people as being quite obviously untrue is this. Why, if you are meek, instead of inheriting the earth it is all you can do not to be pushed right off the earth!

In one of those witty articles that Mr. Thomas contributed to the *News Chronicle* on Saturdays he discussed the curious phrase 'imagination boggles.' He said it was odd that nothing ever boggled except the imagination! But if any one did not know what it meant he could tell them how to make it happen. 'Write down,' he said, 'some astonishing statement, such as "Income tax reduced to fourpence in the £," or "The meek shall inherit the earth next Wednesday."' The sensation that immediately comes over you is your imagination boggling!

What is it to be meek? The man who translated this clause for the Authorized Version of the Bible must have meant by 'meek' something different from 'abject.' He said that 'Moses was the meekest man upon earth,' and certainly Moses was not abject! He was one of the most fiery-tempered people in the whole Bible. He lost his temper, sometimes with the Almighty, more often with the Children of Israel. Remember, for instance, this incident. Moses came down one day from the Holy Mount and found the Children of Israel had occupied themselves in his absence with making a golden calf and worshipping it. 'And Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.' These tables were the two stone tables on which the Ten Commandments had been written (according to the Old Testament story) by the Almighty Himself; and Moses was in such a rage that he flung them on the ground and broke them. And now we say 'as meek as Moses'!

Remember that lovely description of our Lord in one of Heywood's plays (*A Woman killed with Kindness*): 'A soft, meek, gentle, humble, tranquil spirit, the first true gentleman that ever breathed.' You see the meaning—'a gentleman.' What did Christ mean when He used the saying which has been translated, 'Blessed are the meek'? We can always understand what our Lord meant by what He was, for He never preached anything that

He did not practise; so let us see in what sense He could truly say: 'I am meek and lowly of heart.'

The easiest way for us is to think of the things that make us feel un-meek: discourtesy, injustice, insincerity, stupidity, treachery, violence. It is in the face of things like these that we feel it is rather abject to be meek. In the face of such things, what was the meekness of Christ? Our Lord was mocked and derided and literally spat upon, and He 'answered nothing.' He was unjustly accused, dishonestly condemned. When He was accused and answered nothing, Pontius Pilate said in his astonishment, 'Don't you hear what they say about you? What do you answer?' and again our Lord 'answered him not a word.' Is there in all the history of the human race a scene of more deathless majesty than that silence in the face of insult and injustice? When Christ's friends betrayed Him, when they 'all forsook him and fled,' He uttered no reproach. When Peter denied Him, He turned and looked at Peter with that look which redeemed him, a look of confidence and trust; and Peter was able to pull himself together and to become one of the greatest of all the apostles. When Judas came and kissed Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said, 'Friend, wherefore art thou come?' 'Friend!' Is that not almost incredible from one who was never guilty of the slightest insincerity? When He met with violence and death, He uttered no reproach. All He said was, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

Yet He was sometimes angry, was He not? He was angry when He met with cruelty, not to Himself but to some one else. When people objected to His healing suffering and illness on the Sabbath Day, then He was angry, but not for Himself. He was angry in the face of self-satisfaction, but again it had nothing to do with Himself. When people tried to entrap Him in His words He was not angry. If any of us have ever advocated any cause that is dear to us and been confronted with some one who is deliberately trying to entrap us into saying some rash word that may be 'twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,' have we not felt an almost intolerable resentment? Not so Christ. Some of the noblest answers that Christ ever gave to the world were given to people who had come there and put a question with the express intention of entrapping Him. The secret is this—that Christ could never feel any kind of resentment for anything that was done against Himself. There is a curious and

most repellent phrase which people, when they are going to act in an aggressive or pompous way, sometimes use—'I owed it to myself' to do so and so. Our Lord never owed anything to Himself. He owed all to God and to man, and had nothing left to owe to Jesus of Nazareth. Those who are meek in this sense do inherit the earth. They enjoy life and enjoy every lovely thing that is in the world in a complete and beautiful sense which is never ours as long as we resent and rebel and protest about our rights.

If we have read the account of Gandhi's campaign for the rights of Indians in South Africa, we must have recognized somebody who knew what our Lord meant when He said, 'The meek shall inherit the earth.' Gandhi won that campaign. He was invincible. As we cannot take things away from a person who enjoys everything, so we cannot break a person who offers no resistance.

There are meek people in this sense in our own acquaintance. We have all met some people to whom everything is a possession. They have nothing, yet possess all things, and possess them with a reality that people who merely grab can never know. There is a lightness of heart, a thrill, an unconsciousness of the sordid limitations and restraints that prisoned spirits feel among the meek. And in a sense far truer than we have yet been able to grasp they do inherit, they do possess, they do enjoy the earth.

