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Professor Adolf Deissmann[1] calls attention to the fact that the best preserved of these fragments (Dt $25^{1-3}$) contains a passage of the O.T. Law, τεσσαράκοντα μαστιγώσουσιν αὐτὸν, οὐ προσθήσουσιν, which played a painful part no less than five times in the life of St. Paul (2 Co $11^{24}$, ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσαράκοντα παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβον). 'We may gather from this that the Septuagint was for the Diaspora not only a book of edification but was still used,' with the characteristic precaution of παρὰ μίαν to ensure the οὐ προσθήσουσιν, 'as the accepted code of legal penalties by the spiritual rulers. The "scourging" paragraph on our old leaf from Egypt must have carried very much the same authority two centuries later in the Bible rolls of the Diaspora.'

The second papyrus, a fourth-century fragment, is a part of a double leaf of a Codex containing a collection of O.T. passages, and, as is the case with other of the literary papyri in the John Rylands Library, other fragments of the same Codex have found their way into another collection. These were published by G. Rudberg under the title *Septuaginta Fragmente*, and are now known as *Pap. Osloenses*, ii. 11. The combined texts contain Is $42^{3.4}$ $66^{18.19}$ $52^{15}$ $53^{6.7}$ $53^{11.12}$, an unidentified verse, Gn $26^{13.14}$, 2 Ch $1^{12}$, Dt $28^{8.11}$. The Oslo fragments were described by Rudberg as a *Textbuch für kultische Zweck*, and the later editor of the Oslo papyri thought that 'Isaiah combined with Genesis suggests that the book was meant for liturgical use.' But the addition of the new fragments, Is $66^{18.19}$, 2 Ch $1^{12}$, Dt $28^{8}$, suggests a different purpose. All the passages can be classed as 'Messianic'—prophetic of Christ or of Pentecost,[2] and we have here a part of a Testimony Book, a collection of extracts from the O.T. to prove the witness of O.T. writers to the truth of the Christian faith. The inclusion of Gn $26^{12f.}$, the prosperity of Isaac, in such an anthology seems at first strange, but it is a good example of popular allegorical interpretation, and the clue lies in the opening words of v.[13] (the actual line is missing in the MS.), καὶ ὑψώθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος . . .; that one word is enough to link up the passage with Nu $21^{9}$ and Jn $3^{14}$.

It is an appropriate coincidence that these fragments which have now come to prove the first extant bit of a Testimony Book should form a part of one of Dr. Harris's finds; for his study of the *Testimonies* is the standard work on the subject.[3] It is not likely that they form a part of a copy of a Testimony Book such as Dr. Harris envisages—the first written book in Christian use, perhaps already used by St. Paul and the Evangelists, and later on by Cyprian and Tertullian, Gregory of Nyssa and Barsalibi. There is no trace in this collection of introductory formulas, and the passages outside Isaiah are not used by Cyprian or Gregory. But it may be rather, as Mr. Roberts suggests, a copy of what Dr. Harris had in mind when he wrote: 'It was *a priori* probable they would be little books of wide range. The parallel which suggests itself to one's mind is that of the little handbook known as the *Soldier's Pocket Bible*, which was carried by the Ironsides of Cromwell and was composed of a series of Biblical extracts, chiefly from the Old Testament, defining the duty of the Puritan soldier in various circumstances in which he found himself, and arranged under headings of questions appropriate to the situation.'[4]

[1] 'The Oldest Bible Leaf,' in *The British Weekly*, Aug. 6, 1936.

[2] Cf. the use of Is $66^{18f.}$ in Cypr., *Test.* i. 21, not ii. 21, a little slip on p. 51, as is also the statement on p. 52 that only the quotations from Is 52, 53 are employed by Cyprian.

[3] *Testimonies*, by Rendel Harris and V. Burch (Cambridge University Press; Pt. i. 1916, Pt ii. 1920).

[4] *Op. cit.* Pt. i. p. 1.

# In the Study.

## Virginibus Puerisque.

### Road or Street?

By the Reverend A. E. Willmott, Bow, London.

'Jesus saith . . . I am the way.'—Jn $14^{6}$.

Do you live in a road or street? It does not really matter very much where your home is, because our homes depend upon us and not where our house is situated, yet there is a great difference between a road and a street. A road is a riding: if you have read Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, you will remember how Griffith describes Wolsey's last ride from York to Leicester: 'At last, with easy roads, he came to Leicester,' which means that he came with easy

ridings; his mule did not turn contrary on the way! You have noticed that *ride* and *road* are similar in sound, and this gives you the clue to the meaning of road. You also know that people speak of the 'Road of Life,' and the 'Road to Success,' and these phrases show that we are thinking of a journey. A road thinks of the beginning and the end: it is a way between distant places.

