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forgets its 'sins.' The sob of the penitent is in it. It is the speech of a man who knows where and how and when he has done amiss, and with his finger on the ugly things of his own past cries aloud, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' And the grace of God which has so often made His heroes out of broken lives wrought mightily in Donne, transforming a 'magnificent rebel' not indeed into the 'crystal-hearted saint' of Walton's page, but into 'a still more brilliant and powerful servant.'

III.

Donne's 'abilities and industry in his profession,' writes Walton, 'were so eminent, and he so known and so beloved by persons of quality, that within the first year of his entry into sacred Orders, he had fourteen advowsons of several benefices presented to him: but they were in the country, and he could not leave his beloved London, to which place he had a natural inclination, having received both his birth and education in it, and there contracted a friendship with many, whose conversation multiplied the joys of his life.' There seems good reason for doubting the story of the 'fourteen advowsons,' but there is no mistake about Donne's attachment to London. A few facts will illustrate the intimacy of the great preacher's tie with the city of his birth and of his choice.

He was born in or near Bread Street, off Cheapside—John Milton's Street—and within a stone's-cast of the famous Mermaid Tavern. The chief scene of his ministry was old St. Paul's. In the modern cathedral, against the wall of the south choir aisle, stands his strange effigy, the sole memorial, it is said, of the old cathedral which perished in the Great Fire.[1] Still going west we come to the site, now occupied by the Congregational Memorial Hall, on which stood the old Fleet prison of which, for his indiscreet marriage with the daughter of Sir George More, Donne was for a time an inmate. At Lincoln's Inn he was preacher—or 'Divinity reader' as it was called—for five years, before becoming Dean of St. Paul's. Hard by is the church of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, where Izaak Walton was vestryman and Donne for seven years vicar. A few yards still further west is the church of St. Clement Danes where lies his patient, weariful wife, the mother of his twelve children. And finally, to close without completing the list, on or near the site of the Olympic Theatre stood Drury House, in which, when his fortunes were at their lowest ebb, Donne received from its owner, Sir Robert Drury, hospitality and friendship.

[1] 'It is the long, gaunt, upright figure of a man, wrapped close in a shroud, which is knotted at the head and feet, and leaves only the face exposed—a face wan, worn, almost ghastly, with the eyes closed as in death. This figure is executed in white marble, and stands on an urn of the same, as if it had just arisen therefrom. The whole is placed in a black niche, which, by its contrast, enhances the death-like paleness of the shrouded figure. Above the canopy is an inscription recording that the man whose effigy stands beneath, though his ashes are mingled with western dust, looks toward Him whose name is the Orient' (Lightfoot).

In the Study.

The Seven Words.

V.

Christ the Human Sufferer.

'I thirst.'—Jn 19[28].

1. Our Lord has been hanging six hours on the cross, and yet this is the first word which makes any reference to His bodily sufferings, the first which implies any sort of request for their alleviation. It is a single word—a short word of two syllables only—this fifth word which He utters. It may have been that He had no power to say more, that His tongue clave to the roof of His mouth, and that His voice failed Him for thirst. The end is very close now, there is very little more that He has to do. He knows that all things are now finished, and soon He will say, 'It is finished.' Now, in order that the Scriptures might be accomplished, He saith, 'I thirst.'

The Scriptures referred to are no doubt the 22nd Psalm, as thus: 'My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death'; and, again, the 69th Psalm, with its still more distinct outline of what actually came to pass at the Crucifixion: 'They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me

vinegar to drink.' Extreme as was the anguish of this thirst, it is probable that if these words of prophecy had not given licence and liberty to Him, had not, as it were, solicited this utterance from Him, He would have refused to embody it in words, and no outward voice would have told what He was inwardly enduring.

2. There is a natural sequence between this word and the last. That was the voice of soul-loneliness; it was uttered when the conflict was at its fiercest point, when the crisis had been reached; and the seat of that conflict was the soul. That crisis had now passed, and, with a natural sequence, Christ becomes conscious of His distressing physical condition. While the mental and spiritual conflict had lasted, He had not felt fully the agony of the body. There is a strange law of precedence which sometimes comes into play in our human nature. The body, though in distress, can be for a season forgotten, because of great mental engrossment or anguish. Sudden intelligence of danger or distress has been known to banish physical pain; there was, so to speak, no mind to notice the distressing intelligence from the body. Soldiers have fought through the long fight, and have scarcely been conscious of wounds received in the fray; but when the battle was over, then they became aware of their wounds and the painfulness of them.

