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death and resurrection, this would afford a simple and natural explanation of one at least of the most difficult passages in the Synoptics: 'Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come' (Mt 10^{23}). That this 'coming' refers primarily to His death I cannot doubt, though He may not at that time have foreseen the circumstances in which it would occur. If His thoughts were already centred in His coming death, but He felt it impossible to speak of this 'openly' (Mk 8^{32}) till He had won from the disciples such an understanding confession as that of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, what more likely than that He should have hinted at it in veiled language of this character?[1]

I suggest that we can trust the Johannine interpretation, as giving a real clue to what lay behind the imagery in which Jesus clothed His thoughts of the glory He was to win through death, of the victory He was to achieve by perfect obedience, though that should lead Him through depths of shame. If so, then the Apocalyptic sayings take their place as no excrescence, no mistake of a deluded enthusiast, but as the crown of all His teaching. They give us the assurance—which in these days of darkness and horror we need as much as the disciples needed it—that His Kingdom will come in glory and power, that He will yet be the Lord of all our life, if only He can find once more the men and women in whom He can be 'glorified,' who will strive for His Kingdom even when the cause seems hopeless, will believe in Him even when 'the world' seems to have conquered, and be willing to follow Him even unto death. 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be.'

[1] So also I should venture to explain the similar statement in the parallels Mk 9^{1}, Mt 16^{28}, Lk 9^{27}.

In the Study.

The Seven Words.

VII.

The Surrendered Life.

'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.'—Lk 23^{46}.

THE darkness had lasted from noon till three o'clock, and it was after this that Jesus took the vinegar, and cried with a loud voice, and died.

The evening was closing in. The mysterious darkness had passed away, the sun again shone over Calvary and the mountains of Judæa and the Holy City. The sun was drawing to its setting, and its level rays gilded the cross, and cast a long shadow eastward over those who stood behind. The darkness was perhaps rolling eastward, and so the cross would stand out brilliantly against the purple bank of gloom behind. The day—this dreadful day—was drawing to an end, and soon the Sabbath would have begun. Already the crowds were leaving the hill and turning back to Jerusalem, and the scribes and Pharisees had left, for the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice in the temple approached.

Then Jesus 'cried with a loud voice, and said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.'

It is the last of the Seven Words, and it is a word of rest and trust. The conflict is past, the darkness is past, the suffering is past. All is finished. There is no reason why our Lord should remain longer on the cross. So He commits His soul to His Heavenly Father's keeping, and bows His head, and gives up the ghost.

1. What was the cry that preceded these words? Was it a cry of relief at the touch of death? Was it a cry of victory? Was it a cry of gladness that He had endured to the end? Or did the Father look out upon Him in answer to His *My God*, and the blessedness of it make Him cry aloud because He could not smile? Was such His condition now that the greatest gladness of the universe could express itself only in a loud cry? Or was it but the last wrench of pain ere the final repose began? It may have been all in one. But never surely in all books, in all words of thinking men, can there be so much expressed as lay unarticulated in that cry of the Son of God.

2. The words that He spoke are a quotation from the 31st Psalm, as the Fourth Word from the cross is a quotation from the 22nd. A suggestion not to be forgotten lies in the fact that our dying Redeemer thus drew on the Psalms for comfort in those last hours of life. We may securely argue

from dying words to living habits: it was because He had been accustomed to nourish His devotional life by the religious use of the Psalms that, when He came to die, He thus fell back on them for strength. And the same must be said of the attitude of the spirit towards God. What it was in death, that it had been in life. No trait of Christ's character is more original and none more winning than the loving simplicity of His habitual attitude towards His Father; and here, on the cross, that attitude is still apparent. The first and the last words from the cross are addressed to the Father: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'; 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' In the interval between those words our Redeemer had passed under a dark cloud of desolation; He had lost for the moment the sense of the Father's love, and had lifted His voice in protest, sinless yet infinitely woeful, to an unregarding Heaven: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But it was only for a moment; underneath Him still in that horrible darkness were the Everlasting Arms, and, as His last vigour failed Him, it was into them that He fell to rest.

3. In the psalm the prayer has reference to life; it is the committal of the spirit in the midst of tumult and danger to the merciful and faithful keeping of One able to protect and deliver. On the cross, in the midst of darkness and anguish, it is used as the expression of life's last act of renunciation—the surrender of the departing spirit to God. It is not a cry, like the Psalmist's, to be preserved from death, but a cry to be preserved through death unto everlasting life.

And if we are to be able to use such a prayer in death, it must be familiar to us in life. Hardly may we learn to pray it on the bed of death if we have not been accustomed to such thoughts in the heyday of strength. It is surely a remarkable thing that the two personal cries to God which our Lord uttered from the cross were, both of them, petitions already consecrated by the devotion of many centuries. They are not new prayers, fashioned for the crisis of the moment—they are old prayers; and in prayer, as in doctrine, it is *the old* which is *good*.