And what is a street? A street belongs to towns and villages; it is a paved way; it is a place where houses are built, and where people live together. How do people use the idea of street? When we speak of 'Fleet Street' we think immediately of newspapers and all that is connected with them. Very often you hear people say that they have been taken 'up a side street,' which means that they have been taken out of their way. A street has the idea of the things which remain in it, of the people who stay there; a street does not lead anywhere.

So we may put the difference between a road and a street like this: a road is a great way which thinks of a beginning and an end, a journey with a destination in view; a street is a turning off the great way where travellers are apt to stay and forget their journey and their destination.

How important is that thought for our lives! We are always told that we are travellers; that while we are growing we are also going; and that we must get somewhere. I knew a man who, whenever some one died, always said that that person had 'gone home.' Don't you think that was a lovely way of putting it? Some one had got to his destination. He had travelled the road, reached the end of his journey. We are all travellers, but, where are we? On the road or up the street? There is the road which thinks of the beginning and the end. You are beginning—what about the end? Jesus says, 'I am the road,' and He is the Great Way by whom we can reach the place where God would have us be; the place which my friend called 'Home.' But the sad thing is that so many folk, although this road is ready for all, still cluster in side streets; they have forgotten their journey in life, and have lost sight of their destination. As Isaiah says, 'They have all gone out of the way.' They are in the place which Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress* called 'By-path Meadow'; it may be very attractive and very pleasant—but it is 'up a side street.' They are clustering instead of journeying.

We began by asking, 'Where do you live?' and now you can see the meaning of the question, and catch something of its importance. Are you on the Great Road, or are you playing about in some side street which will get you nowhere? Get on the road with Jesus! Then you will be able to join in the hymn which you have sung so often:

> Children of the heavenly King,
> As ye journey, sweetly sing;

and be able to sing it right through to its last verse:

> Lord, obediently we go,
> Gladly leaving all below;
> Only Thou our Leader be,
> And we still will follow Thee.

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### A Provoking Child.

By the Reverend Stuart Robertson, M.A., Lisbon.

'Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.'—Heb $10^{24}$.

'How provoking!' Have you ever said that? Often. Have you ever had it said about you? Often. I know very well you have.

Some morning, for instance, you are getting ready for school. You have lain a bit too long, thinking about getting up. You have pottered a bit more in dressing. Breakfast has been somewhat of a hurried business, and now you are in the final rush to be off in time. That is the moment when your shoe lace chooses to break! Most provoking! You are hurrying for a train in a London tube. As you leave the lift you hear the train. A scamper along the passageway, a breathless series of brake-neck jumps down the stairs, and as you reach the platform the train-doors close in your face and you watch the train vanish into the tunnel. Most provoking!

You are playing a hockey match. At last the chance you have been hoping for has come. Good passing has done the trick and you are through the defences, and the way to the goal is open. You reach the sacred semicircle, and just as you are ready to shoot you skid on a slippery bit of ground, down you go, and the chance of a score vanishes. Most provoking!

I can fancy that was what the foolish virgins in the Parable said when they found their lamps had no oil in them; and what the guests in another Parable said when they found the doors shut and were told they were too late for the supper; and the man who found he had no food to give to the friend who had turned up unexpectedly at midnight.

Yes! things can be most provoking, and so can people. Has your mother never said to you, 'You are really a most provoking child'? Perhaps she had good cause to say it.

One often reads in the papers of some man who has lost his temper and done something violent that has brought him into the police court. He can't deny the facts, but he pleads that he had received 'great provocation,' and that is taken into account.

What does 'provoke' mean? It means 'to call out.' A provoking thing is what calls out something that is lying quiet in us, and the provoking thing is usually something unpleasant, and what is called out is also usually something unpleasant, in fact, our bad temper. So 'provoking' is an unpleasant word to our minds: it belongs to disagreeable things and disagreeable people and it never finds us at our best, for we use it when we are ruffled in our tempers.

Yet, in spite of all that, 'provoking' need not have only a bad meaning. If it means to call out, it need not only mean to call out the bad in us. There might be provoking things that call out the good in us, provoking people that waken in us good impulses that are asleep till they are provoked. It is so: for I find St. Paul writing to the Christians of Corinth that their generosity had 'provoked many': which means, not that it had made them angry, but that it had stirred them to be generous also. Elsewhere we are told to consider one another, 'to provoke unto love, and to good works.' This is a good sort of provocation.

I have a privet hedge in the front of my house. It needs to be trimmed regularly, and at times I look at it, and although I know perfectly well that it needs trimming I persuade myself that it doesn't, and walk past it saying to myself, 'It'll do fine for a while yet.' Then when I come back I find my next door neighbour has trimmed his hedge! It makes mine look so untidy that I have got to start in at once and trim mine. He has provoked me to this good bit of work.

