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The Concept of Sin (1912), where the theory of actual sin and practical applications of it to life are discussed.

A few words may be said in conclusion with regard to the two notions of accountability and guilt which, as has been implied in the foregoing remarks, are correlative with sin, and as to which psychology has something important to say. Psychologists have taught us that any process of consciousness can be regarded from two distinct standpoints, viz. (1) that of the subject at the moment when he is having the given experience, and (2) that of another person, or of the same subject at a later time, reflecting on that experience. The confusion of these two standpoints constitutes what has been called 'the psychologist's fallacy,' and we commit it whenever we read our own experience into that of another subject, e.g. the child, the savage, the lower animal, as men commonly do. The latter of these standpoints is that of objective science or common knowledge; the former is that of first-hand individual experience, sometimes spoken of as 'subjective.' Now it is plain that moral self-judgment from the subjective standpoint may often be the opposite of the judgment passed from the objective standpoint on the agent of a particular act. An ancient Hebrew whose ethical standard was 'an eye for an eye,' for instance, would approve of himself for an act of lawful

revenge; we Christians would condemn such acts as sinful. Hence the terms 'accountability' and 'guilt' have two possible meanings, according as they refer to the subjective and objective standpoints respectively. And if our preceding description of sin be true, it will follow that 'sin' is only correlative with the subjective meaning, as is recognized in Paul's casuistry concerning meats offered to idols. But inasmuch as ethics adopts the other standpoint, theology has generally borrowed its attitude; and this is one cause of the common confusion of sin with imperfection. It is, however, only subjectively apprehended responsibility that is involved in sin and guilt. A man may experience guilt when he is objectively guiltless, and *vice versa*. And this is why the sense of sin—which is no infallible guide to the actuality of objective sinfulness—is no secure starting-point for a concept or a doctrine of sin. Once more, then, psychology has enabled us to get rid of an ancient theological error; and the elimination of the several errors upon which I have touched is not merely a matter of words, or even of correct theory: it should affect religious practice. It should discourage morbid self-examination and exaggerated language concerning sin, the frequent libelling of human nature and the pleasures of sense, and conduce to a true charity towards sinners, devoid of flabby sentimentality.

In the Study.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

Sunday after the Ascension.

POWER AND ITS CONDITIONS.

'Ye shall receive power.'—Acts 1⁸.

No gift is given by God without man's response. There are conditions. What are the conditions upon which the greatest of all gifts is given, the gift of the Holy Spirit? That is the gift which brings power—power for holiness of life and for successful service. How is it ours?

The *appointed way* is through the gate of prayer and obedience. It is a great step toward getting power when we feel the lack. 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.' A sense of want is

the key to the Divine plenty. 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you'; asking, seeking, knocking, all these are but expressions of lack. The Laodicean Church was lukewarm, because it felt no lack, saying, 'I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.' Take that as a beacon of warning. The sense of need is the soul's answer to God's plenty; the sense of weakness, the first condition of power. 'Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.' Paul knew this when he said, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' The Pharisee felt no lack and received no blessing, but the Publican conscious of his need went away justified.

Let it be remembered that this promise was spoken to specially prepared men. The 'ye' is significant. This message was to the elect, that is, to the men whose type of life made them ready for its greatness. The Spirit must always work with what we bring to Him. It may be reverently said that He is conditioned by the subjects of His working. On the day of Pentecost this was so. The disciples did not offer Him a vacuum. Rather they brought to Him the three years of close association with Christ, the three years of infinite teaching, the three years of growing faith, the three years of beautiful sacrifice, and the three years of blessed memory—and these He received and re-enforced until the power of them was focused into one day.¹

1. Christ received the Spirit in this way.

(1) He was obedient. When John protested against baptizing one better than himself, Jesus replied, 'Suffer it to be so now; for thus it cometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' It was a part of God's commandments, 'though a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered.' 'He was obedient unto death.' 'It is my meat and my drink to do my Father's will.' The centre of that wonderful prayer He taught the disciples is, 'Thy will be done.' The one purpose that runs through all Christ's mission, from the day when He said, 'I must be about my Father's business,' till He bowed submissive on the cross, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' the backbone of His life into which gathered all the system of thought and action, suffering and doing, was the steady, persistent will to do God's will, obedient to God's law.