¶ These words, which now He uses, were, according to some, the daily prayer which every Jewish mother taught her child to say, the last thing when lying down at night. If this was so, the Lord's last words may have been the prayer which, when a little child, His Blessed Virgin Mother had taught Him, as an evening act of devotion, a child's short evensong of calm and trustful repose of soul. How this reminds us of those words, in His ministry, in which He speaks of that which is truly childlike as being most godlike, 'the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.'[1]

I. The Prayer.

1. *Father.*—In quoting the prayer of the Hebrew poet, Jesus has made a notable addition to its terminology. He has prefaced it with the word 'Father,' which is the name by which He has taught us to speak to God in prayer. And this word, which from Jesus we have learnt to use, states the very kernel of the Christian hope.

The advance which this name indicates over the earlier names of the Old Testament is plain enough. It changed, deepened, and enriched men's thoughts of God. He was seen to be all that men had hitherto believed concerning Him, and wonderfully more also. It was a great thing to realize God as eternal, but to realize Him as paternal—what a new and blessed thought! This name contains the special revelation which Jesus made of God. It has already wrought revolutions, and will go on changing both the thought and the life of man.

¶ 'Father.' This is pre-eminently the word of Jesus; His one name for God, the one note to which all His music was attuned, the central persuasion and confidence of His soul, the key to His life, the first and the last in His teaching, the soul of His religion, the symbol of His whole theology. It is the one recorded word of His youth: 'Wist ye not I must be about my Father's business?' It was the word from heaven heard in His heart at the opening of His public career—a crisis marked by a new disclosure and realization of His Sonship to God. It was the first word of the prayer He taught His disciples; the word with which He accepted the inevitable in Gethsemane; the first word from the cross, and the last before 'the deep, vast speechlessness of death.' It was the ruling passion of His life—the passion which had moved Him to intense and tireless toil and sacrifice, and sustained Him amidst the temptations of manhood—which strengthened Him in the hour of His final conflict and calmed Him with its most tranquil assurance. It was 'Father' at the beginning; 'Father' all through the stormy years that led to the cross; 'Father' when He felt His hour was come, and troubled in spirit He cried, 'What shall I say?'; and it was 'Father' at the end. 'I live,' He once said, 'by the Father,' and so He died trusting in the Father. The commending of His spirit at the last moment to His Father was but the summing up of what He had been doing all His life. He breathed out the whole

[1] S. J. Stone, *Parochial Sermons*, 225.

spirit of His life in that prayer. All His days He had been offering Himself to His Father to enjoy and to suffer, to do and to bear; and so in death, and beyond death, He gives Himself into the hands of His Father.[1]

2. *Into Thy hands.*—By 'the hand' of God we mean His working power. Using the term plurally, and at the same time lovingly, by 'the hands' we mean more than this. Power, indeed, is meant, but power working by love; power in its delicacy; power soft, caressing, fondly tender; power taking up trusting weakness; the power that lovingly catches, lovingly holds, lovingly hushes, lovingly leads. The image, though sublime, is domestic. It is the utterance of a child's conception of God. When David said, 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit,' he seems to have had in his thought hands held out to an infant, to catch it, to clasp it, and to make it happy, when it springs forward.

¶ Let our hearts rest where the heart of Jesus rested. No fearful adventure, no leap in the dark, can death be to those who live and die in His faith. It was said of Him that He was delivered into the hands of men to be crucified, but beneath the hands of His foes were His Father's hands. So when we fall, it is not into the hands of disease, decay, and destruction, but into the hands of the living and Eternal Father, who will keep that which in life's last moment of renunciation we commit to Him.[2]

3. *I commend my spirit.*—The last thought of Jesus was not about His body, but His 'spirit.' His body had suffered almost more than He could bear; the vital forces were nearly spent, the cross had done its deadly work, the moment had come for dissolution—the body going one way, the spirit another.

What is the spirit? It is the finest, highest, sacredest part of our being. In modern and ordinary language we call it the soul, when we speak of man as composed of body and soul; but in the language of Scripture it is distinguished even from the soul as the most lofty and exquisite part of the inner man. It is to the rest of our nature what the flower is to the plant or what the pearl is to the shell. It is that within us which is specially allied to God and eternity. It is also, however, that which sin seeks to corrupt and our spiritual enemies seek to destroy. No doubt these are specially active in the article of death; it is their last chance; and fain would they seize the spirit as it parts from the body and, dragging it down, rob it of its destiny. Jesus knew that He was launching out into eternity; and, plucking His spirit away from these hostile hands which were eager to seize it, He placed it in the hands of God. There it was safe.

[1] J. Hunter, *De Profundis Clamavi*, 150.
[2] *Ib.* 167.

II. Christ's View of Death.

This last word of the expiring Saviour revealed His view of death.

