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## In the Study.

### Virginibus Puerisque.

#### Treasures in Heaven.

BY THE REVEREND O. MORDAUNT BURROWS,  
M.A., B.D., EPWORTH.

'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.'—  
Mt 6<sup>20</sup>.

EVERY one gets bitten by the collecting craze. When we are boys and girls it is cigarette cards or foreign stamps, and when we are grown up it is old furniture, pictures, or valuable china. It is an old, old habit and arises from something deep down in human nature which clever people give a name to and call the 'acquisitive instinct'—the instinct that makes us want to acquire or get things. It isn't a bad thing, but like most human desires it needs to be very carefully watched I think.

The Lord Jesus noticed how people used to collect things in His country—mostly food or clothes or jewels, which make up an Eastern's wealth—and He gave them a word of warning. 'If you hoard up too much food, it will decay,' He told them. 'If you hoard up more clothes than you can wear, the moths will eat them: and if you pile up a hoard of jewels, thieves will try to steal them.' 'It is far better,' He said, 'to store up treasures in heaven—nothing can spoil *them*, nor can any one take them from you.'

But how can we do that? What did He mean?

Well, there is a story of a very wealthy lady who had been very mean and selfish; when she died and went to heaven an angel met her to guide her to her new home. Along they went, past great mansions set among lovely trees, with green lawns and beautiful gardens. 'Ah!' she thought, 'one of these must be mine.' But no, the angel never stopped; on and on the angel led her until at last they stood before a very miserable house in a very ordinary little street—'That is yours,' said the angel.

Oh, how indignant the great lady was! 'I have never seen such a miserable little hovel,' she burst out angrily, 'surely you have something better for me than that!' 'I fear that is the best we could build with what you sent up,' replied the angel. Treasures on earth, but no treasures in heaven, you see.

Now then, what are the treasures, do you think, that we can take with us or send on ahead? Earthly treasures to most people mean £ s. d., pounds, shillings, and pence—copper, silver, and gold, don't they?

Well, heavenly treasures begin with exactly the same letters, so it is going to be easy for us to remember them—CSG—CSG—copper, silver, and gold. And let us begin with the most important, just as we do in money sums, because if your pennies' column is wrong it puts everything else wrong too. C stands for—copper, did I hear somebody say? No, no, it is heavenly treasure we are thinking of now.

1. C stands for Character. In this world people are often judged by what they have: in heaven we shall be judged by what we are, by our characters: whether we are industrious or lazy, mean or generous, kind and helpful, or grumpy and selfish. It is what we are that will count, and not what we have pretended to be. A Christ-like character is certainly something we can leave behind on earth as a fragrant memory, but it is something we can take with us, a treasure in heaven.

2. S stands for Service. Have you ever heard of Biddy's pig? It belonged to Mrs. Biddy Flaherty and it meant a great deal to her; indeed, it meant her breakfast and her dinner and her supper for months and months. One day it died and in came the neighbours one after another to condole with her: 'Ah! Mrs. Flaherty, sure and it's sorry I am,' they said, and went out again. At last Biddy got a bit tired of it, and taking her little money box off the mantelshelf she shook it under her visitor's nose and snapped out, 'How much are ye sorry?'

What we are counts, and so does what we do, especially what we do for other people. 'I am among you as he that serveth,' said Jesus, and if our characters are Christlike we shall not be able to help showing it in 'little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.' And what is more, we shall find them stored up for us, a treasure in heaven.

3. G stands for—what do you think? Well, G stands for something which other people send up for us—their Gratitude: that is, of course, if we have earned any. Many of those whom we help on earth are not grateful, I know; and anyway we don't do good turns for our fathers and mothers and friends just to have the pleasure of hearing them say, 'Thank you,' do we? But what we do for others for Jesus' sake and for love of Him, He at least is grateful for. Will not His thanks and His look of gratitude be just the greatest of all treasures that could possibly be awaiting us in our Father's home?

### The Power of God.

BY THE REVEREND STUART ROBERTSON, M.A.,  
LISBON.

'With God all things are possible.'—Mt 19<sup>26</sup>.

Take man by himself alone, with nothing to depend on but his own muscles. What is he? A very poor affair! A flea can outjump him; a fox can outrun him; he has neither the scent of a dog, nor the sight of a bird, nor the hearing of a hare, nor the strength of a horse. He is just the feeblest of animals.

Yet he has built the *Queen Mary* and the Forth Bridge, dug the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal, and raised the Pyramids. He works hard iron as if it were putty, cuts steel like cheese, erects skyscrapers towering to the sky, and flies in the air himself at three hundred miles an hour, faster than the swiftest bird.

How does he do it? By joining hands with the great forces of Nature. With them he can do what he could never have done alone. At first he was a naked savage, half-clad in skins or grasses, eating his food raw, living in caves, like other beasts in their dens. Then he found out Fire, and with Fire he did a whole lot of new things—cooked his food, burned out tree-trunks to make canoes. Next he discovered Iron, and with Fire helping he made tools, and with them he cut wood and stone and began to build houses and cities.

Next he discovered Steam, and with Steam he made steam-engines and steam-hammers, and increased his strength a thousandfold; and things like the Forth Bridge and the *Queen Mary* began to be possible. What were once wild dreams and impossible miracles became facts.