Our front lawn and his run into each other without any hedge or fence between, and so when he cuts his grass I have got to cut mine. When I cut mine he has got to cut his, or it would look like a man that had shaved only one side of his face. So my neighbour and I, who are excellent friends, continually provoke each other, and it's good for us both.

Evil provokes us to evil, but good provokes us to good. Jesus Christ wakens in us the desire to be like Him, and sets us singing, 'I want to be like Jesus.' That is how the religion of Jesus spreads. I have heard a story of a missionary who showed such great kindness to a poor Hindu boy dying of cholera that afterwards the father came and wished to become a Christian, 'because,' he said, 'I want the religion that made her do what she did for my boy.' She had provoked him to good, as she herself had first been provoked by Jesus.

Go and hear a great pianist: you come home provoked to practise harder. Go and see any one do supremely well something you do only middling well and the determination to do better is called out in you. So Jesus, who is the supreme goodness, provokes us to long for His likeness and to follow Him; and if we do, unconsciously but inevitably, we shall provoke others to the same good way; and to be called 'a most provoking child' in this sense is indeed a very great compliment.

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## The Christian Year.

### Second Sunday after Epiphany.

#### On Proportion of Life.

'Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.'—Ro $12^{6}$.

The immediate application of these words is to the use of the charismata, or spiritual gifts, bestowed on the various members of the primitive Church, and to the importance of manifesting them in due measure and balance. Every man, says the Apostle (in effect), who has a religious gift of any kind must exercise it with a proper regard to its character, amount, intensity, and practical value to others.

Let us take this principle of proportion and due measure, and apply it to life in general, seeing how it works out, first, as regards the qualities that make up our ideal of character; and, secondly, as regards the rule of practical conduct.

1. *The Christian ideal of character* includes the principle of proportion. We are to reach out, not in the direction of one virtue only, or of a few, but of all; we are to 'grow up unto him in all things, who is the head, even Christ.'

It would be well, perhaps, to point out that this does not mean that we are to aim at uniformity in character. That was the fault of Puritanism, which in its later manifestations coerced its votaries into a solemn, rigid, sour uniformity of behaviour. And that is the fault of the pietistic type, which would cut off half the natural human qualities and

develop the rest into a kind of hothouse growth. These sectional ideals are destructive of the free life of the spirit.

We are all intended to be different in the outlines and in the content of our individuality, and yet to preserve a sense of proportion. There are many types of architecture—for instance, the Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Doric, the Gothic, the Moorish, the Indian—and there are laws of proportion that govern them all. And so we are to gain and to maintain our separate individual type of excellence in the religious life.

Nor are we to imagine that such proportion need interfere with the utmost development of our special gifts. Paul delighted in any individuality of endowment in his converts, and he encouraged them to cultivate this to its limit.

We must not, however—and here we find the completing thought in this argument—be satisfied with having mere individual excellences. If there is anything lacking in our disposition, see that our endeavour be to supply it. Are we strong in imagination, but weak in will? Are we full of zeal, but tend to grow soon discouraged? Are we warm in our sympathies, but lacking in persistence? Are we cheerful in disposition, but quick of temper?

The tendency of this age is towards specialism in every department. Life is so full and so complex that there is 'not enough for this and that'; we must concentrate, we say, on one thing, and do that well. That is good within limits, but it has another side to it. This is the reason why we have so many schools of thought. This is why we divide up so much into parties in State and Church. This is why we have so much one-sidedness of judgment on all subjects. Men tend to isolate themselves from the broad stream of human life and linger in backwaters while the great tide moves on. However inevitable this may be in some directions, let us not submit to this tyranny of specialism in religion. Let us aim at being full men and women, having sympathies that follow the daylight round the globe; having thoughts that ripen with the process of the suns; having a mind open to all God's truth whencesoever it may come; having a soul with windows open north, south, east, and west, so that we may be accessible to every wind of God's Spirit, and be stimulated by every fragrant breath of Divine influence. Let us pray that we may not become narrower, more cramped, less sensitive to all that is fair and true and good, as we grow older, for that is the general danger, but rather that we may retain the freshness of youth with the experience of years, and grow in intensity and breadth and fulness of life to the end.

2. And now let us consider the need for applying *the principle of proportion in practical conduct.* Life is not only a matter of this or that, but of one thing out of many things, of less or more, of circumstances that affect the issue and make it different, of infinite shades and degrees and measures, and all these things have to be taken into consideration in determining most questions of conduct, good or bad.

