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climax of power in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, from which most of these inscriptions come. They were powerful throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine. It is interesting to find an Indo-European element in the pre-Israelite population of Palestine! The Hittites are to be regarded as prehistoric intermediaries between Europe and Asia. What we read of them in historical times comes from a time when they had long passed their prime.

I refrain from commenting upon this most important work, preferring merely to report. Clearly the work must undergo severe testing; and in happier days the Orientalists of all nations will be busy with a very new field, which takes us back to the very earliest period of our language group. Its bearing on Old Testament studies, if not very profound, is clear enough perhaps to justify me in offering the report to the readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

In the Study.

Resignation.

TOWARDS AN ANTHOLOGY.

CHARLES LAMB and DANTE.—There is a beautiful little sentence in the works of Charles Lamb concerning one who had been afflicted: 'He gave his heart to the Purifier, and his will to the Sovereign Will of the Universe.'[1] But there is a speech in the third canto of the *Paradiso* of Dante, spoken by a certain Piccarda, which is a rare gem. I will only quote this one line: '*In la sua volontade è nostra pace.*'[2] The words are few and simple, and yet they appear to me to have an inexpressible majesty of truth about them, to be almost as if they were spoken from the very mouth of God.—Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, i. 215.

W. E. GLADSTONE.—A summary of Mr. Gladstone's interpretation of it is perhaps found in a few words used by him of Blanco White, a heterodox writer whose strange spiritual fortunes painfully interested and perplexed him. 'He cherished,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'with whatever associations, the love of God, and maintained resignation to His will even when it appears almost impossible to see how he could have had a dogmatic belief in the existence of a divine will at all. There was, in short [in Blanco White], a disposition *to resist the tyranny of self; to recognise the rule of duty; to maintain the supremacy of the higher over the lower parts of our nature.*' This very disposition might with truth no less assured have been assigned to the writer himself. These three bright crystal laws of life were to him like pointer stars guiding a traveller's eye to the celestial pole by which he steers.—Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, i. 217.

JACOB BOEHME.—The *Will* of the *Desire* must bow itself down to the Earth, and bring itself into the *deepest Humility* and *most simple Ignorance*, and say, 'Thou art foolish, and hast nothing but the Grace of God.' Thou must wrap thyself up in *that Belief* with great *Humility*, and become *nothing* at all *in thyself*, and neither know nor love *thyself*. All that thou hast, or is in thee, must esteem itself as *nothing* but a *mere Instrument* of GOD; and thou must bring thy *Desire* only into GOD'S Mercy, and go forth from all *thy own* knowing and willing, and esteem it as nothing at all, nor even entertain any *Will* to enter into it again.—*Of True Resignation*, chap. ii.

GEORGE ELIOT.—Joy and peace are not resignation: resignation is the willing endurance of a pain that is not allayed—that you don't expect to be allayed. Stupefaction is not resignation: and it is stupefaction to remain in ignorance—to shut up all the avenues by which the life of your fellow-men might become known to you.—Philip Wakem, in *The Mill on the Floss*.

GOETHE.—The two great fundamental ideas running through *Die Wanderjahre* are work and resignation. Resignation means much. It means

[1] *Rosamund Gray*, chap. xi.

[2] Mr. Gladstone's rendering of the speech of Piccarda (*Paradiso*, iii. 70) is in the volume of collected translations (p. 165), under the date of 1835:

> In His Will is our peace. To this all things
> By Him created, or by Nature made,
> As to a central Sea, self-motion brings.

limitation, concentration. It is man's duty to limit his striving and to concentrate all his powers on the limited field. Resignation means the conquering of passions, means the giving up of many inherited and earned advantages, rights, and possessions. It transforms the man of impulses into a man of reason, the selfish man into a public-spirited man, the egoist into an altruist. It exerts such a profound influence on man's nature and development that Goethe considered it, next to work, the most important principle of life. Hence he gave the novel, which was to show forth the foundations of a prosperous individual and public life, the sub-title *The Resigned.* — Bielschowsky's *Life of Goethe*, iii. 195.

C. J. Littleton.—Resignation speaks of giving up your ideas, views, and opinions to the faith of your Holy Church, and not, like so many do, picking and choosing a truth here or a truth there, but affixing your signature, as it were, to all as you repeat your 'Amen' whenever you recite the Creed, and rehearse the articles of your Christian faith. It speaks of the surrender of your powers of understanding and knowledge to the teaching of the Catholic Church.—*The Handmaid of the Lord*, p. 23.

The Seven Words.

III.

Christ the Son.

Woman, behold thy son!
Behold thy mother!'—Jn 19[26. 27].

1. At the foot of the cross stood a group of women, in its heart the mother of the Crucified, by her side the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Of the others we know but little. His mother's sister, Salome, the wife of Zebedee, was mother of the beloved disciple who had led the little group of mourners, when the crowd had begun to disperse, right up to the cross, and now stood with them in silent sympathy. Did she think then of the words which had once humbled her pride in her two sons when she asked for thrones at the Lord's right hand in His kingdom? 'Can ye drink of the cup that I shall drink of?' He was drinking it to the dregs; but there stood her son prepared to drink it also, as he promised. No throne was in prospect for him on this earth, but in the humiliation of her regret over her past ambition she was still willing to give her sons to Him for service, whether in life or in death: an heroic mother, a disciplined saint.

Mary, the wife of Cleopas, may have shared in the wonder of that supper at Emmaus on the evening of the First Easter Day, when the Lord made Himself known to Cleopas and another in the breaking of bread. If so, she deserved it by this and perhaps many another service, when she and Salome and other women of Galilee had ministered to Him of their substance.

Mary Magdalene too, out of whom the Lord cast seven devils, of whose struggles for self-conquest we can only guess, but whose gratitude at least is patent and plain to view beneath the cross of Him who was her strength and her Redeemer.