The word used by Jesus in commending His spirit to God implies that He was giving it away in the hope of finding it again. He was making a deposit in a safe place, to which, after the crisis of death was over, He would come and recover it. Who can doubt that we, who must all enter upon the solemn mystery of death, were intended to draw comfort and brightness from this view of death given us by the dying Lord? The spirit and body came to be called 'my deposit,' 'that which I have committed unto him,' from a sweet and solemn reminiscence of the last sentence upon the cross. The deposit must be safe which is lodged with such a depositary, and vested with such a trustee. Blessed is he who can call God his Father with his latest breath, and imitate Christ, if not in the magnificence of the investment, yet with some faint degree of the filial confidence with which it is lodged.

Are any of us afraid of death? If we are, then with the eye of faith see what a good death is. There is no fear in it—there is no terror in it—there is simple, calm trust in it. There is nothing in itself to fear in the spirit passing to the Father of spirits. If the life has been what it ought to be—if the life is the Three Hours' life—if there is a forgiving spirit—if there is contrition and courage as in the penitent thief—if the home life is loving and considerate—if there is patience through the darkness—if there is helpfulness to others' wants, as humanity thirsts—if it is a sacramental life in communion with the perfected life of Jesus Christ—then we need not be afraid to die.

¶ Deaths have been as varied as lives; but generally men have died as they have lived, and so the final utterances of men have been very different. The last words of Hobbes, the sceptical philosopher, were: 'I am going to take a leap in the dark. I commit my body to the worms and my spirit to the great Perhaps.' 'Let the curtain down,' muttered the dying Rabelais; 'the farce is played out.' The last words of Rousseau were: 'Being of beings, God.' The historic burden of Cardinal Wolsey's last utterance was: 'Had I but served my God as diligently as I have served the

king, He would not have given me up in my grey hairs.' Addison said, with great difficulty, on his death-bed, to a youth for whom he had sent: 'See in what peace a Christian can die,' and soon expired. Locke, the father of English philosophy, said the day before his death: 'I have lived enough, and thank God for having spent my life so happily.' As Martin Luther lay on his death-bed, his friend Dr. Jonas asked him: 'Reverend father, do you die with a firm conviction of the faith you have taught?' Luther, in a distant voice, replied 'Yes,' and soon after breathed his last. The executioner of Sir Walter Raleigh told him that his head was somewhat awry on the block. 'So the heart be right,' said Sir Walter, 'no matter which way the head lies.' General Wolfe, when his men were victorious before Quebec, dies saying: 'Now, God be praised, I will die in peace.' Goethe, that giant mind of Germany, dies asking for 'more light, more light'; and Schiller, asked how he found himself, answered: 'More and more calm.' The last words of Beethoven, who was deaf, were: 'I shall hear in heaven.' John Wesley dies saying: 'Best of all, God is with us.' 'I feel,' said Cardinal Wiseman, a short time before he died, 'like a schoolboy who has learnt his lesson, and is now going home for his holidays.' Dr. Watts, when asked on his death-bed how he was, answered: 'Waiting God's leave to die.' And one of the last recorded observations which Browning, ever firm in his faith in the future life, made to a friend was: 'Never say of me that I am dead.'[1]

III. His Surrender to the Father.

Jesus' death was a willing surrender of life. Though His death was violent and cruel, it was a voluntary sacrifice; and His surrender to the Father was a free, spontaneous act. In full possession of His powers, Christ committed Himself to God. None took His life from Him. He laid it down of Himself. 'My life,' He said, 'no man taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down.'

¶ The surrendered life is the life of a child of God—childlike, meek, lowly, full of faith and trust, of repentance, of love, fearing to offend our Father, pure as in His sight, obedient, doing such things as please Him, always desiring to serve Him. For is not lowliness of spirit humility, which is the foundation stone of the Christ-like life, the childlike spirit, whose only thought is to please the Father and do His will. He became obedient unto death. He submitted Himself, He pleased not Himself, He commended His soul to His Father when His will was done.

Let us ask God to give us this same childlike spirit, that we may follow in His steps.

And this is the end of such a life, the reward of the child of God—to go back to the Father's hands, to be welcomed home, and find rest.[2]

[1] J. A. Davies, *Seven Words of Love*, 68.
[2] W. Newman, *Meditations on the Seven Last Words*, 87.

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Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

April.

'But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.'—2 Co 3^{18}.

1. One of the grandest things that ever man said about God was the answer given in the Shorter Catechism to the question—'What is God?'—'God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.' God is *unchangeable*.

Sometimes one may hear good people who have lived a long time, and can look back over many years, speak of God as having been their Friend all the time. 'He has never changed, and I know

He never will.' That is what they think; they may even say it.

And haven't you boys and girls noticed how, year after year, the seasons come round—Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter? Near the beginning of the Bible story we read how God made a beautiful promise to a good man who trusted Him: 'While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.' And He has kept His word. That is in the story of the world—the big story of God as our Creator who is 'unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.'