For instance, take the question of speaking the truth. We must always do this, we say; and of course that is right. But in practical life truth and falsehood shade into one another. A look, a gesture, a smile, will often change a truth into a falsehood by the way it is spoken. Or—how much of the truth should a man tell his friend? It is something that affects other people as well, let us say, and if he tells him too much he may do mischief to a third party; if he tells him too little, he leaves the way open to a serious misunderstanding. Even in so clear and rigid a thing as truth-speaking there is thus room for less or more, and that in the interests of truth itself.

How much more is this so in those cases where there is no vital principle at stake, but where it all depends on adapting means to ends, on mood, temper, sentiment, relationships, and so on!

Take family government. What is the right limit of authority in training children? Take the very practical question of how Christians should spend the Lord's Day. Is there not a right principle of measure and proportion wanted?

Once more, take the question of amusements. What is the right place for this element in a Christian life? It is again a matter of less or more, of proportion. If men recognized this, no one would doubt the value of relaxation, and the brightening effect of concerts and dramatic art and pleasant games, and all that goes to lighten the burden and care of life. The reason why pleasure is dangerous is not because it is wrong, but because it is so difficult to indulge in it in due measure. The rein has to be drawn tight in order to keep most of us within due bounds.

Let us pray that God may enable us, both in character and in conduct, to keep the happy mean in all those directions where life opens out possibilities of too much or too little. The way is narrow, but it is good; it is difficult, but it leads to a great reward. We are here to grow into a full-grown or perfect man—such was Jesus our Lord.[1]

[1] E. Griffith-Jones, *The Unspeakable Gift*, 173.

SEPTUAGESIMA.

## Four Bible Stories: Men who were Angry with God.

BY THE REVEREND R. A. JONES, B.A., LUMB IN ROSSENDALE.

'How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? And how shall I denounce, whom the Lord hath not denounced?'

'Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.'—Nu $23^{8.20}$.

Beginning from these words, which have come down to us from very ancient times, let us try to catch a new vision of the vastness of the Kingdom of God, and realize anew how all peoples are embraced in His love and mercy.

From the great literature of the Bible let us select four passages for our meditation which will show us men in rebellion against the Christian idea of God—men who were afraid and angry at the love of God; who found it impossible to conceive that God really cares about all men regardless of their race or condition.

(1) *The Story of Balaam.*—It must be remembered that this is a very ancient story; so ancient that it is impossible to make a final judgment as to the historical accuracy of all its details. Balaam was a pagan soothsayer; he was a kind of prophet, but not a preacher prophet like the great ones of Israel: he was a diviner, a foreteller of the future; the kind of man who went into a trance, a type still to be seen in the East to-day. And he was a 'professional'—they sent for him 'with the rewards of divination,' and they believed in the effect of his blessing and cursing.

The Israelites at that time, having got out of Egypt, were pursuing their way: they had conquered a tribe called Amorites and now came into the plain of Moab. The Moabites were afraid, and sent for the professional curser! 'Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time,' and he sent for Balaam to come a great distance and to curse Israel; but when Balaam came the words would not come forth from his mouth. The writer of the story explains that Jehovah, God of Israel, said unto Balaam, 'Thou shalt not curse this people, for they are blessed.' And for all the persuasion, and the bribes of Balak, this soothsayer could not curse Israel. 'How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?' 'Behold I have received commandment to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.' And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam.

Was there some kind of holy influence that possessed this pagan magician? For his ancient words speak still to those who shut up their heart and affections, and all sense of responsibility to men of other races and countries, while at the same time they profess the religion of Jesus Christ which unites the whole human family in the Fatherhood of God.

(2) *The Story of Jonah.*—The second story of a man who was angered and humiliated because he had a vision of the wide embracing, wondrous love of God for all men is that of Jonah. The Old Testament book entitled 'Jonah' is a sermon of great power and beauty. The prophet Jonah is called to go on a mission to Nineveh; he was told to speak the words given him by the Lord. The message was: This wicked city is to be overthrown—in forty days God's vengeance will be felt here—repent—proclaim a fast in case God may turn away His fierce anger. Jonah preached so powerfully that they did repent, and 'God saw that they turned from their evil way,' and God did not destroy that city. 'But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry'—angry at God's love and mercy!

Jonah went out of the city and sulked. He wanted to see that city destroyed. It was very sultry and hot, and a great plant grew up to shelter him; then a worm ate up the plant, and Jonah prayed to God, 'Let me die.' God said, 'Are you right to be angry for this gourd?' And Jonah said, 'I do well to be angry even unto death.' And the Lord said, 'You feel sorry about the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither made it to grow—which came up in a night, and perished in a night—and should not I feel sorry about Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle?'