2. The tearful face of the mother touched her Son, and called up perhaps visions of childhood, memories of the happy home at Nazareth, where care dwelt not, and love brooded, and the shadow of the cross was too distant to dash the sunlight that streamed over all. But the visions of the past died before the sight of the present. Before His mother's agony He forgot his own. The look of desolate and ravished love, of the despair that had quenched her once splendid hopes, of horror at the loneliness that was creeping into and poisoning her very life, pierced Him to the heart. He seemed to feel what it was to a mother so to lose such a Son; and so with richest tenderness He gave her one she could love for His sake, who himself would be comforted in loving the mother of the Master he loved. 'Woman, behold thy son!' was His word to Mary; 'Son, behold thy mother!' His charge to John. The world has loved Him the more for His filial love, and feels maternity the holier for His dutiful and beautiful Sonship.

¶ This secular provision is on a lower level—so we think—than the priestly prayer, the royal pardon. Yet a deeper spiritual insight will discern that the words are arranged in the true order of ascent. The Son of God comes nearest to our human life when He unites Himself with His faithful people in the familiar intercourse of home. He absolves the souls, for whom He intercedes, in order that He may walk with them in the house of God as friends, that He may come in and sup with them, that He may hallow their daily life by sharing its joys, its duties, its sorrows. For priesthood, as Christ interprets the mediatorial office, is not the interposition of some mysterious nature—more than human, less than Divine—between earth and heaven, but the taking of the Manhood into God.[1]

[1] J. G. Simpson, *Christus Crucifixus*, 265.

I.

Sonship, Divine and Human.

There are at least three distinct relationships which Christ maintained in His earthly life—His Divine relation to God; His redemptive relation to mankind; His human relation to His earthly parent and her seed. Now, in the two greater relations, which are of course the more important, we are in danger of forgetting altogether the third relation. If we ever lose sight of this third relation, we shall lose many very beautiful traits in the character of the Christ.

1. Is it not consolation to us that when the Son of God became Man, it was as the Son of Man? He entered into the world along the beaten track, taking His place as a child in the family, as a patriot in the nation, exhibiting to us how to live in the common relations of daily life. He was subject to His parents in the humble life of the Nazareth home. Of Jewish blood, He confined His labours to His own country and people, only touching incidentally the vast world beyond. By deliberate choice He limited the range of His human experience, and, through the narrowness of the conditions into which He thus entered, He reached the widest possible sweep.

2. As a Son He owed a duty to His mother He came as a true man under the law of God with regard to sons and mothers: it was His duty to love, honour, and succour His mother. He came into the world to show by His example what man should be, and what in particular sons should be. In His agony He sees her in her deep distress. He—what is He doing? He is bearing the sins of the whole world. She—what is she doing? She is watching her only Son suffer and die. We cannot compare the two: though Son and mother they are incomparable. We cannot compare their sufferings either; they are incomparable also. But he is Son and she is mother, and she is suffering; and the great Burden-Bearer must have a word of comfort to say to her. The days have passed for ever when He can personally minister to her, but He cannot leave her lonely, He must provide her with a protector and a stay, and He gives her in charge to the disciple whom He loves best.

3. The cross did not affect the sweet relationship between Christ and His Father. There was no sense of alienation, no feeling of rebellion, no wrath of condemnation, in the heart of Christ. Love triumphed over all earthly trials and pains, and kept the vision of the Father constantly before His eyes, and His trust in Him unshaken. His suffering was the Father's will, and He gladly and uncomplainingly submitted; and even though He was allowing Him to die upon the cross, He did not hesitate to approach Him with His request in the same familiar way as He had been wont to do in happier days. God was still His Father, whom He loved, and who, He knew, loved Him. His faith was unimpaired. His love was supreme.

Yet not even the agony of the cross could make Him forget His mother. As a boy He was obedient and dutiful, and as a man He was chivalrous and thoughtful. All through His life He was an obedient and a loving Son. And so His last will and testament, which we have in the Third Saying from the cross, shows us how self-forgetful and considerate He was, and how tenderly sympathetic and affectionate towards her who bore Him.

It is a most precious harmony of the first and the fifth commandments: the first commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and have none other god but Him'; and the fifth commandment, 'Honour thy father and mother.' And sometimes it is not easy to see how to carry out these two commandments, to give ourselves to God and to attend to our family duties. Here we have an example of the perfect solution of it. Look at the obedience which the Saviour's life sets before us, His own home life in the little village of Nazareth.

II.

The Legacy of Christ.

'Stripped of everything,' says Godet, 'Jesus seemed to have nothing more to give. Nevertheless, from the midst of this deep poverty He had already made precious gifts; to His executioners He had bequeathed the pardon of God, to His companion in punishment, paradise. Could He find nothing to leave to His mother and friend? These two beloved persons, who had been His most precious treasures on earth, He bequeathed to one another, giving thus at once a son to His mother and a mother to His friend.'

1. Who would have aught but words of praise had He concentrated every thought and word on the great redemption deed? Yet He lifts His eyes

to look upon His mother. A flood of recollection, we can boldly say of Him who took upon Him our nature, passed over Him. The home in Nazareth, in His vision, hid the walls of Jerusalem. The crooning of His mother's voice as she sung her lullaby to Him; the feel and pressure of His mother's arms; the tending of her care as His boyhood grew to strength; the reverent wondering of her mind as He bore more plainly the marks of His divinity, and the piercing of her heart as He strained forward to the cross—all came back to Him. Now also clear before Him rises the picture of her future. The widow's loneliness made more desolate, the whitened hair given another sorrow as it goes down to the grave, age feeling its failing strength, poverty and homelessness stinting her of the sweet comforts of life! He masters His agony, He refuses His groan, and in brief words, never forgotten by two of those who heard them, He said: 'Woman, behold thy son! . . . Son, behold thy mother!'

2. Jesus left the last and greatest legacy of love to those two whom He loved most in all the world when He bound their broken lives together in a new bond of mutual service. How the memory of Him they had loved lived on in that new home! How He must have dwelt with them always, a silent, invisible Presence more real than all things of sense—than the burning glory of days of sunlight, than the oppressive quiet of Eastern evenings, than the familiar stretch of hill and plain, than all Nature's customary framework in which their simple lives were set! And He dwelt with them all the more really because speech so often silenced itself in presence of the great theme that filled their hearts, because their hands were always full of ordinary work and their thoughts always engrossed in ordinary interests. It is so that God trains us for His heaven. More surely in the home than even in the Church, more fully in service than even in meditation, does the comfort of God's presence descend upon the aching hearts of His children.

