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with them to-day. In many details the translations will doubtless be corrected and improved by future research, and the obscurities and literary *bêtises* which they seem to exhibit will be cleared away, as has been the case with the Semitic texts of Babylonia. When we remember that even the Semitic scribes of later Babylonia were not always sure about the signification of a Sumerian phrase, the difficulties which beset the best-equipped modern translator can be easily understood.

In the Study.

Fresh Literature for the Pulpit.

WHATEVER other gifts are possessed by the Rev. Archibald Alexander, B.D., he has the gift of effective public speech. His new book *The Glory in the Grey* (Allenson; 3s. 6d.) contains, he says, forty-two *talks* on everyday life and religion. 'Talks' is the right word. It used to be addresses. But the address was never so compact of familiarity and reverence. And, above all, the addresses were never so deftly shot through with illustration. Every talk is lit up with appropriate anecdote or analogy. But we shall choose one that has less illustration than usual, to show what the talk can be as a sketch of character.

Toward.

In the life of Daniel and in that of Lot there is a 'note of direction' which is very significant. Daniel opened his windows *toward* Jerusalem, and Lot pitched his tent *toward* Sodom. In these contrasted directions, the life-stories of the two men are told in brief.

Every character has one supreme direction. There is no gainsaying that, I imagine. We have all many interests in life. There are many directions in which we develop our original holding. We are keen on this, that, or the other thing. But on analysis it must be found that one of these is supreme. When there is a conflict of interests, there are some that we allow to go to the wall.

It was as much Daniel's wish as it would have been yours or mine to keep out of the lions' den and to stand well with the king. But he saw clearly that to follow that direction would be for him to be false to his God. There, then, were two competing motives. He had to elect one to the supreme place. And he had done it when he opened his windows toward Jerusalem in the sight of the whole town.

Lot, likewise, knew what Sodom was. There was the talk of the countryside about Sodom's reputation, and there was a voice of God within his own heart. On the other hand were the man's keen commercial instincts and his love of money. He had to elect one of these directions to be the supreme one. And he had made his choice when he pitched his tent toward Sodom. There is a direction in life which a man makes supreme. It can be what he likes. It may be Daniel's, or Lot's, or countless others besides. But a chief and controlling direction every man must have, every man actually has. The question is—What is it? Toward what?

For it is direction that is the only true and just test of character. That there are other tests we all know, and many of us have winced under them. The matter-of-fact world has its tests for all religious profession. Of course, it is practical. 'Let us see what they do,' it says. And too often it has cause to point its finger in scorn at the doings which it can see. The critic, both without us and within us, asks for facts, and there they are, some of them shameful, dishonouring, damning facts! Now, I do not for one moment seek to underrate the value of that standard. But I want you to know that there is a fairer test than that, Heaven's test. The world asks, 'What does the man do?' But Heaven asks, 'What was he trying to do? What is the main set and purpose of his life?' By a blamable error in navigation the ship may run out of her course, or a tempest may drive her headlong before it. But the question at last comes to be—What port was the captain trying to reach?

It is the easiest thing in the world to pick faults in the life of the Christian man or woman. Peter once denied his Lord with curses. But is there no difference between his cowardice, sad and shameful as it was, and the cold, calculating spite of the Chief Priests who did Jesus to death? Peter's

denial was not a fair sample of his attitude toward the Master. We say of a river that it flows south, if that is its main direction, even though for a little it may bend some other way. Peter turned shamefully north in his course for a while, but the river of his love was, over all, southwards and Christ-wards for all that. And Christ knew it. He always knows it. Even from the legitimate discipline of conscience and the sneers of his friends, a man feels that there is an appeal to Christ Himself, who knows. We have wandered and turned aside, but Christ knows whether we love Him or not, whether we are really trying to follow Him or not.

You remember how Christian and his friend Pliable in the *Pilgrim's Progress* fell into the Slough of Despond together, and got plentifully bemired in consequence? Bunyan's whole passage is a masterpiece, but there is one touch in it that is unsurpassed. After describing how Pliable turns tail and leaves Christian, Bunyan goes on: 'Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone, but still he endeavoured to struggle to that side that was furthest from his own house and next to the wicket gate.' There you have the test of direction, met and passed! The side next the wicket gate! Ah, my brothers, there is no promise that we shall escape the pitfalls and the accidents even though we follow the light from Heaven, but if only we struggle toward the far side of the bog, if, miry as we are, we clamber forward to the side nearest to the gate of God, it surely will be well with us in the end. For it is not his falls that altogether determine whether a man be a true Christian pilgrim or not. It is the side he makes for out of the mire.