(2) The second condition was prayer. 'Jesus, being baptized and praying, the heaven opened and the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon him.' Upon the praying Christ, the Spirit descends; upon the praying Christ, the Spirit abides. When He would have wisdom to choose His followers, He prays; He was transfigured while praying; angels ministered unto Him in Gethsemane while in prayer. Obedience and prayer, then, are the two hinges upon which the golden gates of heaven turn, that the Holy Spirit might descend into the life of Christ, bringing power. His success dates from that moment in His ministry. Obedience and prayer brought the answer.

2. The same law applied to the disciples. It held good at Pentecost. While they waited in simple obedience to the known will of Christ, the gift of power was bestowed. Moreover, 'they

¹ E. F. Hughes.

were all with one accord in prayer and supplication.' As a natural result God opened the windows of heaven above them, and poured out such a blessing that there was not room enough to receive it. Upon obedient, praying disciples of Christ, the Spirit came.

A moment's thought will show us how thoroughly scientific this is. Obedience to natural law, 'Communion with nature, in her invisible forms,' gives to men the mystery of her power. Newton discovers the law of gravitation; Watt masters the steam; Franklin captures the lightning; Edison controls electricity, by obeying law and communing with nature. Dominion over forces of earth, sea, and sky, are conditioned upon obedience to law, and communion with the forces that work according to law. So in the spiritual realm, power comes to the soul obedient to God, in prayerful communion with God. So it has always been; so it must ever be. It is a natural law in the spiritual world. To confer spiritual power upon the disobedient would be to confirm disobedience, and risk the abuse and misuse of power. Such power cannot, in the nature of things, be given to the soul out of sympathy with God. And to give it unasked would not lead to communion with its Author. God does bestow His natural blessings, rain and sunshine, unconditionally. But history shows that the natural blessings do not lead souls to commune with God. But God wants to take up His abode in the believer. He yearns to inspire in every human soul the gladness of filial feeling in place of the dread and foreboding of punishment which haunt conscious guilt. His personality interpenetrates our spirit in proportion to the perfectness of our surrender. It was a wise remark of Gordon that the spirit like the wind always moves toward a vacuum. By entire consecration make your heart vacant of all love of the world, and the Holy Spirit will come in Pentecostal power and fill the vacuum. This highest outreach of faith is possible only to the deepest submission of the human will.²

Whit Sunday.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

'The Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father.'—Jn 15²⁶.

Why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of Truth?

1. He goes forth from the Father, the God who is true, and bears witness to Christ as the Truth. This is the service which He renders to the Truth, as being the Spirit of it; and the witness which He bears does not supersede but involves the witness which the chosen disciples have likewise to bear, as having been with Christ from the beginning.

2. But, further, this testimony of the Spirit of

² C. T. Wilson.

the Truth to Christ the Truth determines the manner of His guidance of the disciples in the future. He guides them into all the Truth. The Spirit of the Truth shall take up the office of their Teacher, yet not in any wise without Him who has been their Teacher hitherto. Christ has yet many things to say to them, but they cannot bear them just now; the weight of the words is too great for them to carry. But the Spirit of the Truth shall teach them by putting them in mind of all things which Christ has spoken to them. He shall glorify Christ by taking of that which is Christ's and telling it out to them; and as what is Christ's includes all that is the Father's, so whatever can be called the Father's must come within the Spirit's exposition of the Truth. The knowledge of Christ as the Truth shall constitute the substance of all their future learning, while the Spirit of the Truth shall train and enlighten them in the perception and application of it.