So with the Christ. While He was fighting with the forces of hell, and compassing the salvation of men, He had no time to feel His physical pain and suffering. It was only when the conflict had passed, and the storm had begun to abate, that He commenced to feel the sharp pain of His bodily suffering, and cried, 'I thirst.'

3. But there was more than the instinctive cry of pain in those words. There was the appeal of human weakness for help. The greatness of our Lord's nature was never more divinely revealed than in this appeal for human help. It is only the truly great that can forgive with that last perfect generosity of forgiveness—the forgiveness which begs for help from the wronged. The smaller nature loves to wrap itself in its cloak of false pride, and in doing so most effectually proclaims its meanness. It is the hall-mark of the petty nature to refuse a kindness from one who has some time or other offended it.

¶ Always suspect that as the meanest prompting of your heart which comes to your lips in the words, 'Oh! I wouldn't owe anything to him.' The great natures glory in owing anything to anybody, and most of all in owing it to an enemy. For there is nothing which binds a man to your heart like the silent and grateful forgiveness. Let the man who has wronged you feel that you are generous enough to be his debtor, and you have disarmed him of the last weapon of his hostile armoury. More than that, you have made him a humbled and grateful friend. And so it was that our Lord drew men to Him even upon the cross, grappled to His heart the very men whose thoughtless cruelty had chosen Barabbas in His stead and delivered Him to be crucified. The natural cry of physical pain and physical need called out in those rough natures a sympathy that His great spiritual agony could never have evoked.[1]

¶ Christ does not use language like that of Cassius when he laughed at Cæsar because he was sick, and said:

> And when the fit was on him, I did mark
> How he did shake: 'tis true, this god did shake:
> His coward lips did from their colour fly;
> And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world
> Did lose his lustre: I did hear him groan:
> Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans
> Mark him and write his speeches in their books,
> Alas! it cried, 'Give me some drink, Titinius,'
> As a sick girl.

And why should it not? He was but a man; he was but 'as a sick girl,' and what is there in a sick girl to despise, after all? Jesus Christ said, 'I thirst,' and in this He says to every sick girl, and every sick child, and every sick one throughout the world, 'The Master, who is now in heaven, but who once suffered on earth, despiseth not the tears of the sufferers, but hath pity on them on their beds of sickness.'[2]

I.

The Human Nature of Christ.

1. It is to St. John that we owe the preservation of this Fifth Saying from the cross. Why should St. John alone of the four Evangelists record it? The reason probably was that there existed in the Church of the Apostle's days a marked tendency to deny the reality of the Lord's human nature, and so to view His Passion as purely phantasmal.

False teachers crept into the Church who said, 'Christ had no real human nature; He was a man in appearance only; what was thought a body was an optical illusion, a miracle that produced upon the senses the impression that a body was there, but there was no solid reality. It is impossible to believe that Jesus Christ, the great God, actually came 'in the flesh.' To these teachers St. John referred in the words, 'Every spirit that confesseth

[1] A. L. Lilley, *Nature and Supernature*, 216.

[2] C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 1915, p. 604.

not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.' 'Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.' His eye is upon them as he sets down this word of Jesus, 'I thirst.' Only that which comes in the flesh can thirst; then Jesus came in the flesh.

2. The tendency to minimize or to disregard the reality of the human nature, which in the Incarnation the Son of God assumed, has, however, continued in the Church all down the ages. If the thought should rise that the Saviour, being God, did not suffer what an ordinary man would have suffered, let us set ourselves to find an instance when our Lord used His Divine power to shield Himself during His earthly life. That Divine power shines forth in mighty words and mighty deeds. 'Never man spake like this man.' 'No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.' His Divine glory shines forth to the favoured three on the Holy Mount when He was transfigured before them. But He hungered, and He thirsted, and He was weary with His journeys, and He was tempted, and He was in an agony. There is nothing man suffers which He did not suffer. He was indeed 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief': the deepest of sorrows, the most terrible of griefs; and He never uses His Divine power to free Himself from the needs and pains natural to man.

II.

His Thirst.

His thirst was the result of His physical and mental sufferings. Jesus was thirsty in every part of His nature; in body, soul, and spirit. His Passion was borne in the perfection of His human nature.