I have sometimes imagined to myself another ending to the Parable of the Prodigal Son. I have seemed to see the wanderer come limping and weary all those sorrowful miles back on the way home. But night fell as he was getting in among the old landmarks, and the cold chilled him, and his strength was nearly spent. Yet he struggled bravely on till he came to the road-end that turned up for home, but there he had to give in. There he fell down at last, and lay, face forward, with his arms outstretched, as if he would have gone farther if he could. There the hired servants found him in the morning, cold and stiff and dead. When they brought the old man out, do you think he turned away because the confession had not been spoken? Ah, no. He read in those outstretched arms what it was the wanderer had tried to say. And with tears in his eyes and a great gladness in his heart, he said, 'It is my son, come home.' It is with a judgment and a love like that we have to do. A love that looks more at what we aim at than at what we reach. A Master who generously counts for service what we should have liked to do. A Father who looks, not at the fall only, but at the road we were travelling on when we fell.

The Right Rev. Arthur Vincent Green, LL.D., Bishop of Ballarat, has published a volume of *Australian Sermons* (Macmillan; 3s. 6d. net). Their first distinguishing feature is their unfailing contact with reality. The Bishop of Ballarat does not believe that the sermon is worth preaching which never descends from the clouds. The next feature of distinction is that the earth upon which they move is their hearers' own land. They are Australian Sermons. The illustrations also are Australian.

One of the sermons is on Prayer. Here is an illustration in it:

'You who are busy pratical-minded Australians will ask perhaps, But what after all is the good of prayer? Let me answer you from a familiar experience of all who visit or live in one of our larger towns. You enter an electric tram-car. Above you is the live wire, charged with power. But how is the power to be applied to the car? By the trolly-pole which connects the car below with the wire above. Now the car represents the human life, and the electric wire is the life of God and the trolly-pole is prayer. Let the pole run off the wire, and you can no longer illuminate your car, and presently it slows and stops. So, when there is no prayer there is no inward light in man nor power of moral and spiritual progress. The unnatural thing is not to pray. Naturally we belong to God. All that is best in us thrives only by sharing in His life. The brute cannot pray: the man can.'

The Rev. William Temple, M.A., formerly Headmaster of Repton, has published a selection from his sermons to the boys there. It is his second volume of School Sermons. But this time he has included two or three University Sermons. We like the School Sermons best. In them we see at once what the preacher wants us to believe and do; and it is always worth believing and doing.

The title of the volume is *Studies in the Spirit and Truth of Christianity* (Macmillan; 3s. 6d. net).

Portrait painting is always more attractive to the multitude than landscape painting; and *Portrait Preaching* is always more attractive than doctrinal or ethical preaching. So, under that title, Mr. H. Jeffs has issued a volume of addresses on the most notable persons in the Bible (James Clarke & Co.; 3s. 6d. net), and the volume is sure to do well.

Mr. Jeffs does justice to Timothy. And he attributes much of Timothy's usefulness in life to his knowledge of the Bible. 'The Bible,' he says, 'needs to be slowly absorbed from childhood as the Bread of Life until it passes into the blood and bone of the Bible reader. It is such a Bible student, a Bible student because he loves the Bible, who in later years will make the ablest, the most interesting, and the most convincing expositor of the Bible; and the Bible expositor was never more called for than he is to-day.'

An exposition of the Fourth Gospel has been written by Professor W. W. Holdsworth, M.A., of Handsworth. It is not a word for word commentary, nor is it a paragraph by paragraph exposition. Professor Holdsworth believes that the Fourth Gospel (whoever wrote it—John the Apostle most probably) is a work of art with beginning, middle, and end. So expounded, every event and even every saying gains its place and purpose.

Professor Holdsworth takes the whole Gospel as genuine, including the narrative of the Raising of Lazarus. His defence of that miracle is a triumph of simplicity and persuasion. The book is called *The Life Indeed* (Kelly; 3s. 6d. net).

It is impossible to give any idea of what Mr. Charles Edwards means by *Things to Grip* (Scott; 2s. net) except by sample. Here is one of the outline addresses in the book:

The Flags.

There are three Flags generally used on our railways to regulate the trains, and ensure safety—*Red*, *Green*, and *White*. *Red* for Danger, *Green* for Caution, and *White* to say all is right.

The Holy Spirit uses many Bible flags, but there are three special ones we may observe.

1. The Red Flag of Danger. *Beware.* 'Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee' (*Job* xxxvi. 18).

Yes, there is wrath, God's abiding displeasure against sin. That is awful.

Where is it? In Hell, and upon the conscience of every unsaved soul. The sense of it brings hell. There *is* wrath (*Job* xxxvi. 18), there is *abiding* wrath (*John* iii. 36), and there is *wrath to come* (*Matt.* iii. 7).

But it is very blessed to know 'God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 *Thess.* v. 9), and the believer can say, 'Even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come' (1 *Thess.* i. 10).

2. The Green Flag of Caution. *Repent.* 'The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the Gospel' (*Mark* i. 15). 'Repent ye and be converted' (*Acts* iii. 19). 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish' (*Luke* xiii. 3). 'But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent' (*Acts* xvii. 30).