Then he discovered Electricity, and with telephones and telegraphs and wireless sent his messages flashing round the world, and his voice—such a little voice! that, by itself, couldn't carry a mile—sounding to the ends of the earth. Petrol engines gave him speed on the roads and power to fly in the air. All sorts of impossible things had become possible because he had joined hands with these great forces. They had been there all the time, waiting to be discovered, and used. He didn't make them; they were God's gifts.

Now there is a greater force still waiting to be used, which can make possible for us things that are impossible for us without it, and bring things that we feel are beyond our reach, within our reach. It is the power of God in Jesus Christ.

Jesus calls us to do very difficult things, so difficult that we say they are quite impossible.

We are to love our enemies. We are to deny ourselves. We are to be perfect as God is perfect. We say 'it's impossible. It just can't be done.' Like Aunt Chloe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, we say, 'Lor! it's too tough.' And so it is, for us alone. But Jesus says, 'With God all things are possible,' and that doesn't mean just that anything is possible for God—which of course is true—but that things that are impossible for us without God become possible for us along with God. Alone, we can't; along with God, we can. We need not go on in our strength alone, trying to keep the high commands of Jesus and failing all the time until we give it up as hopeless. Just as God put these mighty forces of Fire, and Steam, and Electricity in the world so that man with them might do wonderful things, so He sent Jesus Christ who is 'the power of God,' that with Christ man might do even more wonderful things. He can conquer his temptations and tread evil underfoot. He can build up that wonderful thing called 'character' into the likeness of Christ. He can make that new and happier world we all long to see, where there shall be no more war and injustice and cruelty, if only he will join hands with this mightiest force of all. 'Without me,' Jesus says, 'you can do nothing'; and it's true. But one of His apostles said, 'I can do all things through Jesus Christ who makes me strong.' And so can you.

### The Christian Year.

PASSION SUNDAY.

#### The Cry of Desolation.

'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'  
—Mt 27<sup>46</sup>.

This Word from the Cross is the supreme instance of the comforting honesty and utter frankness of the Bible. So Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe  
hath shaken—

It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken!'

It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,

That, of the lost, no son should use those words  
of desolation!

A long space of time intervenes between the Third and Fourth Words. The first three Words were spoken before the darkness, a word of forgiveness, a word of promise, a word of consolation. The first three had all to do with His fellow-men: the last four all with Himself and God. Now the

mysterious separation of soul from body is approaching: foes and friends and dear ones even have gone beyond the power of the failing spirit to remember, and the Sufferer is alone with God. We have come to the final stage of the Passion. In all the universe there is but God and Himself. These are hours of silence and darkness and suffering such as 'we may not know, we cannot tell.' Suddenly out of the darkness there stabs the silence a great and bitter cry, so terrible, so unforgettable, that even those who did not understand the dialect remembered the strange tones: 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.' They recorded it so, a rough rendering of the Hebrew, because they could never get the sound of those tones out of their ears all their days.

We are indeed upon holy ground here. This Word, unlike those immediately preceding it, was addressed to God, not men; and we can never expect to understand all that that cry meant. But something we can understand. This is the crucifixion in the Crucifixion. This the torment of the soul, compared to which the torture of the body was as nothing. It is amazing how much a human being can endure in the way of physical distress when he is persuaded that his toil is directed to a worthy goal. It is anguish of the mind that makes desolate and hopeless the soul.

There is no need to make an undue mystery out of this cry of agony. This is the most awful result of sin, that in the end it triumphs so terribly that it seems even to have made an end of God. And remember, in that terrible word of the Apostle, that our Lord was *made sin* for us, who knew no sin. Think of the many to-day who tell us that God has gone from them. Belief has left them. 'Going to church? You're joking!' exclaimed in astonishment a member of a country-house party to a fellow-guest who had announced his intention of worshipping on the Lord's Day morning. 'There is no one to meet there.'

We were blind to the havoc sin was causing in our own life and in the life of the nations. There was a gradual shedding of the old restraints in religion and morals. There was loss of fine feeling, and the sense of responsibility, loss of honesty and brotherliness. These things did not move us as they should have done. Now there comes the last stage when men seem to have lost even their faith in any God at all. No Church, no religion, no God. We may have yet to go through such unutterable depths before Resurrection can come. Thank God to-day that He who was made sin for us didn't play at redemption, but tasted the whole terrible business so thoroughly that He reached that depth

where sin can plunge us, when we even wonder whether there is a God at all who sees or cares, and when our very prayer becomes a kind of confession of agnosticism.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews picked his words with deliberation when he said that One like that was able to save *to the uttermost*. *Panteles* is a compound word in the Greek, bringing everything within its sweep. All and End. And if we live to see it, and when and if the worst comes to the worst, and sin works out its utter catastrophic destruction; when the Church is condemned as a useless anachronism, when men say that religion can do nothing for the world, that faith is a delusion—there, amid the ruins of the universe men will find the Cross at the heart of it all, and the Man Christ Jesus able to save and help them, and able to restore all things according to His mighty power. For all this, and more if we can imagine more, is summed up in the experience voiced in that shattering cry: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

And now that we have assured ourselves afresh that we really have a gospel for an age of doubt, a gospel for a time of transition, a gospel for a desperate world, a gospel for a sinful soul, let us draw near this wondrous Cross, remembering always that there is darkness over it which our finite senses can never hope to pierce. And yet we can understand something of the mystery.