2. But the Bible gives us another side of God's character. It is that of a loving Father, who understands exactly how His children feel about things. He knows that boys and girls love changes. Men and women are just the same—everybody cries out against monotony; it is hard for human nature to learn to endure it.

The voice of duty may come to a young girl, saying, 'Your work is to help mother after school hours, to nurse your baby brother, to run messages for a frail neighbour.' 'Oh!' we can hear that girl say to herself, 'what a dull life I have, how I should like a change.' We learn patience in strange ways; and it often takes a long, long time; not very many boys and girls know what a lesson in patience really means.

But in this month of April it seems as if the great Heavenly Father were falling in with the very thing you long for. It is the month of changes. Sun, rain! How quickly they follow each other! There is a surprise at every turn, so to speak. Try to think of some of the Aprils you have had. You can remember that there was more than sun and rain in them. Some of you went primrose gathering, or you may have visited a friend who had a large garden with a glorious tree, under which you lay and looked up to the blue sky through a roof of apple blossom.

I remember a sick boy who had a very poor home: but near his bed was a little four-paned window. One April morning he was wakened by something making a rattling noise on the glass. 'Mother lighting the fire,' he said to himself. What do you think it was? It was a branch of apple blossom knocking at the little window. The boy forgot his weariness and actually laughed out loud.

Oh fair to see
Bloom-laden cherry tree,
Arrayed in sunny white,
An April day's delight;
Oh fair to see!

'A surprise at every turn.' Can you recall the old country walks of April? You looked this way, you looked that way; the idea came to you—you thought nobody had ever felt it so strongly before—that the world was beautiful. You looked round in another direction; there was a bank covered with wild hyacinths, and here and there primroses peeped up very modestly from amongst them. The birds sang—they were happy too, for the winter had passed; joy was come.

The earth was cold, hard-hearted, dull;
To death almost she slept:
Over her, heaven grew beautiful,
And forth her beauty crept.

Showers yet must fall, and waters grow
Dark-wan with furrowing blast;
But suns will shine, and softs winds blow,
Till the year flowers at last.

The sky is smiling over me,
Hath smiled away the frost;
White daisies star the sky-line lea,
With buds the wood's embossed.

Troops of wild flowers gaze at the sky
Up through the latticed boughs;
Till comes the green cloud by and by,
It is not time to house.

Yours is the day, sweet bird—sing on;
The winter is forgot;
Like an ill dream 'tis over and gone:
Pain that is past, is not.[1]

3. What makes the wonderful change in April? If it happen to be a dull, cloudy time, it is not so noticeable. To make a lovely April, the earth must hold up its face to the sun. But that is not all. The sun strikes on the bare rocky cliff and there is no response; nothing grows there, the rock seems even harder and more unimpressionable than in the long winter days. It is the life that is in the earth that makes the difference; the April sunshine only awakens it.

[1] *Poetical Works of George MacDonald*, i. 374.

In one of the schools of a large town a flower show was held where prizes were given. A little deformed girl had a small geranium given her. The plant grew and had beautiful blossoms. When it was brought to the show, the judges said it was the finest and best in the collection, and they were surprised to hear it had been grown in a gloomy court. But the secret of its beauty came out. The little girl told how she had watched the sun and the plant every day, keeping the geranium in the sun's rays, moving it as the sun moved; and the result was a perfect plant in life and beauty.

4. To-day I should not preach to you if I believed your hearts were like the hard, unimpressionable rocks. There is something in every boy and girl that, in some way or other, answers when God speaks.

It is said that the city of London is built over a bed of chalk, and if a shaft be sunk anywhere within its area, there will spring up a fountain of clear, cool water. It will be as clear and cool amid the squalor and poverty of the East End as amid the mansions of the great and noble.

Boys and girls, we should be thankful for the wonderful 'something' God has put into our hearts. There are young people who have held their faces up to the sunshine of God's love, and their friends could not but notice the wonderful change that took place in their characters. They became just such young men and such young women as the world needs to make it better.

> Looking upward every day,
> Sunshine on our faces;
> Pressing onward every day,
> Toward the heavenly places.

5. It is well known that people become like those with whom they live and whom they allow to influence them. That is the idea in our text. Missionaries tell us of the change which Christianity works in the lives of their converts. One lady missionary wrote a very interesting article in which she says that the love of Christ has brought a change even on the *faces* of the women of China, and she quoted a newspaper article in support of what she said. Let me quote a little bit of it. 'To judge from the beatific expression of certain converts I have met, the gospel means to them what the opening of the hatches of a captured slave ship meant to the wretches pent up in its hold.'

6. It is never a case of changing, or becoming like Christ all at once. We are transformed from glory to glory. One must be in Christ's company every day—every hour. It is like keeping our faces constantly towards the sun, and the change is wrought—we ourselves do not know how.