What is Repentance? A new mind about God, Sin, Life, and Eternal things. It is the action of the soul by faith turning round to God. It is 'Godly sorrow' (2 *Cor.* vii. 10). 'Mourning for sin' (1 *Cor.* v. 2). 'Awaking out of sleep' (*Eph.* v. 14). 'Turning to God. Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' (*Acts* xx. 21). These bring salvation. Repentance is the holy, divine caution of the soul. See that the plough of repentance goes deep enough to prepare the heart for pardon.

3. The White Flag of Peace and Safety. *Mercy.* 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved' (*Acts* xvi. 31).

Believe. That is all. *Crying*, or *praying*, or *doing* won't do. Only believe and thou shalt be saved. Believe *on* the Lord Jesus Christ. Not merely about Him.

Believe, and be *saved.* From all sin, and to eternal life. Believe now—there is no time for delay.

When Alexander encamped before a city, he used to set up a light, to give notice to those within that if they came forth to him while the light lasted, they should have quarter: if otherwise, no mercy was to be expected. God sets up light after light, waves His Flag of Mercy, and waits year after year, and even invites men to come unto Him, that they may have salvation and life, but often has to com-

plain, 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life' (*John* v. 40).

In the Preface to his book on *Teaching by Illustration* (Scott; 3s. 6d. net) the Rev. W. W. Moeran, M.A., says sensible things about the use of illustrations in the pulpit. And the most sensible thing he says is that our Lord's most sublime utterances were often made luminous to the simple-minded by the clear light of some beautiful emblem drawn from nature or human life. 'The common people heard him gladly.' And this, no doubt, was partly because He clothed His teaching in parables made attractive by their very homeliness. Almost everything He saw seemed to lend itself to the sacred purpose of His message.

He spoke of lilies, vines and corn,
The sparrow and the raven;
And words so natural yet so wise
Were on men's hearts engraven.

And yeast, and bread, and flax, and cloth,
And eggs, and fish, and candles—
See how the whole familiar world
He most divinely handles.

Mr. Moeran understands that not all good illustrations can be used. His are good, and they are all available. Here is one:

'During the "eighties," England was startled and many people were terrorized by a series of dynamite-outrages perpetrated by a fanatical section of Irish Nationalists. At that time, Mr. James Monro, C.B., was Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. He said to me one day, "We have had a most anxious time of it lately; frequent warnings reached us in Scotland Yard of violence, threatening the destruction of public buildings, and involving the loss of life. We have often been at our wits' end to know exactly when or where some fearful outrage with its wanton and cruel consequences might be successfully carried out. In weariness of heart, and almost in despair of disentangling the criminal net that was being so cunningly woven round the unconscious sleepers in the City, I have knelt down late at night in my office, and told the Lord all about it, praying to Him for guidance and wisdom. Then, the very next day perhaps, some intelligence would come in, putting us on the track of the criminals. People would read of the clever way in which the London Police had discovered the conspiracy just in time to avert some horrible deed of death and ruin. But they never knew, as I did, how much they owed, not only to the skill and courage of our brave police-force, but far more to the goodness and care of God who hears and answers prayer."'

Why does Canon C. D. H. McMillan call his volume of sermons *The Sleeping Cardinal* (Scott; 1s. 6d. net)? It is because in the beginning of the first sermon in it he speaks of the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome, and says:

'It was in this church that Martin Luther offered his first and last Mass in Rome. It is a most beautiful building, and is noted for the almost innumerable effigies and statues of departed popes and cardinals. There is a characteristic touch of life in most of these figures, which we generally find wanting in the colder and severer recumbent effigies of our northern clime. And there is one figure in which this characteristic is specially marked. It is the effigy of a cardinal in his robes, with a mitre on his brow, and a crosier in his hand at his side. The figure lies with the right side slightly raised, and this gives the impression that the sleeping cardinal is about to raise himself upon his elbow, and come forth into life.'

This is the way in which Canon McMillan preaches all his sermons. He has a picture in each, and round it the sermon takes its form and finds its appeal.

An expositor who is as faithful to his text and the laws of true interpretation as is the Rev. J. M. Witherow, M.A., is entitled to call his volume of expositions *Grapes of God* (Keighley: Wadsworth; 2s. net). In every exposition is to be heard the accent of the personally persuaded. 'I know,' says this author, as calmly as St. Paul.

The Rev. T. W. M. Lund, M.A., has published another volume of sermons preached by him in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Hardman Street, Liverpool. He calls the volume *A Sower Went Forth* (Longmans; 5s. net). This is not the title of the first or of any other sermon in the volume. It describes the preacher of the sermons.

Some time ago Sir Oliver Lodge made copy for the newspapers by saying that in these days men do not worry about their sins. Mr. Lund does not agree. They do worry. But they have no

right to worry. There is nothing to worry about. The world is a very nice place, and God (for Mr. Lund believes in God) is a very nice God. He wants us all to be happy, and we are fools if we are sad. What makes people sad? This:

Nothing to breathe but air,
Nothing to eat but food,
Nothing to wear but clothes
To keep us from going nude.
Nothing to do but things;
Quick as a flash they've gone;
Nowhere to fall but off,
Nowhere to sit but on.
Nothing to quench but a thirst,
Nowhere to sleep but in bed,
Nothing to have but what we've got,
And no one to bury but dead.
Nothing to weep but tears;
Ah me, alack and alack!
Nowhere to go but out,
Nowhere to come but back.
Nothing to see but sights,
Never a gleam in the gloom;
Nothing but days and nights;
Oh for the rest of the tomb!
Nothing to comb but our hair,
Nothing to wed but a wife,
Only to suffer and bear;
What is the value of life?