We must bear in mind what our Saviour had said the previous night to His disciples when He was seated with them at the Last Supper. There He was conscious that His dark hour was approaching. He told them quietly that He was well aware that He would have to face this dread experience alone, for they would fail Him, 'yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.' It was in that confidence He was strong. And now! 'Why hast *thou* forsaken me?'

This was the most unkindest cut of all;  
 . . . then burst his mighty heart;  
 Then I, and you, and all of us fell down.

Forsaken by the fickle populace it mattered not, for He had still His Father. Forsaken by the twelve picked comrades He was not alone, for the Father still was with Him. But now the hand that had held and upheld Him all along was withdrawn just when His need was greatest.

We know that in that awful moment Jesus was not really forsaken! that He was never nearer and dearer to the heart of His Father and to all the generations of the good and the great than in

that moment. We know that even before death came to Him assurance came also, so that later His words were words of quiet trust and confident victory. But He did taste the bitterness of death and the sinfulness of sin for every man, so that none could ever get beyond His understanding and His power to save.

We want to hear from the lips of Him we follow that confident, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you.' But sometimes we want to hear Him say what we are so often driven to say, 'My God, why?' How often we have asked it. Beside a sick-bed; at a graveside; in brooding over something denied or taken away—something that seemed so good and true and worthy, so honouring to the Father, so utterly right and surely pleasing in His sight.

'But indeed it is into the most earnest and delicate souls that this despair is likeliest to slip. The ignorant, the frivolous, and the time-serving are safe from it; for they are well enough satisfied with things as they are. Callous minds learn to be content without explanations. . . . All the millions of Whys which have risen from agonised souls, jealous for the honour of God but perplexed by His providence, were concentrated in the Why of Christ.'

We remember the words of George Tyrrell, who struggled for faith, always loyal to his vision. 'To believe that this terrible machine world is really from God, in God, and unto God, that through it and in spite of its blind fatality all things work together for good—that is faith in long trousers; the other is faith in knickerbockers.'

How near He is to us! Can we get close to Him? He still says, 'My God.' At the very darkest God was still His God. 'Lord,' so spoke a great Englishman as he knelt on the scaffold, 'Lord, I am coming as fast as I can. I know I must pass through the shadow of death before I can come to see Thee. But it is but *umbra mortis*, a mere shadow of death, a little darkness upon Nature. But Thou, through Thy merits and Passion, hast broken through the gates of death.'

There may be darkness over all the land about the space of three hours. But it breaks in everlasting light for those who take their stand beneath the Cross of Jesus.

Through all the depths of sin and loss  
Sinks the plummet of His Cross.  
Never yet abyss was found  
Deeper than that Cross could sound.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. L. Simpson, *Testament of Love*, 77.

## PALM SUNDAY.

### The Destruction of a City.

'And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes'—Lk 19<sup>41</sup>. (R.V.).

Our Lord was going into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and He goes on to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem. Our Lord was not in the magical sense of the word a prophet. But though He was no magician He was a prophet, because He saw from the temper and character of the Jews, from the temper and character of Jerusalem, the inevitable destruction that was to come upon them. He prophesied exactly as a scientist may be said to prophesy when he tells one that a certain effect will inevitably follow on a certain cause. If one sets in motion certain forces the result is inevitable; and a man may prophesy: 'Such and such a man will die of apoplexy, such and such a man is drinking himself to death, such and such a man will go mad.'

It does not seem that our Lord had any more knowledge of the future than we have or ought to have if we 'perceived spiritual law.' He did not expect to fail when He first preached to the Jews, He was almost certain that they could not resist Him. As the years passed of His ministry, and He saw more and more clearly the 'damnable' state of mind in which the Jewish nation was, He realized, exactly as we might realize if we had a message to the world, that they were not going to receive it; that they could not, or would not, understand. And instead of accepting this as a man who knows the inevitable, He strove against it. He varied His appeal; He went from place to place; He sent out messengers; He tried this way, and the other way. He spoke in parables; He spoke to them plainly. He went up to Jerusalem; He went down to Galilee. He tried by every conceivable means to make them understand the things that belong unto peace. And at last He realized that they *would not* understand, and that on the contrary in the end they would probably turn on Him and kill Him.

He went up to Jerusalem, and as He came into the city He was met by that pathetic little triumph. And our Lord, as He looked down on that beloved city—for remember that He was a Jew—wept, saying that if only the Jews had understood, even at this hour, the things that belong to peace, the city would be saved. But they were so materialistic, so cruel, so full of hate, so unreliable, so unspiritual, so deaf to the voice of God, that the seeds of destruction were in their souls.