(3) *In the Synagogue at Nazareth.*—The third of these strange stories—and here we are among the established facts of history rather than in ancient tradition or allegorical teaching—is a story of a crowd of people in the synagogue at Nazareth. They had been listening to Jesus; they had wondered at the gracious words that came from His lips. But after they had listened a little longer, 'all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.' They rose up and put Him out of the town and would have done Him violence. What did Jesus say that caused them to be angry? What set them all at once in a passion? Only two incidents from their own Scriptures. This was one: 'The word of the Lord came to Elijah, Arise, and get thee to Zarephath

(Sarepta), which belongeth unto Sidon, and dwell there; behold I have commanded a widow woman to sustain thee.' 'There were many widows in Israel in the day of Elijah, but unto none of them was Elijah sent save unto Sarepta, unto a woman that was a widow.' The other was of Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria. He was a great and honourable man, a mighty man of valour; by him the Lord had given deliverance to Syria: but he was a leper. Elisha, who had the power to heal, brought about his healing. 'And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian.'

What was there in these two stories to enrage the congregation at Nazareth? Only this—the woman of Sarepta in Sidon was not a Hebrew; yet the great messenger of God, Elijah, was sent to her for sustenance and not to hundreds of Jewish women. And Naaman the Syrian chief, not a Hebrew, was healed by the power of God mediated through His messenger Elisha, while there were hundreds of lepers among the Hebrews.

This is what Jesus meant: God is merciful and loving; and God cares as much for people wherever they live; whether they are clean or unclean; and He will have mercy on any who call unto Him; 'for the same God is Lord over all, and is rich toward all who call upon him.'

(4) *The Elder Brother.*—The fourth is perhaps the best known and best loved of all the stories Jesus uttered: 'Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. AND HE WAS ANGRY, and would not go in: therefore came his father out and entreated him.'

He was angry and would not go in; a second Jonah! He sulked because his father was so kind and merciful and good. 'I've never broken your commandments—served you all these years—this man, this prodigal has wasted his life, and you have killed the fatted calf for him.'

What are we to think about the man who is angry at the Love of God; who thinks he is pleasing God by ignoring the man who has fallen; by ignoring the man whom God yearns after more than the most holy?

Such a man doesn't know what the Love of God is. He is satisfied with what he has done—kept commandments, done as he was told; and he will not trouble himself about any who have had a harder time, or who, through their own fault, have failed to keep the rules.

Now the faith we preach is this: there is something worse that can befall a man than to fail to keep laws: you can keep all the laws in creation, be respectable, and give one-tenth of all you possess, fast twice in the week, attend the synagogue regularly, BUT if you lose touch with God, and the Eternal Fatherhood, your last state will be worse. A people that has sinned can repent of its evil ways; a prodigal son can rise and go to his Father, but the man who *does not know God as Father of all* is angry and will not go in. 'Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.'

Why are men angry at the Love of God? 'For He is like a refiner's fire.' Is it because men know instinctively that the Love of God scorches up with a flame all our selfishness, that they fear it and shrink from it?

In the world we meet every day people who have not advanced far beyond the law of 'eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, a life for a life.' Is the Christian God, then, a myth? Is reconciliation folly? The picture Jesus drew of the judgment of nations was quite familiar to His hearers; a judge, a throne, all nations gathered, and the separation of them as of sheep and goats: but the standard of judgment of Jesus was utterly different from that of His hearers; for them it was national. His judgment was one of Love. 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat.' His judgment was whether a man or a nation had love or goodwill at heart.

After the war the late Principal Thomas Phillips wrote a book, *The Grace of God and a World Religion*, in which he foresaw that out of the world war might arise a world religion. He wrote: 'I cannot believe in a parochial God even if His parish be Christendom. I cannot believe in a God who is a respecter of persons, even if those persons be saints. I cannot believe in a God who makes His sun to shine in patches and His rain to fall in compartments. I cannot believe in a God who is other than impartial or who is less than universal.'

So we beseech men in this world of strife and unrest, not to shelve the problems of internationalism, but to face them in the knowledge of the redeeming Love of God. We must ask even to-day before we make rash judgments—'How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? And how shall I denounce, whom the Lord hath not denounced?'

For His blessing is poured out upon all; His judgment is of Love alone; His ways are higher than our ways.

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SEXAGESIMA.

**Eleventh-Hour Men.**

'Unto this last.'—Mt 20[14].

1. 'Idle in the market-place'—do we realize what that means? The weariness that comes after a day, not of work, but of doing nothing. The sweat on the brow that means no labour done. Scorched with the heat of noon, but gaining nothing from its precious hours. Chilled with the breeze of evening, but feeling none of the refreshment it gives to the tired worker. 'Idle in the market-place!'

It was a scene the boy Jesus had doubtless often witnessed during these years at Nazareth when He was thinking these thoughts that were to regenerate the world. He had seen the labourers as with hopeful faces they gathered in at early morn. But some were left untaken. Until at length the slanting rays admonish them that the eleventh hour has struck. And then, just as they are turning sadly away, a vineyard husbandman saunters into the market-place. 'Go ye also into the vineyard,' he says to them, 'and whatsoever is right that shall ye receive.'