1. *Bodily thirst.*—It is first and undoubtedly a natural thirst. We remember the agony and the bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane. We remember the long wearisome journeys from one tribunal to another. We remember the loss of blood consequent on the terrible scourging. We remember again how the blood must have flowed out when the nails were driven through the Sacred Hands and the Sacred Feet. From His lacerated hands and feet the blood was slowly oozing; and the wounds would be inflamed by exposure to the air, the cruel rending of nerves and the unnatural tension of the suspended body would exhaust the Sufferer and produce thirst. Remembering all these things we arrive, no doubt, at one cause of the thirst of Jesus Christ on the cross.

¶ One of the most insufferable, even maddening, of pains to which the mortal frame can be exposed is unassuaged thirst. It is caused by other pain of every sort, and it is the awful crown of all the pains that cause it. That is the agony above all others which proclaims itself in never-to-be-forgotten looks and cries to those who have stood upon a battlefield; and whatever there may be of protracted and manifold physical suffering and of mental distress and agitation to cause the thirst of those who lie amid the ghastly scenes of carnage there—all that assuredly there was in the case of Him who was nailed in the strong Eastern noonday heat, and amid the encompassing crowd of fiends and fiend-like men, to die on the accursed Tree.[1]

2. *Thirst for souls.*—But there is a deeper meaning in His words. Once in His ministry, Jesus, 'being wearied with his journey,' rested by a well as He went through Samaria, and 'it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.' We know how our Lord in these words meant more than appeared on the surface, and how He gently rebuked the woman: 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee *living water*.'

And now again, 'wearied with his journey,' and also 'about the sixth hour,' He who spake these words is dying on the cross; He is purchasing for all His children the water of life with His own blood, but, as that blood flows down, drop by drop, to assuage the thirst of the world, the loss of it causes that thirst which mystically it also satisfies. If it can now be said of the redeemed, 'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat,' it is because on Calvary the burning heat of the sun has forced from the lips of the dying Saviour the cry, 'I thirst.' And for what does He thirst, but for our salvation and the fulfilment of the holy will of God?

Still, in one sense, our Lord in glory says, 'I thirst.' He thirsts for the love of men, for the salvation of souls; as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth the soul of Jesus for His redeemed. As a tender parent yearns and longs

[1] P. C. Purves, *The Divine Cure for Heart Trouble*, 191.

for His children to grow up pure, and good, and noble, so yearns Jesus over us His children. He thirsts that we may thirst for Him; when we thirst for Him in a barren and dry land where no water is, we learn to minister to Him by helping others, as He said, 'In that ye have done it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me.'

3. *Thirst for God.*—But the words 'I thirst' have a third meaning, the greatest and highest of all. Jesus' bodily thirst, and the thirst of His soul, were as nothing compared with His spiritual thirst for His Father. The clouds of sin had separated His soul for a while from the vision of His Father's face. He had said, 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' But now the clouds had rolled away; the brief moment of separation was over; and He said, 'I thirst.' Yes, He thirsted for the end, for the moment when He could say, We will go into the House of the Lord, for the work is done; I will go into the House of God—Heaven—taking with Me human nature sanctified, redeemed, glorified! He thirsted for the end, the glory of God! And we too must in some degree thirst in these three ways.

III.

Christ's Thirst satisfied.

1. *His bodily thirst.*—There are three draughts on the cross mentioned. The first is the proffered opiate, refused because He meets death without respite or alleviation. The second is the mock wassail-cup, the caricature of the imperial coronation wine. The third is that on which we meditate. Jesus had declined the stupefying potion which was offered Him immediately before He was nailed to the cross, because He desired that His faculties might be kept clear while He was bearing the burden of our sins; and now for the same reason He accepted the vinegar, which was meant to refresh, and was also given with a touch of pity and kindness. Some one brought the longed-for relief. He held the sponge to the parched lips, and the thirst of Jesus was relieved for the last time. We do not know anything of the merciful bystander; but, friend or foe, his act was greater and more momentous than he knew. And He who promised a reward to every one bringing a cup of cold water to the thirsty, He who so richly repaid the Samaritan woman who gave him to drink at the well is not forgetful, we may be sure, of the watcher who relieved His thirst at the cross.