What chances we miss, says Mr. Lund, when we go about with an undertaker's air, with a miserable, graceless soul stamped on a face, lined with its precise counterpart! The prettiest epitaph I know is in a New England cemetery, and it is very brief, but very pregnant: 'She was so pleasant.' What a picture it calls up of hearts comforted, loads lifted, weariness solaced, nerves soothed, lives strengthened, all because 'She was so pleasant!' There is another of a little girl: 'Her playmates said, It was easier to be good when she was with us.' Yet another in Père la Chaise: 'She loved and she was loved'—the inevitable complement. But don't let us wait for epitaphs. Let us copy the woman of whom it was asked why she was such a favourite, and the reply was, 'I suppose it is because she makes us all feel so nice.' You can't do that if you are one of the 'miserable sinners.' I like that turn to an old phrase; sinners because we are miserable, discontented, or dejected, when we ought to be doing our best to look pleasant, a habit which a little practice would help us all to acquire. That is, anyhow, a good way of entering into the joy of our Lord, and I commend it to all this Lent.

Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

The Morning of Life (Kelly; 2s. 6d. net) is the title which has been given by Dr. Barber, Headmaster of the Leys School, Cambridge, to a volume of Addresses to Boys. We strongly advise Sunday School superintendents and all others who have addresses to give to boys to buy the book. The best encouragement, perhaps, will be to quote one of the addresses. Here is an average example with an average number of illustrations.

The Enheartenment of Hope.

Never despairing—despairing of no man.—Lk 6^{35}.

Christ was an incurable optimist about mankind. He who knew most about man's sin, He who felt most keenly its agony and burden, was the very One who believed most in man's possibilities of response to holiness. And He bids us look at life in this spirit, always to believe the best possible, never to despair of any one. Later on, when Paul was seeking to sum up the characteristics of Christ's service, he wrote them down as Faith, Hope, Love. It is Faith—there is no despair there; Hope—the very antithesis of despair; and it is Love which covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Despair is utterly unchristian.

Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing? God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

Do we not all know the value of an enthusiast? Have you not found him in your house life, in your school life, in your games? What life flows through the veins of all from one who enthusiastically refuses to believe in defeat, who assures the faint-hearted 'You can win'! The atmosphere of his cheeriness insensibly scatters clouds and braces the whole community. How often in the past have besieged garrisons and forlorn hopes owed everything to some incorrigible optimist who refused to see the dark side, and, by sheer force of hope, shamed men to dare and endure the impossible and to win!

I propose to-day to glance at one or two such strongholds of despair made strongholds of hope by the spirit of our text.

First, here is a holy city, but with its glory sullied and its very existence threatened. The insulting might of all Assyria is coming to crush Jerusalem. The numberless banners of Sennacherib's army are waving in the sunshine; the multitudinous tread of his armed hosts is thundering nearer and nearer. King and people alike are helpless; every face is pale with fear; men are going about the streets with downcast look and bowed head. For what can the tiny might of this capital of a little province do against the power of the world-empire? But, treading its streets with upright form and determined mien, is one whose very look heartens the people. Isaiah, prince and prophet, believes in the destiny of his city and his race. Does he not know their sin? None knows it better than he. When the right time comes, who can lash it more sternly than he? But after all it is the city of Jehovah. And, when the insulting message comes and Hezekiah dons sackcloth and lies prostrate before the Lord, it is Isaiah who gives the message. 'The virgin daughter of Zion shall laugh,' 'I will defend this city to save it for my own sake and for my servant David's sake, saith Jehovah.' Never a tremor of fear, only exultant strong faith in the city because it is God's. And men caught the contagion of hope, bent heads were raised, trembling voices tuned themselves to unfaltering praise; the whole city learned to believe in herself because there was one man in its midst who believed in her and her God. Calmly she waited. Then one night her foes were a mighty host; next morning 'they were all dead corpses.'

Next, it is the city of mankind, the race itself. It is fallen, hopeless. Never was the world's night darker. A great power was seated on the hills of Rome, and national existence was crushed flat beneath the weight of its rolling might. The old religions and the old freedoms were powerless, exploded forces; the whole head was sick, the whole heart was faint.

> On that hard pagan world disgust
> And secret loathing fell;
> Deep weariness and sated lust
> Made human life a hell.