There is a fable told of a statue of an Ethiopian king. It was a huge figure of black stone seated on a throne. The feet were together and the hands pressed on the arms of the throne, as though in the act of starting up, and the face was looking wistfully toward the place of Sunrise. It was as if he watched for the morning; and, says the fable, whenever the first glimmer of the dawn flushed across the horizon and lit the eager face, a strain of music came from the parted lips.

And so may our lives be. Kingsley's verse is a little hackneyed perhaps, but there is a very fine truth in it:

> Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long;
> And so make life, death, and that vast forever
> One grand sweet song.

II.

The Right Kind of Tongue.

'Keep thy tongue from evil.'—Ps 34^{13}.

Supposing some one were to present you with a sword and to tell you that you could use it as you pleased, what would you do with it? Well, there are two ways in which you could employ it. First, you could use it to destroy things—to cut open the covering of your mother's chairs or slit her pictures, or even to hurt or kill people. Or, second, you could use it to fight for the right and to defend the weak. Which do you think would be the better way?

Well, each of us possesses a weapon and we can use it in either a bad or a good way—we can use it to hurt and destroy, or we can employ it to help and bless. It is a very powerful weapon and can be very dangerous, so it is important that we should learn to use it in the right way. Now if you look at the text perhaps you will be able to guess the name of the weapon. Yes, it is the tongue, and to-day I want to speak to you about the right kind of tongue.

In the first place, I wish you to realize what an important thing the tongue is. I want you to learn it now and never to forget it, because if you become quite sure of that, you will save yourself

and other people a great deal of trouble. Never think that what you *say* is a small thing. Sometimes it counts more than what you *do*. There are a lot of people going about the world who seem to think that it doesn't matter much what they say, so long as what they do is all right. Some of them are quite kind and well-meaning, and they would be very much surprised if you told them that they were doing much more harm by their words than good by their deeds. Part of our duty to our neighbours is to 'hurt nobody by word,' and yet you hear people saying silly things such as 'words don't hurt.' Words do hurt. They can do a very great deal of harm. They can break friendships, and spoil lives, and sometimes they can even kill. The Bible doesn't let us think that words don't count. It has a very great deal to say to us about the right and wrong use of the tongue.

Now if I were going to tell you all there is to tell about the right kind of tongue, I should be talking for hours, and if you hadn't fallen asleep long before then you would inform me that I didn't know how to keep *my* tongue in order, so I'm going to mention just a few things about it and you can think out the rest for yourselves.

1. First of all, the right kind of tongue is a *well-controlled* tongue. It knows when to be quiet and when to speak. It doesn't blurt out just whatever comes uppermost. It doesn't go on chattering when it ought to be quiet. It doesn't give away secrets that don't belong to it. It doesn't run off at a gallop with its owner like a badly-trained horse.

There is an Eastern proverb which says 'Of thine unspoken word thou art master: thy spoken word is master of thee.' And that just means that so long as we have a thought in our minds it is our own, but if we speak it out it is ours no longer. We can never get it back again, and it is a power against us for good or evil as the case may be.

Boys, flying kites, haul in their white-winged birds,
But you can't do that when you're flying words.
Thoughts unexprest may sometimes drop back dead,
But God Himself can't kill them when they're said.

2. And secondly, the right kind of tongue is a *true* tongue.

There are two things I want to say about the true tongue. The first thing is that it is nearly always cowardly to tell a lie. It is better far to suffer for telling the truth than to escape punishment and lose your honour. If you've done wrong own up like a man, don't deny it like a sneak.

The second thing is that there are more ways of telling an untruth than one. What makes a lie is the intention to deceive. You may lie by saying what is true in word but not in sense. And you may lie by consenting to a lie, by being silent when you ought to speak.

3. In the third place, the right kind of tongue is the *pure* tongue, the tongue that does not stoop to repeat any bad stories or nasty jokes; above all, the tongue that does not stoop to the cheap distinction of taking God's name in vain. Boys, just one word. I can't help thinking this is one of the shabbiest and lowest-down tricks you can play. If you heard another boy speaking lightly or disparagingly of your earthly father you would want to knock him down though he were twice your size, and yet you yourself don't hesitate to take your Heavenly Father's name lightly and foolishly upon your lips. And why? To show how brave and daring you are? Surely that is a poor sort of courage which deliberately defies a God who loves you too much to visit you with His judgment. To show how big you are? You deceive nobody but yourself. It is mostly childish men who stoop to such language. It is generally when things are going against them that they use it, and then it serves them instead of the tears of a baby who can't get what it wants.

4. Again, the right kind of tongue is a *kind* tongue, the tongue that prefers to say good about people rather than evil. Never twist and deform your tongue by picking out people's faults and speaking about them. If you hear a nasty thing about any one, don't let it go any farther. If there were no one to repeat nasty stories these stories would soon stop. If you must talk about others, try to find the best things to say about them. Use your tongues to cheer and brighten, and the world will be a great deal happier and better for your having lived in it.