2. *The thirst of His soul.*—Who is there that would not have been prompt and glad to give literal drink to that thirsty One upon the cross? Who would not have fought a hard way through all hosts of Philistines to reach the Well of Bethlehem and draw water thence for this greater David's thirst? But the Saviour is still saying, 'I thirst.' How and where? Listen! 'I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.' 'Lord, when saw we thee athirst, and gave thee drink?' 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.' Wherever the brothers and sisters of Jesus are suffering, sitting in lonely rooms and wishing that somebody would come and visit them, or lying on beds of pain and needing somebody to come and ease the pillow or to reach the cup to the dry lips, there Christ is saying, 'I thirst.'

The world is perishing for want of the water of life. The cry of Jesus is the cry of the slums, of the lapsed masses, of the friendless and despairing, of thieves and murderers, of the pagan multitudes, of those who dwell in the regions of darkness and of the shadow of death, of the poor and unbefriended and unholy everywhere. Would you give Jesus to drink? Then put the cup of water to their lips.

¶ We have the power to satisfy this thirst of Christ, not only in ministering to our Lord in the person of His poor, but by offering to Him our own self. He thirsts for our eternal welfare. To-day let us, who have been regenerated in the waters of life, see that we satisfy this thirst by ourselves thirsting after righteousness. The less we thirst after Him, the more He suffers; by thirsting for Him we give Him to drink. But after all, it is our own good that He desires, thirsts for; it is our own thirst he would allay. We must thirst—whether we will or no; but He would fain satisfy us! 'I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely' is His own gracious promise.

¶ Let us then in listening to the cry, 'I thirst,' draw near and ask of Him who thirsts to fulfil His promise to give us of the water of life freely, so that we 'shall never thirst.' 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'[1]

[1] R. E. Hutton, *The Crown of Christ*, i. 506.

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Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

February.

AN OLD-TIME PARTY.

'There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth.'—Pr 13^{7}.

'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'—Mt 6^{33}.

Your grown-up friends will tell you that they can never forget their schooldays. They remember the lessons, and they remember their schoolfellows they remember the fun too.

It used to be a question with us whether the fun of winter or the fun of summer was the better. While in July and August we favoured summer, in January and February we believed very strongly in winter.

One of winter's attractions was a party we all liked very much. It was held on a certain Tuesday in February. In some calendars it is marked as Shrove Tuesday. That does not sound very festive, does it? It was not meant to do so. Originally Shrove Tuesday was a day set apart for humiliation and the confession of sin, in preparation for Lent, which began on the day following.

In course of time the idea of confession and penance was set aside, and Shrove Tuesday came to be regarded as a day of mirth and sport. It is strange to think that a children's party at length grew out of it—a party which in the north of Scotland used to be looked forward to as a very happy event. It is as the children's festival that I want to speak to you about it.

Boys and girls in a village school might sit puzzling over their sums on a disagreeable February afternoon, and be comforting themselves with thinking, 'This is pancake day, we shall have great fun to-night!' They looked forward to a party at which pancakes, or, to give them their Scottish name, *bannocks*, held a prominent place. Little *bannocks*, big *bannocks*, they were of all sizes. Games followed tea; but the event of the evening was the cutting up of a pancake, or *bannock*, that was bigger and thicker than any of the others. In it were concealed a ring, a sixpence, and a button. Each boy and girl got a piece of the pancake, and thus had a chance of finding one or other of the articles. To find the ring was the chief honour; the boys were generally eager to get the sixpence; nobody wanted to get the button.

There must have been wise heads at the starting of the party that became a children's one. To get the ring meant that the finder would be beloved; the boy or girl who found the sixpence would become wealthy; but the finder of the button was one who would never make much of anything—he would 'never get there,' as we say.

The old-fashioned party preaches a sermon to us—a sermon about boys and girls. It places them in three sets—those to whom Love is the greatest thing in the world, those to whom money is everything, and those who get the button, who never make much of anything.

The first two need to be united. It is a good thing to be careful of money; even love cannot

get on without it. The Great Master was the son of poor people. In His home there would never be more than just enough to satisfy very simple wants. He Himself worked for a livelihood until the last year or two of His life. But, while He saw the need of money, He knew that the love of it could draw the mind away from what was good. His whole life was a story of love. And because some people are followers of Him, out of their lives they make a story a little like His. A tired workman, making his way home after a day's toil, passes a toy shop; he sees something in the window that makes him stop. It is a little toy horse. He can ill afford it, but he goes in and buys it for the sick boy he has at home. That man had both the sixpence and the ring. Don't you understand? If you have the sixpence, you need the ring—you need the love.