The city of mankind was besieged by all manner of triumphant foes, and it had lost confidence in itself. Into the midst of this city there came the Son of Man, God Incarnate, and gave it new hope, new life, by believing in it. Did He not know its badness, its sin? None ever knew it so well, but He thought this poor world worth living for, worth dying for. Publican and sinner and harlot, scorned and living down to the level of scorn, those who had lost belief in themselves looked to Him—and lo! His words and looks all spoke to them of forgiveness and new life. And bowed backs were straightened, sour natures sweetened, downcast faces lifted up to heaven, sins cast out as unworthy because of the enthusiast who believed in them.

Do you remember Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, released convict, victim to sudden temptation, stealer of silver candlesticks, restored to his better self by the protecting love of the old Bishop who declared that the candlesticks had been his gift?

It is the world which sees the heap of refuse, and the one man who discerns the hidden radium worth a king's ransom; the world which scorns the filth after the gas has been extracted from the coal, and the one man who sees the beautiful aniline dyes.

A missioner once told me of an attempt to reach the poor lost women who are the victims of the selfishness and sin of the great city. A supper was given to a number of them, at which he was present, and pure women spoke to them and loved them. Not long after, the missioner was passing down one of the crowded streets and caught a glimpse of a face which he had seen, but could not exactly identify. With the natural instinct of good manners he raised his hat to the woman he saw. That very night a daughter of shame came imploring to a refuge. 'Mr. —— saw me and respected me, for he took off his hat to me. Oh, save me from the life I have been living!' It was months after before he knew—and then the soiled life was clean again.

So when Jesus Christ, who knew our sin, respected us and believed in us the whole sin-soiled, self-weary race gained new life, believed in itself—and all the Christian hope of the centuries was born.

Third, let us come to the city of your own life, the City of Mansoul. Your own life is before you. In a few days some of you, in a very few years all of you, will be leaving the shelter of school and will be taking your place in the great race of life. And at

the crisis many of you linger and shiver. How can you play your part well? How can you believe in yourself? There is only one way. Christ must come into your heart. Amidst the beleaguerment of sin and fear and diffidence He throws Himself into the citadel with His stores of hope and His good cheer. Does He not know your weakness and sin? It is just because of that that He comes. Have you often fallen, and therefore do you lose all confidence in yourself? He knows it all, and He says, 'I believe in you. I thought you worth dying for. You can do anything through Me who strengthen you.' Hence look forward to your own life and work with interest and enthusiasm. The one thing that is utterly hateful is cynicism, the spirit that sees no good in others and owns to no good in self.

But the life that admits the Lord and knows 'my Lord believes in me'—that life is set to high and noble music, where meanness is impossible, for the keynote is His love that gave the motto 'Never despairing—despairing of no man.'

Because of Thy strong faith, I kept the track
Whose sharp-set stones my strength had well-nigh spent;
I could not meet Thy eyes if I turned back:
So on I went.

Because Thou wouldst not yield belief in me,
The threatening crags that rose my way to bar
I conquered inch by crumbling inch—to see
The goal afar.

And though I struggle toward it through hard years,
Or flinch, or falter blindly, yet within,
'You can,' unwavering my spirit hears:
And I shall win.

II.

An attractive volume (attractive both without and within) of parables and pictures in prose has been published by the Rev. Bertram Pratt, M.A., under the title of *The Wingless Angel* (Allenson; 2s. 6d. net). The parables and pictures are short; but here is one of the shortest.

The Other Victory.

Little Jimmy came home one day looking very glum. His side had lost the football match, but he had shared that experience before, and mere defeat hardly seemed sufficient to account for Jimmy's utter depression. Mother wisely made no comments, but waited for the situation to develop, and at last the tale of woe was told. 'Mother, God helped the bad boys and they won. Our side didn't get angry or use bad words, and we kept the rules, but the others swore and cheated, and they beat us by three goals to one. God must have been on their side, and I don't call it fair.' Ordinary comfort and explanation proved unavailing. The boys who had done right had been beaten by the boys who didn't care. God was on the side of might, not the side of right, and Jimmy continued to smart under the injustice. Presently father arrived home, and before Jimmy had seen him, mother took the precaution of explaining how matters stood. Father was thoughtful for a few moments, and then, calling Jimmy, said cheerily, 'Well, Jimmy, I hear you won all right to-day.' Mournful and tragic were the tones of Jimmy's voice as he replied, 'Well, you heard wrong, because we didn't.' 'Oh, but I heard there were two victories, and you won one.' 'But I don't know what you mean, daddy.' 'You see, mother told me all about it. She told me you lost the football match, but you won the bigger thing: you didn't win with your feet, but you won in your hearts, and conquered all the anger and cheating and bad language. You won after all, didn't you? I'm proud of you, my boy.' The clouds began to clear from Jimmy's face, and after a minute's thoughtful silence a much happier little boy said, 'I see now, daddy. God was on our side after all, wasn't He?' 'Jimmy,' answered his father, with a smile, 'there's a wonderful old Book which has this sentence in it—"Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." You ruled your spirit, kept your temper, and God helped you to win.' That night, when Jimmy knelt down to pray, he put these words on at the end of his prayer, 'Please, God, I'm sorry for the way I thought about You this afternoon. I didn't understand at first.'