The history of the Red Indians and the negroes in America is a striking instance of this. Both peoples were primitive, both, in the social sense of the word, 'savage.' What is their history? The Red Indian is dying out. The United States Government put aside great areas where the white man is not allowed permanently to settle or buy land. It is settled for ever on the Red Indian, to protect him from extermination; and yet he is dying out and his numbers decrease from year to year. A friend of the Indians who understood them, and liked their handicrafts, and cared for their religion, said nevertheless: 'They are dying of sheer resentment. If you like to put it that way, they are dying of sulks. They cannot reconcile themselves to the world as it is, and they cannot change it, and so they die. There is no animosity against the red man in America as there is against the black man. But we cannot make them live, because they resent with all their soul the changed world in which they live.'

Turn to the black man, who endured far worse treatment, who has been hated and feared for generations but who has the spirit of unconquerable

meekness. In all the songs of the Negro in America—songs which are the expression of the very soul of the people—there is no resentment, no rancour, no indignation of a bitter and revengeful kind. They are, as all of us have heard, sometimes tragically sad, and they are often enchantingly gay: but in them all there is no rancour, though they are the very soul of a people whose history is one long bloodstain. They are inheriting the earth! Now it is a positive thing that the Negro is valued and contributes to American civilization. The contrast between these two races and their fate is not a question of goodness and badness; it is a question of resentment and acceptance. One is dying out of the land in which he was born; and the other, torn from a country far away, utterly unlike this country to which he has been brought, with a climate that is different, with a different religion, with a terrible and grim history behind him, is inheriting the earth.

Can we ever again say quite so glibly that what Christ said was 'glaringly untrue'? Our Lord is a most signal instance of what He says. He was indeed 'meek and lowly of heart': and His Spirit walks the earth and conquers where it goes. He had nothing, but possessed all things. They insulted Him and He presented a front of majesty which no insult could fowl. They killed Him, and His Cross became a throne.

Oh, why come ye out with bludgeon and rod
Against the unbreakable meekness of God? ¹

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Son who was not spared.

'He . . . spared not his own Son.'—Ro 8³².

There are two different ways of regarding the divine sonship of Jesus Christ, towards one or other of which Christian thought has often tended. One may be called metaphysical. It abounds in abstract words, designed to express His essential deity in terms of human philosophy. The great historic creeds tended more and more in this direction. The other and opposite mode might be called humanitarian. From this opposite point of view our Lord is the Son very much as we all are sons, though very much more perfectly than we. The difference between Him and ourselves lies not so much in ultimate origin as in moral and spiritual stature. The New Testament seems to guard against this humanitarian way of thinking from the

¹ A. M. Royden, *Here—and Hereafter*, 39.

outset. If Christ speaks in the same breath of His sonship and theirs, He distinguishes—'My Father and your Father,' He says. Continually there is claimed for Him, continually He claims for Himself, implicitly or explicitly, a unique origin in the bosom of the Father, a unique message from God to men, a unique power to interpret and reveal the Father's very heart.

To re-read the New Testament with these thoughts uppermost is to discover that the apostles of Christ took a line of their own on this high theme—perhaps about as different from the merely metaphysical point of view as from the merely humanitarian. It would be no very inaccurate definition of the line they took to call it the evangelical line. The characteristic New Testament note is in a phrase St. Paul uses elsewhere, 'the Son of his love': that is the essential message—the New Testament emphasis in presenting the divinity of Christ. The Son who was inexpressibly dear to God and intimately related to Him: He it is that is the revelation of the heart of the Eternal and the measure of God's love to man. And though in this passage Paul does not use the full phrase, 'the Son of his love,' the tenderness of the thought with all its implications is present in the words, 'His own Son'—and God did not spare Him!

1. This line of thought brings us close to some of the strangest of God's dealings with men. It almost compels us to think of *some whom God does seem to spare*, who apparently have all that they want, unchecked, unhindered, undisciplined. The Psalmists were greatly puzzled by this problem. Why has God, again and again in the troubled history of the world, given a long rein and a loose rope to the tyrants, the money-lenders, the man-slayers, the men whose God is their belly? Why did He spare the Chief Priests and the multitude with swords and staves closing in upon Gethsemane? It is easy to raise such questions and hard to answer them. Men are wise if they do not despise His forbearance, or misinterpret the leisure of His action, or forget that, though 'He does not pay at the end of every week, at the last He pays.'

