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be true, it is clear that the prophet played a part in Israelite worship which until recently was quite unsuspected. Moreover, its implications for the study of the Canonical prophets are manifold; for the latter will require careful re-examination as regards, not only their literary style and even their

message, but also (as in the obvious case of Haggai and Zechariah, for example) their possible connexion with the cultus. To what extent, after all, may any of them be regarded as pioneers? Has their individuality been over-emphasized—at least in some respects?

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## In the Study.

### *Virginitibus Puerisque.*

#### Easter Lights.

BY THE REVEREND E. EBRARD REES, LLANISHEN,  
CARDIFF.

'Ye are the light of the world.'—Mt 5<sup>14</sup>.

DURING Easter week for two consecutive nights the Lower Gardens between the Square and the sea at Bournemouth are illuminated with artificial lights. Not only visitors look forward to seeing these lights, but the people of the town, who have seen them on many previous occasions, look forward every year. And they are wonderful lights. There is design of colour and pattern which appeals to the old as well as to hundreds of boys and girls.

For days previous to Easter week gardeners, carpenters, and labourers are busy making wicker-work designs of various shapes and sizes on which the lamps are to be hung. These frames of wood are hidden in out-of-the-way and unexpected places, for it is obvious that one of the purposes is to surprise people with beautiful lights.

When the framework is ready, little glass jar lamps are hung in designs, and in the jars night-light candles are set ready to be lit at the proper time.

When I arrived, the first evening the whole garden was full of the most exquisite colours; not one colour or shade seemed to be missing. And there were squares and circles and stars and the most weird shapes. The whole was a wonderful fairy-land, and the hundreds and thousands of children and adults were thrilled as they moved on from one point of view to another. It was something I had never seen before, and something that most of the boys and girls would never forget.

But I could not understand how these thousands of little lamps were lit. They were candles and not

electricity. Each had to be lit separately. I was told that it would take six men hours to light them all. But they had been lit in a few minutes somehow. I determined the following night to be there early enough to see exactly how this was done.

An hour before the sun went down the following evening I was there, and there were hundreds of boys and girls there too. Two men were handing out torches and tapers to these boys and girls, and each torch and taper was lit. With these they went from candle to candle, and when hundreds of boys and girls lit three or four candles in a minute I could see how easily and quickly the whole began to show a design and glory. In fifteen minutes the whole garden was a blaze of colours. And the children were thrilled with the fact that they had lit up the garden and its glory. It was the jolly and joyous work of the children together that made the beautiful sight possible.

If all children everywhere would pray and sing and act like this all the time what a beautiful world it would be.

God make my life a little light  
Within the world to glow;  
A little flame that burneth bright,  
Wherever I may go.

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#### Playing at Funerals.

BY THE REVEREND G. G. BARNES, B.A.,  
CAMBRIDGE.

'Like unto children . . . which call unto their fellows, and say, . . . we wailed, and ye did not mourn.'—Mt 11<sup>16-17</sup> (R.V.).

What a strange game to play! We can understand playing at weddings, but to play at funerals . . . did you ever?

The boys and girls in Palestine often saw and heard the funerals trailing along down the narrow village street. The most important part of the procession was the black-robed women, their eyes swollen with weeping. As they went they stooped, cupped up handfuls of dust from the road and threw it over their heads, and wailed and sobbed as if their hearts would break. What fun to imitate these women in a childish game . . . what an excuse for throwing the hot brown earth at each other!

But we don't think it kind to imitate sad things like funerals in England. Even the little boys stand at the roadside and take their caps off as the procession goes by, so as to show their sympathy.

But I was playing at funerals this morning! I was so busy, I buried fourteen in an hour. I just scooped a hole in the earth, and popped the bodies in, one after another. There were fourteen of them: eight hollyhocks and six lupins!

The funeral service says, 'It is sown in dishonour.' They certainly were sown in dishonour. No one stopped to watch me, as I hastily came to the end of my funeral game, and smoothed the earth over the last grave.

That was how they buried Jesus—hurriedly—without any honour, even without any prayers said over His tomb. But what a show of flowers came from that sowing!