So far the Parable may have been fact, but it is more than likely that its end is the work of Christ's own imagination.

(1) Now, why does Jesus tell this story? Because it brings before us a character which is very far from being unknown to-day, but which it is interesting to think was not unknown to, or unnoticed by, the Carpenter of Nazareth—'*the man who has never had a chance*,' the unemployed who is so, not because he will not work, but because no man will have him; nay, who is not so for a day or a week, but for half a life and more.[1]

Our hearts are heavy, wrote Bishop F. Theodore Woods—or if they are not, they ought to be—with the thought of fine specimens of English manhood dragging out a workless existence, body and soul, just kept together by the dole, womenfolk wretched as day after day the man comes back with the same old dreary tale, worst of all, young lives, youths who might develop into useful citizens, deprived of that healthy occupation by which their characters could thrive and grow.

(2) Another type of the eleventh-hour labourer may be found, not in the workless man, but in *the man who is compelled to do uncongenial work* because of the lack of means to perfect his education. In a sense this man is busy enough, but it is not his true work. It does not call forth the powers that are in him. All that is best in his mind is unemployed.

Dr. L. P. Jacks begins his *The Faith of a Worker* with this story. 'In a certain factory where food products are prepared and exported to all parts of the world there may be seen an instance of that monotonous labour which is so marked and terrible a feature of mass production under modern industrial methods. It consists in knocking the top off an egg. The eggs are delivered by machinery on to a table behind which stands a row of women knocking off the tops. One woman has done it for thirty years.'

Gray, in his *Elegy*, goes over the churchyard musing on the unknown and obscure lives that are represented by these 'heaving turfs.' Perhaps, he suggests, here rests 'some mute inglorious Milton.' Perhaps yonder lies 'some village Hampden guiltless of his country's blood.' But, alas! 'chill penury froze the genial current of their soul.' As Oliver Wendell Holmes sings:

A few can touch the magic string,
  And noisy Fame is proud to win them—
Alas for those that never sing,
  But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
  Whose song has told their hearts' sad story,—
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
  The cross without the crown of glory!

(3) Another type of the eleventh-hour man is *the man who is disqualified by physical infirmity* from taking his part in the battle of life. Sometimes this disability reaches back to the very dawn of life. We think of the crippled, rickety children who are so often the product of city life, the mentally deficient, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. There must have been multitudes of these in Christ's time. We know how His heart went out to them, and how He strove to ameliorate their sad condition. But as He did so He sighed, sighed to think of how many He could not heal, who must stand all the day idle, unemployed because unemployable.

2. And what has Jesus to say about him?

(1) Well, in the first place, it is good to know that Christ thinks about him. Jesus is no 'rose-water optimist' who does not face the facts of life. He knew the mystery and the pathos of 'the man

[1] W. M. Mackay, *Bible Types of Modern Men*, ii. 51.

who never had a chance,' and yet He believed in the Fatherhood of God. He saw these problems, He felt them keenly, and yet He has told us this story to teach us to believe and to see the 'bright light that is in this cloud.'

That light is briefly this, that in estimating the value of our life at the last God will look not at the quantity, or even at the quality, of the work we do, but at the motive which inspires it.

(2) Besides that thought of a future redress of the world's sad lots, there is, however, another suggested in this story in regard to the quality of the work of the eleventh-hour labourer. His work will sometimes be found to be of a richer quality than that of the other. Wordsworth had this in his mind when he spoke of himself as an 'Idler in the land,' reaping 'the harvest of a quiet eye.'

Sometimes in a noble piece of music there is a break in the melody. You are puzzled a while. The old sweetness is lost. It has given place to harsh discords that have no connexion with the piece. But by and by the old theme is taken up—the old, and yet not the old. Strangely and subtly have these discords entered the harmony, there is a richness in the music not known before.

So has it been with life's noblest workers. Paul is driven into Arabia just as he receives his vision of Christ. Sore must these years of waiting have been to an ardent spirit like his. But they were not lost. They were the secret of that grand unity with which his life marched like a great drama to its close. No hesitancies with him such as we find with Peter. He had settled these questions long ago. The time was now come to work them into practical life.

Nay, is it not true in a deep sense that the Master Himself was a 'Worker of the eleventh hour'? Into three years was pressed the work of a life that was to regenerate the world. And where were the other thirty passed? In the obscure toil of a carpenter. Who shall tell the trial of these waiting years?

When we have learned to compute our brother's service in the light of his opportunity rather than of its amount, we have not only in practical fashion brought the Kingdom of God a little nearer to him, we have ourselves more truly entered into its spirit.

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QUINQUAGESIMA.