¶ E. Horton speaks of going, when all was over, along with others of the family to hear the will read, and of the talk on the way home because they found that their only legacy was 'the cross.' 'What else,' they said one to another, 'had He to leave?'

No land, no home, not even a cave,
As Isaac had, to make His grave,
Had He; no place to lay His head,
Among the living or the dead.

No gold, no silver—to the bag
All went, that Judas carried; rag
Of clothing, none was left; the guard
Had all, and left Him not a shard.

His spirit, loosed from fleshly bands,
Bequeathed He to His Father's hands;
His body Joseph begged, and laid
In the new grave for Joseph made.

His mother I heard Him leave to John;
Only the cross He died upon,
Some nails, and thorns had He to leave
To us; then, brother, wherefore grieve?

(1) '*Woman, behold thy son!*'—There was not the least disrespect or coldness in the title by which He addressed her. Why did He not call her 'Mother'? Because the bands of this earthly life were being loosed, and now as before, while He recognized to the full all the duties of earthly sonship—reverence and obedience to her in His holy childhood and holy manhood—in their home at Nazareth, even before the first days of His public ministry, before the baptism which dedicated Him to His work, from His first visit to the Temple, He set before her One to whom He stood not in a temporal but in an eternal relation, His Heavenly Father.

The title was also significant of her prophetic relationship to the great event of Calvary. It was the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head. There were many mothers in Israel, but she was the woman who stood alone in the world as the chosen channel through whom the Redeemer should come into the world. Had Jesus called her 'Mother,' the title would have implied nothing more than the inferior love which a child has to a parent. The word 'Woman' gathered up into itself that love toward the human race which called forth the original promise that the seed of the woman should be the Conqueror. It summed up within itself the predestinating love whereby God from everlasting determined that the Divine life should come amongst men.

(2) '*Behold thy mother!*'—It was a great reward of John's fidelity and devotion to his Master that Jesus should thus place him in close personal succession to Himself. To His distressed disciple He gave a mother who would bestow in rich fullness the love and sympathy which his own loving heart demanded. And this blessing and comfort were to be cherished, protected, and loved by him. It was Christ's sacred trust to him, which he gladly

accepted. To minister unto those we love is love's greatest joy. How great must have been the pleasure of St. John when he was asked to guard that which was very dear to his suffering Master's heart! No greater token of His love could his Lord have given than the care of His mother.

III.

New Relationships in Christ.

It often happens in ordinary life that death separates acquaintances. But the reverse of this is seen in the death of Christ. The Virgin and St. John found their union in Him. His death, like the death of many others, might have severed their interest and ended their amity; but He determines that it shall be otherwise. His death is to accomplish a world-wide reconciliation, and to forge new links of love; to deepen attachments, not to sunder friendships; to invest with the sanctity of a new-born family tie all the relationships of life; to unite, not to divide. From His cross He proclaims that those who were not related before have found kinship in Him. 'Woman, behold thy son! . . . Son, behold thy mother!' And is not this the universal declaration of Christianity?

From the Third Word on the cross let us learn three things.

(1) *Consideration for others.*—Note the tender considerateness breathed in this saying. Suffering is proverbially selfish. It constrains all the sufferer's attention, and makes him live only in himself. We take no notice of a sharp word darted at us out from an agony, for when was pain considerate? On the cross.

¶ Watch Jesus Christ on the cross. Watch Him after that long morning of racking agony to nerve and to spirit. Wearied, worn, exhausted, dying, He sees His mother, and the disciple whom He loved. In His own bitter suffering, He sees how they are suffering; He thinks of them, He thinks of what would be a comfort and support to them. He thinks how He shall knit together the ties of love more closely between those whom He leaves behind. 'Woman, behold thy son! . . . Behold thy mother!'

(2) *Reverence for womanhood.*—Learn this lesson from the cross, from this message from the cross, that woman's love is a very holy thing, not only because it has the greatest effect upon life here, it is the greatest lever by which life is to be raised to the Divine height to which God would have it raised, but because it is eternal, because it lasts for ever. Let us see that we keep it holy, that we reverence it as it should be reverenced. Let us not drag it through the mire of the world's lust and passion. Let us remember that love is Divine in that human relationship, whatever that human relationship is. It is a Divine thing, for the Blessed Master Himself partook of it. He was made Man; He was a Son; He was born into this world to fulfil the duty of sonship, and He has for ever consecrated it. Let us see, we who are men especially, that we reverence it. Let us see that we place it upon the pedestal where it should be. Let us see that we surround it with the dignity and reverence with which it should be surrounded. Let us go back from the cross to-day strengthened to see in these human things Divine things as well.

No thyng ys to man so dere
As wommanys love in good manère.
A gode womman is mannys blys,
There her love right and stedfast ys.
There ys no solas under hevene
Of allë that a man may nevene
That shulde a man so mochë glew
As a gode womman that loveth true.
Ne derer is none in Goddis hurde
Than a chaste womman with lovely worde.[1]

(3) *The consecration of home life.*—Human society is founded upon the family, and the Christian family takes its root from the cross. There it was re-made, there it was re-created, there it received a new and more complete sanction than ever it had before.

The family is the true unit of human life. Nations rise and fall with the value which they set upon it. It was virtuous family life that made Old Rome great. With the decay of institutions modelled on the old lines and cemented by familiar patriotism, Rome's greatness came to an end. Rome's Empire was doomed. Our own England has become great under God's providence in the history of the modern world. We can trace our greatness to the same cause. Our national heroes and our foremost statesmen have been trained in the inner circle of family life for the greater tasks of public life. Woe betide us if we ever sink from this ideal.