No one guessed, as His wounded, dishonoured body was put into the grave by two humble friends, that in three days God would bring Jesus to such life that He would never be tired again, never hungry, never thirsty, able to come and go without any doors stopping Him! But it happened. He flowered in three days, strong, graceful, radiant. Pulsing with life, Jesus broke out of the grave and showed Himself to the astonished watchers, and later to the astonished friends.

I hope my friends will be astonished when they see my flame-coloured hollyhocks and sea-blue lupins in full bloom. They will stop to look at my garden then . . . I hope. My poor, brown, straggly ugly roots will have become tall, graceful columns of colour and life! What a miracle! Yet that is nothing to the miracle which you and I are going to have done to us, when our earthly life is over. God will do for us what He did for Jesus—clothe us with that glorious, tireless, beautiful Heavenly Body. To play at funerals, then, is quite a happy game, when we think how clever and strong and loving Jesus is as our Gardener.

## The Christian Year.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

After Easter.

'After that he was risen from the dead.'—Jn 21<sup>14</sup>.

This is the first Sunday after Easter. 'After Easter!' It is not simply this Sunday, but every Sunday, and for the matter of that every weekday, and indeed our whole modern world and everything in it, that is 'after Easter.'

There are certain great and catastrophic events which seem radically to alter the whole scheme of things and to start the world on a new career. The Great War was such an event. We are constantly being told that we are living in a post-war world, and that the old ideas and ideals and conventions and morals of the pre-war world no longer apply. The old kind of preaching, we are told, makes no sort of appeal to the young of to-day. And philosophers tell us the same sort of things about morals. They tell us we are living in a world in which the validity of the pre-war taboos and prohibitions and moral restrictions is simply not admitted. Then economically, again, things are undergoing a sea change. Our fiscal system is being altered. Individualism seems to be on its death-bed and a steady process of socializing is going on.

But the change resulting from the War is as nothing to the change effected by the Resurrection of Jesus.

1. *The Sunday.*—'First Sunday after Easter.' As a matter of date and limiting our thought to this year 1936, that may be true enough. But taken absolutely, of course it is not true. This is not the first Sunday after Easter. All the Sundays have been 'after Easter' Sundays. The Sunday is a new institution—a happier, gladder, and more joyous day than the old Jewish Sabbath. This is the day on which our Lord rose again from the dead. This is the day on which He appeared to His disciples to turn their sorrow into joy. This is the day on which He came again for the sake of Thomas and showed him His hands and His side and turned his doubt into adoring faith. This is the day on which in the person of the Spirit He came back again to His disciples as they were gathered together in the Upper Room never again to leave them. This is the Lord's day.

It may be that the Jewish Christians, at any rate in the early days, observed the Jewish Sabbath as well. But in the Gentile churches from the very start, and gradually throughout the whole of the

Christian Church, the Sunday became the day when the Christians assembled themselves together. There is no cause for surprise in the fact that Dr. Dale, after a certain experience of his own, used to begin every Sunday morning service with an Easter hymn. For every Sunday is a commemoration of Easter, and every Sunday is a product of the mighty Easter event.

As a matter of simple fact, Sunday is, as Mr. Darlow says, 'a creation and monument of Christian faith.' Every Sunday is 'after Easter,' and this unbroken line of Sundays makes a long chain of witnesses to the reality of our Lord's resurrection. 'They date back in unbroken sequence to His empty grave.'

2. *The Gospels*.—Though scholars give various dates to the various books of the New Testament, there is one date that fits them all—they are all dated 'after Easter.' That is their *real* date. Scholarship must be allowed to decide whether they were written in the fifties, or the sixties, or the seventies of the first century. That is a matter of small moment. It was not the Gospels and Epistles that created faith in the Resurrection, it was the Resurrection of Jesus that called into being the Gospels and the Epistles. The men who wrote the books of the New Testament lived and moved and had their being in the glorious sunshine of the Resurrection. That is what the latest school of German scholarship is saying—that what we have in the New Testament is the reflection of the faith of the Early Church. If one thing is certain it is this—if there had been no Resurrection there never would have been a New Testament. If the story of Jesus had ended—where so many modern writers make it end—at the Cross and the grave, there never would have been a New Testament. As one writer puts it, 'It is not this or that in the New Testament—it is not the story of the empty tomb, or of the appearing of Jesus in Jerusalem or Galilee—which is the primary evidence of the Resurrection. It is the New Testament itself. The life that throbs in it from beginning to end is the life which the risen Saviour has quickened in Christian souls.' Is it not the New Testament which has been dictating the progress of the centuries? Isn't that the history of our Western civilization, a constant if fumbling effort to put its precepts into practice in the individual, industrial, national, and international life? Were we wrong in saying that the Resurrection was the most tremendous event in the history of the world? For it gave us the New Testament.