Rome had a great mission to the world, Rome stood for order, and tolerance, and freedom. And Rome, in Palestine, fell below herself. But the Jews were exactly the same. They also had a mission to the world. They were to be the great spiritual revealers of the nature and purpose of God, and they knew as little about God as Pontius Pilate. They hated the Romans, and they only wanted to treat the Romans as the Romans had treated them. They had no more understanding of a spiritual kingdom, or a spiritual power, than Pontius Pilate had. And our Lord, looking down on them, and seeing, and even rejoicing, that they did love Him a little, also knew quite well that when the hour came they would choose Barabbas, the man who was ready to lead an armed rebellion, and crucify Him—this disappointing, ineffective Jesus of Nazareth. *They did not know the things that belong to peace.*

To-day, one supposes, on this Palm Sunday also, God looks down upon the world, upon Europe, upon England, and prophesies disaster, because we will not know the things that belong to peace.

We have the power in our hands to adapt the world to our needs. Let us never forget that glorious saying on which Huxley once wanted to preach a sermon: 'The heavens are the Lord's; the earth hath he given to the children of men.' This earth is so full of wealth and undeveloped power and great spaces that there is room for all the nations. They are members of one household, children of one family, and should help one another in meeting any difficulties that arise. If only we could realize that God has 'made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth,' so that though some may be young and backward, and some poor, and some not highly developed, they still are all one family, living in the world which God has given us for our home! 'Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?' It is the law of God that the nations of the earth are brethren, and that law we cannot escape. What we can do is to act as though it were not true; but when we do so, we are defying the law of our being and bringing death and destruction into the world.

If our children were to begin to act as though they were not brothers and sisters, if they began to fight one another for possession of the good things in their home, it would not prevent them from being brothers and sisters; it would only destroy their home. On what a scale have we destroyed the home which God gave us to dwell in!

We could make the world produce a thousand-fold what it is producing now if we would give

science its head to make the earth what the earth should be. But instead we spend millions in blowing it to pieces. For the greater part of our national revenues goes to preparing for war or paying for past wars.<sup>1</sup>

In *Cry Havoc!* Beverley Nichols wrote: 'I believe that the discussion of war should *begin* with the personal agony of the soldier and should *end* with the political and economic frictions which result in that agony. In the same way I think that the discussion of poverty should *begin* with the realization of empty stomachs and squalid rooms and should end with statistics. If that sounds involved, I would merely explain, humbly, that I am trying to say that I should like to see a model of a hideously wounded soldier on the respectable tables of disarmament conferences, and I should like all parliamentary debates on unemployment relief to be carried out in the sombre and fetid atmosphere of a Glasgow slum.'

#### EASTER SUNDAY.

#### The Easter Message.

BY THE REVEREND RODERICK BETHUNE, M.A.,  
ABERDEEN.

'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'—Jn 17<sup>8</sup>.

This Easter Sunday, like all its forerunners, will hear much said on the subject of immortality. On every hand assurances are given us that because Jesus lives we shall live also; that, though here we are experiencing travail and loss, we journey towards a city which hath foundations; a city which hath no need of the sun since God is the light thereof, and where God Himself doth wipe away all tears from every eye.

Just how many people will be impressed by such thoughts—that we are going on to live even after death, that, after death, sorrow and suffering will flee away? A vast company rightly find much encouragement in these statements. Some have lost friends who were unspeakably precious to them. They rejoice that the separation is not to be for ever, that, as Jesus lives, so will they also live, and some day be reunited with those who have gone before. Such a hope, however far off its actual realization, keeps their courage intact. Others have an unpleasant existence here with misunderstanding, injustice, and hard, exhausting toil. To them the thought that some day all this will be changed

<sup>1</sup> A. Maude Royden, *Political Christianity*, 32 ff.

is positively exhilarating. They can endure the present if the future is to be different. But there are many upon whom such blessings of immortality make absolutely no impression. The statement of Jesus, 'Because I live, ye shall live also,' leaves them cold. They hope, in fact, that it isn't true! They are so sickened by circumstances, so saddened by their failures, so appalled by their inadequacy, that they feel the sooner life is over and done with the better. To others, the thought that in some other world sorrow and suffering will flee away is not satisfying. It is too far away, this ideal world! Meantime they have their problems and difficulties and needs which somehow must be met. Promise of a better life in some other world is poor consolation. They want something now. And we can understand such a position and such a plea.

Have we anything to add, then, to our talk on immortality which would bring satisfaction even to them? Is Christianity concerned only with living indefinitely and a perfect world very far away, or has it something more to say to struggling men and women? In answer to such a question we may say that when we have spoken about immortality we have not exhausted Christianity's contribution to life. We do not accurately describe Christianity by quoting any one text, or by citing any one benefit which it claims to bestow. Christianity is a gem of many facets. 'Jesus Christ,' the Bible declares, 'hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' But that same Bible, in the text which we have chosen, reports Jesus Himself as saying, 'This *is* life eternal that they may know thee and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' And we do ill to separate these two thoughts; for what some people find lacking in the one is contributed by the other. It speaks of immortality *and* eternal life, let us remind them; and to take immortality without the complementary thought of eternal life is to misunderstand the contribution which Christianity tries to make to life.