**The Practicability of the Law of Love.**

'Love never faileth.'—1 Co 13[8] (R.V.).

That may mean either that love never gives up, but always goes on trying; or it may mean that love will always win in the end. It is true in both senses. But it is in the latter sense that we wish particularly to speak of it here.

We may have our uncertainties as to not a few matters in regard to the Christian origins—but there is one thing we cannot doubt if we are observant and honest men and women, and that is that the Spirit of Christ is within reach. Within reach—because it has reached: because of the transforming and life-changing and happiness-giving effect it has had on the best lives in history and on many lives that we know.

In her beautiful last letter quoted in 'A Portrait,' Anne Douglas Sedgwick wrote:

'So life is a *queer* struggle!

'Yet it remains *mine* and *beautiful* to me, and I often know *such* joy—in *feeling* the love about me, in loving, in *knowing* that I lie in the hand of God. . . .

'When you wrote—"your spirit can surmount anything"—I felt a strange tremor of response from an indomitable thread of life within me: *mine*, says Max Plowman: but I feel it *communicated*, from God, through His potent eyes as I look into them every evening, in silence.'

As a writer in the religious Press has said, 'It is a conviction—this availability of the Spirit of Christ—occasional and momentary with some, perpetual and ever-present with others. But with all dead certain. If only the great politicians and those who have the affairs of nations in their hands: if only the Press and those who have unrivalled chances of moulding public opinion: if only orators and preachers and those who call themselves Christians—if only all these could realize that all their problems, so manifestly created by fear, mistrust, greed, pride, and selfishness, have one solution only—the Spirit of Love with which neither fear, nor mistrust, nor greed, nor pride and selfishness can live.'

If Christ can completely change the life and outlook of an individual, He can change the life and outlook of nations: for the nation is only the individual writ large.

Why, then, is this way never taken or, at least, tried? It could not possibly be a greater failure than all other known ways have proved. It is not enough to say that the reason is that the nations have not as yet a common Christian basis. As a matter of fact it is not necessary to call oneself a Christian in order to be one. But though this is deeply and fundamentally and unescapably a religious matter, it need not be presented as such. It can be presented in the light of mere common

sense that in every way it pays better, offers better results, to live by the Law of Love. Why is it, then, that it is never tried? France is afraid of Germany —all the more now. And that is because, during the past years, the French have deliberately made Germany afraid of France.

At least part of the reason is that we don't understand what 'Love' means. We are afraid of it. We don't see that to love intensely means to love more widely; that to love one much—our own country, or our own mother, or motherland, or our friend—is to love others, not less, but more, if love is true to itself. No love of any kind, romantic or otherwise, that is content to remain exclusive has the seeds of permanence in it. 'For we must share, if we would keep, such is the law of love.'

> The very founts of love in us
> Will soon be parched and dry.

We have got to rescue this great, cardinal word of Christ—'love'—from its identification with weakness. As it is with prayer (as Meredith says so truly), 'the failure of so much of our prayer is that we come to God in our weakness, and not in our strength.' It is not quite a man's job: or only the weak man's job—the job of the man who is beaten to his knees. Whereas, in very truth, it is the chief secret of the strength of the strong: the key to victory quite as much as the lever of rescue from defeat. So with love. The world hadn't a word for what Christ meant by it, so the New Testament had to invent one. The New Testament word for love, and with which its pages are saturated and redolent, one hardly finds in classic Greek at all.

And what did Christ mean by it? It is concrete, clear-cut, businesslike, practical, with its head in heaven yet with its feet very firmly planted on this solid earth. It is this: 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you'—everywhere and in every thing. A final, inflexible, unmistakable, unequivocal rule of life—for everybody: and within everybody's reach and capacity. A universal law, an individual law: as applicable to, and practical for, any and every man, woman, or child, as for every nation or race, White, Red, Yellow, or Black. That is 'love' in the New Testament. 'Thereon hang all the law and the prophets,' as Christ adds.

Love may, and does, mean many other things, but fundamentally that is the Law of Love. It sounds old and commonplace, a little trite. But little tried. Commonplace, but unhappily not common. Simple: but heaven-reaching and earth-transforming. The one secret of true and happy success, in business, in family life, in social life, in the many and often perplexing problems of individual life: in civic life, in national life: in Labour problems: in international life, in world-life. This is the Law of Love. And it means the end of hate (personal and national), of greed, of suspicion, of jealousy, of selfishness—we do not say of the inevitable advance of civilization—though it will unarguably govern the whole contact and relation of dominant with lower peoples: *and the end of war*. It is the Law of Love, relieved of all the misty romance and impracticability that is popularly associated with it. It is simple, unequivocal, and universally available. And it is a man's rule: for it will take all a man to carry it out.