3. *The Church*.—Or think once again of the

Christian Church. When did the Christian Church have its beginning? The answer is: 'After Easter.' Had the Cross been the end of Jesus it is just possible that some of His disciples might have written down some of His wonderful sayings and told us something about His career, just as Xenophon and Plato have written down their recollections of Socrates and his sayings. But it is not certain, for these disciples had cherished expectations about Jesus that no one cherished about Socrates. When Socrates drank the hemlock his friends were grieved, but they didn't feel they had been disappointed and cheated in him. But that is exactly how the disciples of Jesus would have felt if the Cross had been His end. That is indeed how they did feel during those two days when He lay dead and buried in Joseph's rocky grave. They felt they had been deceived, misled, cheated. If Jesus had finished His life at the Cross, would not the disciples have wished to forget Him and the whole episode of their mistaken discipleship as soon as possible?

Or, if that is an extreme statement, at any rate this is true: there never would have been a Christian Church. If nothing had happened when the Passover week was over, the disciples would have gone back to their old occupations, and that would have been the end of the Jesus movement. A writer of a book entitled *The Shining Mystery of Jesus* declares that if all the Gospels were broken off, where apparently Mark broke off, at the discovery of the empty tomb, and if St. Paul's account of the various appearances had never been written, and the opening verses of the Book of the Acts had been lost—we should then have been left without any account of the Resurrection. But even in such a case, he says, we should be driven to postulate some tremendous event to account for the difference between the followers of Jesus who fled in panic and despair on Good Friday and those same followers who, a short time later, astonished the Jewish leaders by their boldness and courage, a boldness and courage which did not flinch even in face of persecution and death. Something great must have happened to transfigure timidity into heroism. They themselves say that that tremendous fact was the real resurrection of the Crucified Christ.

The Resurrection gave them their gospel, and their gospel made them into a Church. The Church is an 'after Easter' creation. It was made by the Resurrection, and it lives by its present-day experience of the living Christ. So that it is no exaggeration to say that the chief evidence for the

Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fact of the Christian Church.

Now consider again the place the Church has occupied in the world's life, and the work the Church has done and is still doing. We know the Church has her defects and shortcomings. Yet, for all that, the Church is the mainspring of all ameliorative movements. Was one wrong, then, in saying that the Resurrection was the most tremendous event in the world's history—seeing that it created the Christian Church?

4. *The New Outlook*.—And now let us speak of the new outlook on death and the beyond. If we could have compared the inscriptions in some pre-Christian cemetery with the new kind of inscriptions written on the graves in the Catacombs, the difference would at once flash upon us. Sadness characterizes the one and immortal hope the other.

Bunyan's description of the coming of the Post to Mr. Ready to Halt has an exquisite touch in it. This is what the Post said to that lame and crippled Pilgrim: 'My message is to tell thee that thy Lord expects thee at His Table to sup with Him in His Kingdom the next day after Easter.' It is only the day 'after Easter' that warrants a man in cherishing such a hope as that.

'To depart and be with Christ is far better'—that is an 'after Easter' word. 'O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?'—that is the shout of a man 'after Easter.'

Let us this day rejoice that we live in the 'after Easter' world, a world blessed with the Sunday and the New Testament and the Christian Church. A world in which death has lost its terror, because we know that it is not the end, but a new beginning, when mortality is swallowed up of life.<sup>1</sup>

#### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

##### Life the Builder.

By THE REVEREND J. VIVIAN THOMAS, M.A.,  
LINCOLN.

'With what body do they come?'—I Co 15<sup>36</sup>.