For immortality and eternal life are not quite synonymous. 'Eternal life,' it has been finely said, 'does not denote something after death. It primarily denotes a kind of life which we may live now. Eternal life is not simply post-mortem; it is also a present possession. We should always distinguish, therefore, between immortality and eternal life. Immortality is merely going on and on. Eternal life is having a kind of life so radiant in meaning that it is worth going on with. Immortality is mere continuance of existence. Eternal life is quality of experience.' Now, how does this distinction help to solve the difficulty of those who

find no specific advantage or happiness accruing to them from the thought of immortality? How, in fact, does Christianity, in this way, contribute something to every man?

1. Christianity does speak of immortality. But it at the same time recognizes that immortality without eternal life is always a terrifying prospect, one, in fact, which, to the mass, makes no appeal whatsoever. It recognizes that the idea of living indefinitely can hold no attraction for men and women until in themselves there is the conviction that their life is worth going on with; that it is of little use telling men and women that some day life will be meaningful if to-day it is just meaningless; that it is of little comfort to assure men that some day life will be given sufficient resources to conquer all its limitations if to-day they are quite unable to face squarely the facts of life as they are.

The task, therefore, which Christianity primarily sets itself is to give men and women something here and now. It sets itself to put a new quality into life, a new colour, and a new charm.

Now that is a very real service. For many people's dislike of the mention of immortality is due either to the fact that they have failed to keep in love with life or that the present, which is absorbing all their attention, has problems needing a speedier solution than that promised by entrance into a better world. If only men could be given some line of life to follow which, at the end, would leave them in love with life; if only into the tangled mass of experience they could bring some confident hope; if only they could face up to their several experiences with something approaching triumph! It is this pressing need of the present that most deeply concerns them. And it is just that present pressing need that Christianity sets out to meet. It attempts to give us something which will make the interest of our life more lasting than the tale of our years. Armed with that, Time cannot take complete toll of us, nor disappointment, nor sorrow, nor suffering—nor death!

2. Now, how does Christianity achieve this? How does it bring into our life the quality which somehow makes our life worth going on with? How does it supply us with an interest which not only holds us to the last but makes us eager to live on? 'This is life eternal,' said Jesus, 'that they may know thee and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Wherever men and women see God and understand what His revelation of Himself means, whenever in Jesus' life they see the life

which God would have them live, life, says Jesus, is lived as it never was before.

Now let us expand these thoughts a little. God, revealed in Jesus, is the Father of all mankind. He has, says Jesus, a consummate love and regard for every individual. Not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without Him. He is concerned about the welfare of the human race, and what He can He does to help them. And that His love for the world at large and for the individual in particular might be seen, God spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all. Eternal life—a new quality of experience—claimed Jesus, is given to men when they see that. Yes, says the author of Hebrews, so it is, 'for while we see not yet all things . . . we see Jesus.' And that puts a new value upon life.

Eternal life comes to a man when he sees God in Jesus Christ? Yes, said Jesus, and when He knows God's purpose for life and follows it. In Jesus it was revealed. It is a thing of unselfishness, of service, of sacrifice, in which all selfish gains and pleasures are cut out. Undoubtedly it is a hard way. And yet, despite its hardship and demands for unselfishness, the will of God revealed in the life of Jesus for every man has given, and continues to give, life with a thrill. Following such a purpose, living for others as they were able instead of living for themselves, men and women have become radiantly happy, so that out of the best living in Christendom, as in the New Testament, there comes the cry—'This is life eternal.' It is a foretaste of the life to come, in which there is no remorse, no selfishness which bring pain, in which men and women serve God day and night in His Temple. Such men and women never tire of life. They are eager to live on, and they hail the new world with a cheer. Don't we see how Jesus expands this present life—deepens it, enriches it, fills it full with interest, so that death finds His followers not afraid, nor glad that their life is over and done with, but eager to enter the ranks of higher service. Yes, this *is* eternal life—life with a thrill—that we know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent!

3. From all this, then, certain things follow.

Some of us said that this talk of immortality, if it were all that could be said, signified that the Church and religion and Jesus Christ were quite uninterested in present, everyday living. But the Bible's utterances upon eternal life have been quoted. It is certainly concerned with a perfect world which is some day to dawn, but it is concerned also to bring something of its perfect life into our common, everyday existence. Jesus is eager that

we should have eternal life not after death, but now! He is anxious that we should enter Heaven not when we die, but now! Surely a religion like that cannot be said to be unrelated to life.

Others of us said that we felt no great thrill at the prospect of going on and on. That is largely because our present life is in a particular state. We have no great desire, if any desire at all, to go on as we are. But Christianity speaks not simply of life going on and on, of mere continuance of existence; it speaks of eternal life, of making this present life so purposeful, adequate, and interesting that men and women will want to go on with it. If we had the quality in our life which Jesus had in His life, would we not want to go on living?

That there can be in our life something of the contentment and peace and joy of the perfect world is the message of Christianity. We can have life with a thrill—now! We can have eternal life—now! He who accepts the revelation of Jesus Christ and lives in the light of it, he who sees the way Jesus beckons and follows in it, has life with a thrill. This Easter Sunday morning, having broken the cords of death, Jesus longs that we should withdraw the bolts with which we have made fast our hearts that there may come into our life something of the Easter glory and of that life that is to be. He who said, when He had conquered death, 'Because I live, ye shall live also,' also said, and says afresh to-day, 'I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.'

#### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

##### The Only Adequate Faith.

'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'—1 Jn 5<sup>4</sup>.

It is an easy thing in these days to give assent to the first statement—that faith is the victory that overcometh the world. The power of faith has become one of our modern platitudes. We may not live by it, but we accept it—in certain directions at least. The outstanding quality of the people who do big things in business and science and discovery is faith. By faith, men have tunnelled the mountains; they have bridged the seas; they have fashioned the aeroplane and invented the wireless.

The world of society is still waiting for the pioneers, the adventurers, the men of creative spirit, who will bring to light its spiritual treasures and, in the name of the Kingdom of God, will do for it what the scientists and explorers have done, in the name of

civilization, for the world of Nature. When we believe in the possibilities of the world of grace as the scientists believe in the possibilities of the world of Nature, and are as ready to make sacrifices for it, the Kingdom of God will be at hand. 'For this,' says John, 'is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

But then he goes a step farther. He goes on to specify what this faith is: 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.' The heart and soul of faith is this belief and conviction about Jesus. John was writing to people among whom a peculiar heresy had begun to creep in—the strange idea that Jesus was not real. He was only a kind of stage figure, a shadow Christ, whose temptations were only a sham fight. Against this he sounded his trumpet call. Jesus is a real person. In Him we genuinely meet with God; in Him God is at work in history.

This age of ours is not very tolerant of theology. There is a reason, doubtless, for this indifference. Some of the great truths stated in the ancient creeds have become crusted with outworn ideas. Some of them have become for certain people only a kind of magical incantation that has little influence upon their life.

But the last thing religion can afford to do, is to be contemptuous of thought. Even right feeling cannot be kept alive in the heart except by the power of an idea in the mind. Feeling cannot be communicated without truth, any more than one can make sad people merry by laughing when they do not know what one is laughing at. If we want to kindle emotion we tell a story, we paint a picture, we suggest a thought. These minds of ours are like islands, and the only way we can get from our mind into the mind of another is upon a bridge of thought.

It is an accepted fact that Jesus is the most inspiring figure in history. But the moment we begin to think of Jesus we must have some thought about Him. And here is the point—the higher our thought of Jesus, the greater is His power over our souls. That is what John is pleading for, that thought of Jesus which can awaken the fullness of our power in such a world as this. This is what John means when he says, 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.'

If we are to recover the dynamic power of this belief, we have got to find out what it means. What does it mean for us to say that Jesus is the Son of God? It means that God is like Jesus. The Early Church really meant that, when they thought

of Christ as Divine. What does it mean to us in the terms of our ordinary experience, in the attitude we take to the message of Jesus, in the way we deal with other people, in our whole outlook upon life, that God is like Jesus?

1. For one thing it offers a new outlook upon many of the dark facts of existence. Think of suffering and pain, for instance. How often do people blame God for these, or, if they do not blame Him for them, at least attribute them to Him? But if God is like Jesus, the real test of whether a thing can be rightly attributed to God is the question whether it is a thing which Jesus would have done.

At first sight this seems to deepen the mystery; and some people have unconsciously evolved from it two gods, one of whom is altogether good, and one a kind of devil. That is to make the confusion worse, to deepen the perplexity. It is perfectly true that these things—pain, suffering, distress—happen in a world of which God is the Creator. But surely the true solution of the problem is to be found by remembering that this world is only a world in the making. There are dark things in it because it is yet imperfect. But if Jesus reveals the Will of God, His coming means that God is seeking to redeem the world, to perfect it, and in Jesus is calling us to help Him, as Jesus called out the faith and co-operation of men in fighting evil and overcoming disease. Looking at it thus, a faith awakens which makes for a courageous optimism and puts heart and spirit into us: the faith that, behind and through everything, God works, striving and often baffled, yet victorious. His very love is seen in the fact that He offers us our part to play in shaping and developing the world, and thereby being ourselves shaped and developed. God's purpose of love is so wonderful that it must involve some experiences that try us to the core. And it must take time to work itself out. It is reported that Carlyle once asked an English prelate if he had a creed. 'Yes,' was the reply, 'and the older I get, the firmer that creed grows beneath my feet. There is only one thing that staggers me—the slow progress that creed makes in the world.' 'Oh,' said Carlyle, 'but with such a creed you can afford to wait.'

2. But this faith is not merely a comfort; it is a challenge. For if God is like Jesus, the message of Jesus about the true way of living, about love and that fellowship and co-operation which is the logic of love, has an authority which is far greater than we often give it.

What if God is like Jesus? What if these principles of His, instead of being impracticable dreams, are the unveiling of the way in which God means

the world to work, so that if it does not work in that way it is bound to meet disaster, like an engine defying the rules of mechanics? That is precisely what Christ claims for His message—that love is the law of life. If this faith is ours, the only thing we dare do is to hold on to our ideals, though they create a tension in our souls, between what is and what ought to be, that breaks our peace. It is to hold on and stand fast, and get something done wherever we can, caring for no opposition; and suffering no shallow demonstration of the impossibility of a Christian order of life or industry to stifle our conviction, or keep us from honest thinking, or dry up our prayers. Things are changed by a faith that defies obstacles and laughs at impossibilities, and in no other way. That faith conquers. For, in time, God builds these seeming dreams of ours into the substance of abiding realities. He that overcometh the world is he that believes that Jesus speaks with the insight and authority of God.