But the world will say to us, 'This is all very well: but it would be more convincing to us if you Christians tried it on yourselves and proved its practicability there. Look at the divisions and—not to put too fine a point on it—the bitternesses and antagonisms between the Churches!' It is a pertinent and humiliating point. Now in the religious journal from which we quoted earlier there is a very varied and interesting account of the work, and achievements, of the Oxford Group Movement. One of the results of that Movement—and by no means the least—is the way in which the Law of Love is breaking down the barriers and dissolving the hostilities between the churches.

But there is more evidence than that of the practicability of the Law of Love, and of the Law of Love alone proving the solvent of the world-problem, too. As this extract from an article in a leading organ of the Canadian Press suggests: 'When the established authorities speak on problems of unemployment, privation, and general distress, it has become the habit to say that there is no ready solution, no panacea. The Oxford Group are boldly prepared to affirm that the immediate solution is at hand. It is no less than to put the Law of Love into practice now, without waiting for some one else to do something.' That is not a discovery of the Oxford Group. It is the essence of Christianity.

In her latest novel *Time Piece*, Miss Naomi Jacob records a talk between Claudia (the heroine) and Hugh. '"The real ideas last—because they are fundamentally sound."

'"What kind of ideas—last, Hugh?"

'"Well, mostly the thoughts that are ascribed to—to Jesus of Nazareth."

'Then, stretching out his hand and laying it on hers, he continued: "Don't think that I am being anything but severely practical, and don't think that I am trying to sound—good or even religious—but I believe that the world could be run on these lines if only we had enough pluck to try."'

There are people who fight shy of Christ, because they are afraid that He asks too much. It is true that in the end He asks for everything: but what some people seem unaware of is that He does not necessarily ask for it all at once, and that He is prepared to take anything that any one offers Him, or to give anything that any one asks of Him. Let us start with one thing at a time, if we can't start with two. Prayer may be difficult, to begin with, even the reality of prayer, and the 'Group' doctrine of 'guidance' unconvincing. Start where it is possible. Start always with the Law of Love, which is not difficult, at least to try, and is contingent on no theories of the spiritual universe, like prayer: and, in the end, includes all the rest, 'for the greatest of these is love.'[1]

[1] H. E. Brierley, *Freedom and Faith*, 143.

# The Parable of the Good Samaritan.

By the Reverend W. J. Masson, B.D., Edinburgh.

The usual interpretation of this parable treats it as our Lord's answer to the second question put to Him by the lawyer, 'And who is my neighbour?' It is certainly that, but when we consider some of His replies to other questions, we see that His habit was to go farther and to seize the opportunity to add important teaching upon some related matter. For example, when the priests asked Him whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, He not only answered in the affirmative but continued, 'And to God the things which are God's.' So when He was asked to interfere in the division of the inheritance, He refused, but went on to read the petitioner a sharp lesson on the dangers of covetousness. Similarly then we should expect that Christ's aim in this story was not only to make clear who is to be regarded as our neighbour but also to add some important relevant truth.

To see what that extra lesson is, let us first note the *Dramatis Personæ* of the tale. The selection is not accidental. Our Lord might have chosen any three men if His point were merely to represent the needy as our neighbour. He might have made the story an attack upon His enemies by introducing Pharisees in contrast with the Samaritan. He might have indulged in a dig at His questioner by giving us a lawyer and a scribe. Instead, He chose a priest and a Levite. Why? And why should the third actor be a Samaritan, not a Jew? These are questions which have not been considered sufficiently though they go to the root of the message of the parable, for Christ must have had some reason for His selection. The suggestion of this essay would be that it was in order to extend His answer so as not merely to say that every one in need is to be regarded as a neighbour but also to lay down the principle that our duty to our neighbour must take precedence of all else, that even where our duty to God clashes with it, our duty to our neighbour must come first.

Put thus, the suggestion may sound somewhat startling but it is an obvious corollary to the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, of the love of God, for what father, who really did not need anything from his children, would not heartily approve if a son kept back from him in order to help his needy brother? Moreover, our Lord taught this plainly on other occasions. Suppose a man vows to give a hundred pounds to God at the end of the year. Before that date, however, his father becomes seriously ill and requires an expensive operation. This hundred pounds is all they have to enable them to meet that cost. Must the man keep his vow to God or can he break it and use the money to help his father? That was really the question of Corban. The Pharisees held that he must fulfil his vow and our Lord denounced them in no measured terms. Again, there was the matter of the Sabbath Day. The Pharisees maintained that it was God's day and must be given wholly to Him. Any work, even the healing of the sick, must be left till at sunset the holy day reached its close. Again it was in no measured terms that our Lord denounced such teaching, implying, as it did, that His Father would set His rights before the relief of human suffering. Our duty to our needy neighbour takes precedence of all else, even of our duty to God.