Some years ago at Hyde Park Corner an atheist speaker was loudly proclaiming, 'No one with any sense believes what they can't see,' when a heckler loudly shouted out, 'Then nobody with any sense, Mr., believes that you have any brains, because we can't see them.' The retort was as deserved as it was apt, yet nevertheless multitudes work on the assumption that tangible things are much more real and trustworthy than those we call spiritual;

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Jones, *Morning and Evening*, 104.

they are much more sure of the body than they are of the soul, more convinced of the existence of this world than that of any other. Many people look at you with surprise when you inform them that no one can prove the existence of this world around us, and that a prominent and able body of philosophers, the idealists, maintain that the material universe is non-existent, and that which we call matter is merely an appearance. Moreover, many of the most up-to-date and advanced scientists agree with the idealists that the material is the mere impression we get of the reality that surrounds us, and that the real world is intangible and invisible. We only see shadows, paradoxical though it may seem; the real substantial world is invisible and beyond the apprehension of the five senses. Indeed, the greatest things in this universe are the invisibilities. Think of the ether. No one has ever seen ether; it cannot be felt, tasted, or smelt. No sense can have cognizance of it; it cannot be weighed, measured, or analysed, yet we know it must exist, for without it the world would be in complete and absolute darkness. Light, we know, is a vibration; now you can only have a vibration in a medium, you cannot have it in nothing; there must thus be some medium between us and the sun, moon, and stars for their light to vibrate through; that medium is the invisible all-pervasive ether. We know of ether not by sight, but by what it does. So is it with our knowledge of God. 'No man hath seen God at any time,' yet we simply have to believe in God to explain the facts which without Him are inexplicable. We know Him through His works.

Another great invisibility is gravitation. Were gravitation to cease for one single moment, everything on the surface of the earth would fly off at a tangent—people, houses, rocks, seas, everything! Gravitation holds us down to *terra firma*. Gravitation sometimes may have unpleasant consequences, as, for instance, when any one falls out of a window, or over a cliff. We may not like always being held down, but who would like to be flung off into outer space? Our very existence depends upon it. There is, if we only look to see it, a close parallel between religion and gravitation. The very word religion is from the Latin *religio*, to bind. Much of the revolt against religion is prompted by the desire to escape restraint. We do not want to be tied down. But religion only ties us down in things that pertain to our moral welfare and spiritual development. To master a language or to learn music involves a 'tie,' but we find therein a far greater liberty and expansion of personality than

in a dissipation that refuses the wholesome discipline that leads to attainment.

A third great invisibility is life. Like ether and gravitation, it cannot be caught and tabulated; it is only known in its activities. Yet nothing is more real than life. We can doubt almost anything, but we cannot doubt our existence. For there to be doubt there has to be the doubter. There is one remarkable fact about life, however, that must not be overlooked, that is its capacity to act through bodies; it seems for ever to be seeking embodiment. It is through its action in bodies that we recognize it. Yet it is itself a great invisible power. Among the most lovely little creatures known to naturalists are microscopic little entities known as rotifers. As they are perfectly colourless and transparent, the only way in which they can be seen and studied under the microscope is to stain them with magenta, and so they become visible. In the same way bodies are employed by living forms to render them visible and tangible in this world :

For of the soul the body form doth take ;  
For soul is form, and doth the body make.

Life lays hold of matter in its environment and builds up structures for all to see. Perhaps when you have been at the seaside as you have wandered on the beach you have picked up some exquisite shell, hard as a rock, yet tinted and beautiful as a lovely flower. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself how it came into existence? Its main composition is lime. Now in sea water there is a faint solution of lime, so feeble, however, and diffused as to be utterly unobservable. Life has the power to draw on the invisible lime in the ocean and with it to construct marvellous shells for all the world to see. In like manner some of the most lovely orchids are literally built up out of thin air. For in some of the humid tropical forests these beautiful plants, clinging to branches of the trees, hang suspended in space with the roots dangling in the air. The roots absorb the moisture in the atmosphere, and the leaves breathe in chemical elements from the air, so that the whole plant has been literally built up out of thin air. Life has built up a body seemingly out of nothing, and certainly out of the invisible. Life is surely the most marvellous and miraculous thing in the whole universe. How can any one deem that life with powers like this perishes with the mere withering of the body whose temporary habitant it became for a season, when it is the very power and energy that built the body up? A man can construct, if

he is ingenious enough, an excellent violin out of cigar boxes and cat gut, lowly materials enough! He can play on it divine music. But when it wears out or is smashed up, the man himself is unaffected; there is nothing in the world to prevent him making a new violin. 'Destroy this temple,' said the Lord Christ, 'and in three days I will raise it up. He spake of the temple of his body.'