¶ Christ on the cross has made the Christian home and sanctified the relation of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister. At the request of Jesus, John took Mary to his home. Indeed, Christ on the cross has made every destitute woman 'My mother,' and every destitute man 'My brother,' and every destitute boy 'My child.' The ancient

[1] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, in *The Pilgrim's Way*, 97.

place, where the family abode, was cheerless and cold. The father was a tyrant, the mother a slave, the children chattels. In all classic poetry there is no reference to the pleasures of childhood, and for the very good reason that in pagan lands the child had little pleasure. Mother and home, which we now associate with heaven, were born of God through the pangs of Christ on the cross.[1]

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Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

Christmas.

1916.

'The true light.'—Jn 1[9].

What would the world be without Christmas? Year after year it comes round, and brings joy to everybody, especially to boys and girls. Children who have everything to make them happy look forward to its coming, but I think that the poor ones and those who are sick love it best of all.

Yet to the great World the little Babe in His humble cradle at Bethlehem was nothing. It was only among the angels that His coming made any stir. We know that certain good men who were shepherds, and lived more in heaven than on earth, got a glimpse of them as they sang their song of welcome.

Those shepherds, we may be sure, would count back to that night all their lives. But they were not the sort of men to write down dates. They just thought and spoke to each other about what they had seen and heard.

To many of their children, Jesus became 'all in all.' Some of them, we may be sure, heard Him speak, and they could never forget it. On from generation to generation the story of His birth was passed. As was natural, those who loved Jesus wanted by and by to commemorate His birthday; but the shepherds had kept no count of the days, and the exact date of it was uncertain. Wasn't it good, however, that there were people wise enough to choose the twenty-fifth of December as a suitable day on which to think of Jesus having come to earth as a little baby?

We in this country at least must think them wise. Let me tell you how that is so. You have heard your mother speak of the shortest day. It falls about the twentieth of December. After that there follow three or four days of practically the same length. But on the twenty-fifth, the sun rises a little earlier, and goes on rising earlier each day till midsummer is reached. On Christmas day a wonderful change begins. A new ray of light finds its way down through the dark damp earth and dead leaves. It stays there; and day by day more light, and yet more light, comes, and all around there is heaving and straining and swelling. Not long ago, I read somewhere that if our ears were only quick enough we should hear something of what goes on then. Everywhere, in the bulbs, in the plants, in the shrubs, and in the trunks of the trees new life flows, until the new and the old together break through in the beauty of spring. There is glory everywhere: in the fields, by the riverside, and in the gardens. What better day therefore than the twenty-fifth of December could

[1] A. C. Dixon, *Milk and Meat*, 249.

have been chosen as the birthday of Him who is the Light of the World?

But winter comes back again, as we all know; everything seems to die then; it is dark and cold and dreary. Kingsley tells of an old man who 'minded but two things in all the world, and those were his birds and his Bible.' When the autumn winds began to blow, and the migratory birds plumed their wings for their long southern flight, the old man would toddle out on the moor, leaning heavily on his stick the while, take off his cap to them, and wish them a merry journey and a safe return. Then he gathered up some of the feathers they had left, and went back to read and knit by his winter fire, and wait patiently for his feathered companions.

I believe that to you boys and girls the Christmas parties of a few years ago seem now like a dream. How full of rollicking fun they were. You danced, you sang, and you played all the old-fashioned games you could remember. You had no thought of care.

In looking forward to Christmas this year, there comes a feeling of winter. Outside it is dull and dreary: in the house, father is more solemn than he used to be, mother is often sad. Why not be like the old man with the birds' feathers?—keep the memory of those old happy Christmas days and wait patiently. Spring will come back again.

But I have a better thing to say to you even than that. The angels have been round about; and to many people the world in which they dwell has seemed nearer than ever before. What we read about the shepherds on the fields of Bethlehem might be a story of yesterday. Boys on the battle-field have spoken softly to each other of an angel comrade, who brought peace and eased pain. Many strange things have happened, and are happening. You know that in France and in Belgium, where our men are fighting, there are a great many images of Jesus Christ. It is a very solemn thing to know that when churches have been utterly destroyed by men who cared not, these images have remained untouched, as if guarded by an unseen hand.

At one village there was no church left at which the people could keep their midnight Christmas festival, so they met in the snow outside. One of them said afterwards to a chaplain: 'The good father saw Him—he saw Him on His throne, above where the altar stood, and a shining crown upon His head, and His little hand uplift to bless.'

Boys and girls, Jesus the Light of the World lives, and He will yet dispel the darkness that to you is like that of a long dreary winter. This Christmas, He wants you to remember all the happy past, and set your faces to go forward. The swallow is not afraid to set out over the great ocean. It does not know where it is going: God leads it. A famous philosopher once said: 'I hold that God who keeps His word with the swallows and the fishes in their migratory instincts will keep His word with man.' And, be assured, He will keep His word with boys and girls. Listen to this little prayer:

> Behold what mists eclipse the day!
> How dark it is! shed down one ray
> To guide us out of this dark night
> And say once more, 'Let there be light.'

II.

Old Iron.

'Bright iron.'—Ezk 27^{19}.
'Rust.'—Mt 6^{19}.

To-day I have chosen two texts and I have brought them both with me. The first is 'bright iron,' and here you have a nice, bright, sharp pen-knife. The other is the enemy of bright iron. Now, of course, bright iron has just one enemy—that is 'rust,' so I have brought a bit of old rusty iron I picked up on a rubbish-heap.

Which of those two things looks best, and which do you think is of most use? There isn't much doubt about the answer, is there? Of course it is the bright, clean pen-knife. But if you don't take proper care of your pen-knife it may soon look just like this piece of rusty old iron.

What is it that makes iron rust? Scientists will tell you that it is something in the air that acts upon the surface of the iron burning or oxidizing it. If there is water present this process takes place more easily, so that if you leave an iron article out of doors on a wet day it will rust much more readily than on a fine day. If you don't take trouble to remove the rust it will gradually eat away the iron.

Now people as well as iron can rust. They are not meant to rust. They are meant to be bright and useful, but if they will allow the rust to form,

and will not take the trouble to remove it, of course all their brightness and usefulness is spoiled.