And again, this faith means an invitation to a real contact with God. If God is like Jesus one thing is sure—He is available. For Jesus was available. Who so approachable as He? Two things always happened when people got into the company of Jesus. One was that they became aware that He had entry to their minds—to the secrets of their souls—they could not keep Him out. They felt as some creature of the deep must feel when a searchlight from the upper world for the first time penetrates his comfortable obscurity. And if a man was ready and willing, a second thing happened. Jesus became equally accessible to him; he got right into His mind, into His heart. Ah, but you say, He is now so far away!

Comes faint and far Thy voice  
From distant Galilee.  
The vision fades mid ancient shades:  
How can I follow Thee?

But if God is like Jesus, He reaches us, in every breath of Christ's Spirit, in every glance of His eye, in every flash of His mind, in every beat of His heart. Up in the hills, where the rains fall and the springs and the streams so often run to waste, they sometimes build a reservoir to catch the waters, and out of that reservoir they lead a channel down into the valley where, in a factory, they turn the power of it into light and heat. Through that channel, simple and unobtrusive, the factory takes into its heart the power of the everlasting hills. The influence of Jesus is the

channel through which we become linked with God. Is not this a challenge as to whether our faith is real and how real it is? For surely all things are possible—all strength in weakness, all grace in temptation—to the man who believes that in Jesus, in every contact with His mind and spirit, he is in touch with the everlasting God. 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'<sup>1</sup>

#### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

##### The Relevancy of the Example of Jesus.

'Leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps.'—I P 2<sup>21</sup> (R.V.).

The adequacy of Jesus and His teaching to the conditions of life to-day is being seriously and widely challenged. So we are going to consider this modern challenge.

Let us begin by making a distinction between our Lord's example and His ethic—not that there was any antithesis between the two. Our Lord's life illustrated His ethic. But His example was applicable over a wider field than His ethic, and it is really in His example we find our Lord's adequacy to all the perplexing problems of our time. If we were to collect together all the ethical precepts of Jesus we would not find in them an answer to all our ethical problems. As Canon Barry says—there is more detailed moral advice in Plato and Seneca than we shall find in the Synoptic Gospels. Seneca had an answer for every question. 'If Christianity was morals,' the poet Blake said, 'then Socrates was the Saviour.' There is not enough in our Lord's moral precepts if collected together to furnish the modern Christian with a complete and adequate ethical system. But His example is a greater and wider thing.

Considering first the ethical teaching of Jesus the differences men find about it are principally twofold. First of all, people say that some of our Lord's ethical teaching is inapplicable. And in the second place, they say that there are whole reaches of our modern life which never come within the range of Christ's teaching at all. Let us look at these criticisms for a moment.

First of all this is true, that Jesus spoke in the language of His day, that the questions He answered were questions that puzzled the Jews of His day and that some of the commands He gave were conditioned by circumstances of time and place. So that in our Lord's teaching there is an element

<sup>1</sup> J. Reid, *In Touch with Christ*, 119.

that is local and temporary—though in His answers to local and particular questions, our Lord pronounced eternal principles.

We artificialize the life of Jesus when we suppose that in His sermons He had the people of this generation in view—when, as Canon Barry says, ‘we suppose that Christ in some way “foresaw” the circumstances of our lives or the moral issues of Western Europe in this twentieth century, and that He deliberately intended His teaching to apply to these things.

Much more serious, of course, is the second criticism that our Lord’s ethical teaching is not adequate because some of our most baffling and perplexing problems seem never to have entered within the purview of His thought.

Take one simple, obvious illustration. We live in an industrialized world. All serious-minded people are puzzled and perplexed by the unemployment problem; they are bewildered by the development of the machine and the consequent displacement of labour; they are baffled when they think of the relations between capital and labour. Now these problems simply did not exist in our Lord’s time. Palestine was for the most part an agricultural country. Life was simple and unsophisticated.

The same thing is true about our international relationships. The world is a unity in a sense undreamed of in Christ’s day. The nations are interdependent as never before. And as a result a whole crop of new questions has emerged. What is Christ’s mind upon them? Again we find no specific and definite word.

Are we then left without moral and ethical guidance by Jesus? It is true Jesus has not given us definite instructions, but He has left us an *example*, and an example is of far wider application than any precise instruction and rule. And let us say that by *example* we do not mean the outward form of our Lord’s life. Even in His life few of our modern interests had place. He was celibate—and so untouched by family perplexities. His method of life made Him independent of the *cash nexus*. Our Lord’s life from one point of view was limited and contracted—limited for the purposes of His mission. ‘Who is blind but my servant? or deaf as my messenger that I send?’ And yet though our Lord’s life was limited in that way, and seemed to have no contact with many of our most urgent interests, in His *example* we have something that is applicable to all the concerns of our modern life.