From the record we have of the Risen Lord in the New Testament it is perfectly clear that the spirit of the Master manifested itself in a body, but it is also perfectly clear that it had very different properties to the body that was taken down from the Cross and laid in the tomb. From St. John's account of the Resurrection we learn that the crucified corpse in some way dematerialized, evaporated, as it were, out of the grave clothes, which sagged together, undisturbed by human hand, to bear silent and convincing testimony to Peter and John when they entered the empty tomb. If a body can be built up out of thin air, as we have seen actually it can in the natural order, why should we deem it impossible for the reverse process to take place? Sir Oliver Lodge informs us that 'matter is a twist in the ether.' If ether can twist into visible matter it can surely untwist back into invisible ether again. The Risen Christ is no mere reanimated corpse; we may rather believe that He drew on the invisible matter in the atmosphere around and built up a temporary but tangible body to manifest to the disciples and prove the fact of survival. Unless we accept that the Resurrection was a case of a reanimated corpse, there seems no other way to account for the facts. Moreover, it is difficult to see how a reanimated corpse could appear and disappear at will, and pass through solid walls and bolted doors as our records reveal. Life builds up bodies on this plane; its power will not be restricted on any other. Whether this gross physical body or the more subtle spiritualized body with which our Saviour showed Himself alive to His awestruck followers, the bodies of this world are but temporary structures, creatures of a day, for they partake of a world the order of which is transitional and temporary :

Change and decay in all around I see.

Before a great sculptor makes a beautiful statue in solid marble, or a silversmith casts a model, he makes a plaster likeness, something fragile and *pro tem.*, a sort of trial out for the final and abiding figure. Such, it seems to me, is the body of clay which the soul weaves as its vesture in this

earthly world. 'There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.' 'As we have worn the likeness of the earthly, so we must also wear the likeness of the heavenly.' We shall have an immutable glorified body eternal in the heavens. The physical body is built up from the material, the heavenly from the spiritual. The two worlds we are building now overlap. I saw a cat in some long grass the other day stalking a bird. It crept up behind in a silence that could be felt; it got within an inch or two, then the bird saw it. In an instant it was in the air and off. Had it not long since learned to use its wings, its escape would have been impossible. My friends, death fast stalks every one of us down; it seldom comes with hint or warning. When it comes our way, shall we be creatures of one world only, or having tested out our spiritual powers by the cultivation of the soul here and now, by the building of the abiding amid the glittering shams of this illusory life, shall we soar free with the Risen Christ? and sing with the psalmist, 'Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.'

For what is death?  
'Tis but as when one layeth  
His worn-out robes away,  
And taking new ones sayeth,  
These will I wear to-day.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

**What might have been if only—**

'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.'—*Jn 11<sup>21</sup>*.

One of the commonest difficulties in regard to the conduct of life, and one which few of us avoid, is that of leaving the past where it belongs. On the one hand we are apt to idealize it—'there never were such days as those long gone by!'—until we paralyse our powers of dealing with the present, its obligations, and opportunities. Or, on the other hand, we incline to brood over its mistakes and disappointments, and literally spoil our lives by constantly harking back to 'what might have been if only we ourselves, or some one else, had acted differently.'

There is something inexorably intrusive about the past. With the best intention in the world one simply cannot shut it out. Of course, as a matter of fact, we are not intended wholly to do so. For the past is our school of experience, and its lessons, rightly learned, form the staple of our equipment

for the life and work that are immediately before us. But we are all apt to make of it either such a thing as never was, or such a thing as never should have been. And, in either event, we do ourselves no good.

Not many years ago it was discovered by the architects that beneath St. Paul's Cathedral there flowed a subterranean stream which threatened the stability of that vast building and necessitated the most elaborate and costly overhaul which has recently been completed. Had this not been undertaken, expert opinion was unanimous that the ruin of the fabric in the not too distant future was inevitable. In just the same way the inward harmony and the moral energy of the Christian life may all be literally ruined by unchecked indulgence in distorted speculation as to 'what might have been if only——!' Like the hidden stream under the cathedral, it destroys the stable foundations upon which everything depends.