III.

'The Battle of Life.'

'Fight the good fight.'—1 Ti 6^{12}.

Every boy and girl knows something about the terrible war that is going on at present—the greatest war in the history of the world. And I am sure you can all understand how cruel a thing war is

when you think of what has happened to Belgium. A few months ago the Belgians were safe and happy in their homes, and now thousands of them are homeless and destitute, many of the children having lost father and mother and all who cared for them. And in our own country, though we have not suffered so terribly, there are very many homes which have been saddened by the loss of dear ones killed on the field of battle. And war is cruel in many ways besides these. Yet from such a horrible thing as war we may learn some valuable lessons. For you know life is sometimes spoken of as a battle—the battle of life, we say.

1. Now if life is a battle, what does that mean? Well, it just means that there is some enemy we have to fight. 'An enemy?' you say. 'I have no enemy.' Listen. I know a little girl who one day broke a beautiful vase which her mother valued very much. When her mother asked her if she knew who had broken it, she thought to herself, 'I'll say No; mother will never find out. And if I said Yes I would be punished.' Ah! There was the enemy. And I believe you can all tell me his name; for I fear you have all been tempted, like that little girl, to tell a lie, or to do something else which you knew to be wrong. Yes, Satan is the enemy we have to fight, and the battle is sometimes a very hard one, even for young boys and girls like you.

2. Well, if we have to fight we must be soldiers. When there is a war we don't all go to fight, not even all our men. For some are too old, some too young, and some too weak. So the task of fighting is left to our brave soldiers and sailors, who risk their lives to keep us and our country safe. But in the battle of life, each one must fight—men and women, boys and girls, strong and weak alike. So, you see, we are really all soldiers. And if that is so, we must first of all be *obedient*. Just as the soldier on the field of battle must obey his commander, so we must obey that small voice within us called Conscience—you all know it, and have heard it speaking to you—which tells us, when we are tempted by our enemy, what is right and what is wrong. And then we must also be *brave*. Sometimes the general orders his soldiers to do a very hard thing, to meet a very fierce attack of the enemy. So also does Conscience sometimes tell us to do something that is very hard; and, like true soldiers, we must not shirk our duty, but must do it bravely, no matter what it costs us.

3. There is a word which I think must have become familiar to you all since this war began—the word 'allies'; and I expect you all know that the allies are the Belgians, French, Russians, and British, including our troops from India and the Colonies, and that they are so called because in this war they have agreed to fight together against the enemy, the Germans. That seems a strong force, and so it is—a force which we hope and believe will gain the victory in the end. But there is an Ally that has not been mentioned—the strongest of all—God. For we believe that we are fighting in a just cause, and that God, who is a God of justice, will help us so to fight that the enemy shall be overcome and the cause of justice and righteousness shall triumph. Now in our war against Satan we have no earthly ally, for each must fight his or her own battle. But we *must* have God for our ally, else we shall fight in vain. If we trust to our own strength we shall never be able to withstand the temptations with which Satan is ever ready to attack us.

4. There is another word which I should like to mention. You have all seen pictures of the soldiers digging trenches. These trenches are just very deep ditches in which the soldiers can lie, sheltered by the high ground in front, and escape the fire of the enemy. And so in our battle against Satan there are also trenches, as it were, behind which we can shelter ourselves. I shall mention three.

First of all, *good companions*. Now if you think of all the boys and girls you know, I am sure you can easily tell which of them would be good companions and which bad. Well, if you choose for *your* companions those who are good and true, you have a splendid 'trench' behind which to shelter. For one thing, you won't have so many temptations to face, and even when you are tempted you will find it is much easier to say No if you feel that your companions are sympathizing with you in your difficulty, and would say No if they were facing the same temptation. So be careful how you choose your companions.

Next, *good books*. When you read the story of a brave and honourable life, does it not make you wish to live as good and true a life? Read good books then, and try to follow the examples set forth in them. And above all, read the Bible, where you have the best example of all—the

example of Christ, who never yielded to temptation at all, who did no wrong, but gave Himself to death that He might save those who did. Surely that example should prove a sufficient shelter to you in whatever temptations may meet you.

Lastly, *prayer*. I have said that God is our Ally. That is true. God *is* our Ally; but if we are to obtain His help we must pray to Him for it, and trust that we will receive it. It is only to those who thus pray to Him and trust Him that God's strength is imparted. But to such it is never denied. And in that strength we shall be able to overcome all temptations, however hard, and shall at last enter Heaven victorious when life's battle is ended. Remember, therefore, always to pray.

These four things, then, the war may teach us: (1) that we have all a battle to fight; (2) that we must each fight our own battle; (3) that God is our Ally; and (4) that God's strength and help are to be obtained only by earnest and constant prayer.

IV.

Our Banner.

Jehovah-nissi—'The Lord is my banner.'—Ex 17^{15}.