There are two ways in which rust forms on iron —first, from want of use; and second, from want of care.

1. First, rust forms from *want of use*. If you lay past an iron or steel article for some time, the chances are you will find it covered with rust when you take it out again. But if you keep on using it, it stays clean and bright. Now it's just like that with the gifts God gives us. He has given us hands to work with, but if we don't employ them they will become clumsy and useless. He has given us minds to think with, but if we don't cultivate them they will become stupid and dull. He has given us hearts to love and sympathize with, but if we don't use them they will become hard and cold.

One great enemy of usefulness is *laziness*. Sometimes we think it is very hard to have to go to school and learn difficult lessons. But it is just by learning these hard lessons that we are keeping our minds bright and free from rust. And when we learn to do anything with our hands we sometimes grow impatient at having to repeat the same thing over and over again, but it is just that drudgery that is making them clever for more difficult work.

I read the other day about a gentleman who was very much interested in a boy. He wanted to help him, so he asked his head gardener to take him into the garden and teach him gardening. Some time after he met the gardener and inquired how his young friend was getting on. 'Oh, he's getting on,' replied the gardener. 'There he is at his favourite job, and it just suits him exactly—chasing the snails off the path!' Now, if we are lazy and won't take pains to learn, the rust will soon grow on us; and rust, you know, clogs wheels and stops progress. If we are idle we shall never get much further than that lazy snail of a boy who spent his time chasing his brother-snails off the path.

The other great enemy of usefulness is *selfishness*. You remember the story of the man who had only one talent and who went and hid it in the ground. That man had many faults, but his biggest one was selfishness. He kept his talent all to himself. Now God endows us all with gifts, and He means us to use them and make the most of them. To some people He gives strength, to some brains, to some wealth, to some just ordinary common sense and a sound body. But whatever His gifts may be, He means us to use them for the sake of others. They are not really ours to keep: we have them on trust from Him, and if we allow them to grow rusty from want of use then we are abusing His trust.

2. But, second, rust forms from *want of care*. If you put away your bicycle in the winter or your skates in the summer without drying them and rubbing in some grease, you need not expect to take them out again bright and shining. If you leave your bicycle out in the rain for days on end you must look for a little rust on the handle-bars. And if we don't take preventive measures to keep ourselves bright, the ugly red rust of all kinds of faults will grow on us.

When the *Great Eastern* was laying the big cable across the Atlantic to America she received frequent messages from the shore. At first these messages reached the ship quite clear and distinct, but gradually they grew fainter and fainter. Then they became jumbled and broken, and at last they ceased altogether.

So the men on the ship knew there must be something wrong with the cable, and they hauled it up. They found that a little crack had come on the wire, then rust had got in and eaten away the wire, until at last the crack became too wide for any message to pass. Not until the cable had been mended could any message be sent along.

And so if you have been careless and allowed the rust of selfishness, or ill-temper, or pride to grow and spoil your usefulness, you must get it put right. And how shall we get it put right? By taking these faults to God and asking Him for Jesus' sake to forgive them and help us to get the better of them.

Outside a smithy you have often seen bits of old iron—old ploughs, old harrows, odds and ends of all kinds, all more or less rusty. If you asked the blacksmith what he was going to do with them he would probably tell you that some of the things had been brought to him to sharpen or mend, but others he was going to melt down to make into horse shoes or other useful articles.

Some of us may just need sharpening and polishing to get the rust away, some of us may have to begin all over again; but of one thing we may be sure, if we put ourselves in God's hands, He will do what is best for us and turn us out beautiful, spotless 'bright iron.'

III.

If Jesus had never been Born.

In the Bible, Old Testament and New, the Rev. Charles Brown has been digging for *Hidden Treasure* (Hodder & Stoughton; 3s. 6d. net). And old as the quarry is and well worked, he has found many things that are new. Nor do they suffer by the setting which he gives them. This is the treasure for Christmas.

The great joy of the last month of the year is Christmas, and of all the things to think of at that merry season, we should think most of all of what we owe to Jesus Christ. I wonder whether you ever try to think what the world would be like *if He had never been born*, and of the vast difference which He has made. We cannot tell *all* that would have happened, of course, but we can think of some things.

There would have been the Jewish religion, which has much that is true and noble and helpful about it; and there would have been the heathen faiths, with their sad and cruel and degrading customs. But what a dark world it would have been! We should not have learned to think of God as our Heavenly Father, good and tender and loving, caring for every little child, whatever its nation or the colour of its skin. We should not have known about the life beyond death, which Jesus called the Father's House of many mansions, with all its joys and peace and brightness. These are the greatest things that the coming of Jesus has brought to us.

But you know that He has made this world a much brighter and more beautiful place in many ways. When He was born, the greatest power in the world was the Roman Empire, and we are told, for one thing, that under that Empire at least half the people were slaves, bought and sold like cattle, or like tools, or like pots and pans. Slaves had no rights. When they grew old, they were sometimes rowed out to an island in the Tiber and left there to die of starvation. We may say with perfect truth that Jesus made slavery impossible, because He taught that God loved every man, even the poorest, and when men came to believe that, they could not neglect or treat cruelly those whom God loved. The abolition of slavery is really due to Christian people. The champions and advocates of freedom in Jamaica and America were mostly Christian men and women. Under the old Roman Empire women and children often fared little better than slaves. Leaving children exposed that they might die, and killing children where they were unwelcome, was quite a common custom, and not a crime, as it is with us.

You have only to think of the position of women and girl-children in heathen and Mohammedan countries like China and India, of the difference between an Indian zenana and a Christian home, to see how much Jesus has done for children. There was never a hospital in China till Christian people started them, nor anywhere else. And as for orphanages, where fatherless and destitute children are sheltered and kindly cared for, and taught, and fitted for the work of life, they are entirely Christian institutions. Heathenism has never built one.