The friendship between Jesus and the Bethany household is one of the idylls of the gospel story. Between two of His visits while He was in another part of the country, sickness entered that home and not unnaturally the thoughts of Martha and Mary turned to Jesus. Above all things they wished that He were with them. When at length He did hear of Lazarus's illness He made His way to Bethany without any haste, indeed, with perplexing leisureliness. And when He arrived He was greeted by Martha, in her anguish, with a reproachful, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.'

Of course she was wrong. The plain truth of the matter is that Lazarus had died just because, in a truer sense than Martha could understand, the Lord was there! She did not know that her brother's sickness was not part of Death's campaign and triumph, but was directly ordered 'for the glory of God.' It was actually planned by the Love that permitted it to take its course, and was meant to set the stage for the mightiest display of Christ's power, the most convincing declaration of His Godhead. But this Martha could not know. She had to learn—and she did learn—that His love outstrips all fleetness of the human mind, that it is always ahead of the conceptions and prayers of His followers, that when the lesser is denied it is as a preparation for the gift of the greater.

There are three lines of danger and possible disaster to which undue dwelling on the 'might have beens' of life tends to bring us. There is, in the first place, the danger of idealizing ourselves, not perhaps in regard to our moral worth, for we

all know ourselves too well to be guilty of such unspeakable folly, but in respect of our personal importance in the scheme of life. When we make ourselves the central consequence of the universe we doom ourselves to live in a very small world, a world, moreover, which will most certainly prove itself vigorously hostile to our claims. At the same time we blindfold ourselves to the great fact that the course of things for every man who has committed himself to the Fatherly care of God in Jesus Christ is actually governed by His wisdom and His love for His entire family. Nothing ever happens to His children by chance. It is all in the plan; and the plan is on a big scale which embraces far more than our individual concerns. Had He not willed it, or had He, at any rate, not been willing to weave the dark thread of a human second cause into our little 'web of time,' and had it played no part in the great pattern of life for His entire family, nothing is more certain than that He could have prevented it. We thought that our well-being, or, it may be, the well-being of His Kingdom in its personal significance to us, was necessarily bound up with certain contingencies. We thought that the continuance of a loved life, or the maintenance of what seemed like an established prosperity, or the success of a cherished plan was essential to our good. And none of these desired things eventuated. To-day we are found wonderingly, resentfully, even despairingly saying, 'Lord, if——' and 'Lord, why?' Well, He wants us to scan a wider horizon, and to seek the justification of His permissive will in the moral and spiritual harvests of our dark days, and in the contribution which these qualify us to make to the collective witness of the entire Church before the world.

It is, perhaps, simpler to leave the unknown future to God than the known past. And yet we must do so if we are to maintain faith in Him at all. If what Jesus taught of the Divine Fatherhood is true, it must be that He turns the edge of what men mean for evil so that only good reaches His children, even in their most resented and unkindest experiences.

Then there is the danger of investing the past with an importance it actually did not carry. For the past did not contain all our opportunities either of happiness or of service. The tide we missed was not the ocean's only tide. And God did not cease to exercise 'such pity as a father hath unto his children dear,' just because human folly, or indecision, or even wilfulness tangled the threads.

We are not wise enough to interpret all the puzzling, provoking things of life. Who is, indeed?

We know that 'clouds and darkness' are around about God while 'righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.' And, since this is so, we shall go on being challenged by the mystery of things right to the end of life. The past may at times appear to us to be the final despotism. To Him it is just the raw material out of which character is formed. Even our most inexcusable lapses, if such happen to form part of its record, cannot obliterate His love. And what we are tempted to call accidents are just incidents in the long story of His consideration for His people's highest good. Just as the pearl is evolved to cover a rent in the delicate membrane with which the oyster-shell is lined, so out of what at the time may have seemed dire calamity God brings forth undreamt-of glories of the present and the future.

Beyond every other danger of dwelling upon 'what might have been if only——!' is that of drifting into a spirit and temper of actual criticism of God and His providence, which, like a boomerang, recoils with deadly precision upon ourselves. For, while we are murmuring of what He should have done, we are blinding ourselves to what He has done, and is doing. When we begin questioning the rightness of what He does and permits, we drift hopelessly out of touch with Him and become a prey to the subtlest and strongest delusions.