A Tasmanian preacher in one of his sermons tells of the little spring that trickles from beneath a stone on the mountain side.

'Where have you come from, little spring?' he asks. 'From the deep, dark heart of the mountains!' the spring replies. 'And whither away in such a dreadful hurry?' 'To the deep dark bed of the ocean; can't you hear it calling?' On it rushed, laughing and leaping all the way, singing a song, leaping over waterfalls until at last it found the great river, plunged gaily in, and moved grandly with the waters out to the deep, deep sea. 'Happy little spring!' the preacher adds. But he goes on to tell of rivers that have set out to go to the sea. They too have heard the cry of the deep; but they lost themselves in the sand. *They never got there.*

Boys and girls, do you understand the lesson? I think you do. Be sure you find the ring, then look for the sixpence; never be content with the button.

The advice Jesus gave, was—*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.* He followed the advice with a wonderful promise. It was that everything necessary would be added to us. What do we need more?

II.

The Right Kind of Ears.

'Speak; for thy servant heareth.'—1 Sam. 3^{10}.

The other day I read a story which came all the way from Japan. A missionary was walking along the streets of a Japanese town, and at one corner he came upon a man who had a group of children gathered round him. He was telling them a story. This was the story he told:

'Once upon a time a little boy went to heaven, and when he got there he saw some very queer things lying on a shelf. "What are these for?" he asked. "Are they to make soup of?" "Oh no," was the reply, "these are the ears of the little boys and girls who never paid any attention to what they heard. The good things never got past their ears, and so when they died their ears got to heaven, but the rest of their bodies did not." A little farther on he saw another shelf with more queer things laid on it. Again he asked, "Are these for soup?" "Oh no," was the reply, "these are the tongues of the little boys and girls who were always telling other people how to be good, but were never good themselves, and so when they died their tongues came to heaven, but the rest of their bodies did not."'

Now, of course, this is just a fairy story, but like many a fairy story it has a meaning. God has given us hands and feet and ears and tongues and hearts and minds, and He means us to use them in the right way. Some people don't use them at all, and some people use them in a wrong way. And so for a few Sundays I want to talk to you about the right way of using these gifts which God has given to us.

To-day I am going to speak about the right kind of ears. Ears are very important things, aren't they? We couldn't get along very well without them. You will find your text in the First Book of Samuel, the third chapter and the tenth verse—'Speak; for thy servant heareth.'

You all know the story of Samuel. You remember how his mother prayed that if God would send her a son she would lend him to the Lord all the days of his life. You recall how she brought him to Eli the priest, when he was a little boy of about three years, so that he might serve God in the tabernacle. You remember how Samuel was busy in the tabernacle doing the little odd jobs—running messages for Eli, drawing the curtains which formed the doors, trimming and lighting the lamps—until one night when he was asleep in one of the rooms beside the tabernacle court something great happened—God spoke to him.

Samuel had the right kind of ears. But what are the right kind of ears? I suppose we have all

ears, and yet they are not always the right kind of ears because we don't use them in the right way. It was a frequent saying of Christ's, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' A great many of the people to whom He spoke did not understand Him. It is said of His own parents, who had brought Him up, 'They understood not the saying which he spake unto them,' and sometimes even His disciples, who were so much in His company, did not understand His word. They were not listening in the right way.

1. Well, there are four things that the right kind of ears must be. And the first thing is, they must be *open* ears. Your ears would be of no use to you at all if you were deaf, and they would be of very little use if you stuffed them with cotton-wool. Then you would hear voices as a distant murmuring. What is it that deafens people's ears to God's voice? Well, very often it is the din of the world. It is so loud in their ears that they do not hear the still, small voice. And sometimes it is cares and worries that shut their ears, and sometimes it is indulgence in sin. I think the ears of children are often more open to God's call than the ears of grown-up people, because they are not deafened by the noise of the world — by its pleasures, and cares, and sins.

2. And then, in the second place, the right kind of ears must be *understanding* ears. There might be nothing wrong with your ears, your hearing might be perfect, and yet you might not know what a person was saying, because he was talking in a foreign language. We must have ears that understand God's language. And yet it is no foreign language in which God speaks to us, but the language of our everyday life. Only we mistake His voice for the voice of other people. Even Samuel made this mistake at first. God called to him, and he thought the voice was Eli's. And God speaks to us often in the voice of our minister, or our teacher, or our mother. We think it is they who are speaking, and it is really God.