A little word in kindness spoken
Has often healed the heart that's broken
And made a friend sincere.
Then deem it not an idle thing
A pleasant word to speak.

5. And lastly, the right kind of tongue is the *gentle* tongue, the tongue that is not easily roused to anger. There is a right place for anger in this world, and it is a great gift if properly used. Christ was filled with Divine anger when He drove the money-changers from His Father's house. But if we are going to use our tongues constantly in fighting petty squabbles we shall never have the great and noble anger that scorches and burns up the evil in the world. It takes two to make a quarrel, and if one of the two gives the soft answer that turneth away wrath no quarrel can last long.

Can you remember, then, these five things about the right kind of tongue? It must be a *well-controlled* tongue—not given to chattering heedlessly. It must be a *true* tongue—too brave to tell a lie. It must be a *pure* tongue—too proud to stoop to anything mean, or low, or profane. It must be a *kind* tongue that prefers to say good rather than evil, and it must be a *gentle* tongue that turns away wrath.

There is just one thing more I want you to remember, and it is the most important of all. You will never have the right kind of tongue unless you have the right kind of heart, for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Our tongues just tell what our thoughts think, and if we want to have the right kind of tongue, the tongue that is 'kept from evil,' we must ask God to give us the right kind of heart.

III.

The Rev. W. S. Herbert Wylie, M.A., has published a volume of nature studies, to which he has given the title of *God's Whispers* (Morgan & Scott; 2s. 6d. net). The studies were originally given, he tells us, as addresses to children at the Morning Service in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church of England, Ealing. There is a point, and only one point, in each of them. Take this for an example.

A Lesson from the Limpet.

There are many animals which have power to cling to objects. One of these is the limpet. You must have seen this shellfish often when you visited the sea-side, and have noticed how tightly and securely it can cling to the rock. The shell is shaped like a hat, broad at the base, and tapering to a point. At the base you will find the big, flat foot of the limpet, which is really a large muscle that fills the opening. If you manage to get near without disturbing it, you will notice that it sometimes clings to the rock very loosely. It does this by means of a sticky substance it can produce from its big foot. The water then washes all round and through it, and it gets its food from this passing water. If you knock it sharply with a stick or stone, you can get it off the rock. But if it has the least warning of your coming, or if you touch it even the least little bit, you will find that it will settle tightly on the rock, and you cannot move it unless you are exceedingly strong.

How does it do this? How can it cling so tightly? I can, perhaps, best explain it by an illustration. When I was a boy at school we used to play with what we called 'suckers.' If you get a round piece of strong leather and bore a small hole in the centre, and put through a piece of string which has a knot big enough to prevent the end coming through and therefore to fill up the hole, and if you damp the leather and press it firmly on to a flat stone and then pull the string, you will find that the leather will not only stick to the stone, but you can lift it—even if it be a big stone. The explanation is really quite simple. When you pull the string it lifts the centre portion of the leather from the stone, and a vacuum is made (a vacuum is a space where there is no air), the outer part of the wet leather is sticking to the stone, and no air can get to the space you create when you pull the string; the pressure of the atmosphere all around is about 15 lb. on a square inch, and so that weight presses on the leather where the vacuum is, because there is no air inside to resist it, and hence you can lift the heavy stone. The limpet acts in exactly the same way. It contracts the centre of that flat foot and so makes a vacuum, and the pressure of the air on the shell becomes at once so great that you cannot move it in the ordinary way without exerting great strength. There is one method, however, by which you may move it easily: if you can push even a fine needle under the shell till it reaches the vacuum and then draw it out quickly, the air will rush in and destroy the vacuum, and you can remove the limpet.

Now, St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, told them 'to abhor that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good' (Ro 12^9). You and I are to do the same, and just as the limpet clings to the rock, so we ought to cleave to that which is good. We are not simply to cling loosely as the

limpet sometimes does, lest, like it, we be easily removed. We are to cleave—that is to say, we must mean to cling, and try to do it. You and I cannot do this in our own strength alone. We must have help. Just as the limpet needs the help of the air, so you and I need the grace of God. How may we gain the help of the grace of God? By putting ourselves into the condition of mind and heart to receive that aid. The air is always there, but the limpet does not always put himself into the condition to get its help. We must abhor the evil, choose the good, and wish to cling to it. We must desire God's help and look to Him for it, and then He will give it to us, and His grace will do for us what the air does for the limpet.

But beware of the little sins, which will be to you what the needle prick is to the tightly clinging limpet, and which destroys its grip. Little untruths, little disobediences, little acts of unkindness or selfishness, cause us to lose our grip, so that we are swept into the sea of sin and evil.

IV.