If we need convincing proof, history piles evidence upon evidence to assure us that, in spite of appearances, it is true that 'as for God His way is perfect.' One can easily imagine the Christians in Jerusalem aghast at the news that Saul of Tarsus had been granted his passports by the high priest for the express purpose of proceeding to Damascus that he might persecute their brethren. It is not unlikely that they should have said, 'Lord, if You had only overruled to prevent this'—fearing that the little Church in Damascus must be done to death when this fiery crusader got to work. How they must have marvelled at the greatness of God, who proved Himself greater than their fears, when at length they heard that he who had been a blasphemer now preached the Faith he once destroyed!

It might have been justifiable beyond all contention had Jesus Himself said, 'Lord, if——!' For, looking back over His stormy life, if only men had shown a little more understanding and insight, if only some had been more loyal, if only one had not been lured by money, if only another in his judicial position had possessed the courage of his convictions, there would have been no Crucifixion. But He did not! And to-day we rejoice that He accepted the Father's will as good and perfect,

that He was supremely certain that God had not allowed the control of events to slip from His own hand.<sup>1</sup>

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

**Recovered Certainties.**

'And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.'—Heb 12<sup>27</sup>.

History could unfold the record of many who have been loyal to duty because they knew, not only that they were right, but that time would justify all silent martyrdoms and give the laurel to those who did not strive nor cry, but possessed their souls in patience. And, spite of all high strictures on motives that are even tinged with self, surely it is a great gain to morality that in one form or another this maxim has been written legibly in the commonplace book of humanity: Time will see wisdom justified of her children.

But when we look deeper into our complex life we discover that it is very superficial to speak of 'Time' as the avenger. When we use the word, it is as a synonym for purpose and law, for the essential righteousness at the back of things which redresses the wrong balance and works slowly but inevitably towards truth and right.

Those of us who believe in a living God who has spoken of a truth to men, and who see in Jesus the Revelation of a Father and a Kingdom everlasting, assert that some things must perish because they have no alliance with God. Some cannot perish, cannot even be shaken, because they have that alliance. It is our part to discover the enduring things, that thought may have its deathless fibre and the soul its portion for ever. Within the limits of this great Epistle's message we find three such unshakable certainties that remain for our refuge.

1. The Immutability of His Counsel. This counsel means, of course, more than advice, more even than active guidance. It carries us back to the deliberate purpose of God to offer redemption and to make it effectual. Note the extraordinary solemnity of the assurance by which this counsel is supported. He confirms it by an oath. God promises to accomplish His design. He commits Himself to His plan in all its operations. It is impossible to look for a more emphatic declaration of the fact that God is not going to allow human nature to lie fallow, to waste itself on trifles, to be content with low ideals, or to tolerate the eclipse

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Holden, *A Voice for God*, 183.

of the human soul. Here, then, is one of our great certainties:

Great works, the secret and sublime forsooth,  
Let others prize; what are these at best  
Beside God helping, God directing everywhere.

The Immutability of His counsel—nothing else can help us to keep the treasures of our faith and love from the devouring baseness of a worldly mind. Nothing else can urge the soul in the blackness of defeat to utter its gasping protest, and still claim a God-given destiny. For God has something to do with each of us, and means to do it. No combination of evils can render void the fact that He loved the world. No change can ever shake His purpose to redeem a people. And when the time comes, in which all things are shaken, we shall see His counsel, this highway for wayfaring men, so clear that not even fools need err therein, high above storm and flood, running on through history to the Kingdom that cannot be moved.