Of course, if Jesus had not been born there would have been none of the sweet and beautiful stories of the Gospels, of Jesus blessing little children, of His kindness to troubled people, of His tender love for the little ones, and His great words about them; none of the wonderful parables, none of the great letters of St. Paul, and no St. Paul at all, and none of the beautiful activities which have flowed from the Church ever since, no Sunday schools, no singing of Christian hymns. Think of what the world would be if all these were blotted out. It is well that we should think of these things sometimes, because they are simple facts that no one can dispute, and that we may realize that the world owes a great debt to Jesus Christ. Care for the sick and suffering, care for little children and old and poor people, compassion and kindness, we learn all these from Jesus our Lord as from no one else, and it is very certain that the world would have been unspeakably poorer and darker and more miserable if He had not come.

When we think of these things, what should we do? Well, first of all, we should thank God. No day in our lives should be allowed to pass in which we do not thank God for what St. Paul calls His unspeakable gift. And then surely we should try to realize that Jesus is still living and at work in the world. He has still a great deal to do. He still desires to bless children, and heal the sick, and comfort old and troubled folk; to bring peace and happiness to sad lives.

And He wants boys and girls and men and women to help Him. We read that in the days of His flesh He called twelve that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to help and bless others. That is just what He is doing to-day. He is calling us. He wants to make us like Himself, to fill us with His spirit, that we may help Him to make the world a better place—less sad, less selfish, less foolish and sinful. I am quite sure that is true, and I pray that you may hear His voice and obey His call, and become His loving disciples and servants.

Point and Illustration.

The Blessings of Suffering.

Canon Scott Holland has written an Introduction to the English translation of the Abbé Félix Klein's 'Memories and Reflections of a French Army Chaplain.' The title is *Hope in Suffering* (Melrose; 4s. 6d. net). The Introduction promises good fare, and we are not disappointed. Certainly the atmosphere is different from ours, as Dr. Scott Holland says. The Abbé Félix Klein tells some stories of his ministrations to the suffering,—pathetic enough and pathetic always,—and then he offers us some 'Reflections' on the Problem of Evil, the Fruits of Sacrifice, The Place of Self-Sacrifice in the Common Life, Atonement, The Rewards and Punishments of the Future Life, Grief, Sufferers for a Righteous Cause, Lux in Tenebris, The Blessings of Suffering. From the last Reflection we may take this:

'It has often been said that this war, through the very sufferings that it entails and in spite of its cruelty, brings a precious leaven of regeneration into many souls. If it were possible to publish them, I could give many instances which would clearly demonstrate this from what I have seen in the life of the hospital. But I would rather dwell on a well-known example, the striking case of Rupert Brooke, an English poet of twenty-three, who died at Lemnos while on active service.

'A friend sent me yesterday the *ultima verba* of this young writer, five beautiful sonnets. She wrote—and she is a very good judge—"He belonged until lately to the most modern school of our young poets; their tone was self-indulgent, cynical, distinctly non-moral, and quite anti-Christian. But when war broke out Rupert Brooke was one of the first to volunteer. These five sonnets which I am sending you will show you the new spirit which was awakened in him by this act of self-sacrifice."

'What will a man like this say about suffering, which he has always looked upon as the worst enemy; and about the war, in which, after terrible hardships, he was to meet his death? He will actually welcome these hard trials as the messengers of divine kindness, and he will not know how to thank Heaven enough for having made him share in them. His feelings can be judged by the first sonnet, whose title alone, *Peace*, is in itself a revelation:

Now God be thanked, Who has matched us with His hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping.

'The second sonnet, *Safety*, sings of the security of the warrior:

Secretly armed against all death's endeavour:
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

'The third sonnet, *The Dead*, reveals still more fully the new and glorious light which the great ordeal had shed upon his soul:

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.

'The fourth sonnet has again the title *The Dead*, and the fifth *The Soldier*. Under new imagery, the inspiration is the same. From the first line to the last there shines out, illuminated by the surrender of his life, the magnificent assertion of the joys of sacrifice.

'He has expressed, but with greater right to do so, the same idea as that of a French poet, who, however, had not the blessing of working his own redemption: "Blessed art Thou, O my God, Who givest us suffering as the divine cure for our impurities, as the best and purest essence to prepare strong souls for the joys of heaven."'

Men from the East.

In *Mandarin and Missionary in Cathay* (Seeley; 5s. net), Mr. E. F. Borst-Smith, F.R.G.S., tells the

story of twelve years' strenuous missionary work during stirring times mainly spent in Yenanfu, a prefectural city of Shensi, North China, and gives a review of its history from the earliest date.

He is not overwhelmed with the responsibilities of his work, nor have the numerous wars and rumours of wars he has come through shaken his nerve. He writes confidently, and he writes joyfully. If the sketch of the history of the city and district of Yenanfu is too short for much good, the narrative of personal experience is full and thrilling enough. This is how he tells of the coming of Buddhism to China:

'A Chinese emperor of A.D. 62 had a dream, in which he was advised to send messengers in the direction of the setting sun, where, if they continued their journey far enough, they would find a religion that would bring great happiness to China. The emperor, "not disobedient to the heavenly vision," selected suitable messengers, and instructed them to proceed westwards from the then capital of China (the present Sianfu, in Shensi), and not to return until they had brought back with them the new faith of his dream.

'The men travelled on until at last they reached India, and when they saw the great cities of that land, and the gorgeous religious ritual in use throughout it, they naturally concluded that they had reached their goal, and that in Buddhism the emperor would find the realisation of his dream.

'This is another of the innumerable examples to be found in Chinese history of "arrested progress." The messengers went far, but not far enough. The good, as so often happens, proved the enemy of the best. Would that they had still pursued their journey in the direction of the setting sun. They would have arrived, as did the Magi a few years earlier, at the place where the fullest revelation was to be found.

'Their conclusion, however, was natural enough, and they returned to Shensi with a number of Buddhist priests and a large selection of sacred literature for the Court of the sovereign. From that time Buddhism became one of the recognised religions of the Celestial Empire.'

Yet will I not Forget.