Have you ever tried to speak to children on the indwelling of Christ? The Rev. Stuart Robertson, M.A., does so, and does it successfully. He has published a volume of story sermons for children under the title of *Other Little Ships* (R.T.S.; 2s. 6d. net). To the sermon on the indwelling of Christ he gives the curious title 'In-quaintance.' Let us quote it.

In-quaintance.

'Christ liveth in me.'—Gal 2^{20}.

This is the pretty story of how a little child coined a very pretty word.

The child was Hartley Coleridge, son of the great Samuel Taylor Coleridge. One day, when Hartley was five years old, a friend was talking with the boy and his father, and a little girl with whom Hartley used to walk to and from school every day was mentioned. 'Oh!' said the friend, 'is Annie an acquaintance of yours, Hartley?' 'No,' said the boy, and pressing his hand on his heart, he answered fervently, 'she is an *in*-quaintance.'

And on that his father, writing to a friend about it, made this little verse:

Though friendships differ endless in degree,
The *sorts*, methinks, may be reduced to three:
Ac-quaintance many and Con-quaintance few,
But for *In*-quaintance I know only two.

Now I leave it to the boys and girls who read this, to think over the people they know, and put them into their right sort and degree of *'quaintance*: the people you know, yet whose lives just touch yours now and again—*ac*-quaintances; the people you know who are much *with* you, helping you, on your side—*con*-quaintances; and those who are *in* your heart, *in* your thoughts, *in* your prayers, who live *in* you—*in*-quaintances.

But I want to ask you one question, and it is this: What sort of *'quaintance* is Jesus Christ?

He begins as an *ac*-quaintance with us all when we are children. We read about Him in a book, we learn about Him—what He said, what He did, how He died. We know about Him as we know about other great souls in the far-away past. He is in the past; He is in a book; He is nearly twenty centuries away. We nod to Him over the years, but He is only an *ac*-quaintance.

Then one day—has it come?—it dawns on us that He is living *now*; not shut in a book, not centuries away. Now, in the lives of men, in the world about us, Jesus is living and working now, teaching people to love, helping people to live, redeeming them out of evil ways. In our own homes He lives and works; and most of the things that make us happy there are His doing.

That is better. He is near us. He is *with* us, on the side of the good in us. 'I am with you always,' He said, 'even to the end of the world.' Jesus is a *con*-quaintance.

But that is not enough. Christ *with* us makes our life happy; Christ in us makes our life glorious. 'Christ in us, our hope of glory,' says St. Paul, and his life was a glorious life because he was able to say, 'Christ liveth in me.'

When are you going to be able to say that?

When are you going to open your heart to Christ so frankly and widely that He can enter in and live there, so that you will look up at God with Christ's eyes of faith, and on this world with Christ's eyes of gladness, and on men and women with Christ's eyes of love?

When will you be able to give to the question, 'Is Jesus an acquaintance of yours?' that best answer, which it matters all the world that you should give, and give it with a true hand on a true heart: 'No! He is an *In*-quaintance'; 'Christ liveth *in* me.'

Point and Illustration.

Denominationalism.

Mr. Hugh Martin, M.A., has issued, through the Student Christian Movement, a volume containing five short lectures on *The Calling of the Church* (9d. net). Every lecture is a living message spoken fearlessly. In the lecture on 'The Church that is to be,' Mr. Martin says this about denominationalism:

'Whatever has been the case in the past, it is clear that our denominational distinctions in their present form have outstayed their usefulness. The tasks that confront the Church can only be accomplished by utilizing all our resources to the full. We have much need "seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions." Many of them are meaningless on the foreign missionary field, and to seek to transplant them in their entirety is to give grave cause for stumbling. It can hardly be matter for surprise, for example, if a Chinese, on being invited to join the "Dutch Reformed Church of America in China," feels that there is rather more geography than Christianity in the title! In this matter of unity, as in much else, the mission field is happily leading the way, and there are not wanting signs that even at home we are beginning to doubt the wisdom of overlapping and denominational competition, and learning that we are Christians first and denominationalists second. "Who cares about the Free Church," cried Dr. Chalmers, "compared with the Christian good of the people of Scotland?"'

Considerateness.

Short messages for Lent, touching every aspect of sin and repentance, have been issued by Dr. H. C. G. Moule, Bishop of Durham, under the title of *The Call of Lent* (S.P.C.K.; 2s. net). There are forty-one messages, L'Envoi, and a closing poem. Out of one of the chapters on 'Sins in Personal Life,' take this on Considerateness:

'We will not forget Considerateness as a "concord with God" in home-life. The steady practice of it is a real, and a sweet, element in the "fruit of the Spirit." I remember a story told me a few years ago by a clergyman-friend on Tyneside, on first-hand authority, that of the mother concerned. She was poor, not strong, a widow, with several children. The eldest was a great lad, out at work. He came home daily to dinner, and when the dinner was not ready his tired mother was visited with coarse abuse. But the lad "got converted." And how did the miracle of grace come out? Well, at home it came out thus: the young fellow still wanted his dinner, and still it was not always ready. But now, when he found it so, he would "look ever so bright, and say, *Mother, I'll help you get it ready.*" Very simple words, but God was in them. They were a musical concord with the Christ of Nazareth. And their suggestions reach a very long way.'