My boys and girls, I am not going to preach to you about banners, or flags as we call them. You children of this generation have had reason to hear a very great deal about them, especially our Union Jack. You have got accustomed to seeing the Union Jack everywhere about—on the tops of houses, on motors, on bicycles, in button-holes; and I myself saw a great big, solemn, black dog with one over his back; he was collecting pennies for the Prince of Wales' Relief Fund.

As I said, I am not going to preach to you about flags. I shall just tell you a little story about the Union Jack, and how a boy was inspired by the sight of it. This boy's name was Charlie. He was eighteen, and nearly six feet high. Walking along Princes Street in Edinburgh one lovely autumn morning, he saw a procession of soldiers coming. He was in his working clothes, and he carried a long piece of iron, for Charlie was learning to be a working engineer. He stood up to watch the procession pass. First, there came what seemed to him a great many soldiers; then recruits followed. Some of these had not got their uniforms, and Charlie recognized two of his own friends amongst them. He saluted the two, and shouted, 'Hurrah! hurrah!' but they did not respond; they walked on with their heads in the air, looking very solemn. One of the other recruits, however, waved a Union Jack. Charlie had seen the flag often, and he knew all about what the three crosses meant; but there was something strange about this one. The little bit of cotton somehow seemed living as it fluttered in the wind. The sight of it sent a queer shiver down Charlie's back; he felt his legs shaking. 'Am I ill?' he asked himself, as he turned to go down Hanover Street, after all the men had passed, 'am I ill?' 'No,' he answered, 'I'm not ill. I'm a young recruit—a recruit in Lord Kitchener's Army. I know what the fellows meant now, when they said they couldn't do any work.'

The Union Jack—the Union Jack! It was flying from all the high buildings—Charlie saw nothing but the Union Jack. In the workshop that afternoon, there was the usual loud clanging of iron, and the sound of hammers. 'A lot of tin kettles,' he said to himself as he worked. On till it was time to stop work there rang in Charlie's ears, like the refrain of an old song—'I would sooner see this country of ours blotted out of the pages of history—I would sooner see this country of ours blotted out of the pages of history': just the same thing over and over again, for he did not remember any more of the great speech that some one had given him to read. But he knew and felt sure that the war was for a splendid cause.

How could he tell his mother? He couldn't at supper time—his father would be in the house then. Charlie was afraid of his father. Hadn't he told him over and over again, that he was scatter-brained, and would never be much good in this world? But Charlie spoke next morning. It was at breakfast-time. 'I'm not going back to my work,' he said suddenly. 'I'm going to offer myself for Kitchener's Army. I can't help it—I want to fight for the flag—for the cause. I would volunteer for Imperial Service, but I thought—I thought you would want me back.'

Charlie's cheeks were red; he had never delivered such a long speech in his life. The little kitchen—it suddenly seemed to have changed. The dresser—the dishes—they were the same, but everything had a different look—and his father—he seemed strange too. His eyes were bluer than Charlie had ever seen them. Would he speak? He did, at last. 'A lot of lazy louts—fanatics! Speak about the flag! If you would join—if you

would be a religious man, and serve under the banner of the Lord, your mother and me too would be better pleased.'

It was evening before his mother said anything. Then it was—'Charlie, it's hard, after I've brought you this length. The like of me—We're sometimes just driven to say, "God's will be done."'

'Mother,' he said, 'I can't help it. I must go. It's a great cause we're fighting for; I couldn't help going, even if you were never to speak to me again.' And Charlie went.

Hard work—drudgery—that was the daily story of camp life. One morning however, after what seemed to him a long time, he learnt that he had been drafted for Active Service. He could scarcely believe his ears. The Union Jack fluttered again—the great longing to help the cause re-awoke. In camp Charlie had been tempted to forget it sometimes.

Active Service meant weariness, cold, and sometimes hunger. But the boys knew what they were fighting for, and they believed in their officers—didn't they just? 'They never try to save themselves,' Charlie wrote to his parents. 'When I come home, I think you will both be proud that I have been in this great war. It is a fearful job, but we think of what it means, and, dear mother, nearly every man of us puts up some kind of prayer every night.'

Charlie never came home. He was one of a great many who were carried to the hospital one night, after a terrible day's fighting. 'Ugh,' he said, 'I'm not so badly hurt as you think. Give me a little time; I'll be at it again.' How well that nurse understood the boys!

'You're a bit tired, sonnie,' she said to Charlie as she went her rounds next morning.

'Yes,' and he spoke slowly; 'I don't really think that I'll get back to Auld Reekie, but I'm not giving in—mind that.'

'You want me to write a letter for you, don't you?' There she sat with her writing things ready.

'Yes. Nurse, how is it that you guess things? You're like a witch.'

'Now, I've begun,' she said—'"Dear Parents"'—

'"I doubt I will not see the old place again,"' Charlie dictated. "Tell George to get on with his trade. The Union Jack has the right side—I'm tired—I'm not able to say more." Nurse,' he said, 'think maybe my mother would like a text; but I'm stupid, I can't remember a single one—yes, there's—"The Lord is my banner." If you write that text, I'll make a cross underneath it, for I'm not able to sign my name.'