'Dr. James Martineau's first child died in infancy and was buried in the French cemetery at Dublin. Before they quitted Ireland for Liverpool the father and mother paid a farewell visit to the grave of their first-born. The years went by, and it became Martineau's sacred duty to guide the descending steps of his beloved wife "over whatever grass and flowers could be found, and to soothe the last embrace with the inward calm of trust and love." At the age of eighty-seven he was a lonely old man. But when he was attending the tercentenary of Dublin University, he stole away from the brilliant public functions to stand once more by the tiny grave that held the dust of his first-born child. No other living soul recalled that little one's smile, or remembered where the child was sleeping. But the father knew, and the little buried hands held his heart! This was fatherhood unable to forget. And we remember that the Lord Jehovah said to His people by the mouth of the prophet, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands."'

This touching illustration is taken from a new exposition of the Lord's Prayer by the Rev. Frank Johnson. To illustrate the Prayer is one of Mr. Johnson's deliberate desires, and he has the material as well as the discernment for it. But he has expounded the Prayer also. And yet it is a very small book. The title is *The Disciples' Prayer* (Scott; 1s. net).

Non-Resistance?

The portrait of Dr. Caroline Matthews, who writes the book entitled *Experiences of a Woman Doctor in Serbia* (Mills & Boon; 5s. net), shows us a refined sensitive woman, unlikely to attempt difficult enterprises, unlikely to succeed in them if attempted. But the book reveals a woman who dared and did things in which no man had the hardihood to stand beside her. She was left absolutely alone, at her own urgent request, in a Serbian village, while all foreigners fled before the approach of the Germans and Austrians. And when the 'Huns' came she suffered for it. She suffered, but she never gave in. At last they sent her off to Belgrade with the accusation of espionage. And out of even that hopeless position she rescued herself. At last she found her way to Switzerland and to home, pursued to the very footboard of the train by police agents. She had

to send the last of them out to the platform after the train had started. Dr. Caroline Matthews 'took nothing lying down.'

'One evening a nasty little episode occurred. It happened when the room was crowded.

'"The English people are pigs!" shouted a German soldier, stopping before me. He repeated the words in English and German with a bang of the fist on my table.

'The fellow's estimation of the English people did not worry me, but all conversation ceased in the room. Everyone's attention was drawn to our corner.

'"*The English King is a Pig!*" shouted the man, more loudly, more defiantly.

'There was a significant silence. The other men waited breathlessly to see what the prisoner would do. Frequently my uniform had served as a great protection since the German occupation of the little Slav state. But now, an insult to our King, and I sitting there in khaki? Had I been in the most feminine attire I could not have let it pass.

'Something had to be done.

'Throw some article at the man to stop his filthy words? Things lay to hand on the table, but in a flash I saw the futility of what would amount to a public-house brawl.

'I stood up and looked at the fellow with all the contempt I could muster.

'"Are there any *Hungarian gentlemen* present?" I asked, as quietly as I could, and looking up and down the room.

'It was a happy thought!

'Chairs were pushed aside. Several blue-coated men came forward.

'"This man has insulted my King; will you please put him out?" my words could be heard all over the room, but my voice was not raised.

'But now several Germans pressed forward and the Hungarians hung back. They were timorous of interfering.

'Things were looking nasty. I could not let the matter drop, even if I wished to do so. The German meant mischief. He was explaining what he would do if only he had the prisoner in his hands—and his gestures were expressive of wringing a human neck.

'He began again:

'"The — English King. . . ." He got no further. Of course, it was utterly ridiculous to attempt to fight the man. One blow and I would be sent sprawling. But surely among all those Austrians and Hungarians, surely there would be one who retained an instinct of chivalry sufficient to interfere and prevent a woman from being badly mauled.

'Besides it was not possible to let that German speak foul words of His Majesty.

'There was no choice.

'There was only the one thing to be done. I went up to the fellow. "You coward!" And slapped him on his mouth.

'A Red Cross man pressed forward. In an instant he had grasped the facts of the case, in another he and the exponent of hate were locked in each other's arms, swaying together while we all looked on and wondered, another minute and the fellow was flying through the door.

'The Red Cross man was not content with merely doing me this service. He came up with a friend, apologized, shook hands, and we sat down together for supper.

'"Surely you are not German?" I asked later, surprised at his courtesy and at the feeling which prompted him to range himself on the side of the minority, and that minority a prisoner of war.

'He was not. He was a Pole, a Pole obliged to serve in the army of the Huns.'

Sympathy.

Mr. W. H. S. Aubrey, LL.D., was a force to be reckoned with in his day—politically, socially, ethically. He wrote and he lectured. A selection from his lectures and writings has been made by his daughter. The title is *In Memoriam: W. H. S. Aubrey, LL.D.* (Elliot Stock; 2s. 6d. net). The ideas are not so fresh as once they were, but they are sensible and will always require reiteration. We shall quote the last paper in the volume. Its subject is Sympathy:

'There is a wonderful and irresistible power in genuine sympathy. No one, however insignificant in his own esteem, likes to think of himself as neglected or as an object of indifference. His peculiar trials and difficulties are as real and as great to him as those of others are to them, and a kindly interest manifested at the time will help him to bear his trials and surmount his difficulties like a brave, true man.

'Some sorrows must be borne alone and in silence. The help of friends, however willing they

may be, cannot avail. Physical weariness and pain, the shadow flung by the Angel of Death, the rankling sting of ingratitude, undeserved reproach and contumely, must be endured by those to whom they come. The best of earthly friends cannot share them. There are wounds which Time and the Grace of God alone can heal. Yet even in such matters the sympathy of genuine friendship is like precious ointment, soothing by its gentle application.

'Sympathy need not be always expressed in words, nor are deeds essential. The two words "Jesus wept" convey a deeper and more tender assurance of the Saviour's sympathy with His bereaved friends at Bethany than any long and laboured paraphrase. A look, a pressure of the hand are often eloquent in their silence. True refinement and delicacy shrink from obtruding verbal assurances or fussy deeds, yet the kindly feeling within will be understood by that secret power which men call affinity, and is a source of untold strength when the heart is sore and the spirit is sinking.