Why, if we only understood, we could hear God speaking to us constantly, for He speaks in so many different ways. When you see any beautiful sight, or hear any beautiful sound, that makes you wish to be good, that is God speaking. God made all things beautiful, and He speaks to us through them. When you hear or read about brave and noble men and women and feel you would like to be like them, that is God speaking again.

I think people who no not understand are rather like mules. The mule has very large ears, and I expect he makes rather a point of them and thinks them very handsome, but they don't serve him to much purpose. Do you remember what the Psalmist said, 'Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding.' So don't let us be like the mule: let us keep the ears of our understanding open.

3. And then, in the third place, the right kind of ears must be *attentive* ears. Your hearing may be perfect and people may be talking in your own language, yet you may not hear because you are not listening. Mother asks you three or four times to run an errand for her, but you are so engrossed in your book or your game that you don't hear her. And we are sometimes so much taken up with our work or our pleasure that we don't hear God's voice, because we don't stop to listen for it.

4. In the fourth place, the right kind of ears must be *obedient* ears. You may have perfect hearing, you may understand, you may be quite aware of what is going on around you, and yet you may not hear because you do not *wish* to listen. Samuel learned obedience by doing the unimportant, uninteresting, drudgery work in the Temple, and when God's call came he was ready for it.

Let no boy or girl be ashamed to obey. It is only those who have learned to obey who know how to command. Baden-Powell tells a story of a man in the Boer war who spoilt a very promising ambuscade by disobeying an order. The men had been forbidden to fire, but one man fired a shot and made the enemy aware of the force which was lying in wait for them. 'It would have been different,' said Baden-Powell, 'if he had learned to obey when he was a boy.'

So the right kind of ears are those that hear God's call and obey it. And I want you to notice, in the last place, that God calls boys and girls. He called Samuel in the Tabernacle, He called David the shepherd-lad, He made use of a little maid in His healing of Naaman, the Syrian. Jesus called the little children to Him when He was here below, and the disciple who lay upon His bosom was the youngest of the twelve. God calls boys and girls. Let us ask Him to give us the right kind of ears so that we may hear and obey His call.

III.

Worshipping Children.

A volume of stories and addresses by the late Rev. J. G. Stevenson has been published under the title of *Worshipping Children* (Hodder & Stoughton; 5s. net). It is good; it is all good. Here is a fair example:

NORNA.

Once there was a little girl called Norna, sometimes very good, sometimes rather cross, looking quite pretty in a sun-bonnet and aged seven years and some odd days. Norna had a grandmother who sometimes thought that she might behave better, but who all the time was very fond of her, as is the way of grandmothers. Norna got tremendously excited one day when she knew that her grandmother was going to take her a long railway journey to Scotland; and at the appointed time, with much anticipation and a half-ticket, she found herself seated in a railway carriage with grandmother right opposite. Before the train started an old blind lady came to the carriage-door on the arm of an attendant and was safely guided inside. Very carefully she felt her way until she was able to sit down on the cushion. Norna looked at her rather hard, fascinated by her sightless eyes, for she thought it could not be rude to stare at blind people; and as Norna looked, into her own little heart there came great pity for the blind lady and a great thankfulness to God because she herself could see.

Norna lived in Liverpool, and at some times of the year Liverpool is a very nice place to get away from. So once the train was clear of the city Norna's spirits rose, and she grew so glad that she quite forgot the blind lady. Mile after hurried mile the train sped, and before long the engine was painfully climbing the hill country in the Lake district. In the half-mist the hills lay around like drowsy lions, and Norna's grandmother was so delighted that she called out aloud, 'Norna, dear, do look at these magnificent hills!' 'Hush, grannie,' said Norna at once, 'hush!' And she spoke as though she meant it. Grannies are not used to be ordered to hush by their granddaughters, but there was something about the way Norna spoke that made her grandmother keep quite quiet. A minute or two afterwards Norna explained herself. She came and whispered in her grandmother's ear, 'You see, grannie dear, that poor blind lady in the other corner cannot see; and I was afraid that if she heard us talking about the beautiful hills it would hurt her more than ever to think that she is blind.'