No one can stand before the Portrait of Jesus as

it is given us in these four Gospels, stand before it and seriously consider it without getting a certain impression of His character and spirit. He is a Person characterized by a perfect obedience to God, and a perfect love for man. And that is the *example* which He has left for our imitation. Canon Barry illustrates this truth by the analogy of St. Francis of Assisi. Moved by St. Francis’ spirit, men and women give themselves freely and unreservedly to the service of the poor and needy still. But it is the *spirit* and not the outward form of St. Francis’ life that they imitate. St. Francis, for example, shockingly neglected his body and called it ‘brother ass’—we, on the other hand, take no end of pains to safeguard the health of men and women. He forbade the use of books—we build libraries. He did not worry about economic conditions; he simply showed his contempt for physical comfort of every kind and made poverty his bride. Francis embraced lepers—we try to find a cure for leprosy. He changed clothes with unwashed beggars—we build bath-houses.

And that is how Jesus left us an example. And that is the example we are to imitate. Not the external actions of His life. That life in its outward conditions and circumstances touches only a small segment of our complicated modern life. But the spirit of Jesus—that spirit of utter obedience to God and perfect love for men—is applicable to every interest of life, it touches life at every point.

No doubt it would have been easier for us if Jesus had anticipated our difficulties and given us precise instructions. But there are two immense advantages in the fact that it was an example, and not an ethical system He bequeathed to us. The first is this—an example expressing itself in a Spirit is *abidingly applicable*. Rules are rigid and inflexible things. If Jesus had promulgated a system of ethics suitable for Jewish life in the first century, it would have been superseded long since.

And the second immense advantage is this. The way in which the example of Jesus is to be applied to the various problems which confront us will need close and hard thinking on our part. That is not going to be easy, and perhaps some people would prefer to be spared the trouble of thinking things out for themselves. Yes—but that would be never to move out of the infant class. God called us to freedom, to intellectual freedom amongst other things. We are to serve God with the mind.

But to come back to the truth we wish to insist upon. Jesus has not left us a complete ethical

system. He has given us Himself. Jesus Himself—the example He has left—is a sufficient guide for all our difficulties. Let us go humbly to Him for guidance in all the varied perplexities of our time—personal, social, international—and if we do so we shall make no complaints of His inadequacy. We

shall say about Him what Charles Wesley said of Him, only with a slightly different connotation :

Thou, O Christ, art all I want ;  
More than all in Thee I find.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Jones, *Morning and Evening*, 165.

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## Recent Foreign Theology.

### Feine's New Testament Introduction.<sup>1</sup>

DR. FEINE'S *Einleitung* first appeared in 1913. This is the eighth edition, revised and rewritten to some extent, after his death, by Dr. Behm of Berlin. It is a compact, scholarly handbook, with up-to-date references to the literature of the subject, and abreast of the most recent movements in criticism. Even 'Formgeschichte' is included in the discussion of the synoptic problem, though it is put in its proper place, not in the centre of the room, but in a corner. One significant decision is that the Epistle to the Philippians at any rate was written during Paul's three years at Ephesus, about the year 56. Also, that the Epistle of James is assigned to James of Jerusalem, who is held to have written it about 65, not long before his death. There is little doubt that in this new form, the Feine *Einleitung* will continue to hold its own as a guide to students of the subject.

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### The Minor Prophets.<sup>2</sup>

IN the *Handbuch zum Alten Testament*, which has been already noticed in these columns, the Minor Prophets, from Hosea to Micah, have been assigned to an English scholar, Professor T. H. Robinson of Cardiff. His translation and notes appear in German, however. It is superfluous to say that his work is most suggestive and incisive ; even in his watchful regard for metrical features, he is sensitive

<sup>1</sup> *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, von D. Paul Feine ; Achte, völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage, von D. Johannes Behm (Quelle und Meyer, Leipzig, 1936).

<sup>2</sup> *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten : Hosea bis Micha*, von T. H. Robinson ; *Nahum bis Maleachi*, von F. Horst (Mohr, Tübingen ; M.6).

to the religious content of the text. The plan of the commentary requires brevity, but within his limits he has contrived to pack the results of long, careful study. Perhaps at first sight the reader who is unaware of recent tendencies in the criticism of the Prophets will be astonished to find not only so much uncertainty about the text, but repeatedly a passage broken up into disparate, short sayings, which were not written by the prophet himself, or, if they were, cannot be placed in an orderly sequence. Yet Professor Robinson preserves much for a prophet like Micah, for example. He will not allegorize Hosea's marriage or the Book of Jonah.

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### The Old Testament and Preaching the Gospel.<sup>3</sup>

THE candid, outspoken author of this book is a Lutheran who has realized in the course of his studies and experience that he had to face the question, 'How can the Old Testament be used by one who owns the truth of God's saving grace and love in the gospel?' Dr. Hirsch is more than a scholar. He has eager religious convictions, and these have led him, evidently through some hard places, to warn his fellow-Christians against the conventional, pious, homiletic use of the Old Testament. He will not listen to any one, for example, who would let a child hear the story of the sacrifice of Isaac. Something of the passionate spirit of Kierkegaard breathes through this monograph. It is alive with the dread of a Christianized legalism, so alive as to be almost hectic or Marcionite.

JAMES MOFFATT.

New York.

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<sup>3</sup> *Das Alte Testament und die Predigt des Evangeliums*, von Emanuel Hirsch (Mohr, Tübingen ; R.M.z.60).