2. Thoughts are stirred also about this strange fact that *it does not always seem to be God's way to spare those who are dear to Him*. That was the other side of the problem which the Psalmists faced so often—not only, 'I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked,' but also the hard case of God's people, 'Waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.' That order of experience, especially when it is all crowned by the

sufferings of Christ, is the reason why in the New Testament the wheel of thought has come full circle: if prosperity was the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity has come to be the blessing of the New, because men have discovered that to be 'spared' is no proof of God's favour.

Temple Gairdner of Cairo wrote to a friend: 'I am sure you will understand if I write wretchedly, because the excess of thoughts kills expression. What was uppermost in my mind was this—the apparent cruel mystery of our poor P.'s life. With "parts and character" that fall to the lot of few indeed, all wrecked and ruined, and apparently foredoomed to ruin if not from the very first, certainly from very early. To our human vision, a masterpiece of misguidance and misdirection, causeless and pitiless. Like the saints of the Old Testament I crowd on the shades of agnostic gloom, because it wasn't till those saints expressed all, all they felt along that line, that they got their ray of illumination: see especially Job, and Habakkuk. And some of you have darker tints to add, which I can only imagine, and cannot bear to dwell on even in thought—your sight of his actual pain, so protracted, fruitless, terrible. . . . Just before the news came I read, in a rather complacent chapter, that the message of the Book of Job had been largely superseded by the New Testament. I queried it as I read, I query it even more now. The New Testament has indeed enormously enlarged the area of illumination, but so long as we are in this world of limitation and do *not* yet "know as we are known," so long it seems to me will the Book of Job be a sheet-anchor in insoluble difficulties like the life and death of P. What I get back to is this: some areas in heaven and earth are illuminated, and some remain black as primitive night. From the illuminated one has faith to believe that the whole is illuminable, that is all. I will interpret the unilluminated areas from the illuminated, not *vice versa*. Calvary has enormously enlarged the illuminated area of that dark riddle, has in *principle*, I believe, given us its key; but in the application of the principle whole areas remain dark still.'

The cry of earth's anguish went up unto God,—
'Lord take away pain from the world Thou hast
made,

That it love Thee the more.'

Then answered the Lord to the world He had made,
Shall I take away pain?

And with it the power of the soul to endure
Made strong by the strain?

Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart

And sacrifice high?
 Will ye lose all your heroes who lift from the flame
 White brows to the sky?
 Shall I take away love that redeems with a price
 And smiles through the loss,—
 Can ye spare from the lives that would climb unto
 mine
 The Christ on His Cross?

3. Thus we arrive at the overwhelming fact that *the chief among those who were not spared* was His Son, His Well-beloved. We think instantly of the Cross, but there was much even before the Cross relevant to this theme. Experience teaches us that life, quite apart from death, takes more out of some than out of others. It seems as if, in not sparing His own Son, God began by giving Him a mind and body peculiarly susceptible to sorrow and suffering, peculiarly responsive to all the demands of life. Those who watched saw something in Him which reminded them of the ancient word, 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.' When we see Him asleep in the little boat, unawakened by the storm, we realize how much He had been giving out in word and deed ere utter exhaustion had fallen upon Him. His passion writes the message afresh in unfading crimson. At the heart of history this still burns and shines, the flaming climax of revelation, terrible and tender: 'God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all.'

4. It is possible to see in the light of all these things that *the unsparingness of God may be an honour* and not a condemnation. There are times when life seems strangely, tragically unsparing in its infliction of loss and pain, in its demand for sacrifice and service. It is well to remember reverently that in this matter the Highest and the humblest come under one law. God spared not His own Son; but one-half of the miracle was this, that the Son was content not to be spared, if by His offering of Himself He might redeem and lift the world.

If this law that binds the Master and His servants together in uplifting the world by pain and sacrifice seems an unsparing law, at least He and they are beneath its yoke together. If He submitted, the rebel heart is for ever haunted and shamed by His Cross.