'When I told him that the cross under the text was a beautiful idea, he looked as if he understood me.' So the kind nurse wrote home to his mother afterwards. And the night the letter came, Charlie's father gathered all his family together, and, without a break in his voice, but with great solemnity, read the verses that tell the story of our text—

'Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.' (This rod was really the banner of the children of Israel; they felt inspired when they saw it, and were ready to fight with all their might.) 'So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed. . . . And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi' (that is, 'the Lord is my banner').

'God forgive me,' he said afterwards, 'I have not been a praying man, as I should have been, but—do you know, mother, the young lads—and Charlie was amongst the best of them—they're teaching us a lesson. I never mind of a war like this. You would almost think we were living in Covenanting days.'

None of you boys are old enough to serve under the Union Jack, but boys and girls of you alike can enlist under the Banner of the Lord. Jesus Christ tried to teach men that there were other ways of meeting the foe than with those terrible weapons that men use. After nineteen hundred years, many of our leaders in this country are convinced of the same thing. They recognize the beauty of a law that respects the rights of the smallest of kingdoms, and that stands up for the weak against the oppression of the strong. For that cause they are fighting now. And, wonderful to tell, in the midst of the greatest war the world has ever seen, Jesus Christ is much in their minds. If He were coming to earth, do you think the leaders of our armies would say, as men said long

ago, 'Crucify Him'? No! I believe they would bow down before Him and say, 'Speak, Lord.'

To be under Christ's banner means a battle. You will have to defend your souls against evil. God has created you boys and girls for Himself, and not even the devil can bring evil upon your souls without your consent. Guard well, therefore, the gates that Bunyan speaks of in his wonderful allegory—*The Holy War*—ear-gate and eye-gate. You know how you may be tempted through things that you hear as well as through things that you see. When you pray to-night, say you want to be a recruit in the Army of Jesus Christ. If you are in earnest there will come, as there came to Charlie when he saw the Union Jack, a feeling that you are pledged to serve under the greatest of banners—the banner of the Lord. Think what it would mean if every boy and girl here did this. When the big brothers come home, fathers and mothers would lift their hearts in thankfulness even in the midst of their sorrow: the blessings that have followed all the loss and the misery of the war would be uppermost in their minds. Even now the thoughts of good fathers and mothers turn to the story of the Cross of Jesus Christ; they remember that through that darkest deed in the world's history there came our salvation.

Contributions and Comments.

Ἀγάπη.

By a curious coincidence, the day which brought from the publishers copies of our *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* brought what seems new light on the most crucial word we deal with. Like Deissmann before us, Dr. Milligan and I had to rewrite a hopeful account of *ἀγάπη*, evidence having turned up in the proof stage disposing of a 'profane' citation of the word. We called attention to the substitution of *ἀγάπη* for *ἀγάπηοις*, as a back-formation from *ἀγαπάω*; and we noted that it presumably arose in some limited area, and was subsequently taken up as a needed substantive answering to the verb. To-day in reading the LXX of the Elijah story with a class I have come upon the nouns *συναντήν* (3 K 18^{16} also 4 K 2^{15} 5^{26}) and *ἀπαντήν* (3 K 20^{18}). Conybeare and Stock remark that A substitutes *συνάντηοιν*, as also *ἀπάντηοιν* in the last-named passage. Now *ἀντάω* is as little derived from '*ἀντή*' as *ἀγαπάω* from *ἀγάπη*, and it is clear that both groups must be explained in the same way. The interest of this parallel lies in the fact that the new nouns *συναντή* and *ἀπαντή* are still more restricted than *ἀγάπη*, being found only in the translator of 3 and 4 K. Perhaps some other instances of this dialectic tendency may be found if we look further.

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Salt.

Your note as to the impossibility of finding a connexion between the three utterances concerning 'salt' in Mk 9^{49} is so important, and the connexion or want of connexion implies so much, that I venture to make a suggestion. While admitting the verbal connexion between this and the preceding verses by the catchword 'fire,' I suggest that there is also a connexion of thought, and that the words were spoken by our Lord Himself in the order in which they are recorded by St. Mark, and that they embody a faithfully remembered transcript from the notes taken at what I venture to call the catechetical lectures given by the Apostles in Jerusalem, summed up as the doctrine or teaching of the Apostles (Ac 1^{42}). Not only is 'fire' the connecting word between v.^{42} and those which precede it, but the symbolic meaning of 'fire' indicates a profound revelation concerning the conditions of the future world, both in regard to the awful penalty for obstinate sin, and in regard to that corrective experience to which the best of departed souls must be subjected. This is implied by the word Κόδαοις, or corrective punishment, used in the description of the judgment scene (Mt 25^{46}). Fire, then, is the symbolic equivalent of Κόδαοις, and the fire that shall never be quenched is corrective punishment that fails. The figure is, of course, taken from the purifying fires of the Valley of Hinnom, and the fire is never quenched because