'Genuine sympathy differs from mere politeness. The latter affects an interest and a concern which it does not feel. It forms part of the small change in the conversational coin of modern society, but its intrinsic value is very little. The former asserts itself out of the true love within and does not wait to be sought, but spontaneously comes forth when occasion demands. If needs be, it will stoop to things of low degree, and it prompts to the denial of comfort and ease if thereby the object of sympathy can be helped or cheered. It is ready either for active work or passive waiting, for words of solace or for the quietness of watching.

'It is one thing, and often a very easy thing, to give money, and its bestowal is sometimes a cheap way of salving conscience, but there is a comfort that no money can bring. The most precious and the only lasting gilding is that imparted, not by gold but by love. The gold should not be lacking when the ability exists and when the love prompts, but there are seasons of holy grief when the bruised and bleeding spirit craves sympathy and tenderness and turns away from the glitter of money.'

Lifting Up.

Faith in Practice (Scott; 1s. net) is the title which has been given by the Rev. Richard Wood-Samuel to a book of sermons. It suggests St. Paul's words, 'Faith which worketh through love.' But, although the title is 'Faith in Practice,' every sermon in the volume is occupied directly with faith in God. Mr. Wood-Samuel begins with Prayer, which he says, most truly, must be with faith. He divides his sermon on prayer into four parts each occupied with the phrase 'lifting up,' suggested by the Office for the Holy Communion.

'(1) *The Lifting up of the Eyes.*—The first thing is to look towards God; to *see* God, that is, to have an inward vision of Him. The Psalmist realized this—Ps. cxxi. 1: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Ps. cxxiii. 1: "Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens." There is an inward vision which may be ours—a seeing God now, as a present reality, though it needs concentration for its experience. "The pure in heart shall see God," is the promised blessing; and it is possible to become pure in heart now.

'(2) *The Lifting up of the Thoughts.*—The next thing is to *think* of God; to have the mind fixed upon Him. Again the Psalmist has reference to this, and St. Paul—Ps. x. 4: "God is not in all his thoughts." 1 Cor. xiv. 15: "I will pray with the understanding also." In drawing near to God we must certainly think about Him; and more than this, our minds should be clear of all material things, so that thought may be fixed entirely upon the spiritual. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is *stayed* upon Thee."

'(3) *The Lifting up of the Hands.*—Further, the Holy Book has reference to the "lifting up of the hands," *i.e.* for prayer; and so the next thing is to *speak* to God. This brings us closer to God. Again the Psalmist and St. Paul—Ps. cxli. 2: "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." 1 Tim. ii. 8: "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." We are bidden to pray, "lifting up holy hands"—hands stretched forth with empty palms before God; with no suggestion of bringing to Him any merit of our own—"Nothing in my hands I bring; simply to Thy Cross I cling"—open hands, ready to receive the blessings which God alone can bestow; but more especially "holy" hands; hands "washed in innocency"; clean hands, free from blood or defilement; hands

which have done no hurt, but which are ready to soothe, to comfort, and support others; hands ever active in the service of the Lord.

'(4) *The Lifting of the Heart, i.e.* the surrender of the affections; and so the last, but most important thing of all, is to *love* God. This brings us closest to God. We look to God; we think about Him; we draw closer and speak to Him; but we are closest of all when we love Him. Again the Holy Scriptures—1 Chron. xxii. 19: "Set your heart . . . to seek the Lord your God" (David). 2 Chron. xvii. 6: "His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord" (Jehoshaphat). The heart that loves should direct the lips that speak. Is the heart right? should be the great question for us, whenever we desire to approach the God who is Love, in prayer. He claims the whole of man—body, soul, and spirit. He claims our attention, our thoughts, our service, and our love. He would have us ever be lifting up the heart, He would have us fix our thoughts upon Him; to depend upon Him, and to supplicate Him; but beyond and above all, He claims our affections—the homage of the heart.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear Lord, Who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

'The lifting up of the eyes is Concentration, of the thoughts Meditation, of the hands Supplication, of the heart Devotion.'

Prayer in War-time.

By the Rev. James Donald, D.D., Keithhall.

'Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.'—Ps 55^{17}.

The writer of the Psalm is not prescribing hours of prayer when he says this. In like manner, the writer of the 119th Psalm is not prescribing set times of praise when he says, 'Seven times a day do I praise thee.' But although they are not laying down a rule, they are affording an example. Prayer, as praise, is to be a habitual daily practice. It is to be practised when we lie down and when we rise up. And if we add to our morning prayer, prayer at noon, when we are 'bearing the burden and heat of the day,' we shall be adding another important aid to the life of personal religion.

This Psalm is remarkable for the variety of moods that find expression in it. When the writer says, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee,' he seems to be addressing his own soul, and saying to it, 'Be still, my soul, the Lord is on thy side.' His soul is a troubled soul: it is disquieted and agitated in no ordinary degree. A friend with whom he used to have religious fellowship has turned false and treacherous. He is outspoken in his indignation and reprobation of the wrong. And observe that it is to God that he speaks out what he feels. This teaches us that not only the offering up of our desires unto God, but our speaking to Him in a direct and plain manner of all that concerns us, is true prayer. 'Evening, and morning, and at noon,' says the Psalmist, 'will I pray, and cry aloud'; or, as the words mean in Hebrew, 'will I complain and moan.' He goes with all his woes to the Fountain of Comfort.

I think there is a resemblance between the Psalmist's situation and ours. Germany and we were united by the common bonds of race and religion. There is a sense in which we 'walked unto the house of God in company'; for in our Confessions of Faith we were in fundamental agreement. There are German hymns in our hymnaries: many of our Psalm tunes are German. As fellow-students of Scripture, we valued each other's help. But now we are completely estranged. This is Germany's doing. It is the outcome of ill intentions now revealed, but long cherished by her present rulers and statesmen. Consider what the Psalmist says about the man who had forsworn his friendship, and had turned to become his enemy and aggressor. 'He hath put forth his hands against such as were at peace with him; he has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.' In their bearing upon what Germany's rulers have proved themselves to be,