Norna's grandmother understood; and she had no thought of anything but praising her, for it is always splendid when small children are considerate of other folk. Jesus Christ especially likes them to be considerate of those who are old, or lame, or ill, or infirm, or blind.

What about you? One day I saw an old blind man hobbling along the pavement, when out of school came a lot of noisy boys rushing like a menagerie let loose. They did not mean to be unkind, but they ran right into the old blind man and almost knocked him over. This was inconsiderate, and you must never act in that way. Indeed, if ever you see a blind person who is halting because he does not know exactly where to tread next, be sure to go to him and ask him whether you can tell him anything or lead him anywhere or do anything for him. Try hard to be considerate, not only to blind people, but also to all others who have a call upon the pity of Christ and the sympathy of little children.

Point and Illustration.

'Oh, but you will Come and Pray.'

It is to be hoped that many of the army chaplains will write down their experiences. If they have eyes to see, as most of them have, there will be something in their narratives that will help us all to be more real in our religion. The Rev. Frederick Humphrey has told his story in *The Experiences of a Temporary C.F.* (Hunter & Longhurst; 2s. net). And he has told it just as we would have it told—plainly and truthfully. There is not a word of eloquence to 'heighten the effect,' there is not a word of exhortation to 'drive the lesson home.' Let us take this from it:

'It was the writer's custom to visit certain men at evening time for a brief Scripture-reading and prayer. On leaving a ward one night he noticed a lad lying in a corner bed evidently suffering terrible pain; the poor boy was moaning and crying. "Is the pain very bad, sonny?" "Aye," answered the lad, "it is that!" "I wish I could do something to take it away," said the Chaplain.

"Would you like me to pray with you?" With a wistful look the suffering lad questioned: "Do you think it will do any good?" "It can't do any harm," answered the Chaplain. "God is our good Father, and He tells us to make our requests known unto Him. You want ease in your pain and a good sleep; let us ask our Heavenly Father," and kneeling by the bed a simple prayer asking this definite thing was offered, and the Chaplain left with a "good-night" wish. The next day, going through the ward, he called at the corner bed, and found a smiling welcome awaiting him. "Oh, chaplain," said the lad, "I did have a 'good sleep, aad the pain is so much better." And then he added: "You will come in again to-night and pray?" "Now see here, sonny," said the Chaplain; "I am quite willing to come in and pray for a good night's rest; but suppose the prayer is not answered again, you must not say it is no use praying. It may be God's will that you should suffer. It is quite well for us to pray for the things we want; but we have not learned the real meaning of prayer until we can pray, 'Thy will be done.' Can you manage that?" For a time the lad lay quiet, and the Chaplain wondered whether he had blundered in speaking so soon of the top round of the steep ladder of prayer. Could one who knew little or nothing about prayer be expected to mount so high? And then came a cry from the heart: "Oh, but you will come and pray!" Not once, nor twice, but many times was prayer offered, and it was fully answered when that lad left hospital, recovered from his wounds, happy in the knowledge of Christ as His Saviour and God as His Father.'

The Moderns.

Mr. John Freeman is a penetrating critic of his contemporary men of letters, whom he calls *The Moderns* (Scott; 6s. net). The Moderns are George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Thomas Hardy, Maurice Maeterlinck, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Coventry Patmore, Francis Thompson, and Robert Bridges. They are not all living; but, living or dead, they are all modern. They have the modern manner; they are modern men. He criticises them all acutely, unsparingly, though he is more restrained, we think, with the dead than with the living. He criticises none of them unfairly or with bad temper. And as he criticises he gives the reader a surprisingly sound estimate of the men they are, and the work they have done.

With Coventry Patmore, Mr. Freeman is at his best, and we thank him for that essay. Yet even here he is not appreciatively asleep. Every over-strain of emotion is detected. He says: 'For my own part, this is the only modern verse, other than some lines of Shakespeare, Burns, and Keats, which I find it hard to read without tears; and though I have read these odes a hundred times I know not, where, precisely, the secret of their unfailing poignancy is lodged, or how it is to be described:—just as, though I have watched them a thousand times, I know not how to explain the acute poignancy of a sea-bird's flight or the scream of a swallow. Many of these singular utterances are the expression of personal experience; but even where this is not obviously the case, Patmore's psychology of love and grief, of the ingenious cunning of sorrow, is as true as it is subtle. In *The Azalea* he dreams that she he loves is dead; he wakes, and for a delicious moment is thankful it was only a dream—until he is reminded, by the breath of the azalea, that indeed, indeed, she *is* dead. In *Departure* he reproaches her for going the "journey of all days with not one kiss or a good-bye," seizing upon the lesser grief as a shield against the greater. With *The Toys* every one is acquainted, and also, perhaps, with the following little piece which is only printed here in order that Patmore may speak fitly for himself:

IF I WERE DEAD.