2. The Priesthood of Jesus is offered in this great book as another of our immovable certainties.

There is a great mass of experience to show that human nature awakened to the mystery and burden of life cries out for a priest. Nothing else can explain the part which sacrifice and priesthood have played in the world of religion from the earliest days. There is something in our lot, or nature, or outlook which demands mediation. What is this something? On the largest view we may call it ignorance. We do not know; we cannot see far enough. It is a far way to heaven. The stars give us no answer. We need one who will tell us of God; one who will take the words of God, if God has spoken, turn them into human language, tone and colour them with a personal accent in such fashion that we can say, with an assurance as well based as any assurance of science, 'I know God speaks.' On the other hand, there are in ourselves strong cryings of the soul, yearnings dim and featureless, and a great hunger. Who has ever understood us? Who can harvest these gropings of our nature, and carry them up and express them to God as ours? This necessity of an Interpreter has always been there. And sin, which is deeper than ignorance, and darker, and the heart of all ignorance, is there to make our necessity a desperate cry for life. In the presence of this necessity an ineradicable instinct has always demanded propitiation and a priest.

Now this great letter is written with the deliberate purpose of proving that by one Gift of God, Old Testament Sacrifice, and the Old Testament

Priesthood, and all symbolism around them had been rendered provisional, and had gone. One unchangeable Priest, Jesus, enters into the life of humanity, that by the authority of One Person, the worth of One Sacrifice, the power of one endless Life, He may express for ever the ignorance and sin of man to God and the love and character of God to man. This is secured by the continuity of His life. He abides for ever the great High Priest of our profession, holy, undefiled, always there.

3. 'We have this Hope as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil.' For the believing soul that also abides one of the things that cannot be shaken. It is not for us to judge those who cry wildly out of the dark, the maimed and ignorant who have no clear knowledge. They are not left alone. 'It is God who builds the blind bird's nest,' and He will not be less careful of maimed souls. But, if we do not judge them, we can assert our confidence in the hope that is created by the touch of God, the hope secured by the unchangeable Priesthood of Jesus. When we cast ourselves upon His mercy and trust to His forgiveness, this hope is as an anchor of the soul. It is not vain for men to trust in God. Christian hope is not a mirage, it is an anchor that holds fast by the inheritance. It is

sadly true that many of us do not see far enough. Our outlook is so foreshortened. But the day will come when we shall find it necessary to throw back the boundaries of life, and to cast our anchor within the veil. And the assertion of this book is, that not in vain men do that. The anchor holds.

These, then, are some of the things that endure. We shall endure as we see and value them. That is a momentous thing to believe; for if time be the avenger, if eternal righteousness must have its way, shattering all obstacles, what shall we say of the unveiled purity of God which one day must cross our track? In deep humility we may say this. If in this life, which is so brief and precarious, these eternal things of which we have spoken find a place, to give life its true meaning and our spirit its divine bent, then, though it be with reverence and godly fear, we can face the stern and awful close. Our short-sighted plans, our self-deceptions, our chaotic readings of the Divine purpose, our sickening failures, our poor ideals, these, indeed, shall fall away at the touch of His judgment, and we need not deem ourselves poor if they do. For that will be our entrance into a life more radiant, vigorous, and joyous than we can even dream of amid the shadows of the present.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Connell, *The Endless Quest*, 174.

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## Recent Thoughts on the Doctrine of the Atonement.

### II.

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NOT a little of the interest in recent thinking on the theory of Atonement lies in the refusal of several contemporary writers to regard the traditionally contrasted Anselmic or objective and Abelardian or subjective views as exclusive alternatives. We have already noted Brunner's attitude in regard to this, as well as the thought of Atonement in terms of sacrifice put forward by Bishop Hicks. In *Christus Victor*,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Aulén has given us another interpretation of the work of Christ, setting aside both Anselmic and moral influence views, and inviting us to return to the patristic or truly 'classic' view of Atonement, neglect of which, he would hold, has been detrimental to the theology of the

<sup>1</sup> Eng. tr. (S.P.C.K., 1931).

Church. A reunion of differing branches of the Christian Church, envisaged by Dr. Hicks, is again kept in view in this theory also as being at least made more possible through the 'rediscovery of the old evangelical and catholic faith.'<sup>2</sup>

While it may be surprising, as Principal Franks<sup>3</sup> points out, to find that Dr. Aulén has still a good word to say for the doctrine of redemption from the devil, a more serious issue is raised in the argument of *Christus Victor*. Briefly stated, the thesis includes four main principles. In the first place, the doctrine of Atonement must be presented in dramatic form. Conflict and victory are at the heart of reconciliation. The triumph of Christ is

<sup>2</sup> P. x.

<sup>3</sup> *The Atonement*, 14.