Isaiah the Highlander.

One of the 'Liverpool Diocesan Board of Divinity Publications' is a scholarly popular account of *Isaiah: The Prophet and The Book*, by Canon A. Nairne, D.D. (Longmans; 1s. net). It is fit for pleasant reading and it is just as fit for steady study—an accomplishment only the few can attain to. This is how Dr. Nairne handles a difficult bit of criticism:

'Are these visions Isaiah's or only parts of the additional theology of the book? In particular, is Isaiah ix. 1–7 his, or is it, as some would say, a late piece emanating from the Maccabean struggle, when "Galilee of the nations" came into prominence, and the heavily booted soldiers (ix. 5, R.V. margin) of Antiochus oppressed the saints? Perhaps of this conjecture also we may be content to say that it is ingenious, but is it securely founded? There is, however, another possibility. In the Septuagint, the most astonishing part of the prophecy, the series of divine epithets in verse 6 disappears. In place of these we only find "angel of great counsel." May it not be that we have here an instance of the editor of Isaiah's "Life" taking what he might consider an allowable liberty with the record—perhaps itself already confused and uncertain—of his hero's words, and heightening them in accordance with the faith of the Jewish Church? Just that touch, the series of great epithets, would be an interpretation of the primitive Messianic language, in terms of the later development, which was legitimate development, not change. Such a touch would be hardly bolder than the alteration in the text of 1 Tim. iii. 16, "God who was manifested in the flesh," for "He who was, etc.," not so bold as the insertion of the "heavenly witnesses" in 1 John v. 7.

'And yet, is this conjecture well founded either? The Septuagint, with its merits, has this defect: it is apt to tone down the daring thoughts in which the Hebrew seers delighted. Is not this after all an instance of that toning down? Are not the great epithets consonant with that chord in Isaiah's heart which is all the more surely his because we cannot properly sympathise with it? There is a story of Fiona Macleod which often recurs to me after long hesitation over critical problems like this. He tells of one of his West Highlanders to whom a fairy wish was offered. And he wished for power and wealth immeasurable, and then—"Give me instead," he cried, "give me a warm breast-feather from that grey dove of the woods that is winging home to her young." Fiona Macleod continues: "I tell this story of Coll . . . because he stands for the soul of a race. . . . Below all the strife of lesser desires, below all that he has in common with other men, he has the live-long unquenchable thirst for the things of the spirit. This is the thirst that makes him turn so often from the near securities and prosperities, and indeed all beside, setting his heart aflame with vain, because illimitable desires. For him, the wisdom before which knowledge is a frosty breath: the beauty that is beyond what is beautiful. For, like Coll, the world itself has not enough to give him. And at the last, and above all, he is like Coll in this, that the sun and moon and stars themselves may become as trampled dust, for only a breast-feather of that Dove of the Eternal, which may have its birth in mortal love, but has its evening home where are the dews of immortality" (*Iona*: in *The Divine Adventure*, p. 106). This analogy does not solve the critical problems of the Book of Isaiah, but it illustrates the soul of Isaiah. For Isaiah and the people he dwelt among were highlanders. Their dreams of empire and their dreams of the eternal were strangely mingled, or succeeded each other with strange abruptness, and it would be hard to set limits to inspiration on such a soil. Sometimes too it would be hard for readers of an alien race to trace the hidden lines, so different from what we would prefer to draw, along which their idealism runs out to its goal.'

The Great Thought of the Book of Job.

'Whenever a man can say in his heart, This calamity is not anything I have directly deserved, and when he can further say, I have learnt from this suffering all that I am able to learn, and yet it continues—then he is warranted in claiming for his own the great thought of the Book of Job, the thought that his suffering serves some larger purpose of God, such as the vindication of disinterested piety. If we can really believe that, it gives us what we most need; it links our human lives with a divine purpose, just at the point where the purposes of God seem broken off. Pain is transformed into privilege; sorrow becomes the sign of God's approval. God trusts His servant—trusts him with the maintenance of eternal truths, trusts him to stand by them to the last. The trust is itself a reward, the reward of innocence, and the confirmation of piety, as much an honour as the sufferings of Plato's just man crucified. We often speak of trusting God; is there not often a neglected truth in the thought that God is trusting us?'

That is as finely said as it is true and timely. It is found in a small book on *The Cross of Job*, written by Professor H. Wheeler Robinson, and published by the Student Christian Movement (1s. 6d. net). It is characteristic of the book. There is mastery manifest throughout, and no waste of words.