If I were dead, you'd sometimes say, 'Poor Child!'
The dear lips quivered as they spake,
And the tears brake
From eyes which, not to grieve me, brightly smiled.
Poor Child! Poor Child!
I seem to hear your laugh, your talk, your song.
It is not true that Love will do no wrong.
Poor Child!
And did you think, when you so cried and smiled,
How I, in lonely nights, should lie awake,
And of those words your full avengers make?
Poor Child! Poor Child!
And now, unless it be
That sweet amends thrice told are come to thee,
O God, have Thou *no* mercy upon me!
Poor Child!

If any criticism might be ventured upon, in considering such an acutely painful poem, it would be that this stark rehearsal of intimate grief is intolerable. Just the same absolute note is heard in *A Farewell*, mitigated by those casual touches of pure beauty which make even such grief endurable, and by the remote hope of rencounter (to quote one of the most magical of single lines):

Seasoning the termless feast of our content
With tears of recognition never dry.'

Siberia.

'The earth is full of the habitations of cruelty'—well, at any rate Siberia is. Mr. I. W. Shklovsky travelled *In Far North-East Siberia* (Macmillan; 8s. 6d. net) among the people who inhabit the Kolyma, and surely a more undesirable land to live in or a more undesirable people to live among, the earth has not.

A truly terrible story is told—and it is told as all the stories are, with the inescapable impressiveness of the dreadful reality itself—a story of what comes of banishing criminals to these inhospitable regions. The official title for the Kolyma region is 'Unsuitable for human habitation.' The experience of the haillak, as the exiled criminal is called, is intolerable; but even more intolerable is the experience of the people among whom he is sent to live.

'In their reckoning each haillak costs the Oulooss ten or twelve roubles per month, and this, when the Yakuts themselves are obliged to live on bark, flavoured with a little sour milk, and when in the Verkhoyansk region they are obliged to eat field-mice so that they may not die of starvation. In order to protect their wives and daughters from the haillak, the Yakuts give him an orphan girl with whom to cohabit. Pitiable indeed is the plight of this wretched girl! Her terrible tyrant rules her with fist and cudgel, and her face is never free from bruises. The haillak so despises the Yakuts that, though he may live for years among them, the only word of their language which he will condescend to learn is "give!"

'Life under these conditions is equally intolerable on both sides. The Yakuts regard the haillak as vermin, as a savage, wicked beast that drains their life; as an evil satyr who will violate wives and daughters in the presence of their husbands and fathers. On the other hand, the criminal forced to live among savages, who do not understand him, feels his position to be worse than solitary confinement. Finally, driven to desperation, he does something terrible in order to compel the authorities to remove him from this accursed region. While I was in the Kolymsk district one of these criminals, without any reason, threw the child of a small chieftain into a fire and held him there with an iron rod until he was burnt to death. Despair gave courage to the Yakuts. They sprang upon him, bound him, and took him to Sredne Kolymsk, and from there to Yakutsk, where he was sentenced to twelve years' hard labour.

'Near Nijne Kolymsk there is a clan of eighteen Yakuts who have to maintain fourteen of these transported criminals. It is difficult to believe, but it is a fact that the entire clan are the slaves of the haillaks. The Yakuts give to each haillak everything necessary — draw-nets, nets, dogs, sledges, etc.; the savages themselves, having no nets of their own, work for him, receiving for themselves only one-third of the total catch. Very often the haillak will trade all the things for drink, and then demand new ones.'

The Fisherman as Expositor.

By the Rev. Nicholas Oliver, Newton Abbot, Devon.

It is a strange thing that, considering the number and importance of the disciples who were fishermen, no scholar seems to have studied the Bible, and especially the Gospels, from the fisherman's point of view.

Biblical students have given the fullest attention to the agriculture of Palestine, but the cult of the fisherman seems to have been neglected. This is surprising, because from a fisherman's standpoint many things assume a different aspect.