St. Paul goes even deeper and turns the unsparingness of God towards His Son into a gospel. 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Dr. Denney sums up the lesson by

saying, 'The Christian's faith in providence is an inference from redemption.' Whether that be true of the ordinary Christian or not, it was true of St. Paul. Perhaps the ordinary soul tends to believe in a fatherly providence first as he tastes the reality of God's goodness in the daily gifts of life. Then as he enters into deeper experiences he adds a doctrine of grace to his doctrine of providence. St. Paul's mind seemed to work the other way; the Cross was to him so clear, so sure, so new, so arresting, that all other gifts were included in that gift, all other promises certified by that sign. God's deepest reason for not sparing His Son was that He loved men, that He would not leave them to that banishment from His presence which their sins deserved, that at all cost of seeking and finding He would bring them back to Himself. He did not spare His Son: He did not spare Himself. If life is often unsparing in its demands, all the more need to keep close to that Cross where God's severity and His tenderness meet, the Cross which, once set up to be the sign of doom and the token of a vast demand, turns out, when Redeemer and redeemed reach the hither side of it, to be the emblem of an inexhaustible compassion. From then onwards the children of the Highest know Him as a God who enables them to meet life's unsparing demands in the strength of an ungrudging grace. That is why they, amid the worst that life and time can do to them, even while they know themselves to be somewhat less than heroes, have not given over the hope of being more than conquerors.¹

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Challenge of Lent.

'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.'—Ps 51¹⁰.

This is the meditative season of the Christian year, when the thoughts of all lovers of Christ look forward to the Passion Week, and its commemoration of the great sacrifice. As men realize once more that their hope is rooted in divine suffering, a certain instinct in them recoils from self-indulgence. Lent is a challenge to honest inner inspection and the cultivation of those disciplines of the soul without which spiritual reality may become as unreal as a mirage. The ancient saying, 'The beginning of wisdom is the desire for discipline,' is as true in the art of life as it is in the life of art.

What a shame, cried St. Bernard, to be a delicate member of the Head crowned with thorns!

¹ J. M. E. Ross, *The Tree of Healing*, 190.

Habitual temperance is more religious, and more wholesome, than recurrent austerities, but we have not attained to that grace. Normally, no doubt, the conditions most favourable to holiness result from the healthy interaction of body and soul, but life in our age is not normal. It is sodden with materialism, and soured with cynicism. We may rightly reject the ascetic theory as a mistaken dualism, but there is another side to that truth. Nor must we forget that some of the loftiest and loveliest souls this earth has known used strange, stern means as helps to the holy life. A call for a week of self-denial in Paris some years ago was accompanied by an extract from a letter by Wilfred Monod, running thus :

'How is it that Protestants have produced, on a man like Père Gratry, the impression which he formulates as follows? : "Protestantism is, in essence, the abolition of sacrifice. To abolish abstinence and fasting; to abolish the necessity of good works, effort, struggle, virtue; to shut up sacrifice in Jesus alone and not let it pass to us; no more to say, as St. Paul did, I fill up what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ, but rather to say to Jesus on His Cross, 'Suffer alone, O Lord'—there is Protestantism."'

St. Bernard, not less than Wesley, taught the goodly gospel of free grace, but he did not feel that it exempted him from a habit of austere living. Nor did Wesley, who fasted every Friday as long as he lived, and partook of the Holy Communion fifteen times in the last six weeks of his life, because he needed such aids in the practice of salvation. Neither of these masters of the spiritual life neglected the stern culture of the soul, as so many of us are wont to do, under the notion that the virtues are gifts and not trophies. Père Gratry was right in pointing this out as a grave defect in our teaching, and even more so in our practice.

This is true, whatever else be false—that following Christ is a great adventure, and it means that we must take up a cross and bear it. Even if we apply Christianity to social questions, as we talk so much of doing, there will be little result unless it has more power in it than it has now. It behoves us to think of the reality and ministry of our religion as we look toward the Passion of Him who, being rich, became poor, and was a friend of the lowly and forlorn. Lent evokes such thoughts, and we should keep it and wisely use it, doubly so in an age when 'Whirl is King' and noise is terrifying, lest, as the wages of hurry, we lose our souls.

1. For one thing, Lent brings up the whole ques-

tion as to the relation of the life of the body to the life of the spirit. It is good common sense, as well as wise Platonic philosophy, that he who devotes himself to his appetites will have thoughts wingless and alien to the sky. Asceticism, in its true sense, is simply a disciplined effort to gain an end, nothing more. Every man, if he has any ideal of any sort, is more or less an ascetic whether he knows it or not. A man of affairs forgoes many pleasures to win the prize he aims at. Lent is a period of training for the soul, in behalf of a deeper insight, a fearless self-examination, and a better ordered inner life.

In one of his letters to his children, Gladstone urged them to 'put habit on the side of the spiritual life,' and his wisdom was born of his own experience, as we know from the story of his life. Certain it is that a man inured to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial will be unshaken, while his softer fellows fall. 'A good will is the substance of all perfection,' said the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*; and he added: 'Silence is not God, nor speaking; fasting is not God, nor eating; loneliness, nor company; nor yet any of all the other two such contraries. He is hidden between them, and may be found only by love of thine heart. He may not be known by reason, nor concluded by understanding; but He may be loved and chosen by the true loving will. Such a blind shot with the sharp dart of longing love may never miss the mark, the which is God. Look that nothing live in thy working mind but a naked intent stretching into the divine.'

2. For another thing, Lent suggests most eloquently the need and value of some definite method for the culture of the inner life. Here is the great defect of our age. No lawyer tries to practise at haphazard, with no regard for the decisions of courts or the masters of the law. Yet that is what we do in our life of faith. Not many of us know even the names of the great religious masterpieces—those pastures of the soul, so rich in beauty and wisdom.

Some of us take up with the cult of the esoteric or of some other sort, and spend time reading its books. That is a start in the right direction—but such books, mere rubbish, bereft of beauty, devoid of insight, with never a glint of genius! Suppose one should study art in that manner. Suppose one should leave out of account Angelo, Rembrandt, and Raphael, and take up with some poor dauber. That would not be more pathetic than what some restless, troubled minds are doing. If any one wishes an inspiring optimism, radiant and serene,

let him go to the great thinkers. Better still, let him devote the hours wasted on poor scribblers to the book that shows us, as in a mirror, what we are, and what we ought to be.

3. Then, too, Lent asks us to look into our own hearts and face what we find there, though it may make us shudder.

Bernard Shaw, in *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet*, makes the horse-thief say, 'Why did I go soft myself? Why did the Sheriff go soft? Why did Feemy go soft? What's this game that upsets our game? For seems to me there's two games bein' played. Our game is a rotten game that makes me feel I'm dirt and that you're all as rotten dirt as me. T'other game may be a silly game; but it ain't rotten. When Feemy played it the paint nearly dropped off her face. When I played it I cursed myself for a fool; but I lost the rotten feel all the same.'

With what terrible intensity of insight Ibsen has made us see that sin, no matter how it is excused or hidden, troubles not only ourselves but those yet unborn—ghastly *Ghosts* that will not down. If a great outside teacher, who can hardly be said to have any faith in God, drives this fact home to men, surely the pulpit is remiss when it does not emphasize it.

Ibsen showed the insecurity and ultimate impossibility of any life that is founded upon a lie. Further, this stern teacher goes down into the dim depths of the soul and finds that sin exists there, and that while men spend much time in cloaking it, it never can finally be hidden. He preaches sin as a terrific reality, and he knows the agony of its

inner wound—but, alas! he has no hope that it can be cleansed away. He sees no hope, save in death, and that is why in six of his ten plays men and women invoke death by their own hands. Like all really profound thinkers, he saw the great fact of sacrifice, and especially the free sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty. Yet, sadly enough, he did not see the meaning of the Great Sacrifice.

When the thoughts of men are turned toward the Cross, let us look into our hearts in the light of the life and sacrifice of Jesus. God of mercy! What vile and slimy things a man finds in his heart when he sees it as it is, in that soft, sure, penetrating light! He sees all that Ibsen saw, and more, too. How his respectability vanishes! How his towering vanity comes tumbling down into the dust! Yet it is a kindly light, not only pure but purifying, with health and healing in its rays. It shows a great horror, but it gives us a great hope. Once a year, at the least, a man should examine the house of his heart and see what kind of spirit lives there—and that is the meaning of Lent. It demands that we fling away the spectacles of pretence, and face our souls in the light.

It is good to be last, not first,
Pending the present distress;
It is good to hunger and thirst,
So it be for righteousness.

It is good to spend and be spent,
It is good to watch and to pray;
Life and Death make a goodly Lent,
So it lead to Easter Day.¹

¹ J. Fort Newton, *Things I know in Religion*, 63.

The 'Puzzling Passage' in the New Gospel Fragments.

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SINCE the publication of Dr. H. Idris Bell's volume on the *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel*, acquired by the British Museum last year—with its very fine facsimile reproductions of the fragments themselves, and with Dr. Bell's extremely interesting and illuminating reconstructions and comments—I have been giving close study to what he calls the 'puzzling passage' on the fourth of these frag-

mentary pages. This page, as he points out, is not only in a worse condition than the other pages from the point of view of legibility; but (unlike the other pages) it records an incident to which there is no parallel in the canonical Gospels, and these, therefore, afford little or no help towards supplying the missing words.

The problem is a fascinating one. It has points