3. They who follow the Spirit's guidance will not receive an illumination enabling them to dispense with truth, but the enablement to lay hold of truth: the voice of the Spirit will be heard only in the interpretation of truth, and specially of the Truth. For He shall not speak from Himself. He will utter no independent oracles, making of none effect the fixed and undecaying teaching which is provided in the incarnate Son, or weakening allegiance to the primary authority of the Father; for He too, like the Son, shall speak only whatsoever things He shall hear. Thus on the one hand the Truth given in Christ will need from age to age His expounding to unlock its stores; and on the other hand the faith in Him and His office in the present shall never loosen men from the gospel given once for all, or draw them away from the eternal Father, by enabling any voice born only of the present to seem wholly Divine. Standing fast in the unchanging truth and an endless progress in taking knowledge of it shall be indissolubly united.

4. Yet in another sense the future is specially His. As He of old had taught the Prophets to read the future through the past and the present, so now He shall tell out the coming things to the disciples. By His guidance the eyes of the disciples shall be fixed not so much on what lies behind, though there lies the embodiment of the Truth, as on the future: and this very pointing to the future will be indispensable to His mission as the interpreter of the Truth. For the Way along

which Christ's chosen are led is always an ascent; and it is only in the light of the future that the most essential truth can be seen to be truth indeed.¹

Trinity Sunday.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FAITH.

'If ye have faith, and doubt not.'—Mt 21²¹.

Faith is power. It triumphs over difficulties. It makes men great. What is the secret of its power?

1. To begin with, it brings a man into touch with God. There is no other way of approach to God; as it is written, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.' To bring one's soul into line with the Divine will is to find one's self, and to assume an attitude of power. I am a cipher; but when I move up against the great Unit, I am ten, a hundred, a thousand, if you will; and herein I fulfil the prediction, 'One shall put ten thousand to flight.'

I once saw a tug in the New York Bay drawing six barges of iron; the rope by which it was fastened to them was powerless in itself, yet they could not move without it. So faith couples the soul with God; and, binding us to omnipotence, it makes us labourers together with God.²

2. Then follows self-respect. A man perceives God now, not as an abstraction but as Immanuel, 'God with us.' He looks into the face of Jesus, reads there the story of pardoning grace, and accepts it. The sin that shamed him is blotted out. He reads the blood-atonement as Abel, standing beside his primeval altar, read it. He enters into 'the reproach of Christ' as Moses entered into it. He sees the day of Messiah as Abraham 'saw it and was glad.' An infinite vista of possibilities is opened before him. He moves up to the side of the 'first-born among many brethren,' who said, 'As the Father sent me so send I you.' Life has new meanings for him. He lives no longer as one of the ephemera. Knowing that he dies not 'as the beast dieth,' he measures his life by corresponding responsibility.

3. Thus he necessarily puts a new emphasis on truth. For truth is the basis of conduct; since 'as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' He longs to solve the mighty problems that reach out

¹ F. J. A. Hort.

² D. J. Burrell.

into the eternal æons. 'There are so many voices and none of them is without signification' for him. He turns to the Bible, and searches it as for hid treasure. He sits at the feet of Jesus and learns of him. He hears Him teaching, 'not as the scribes, but as one having authority'; and he takes Him at his word. Doubt is dispelled—the doubt 'that makes us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt.' With vanishing doubt fear takes its flight. Faith feeds on faith. Thus he advances 'from strength to strength' in the symmetrical building of character. He moves away from such timorous phrases as 'I hope' or 'I wonder' to 'I know' and 'I believe.'

4. And in this sacred quest of truth, duty becomes supreme.

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
The youth replies, I can!

He hears his Master saying, 'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do.' As he looks toward eternity, the fear of death vanishes; for death is but 'the covered bridge, leading from light to light, through a brief darkness.' And, more and more, the seriousness of life grows upon this man; since life is the season given for preparation for eternity. To live for eternity is, to him, another way of saying, 'Live to-day!' So faith lifts him above his sordid environment. He is no longer the creature of circumstance. He is 'in the world but not of it.' He can endure sorrow, because it worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. He prepares himself for trial by drinking water out of the King's well. He confronts difficulties as did the priests, who walked round Jericho blowing rams' horns; and difficulties, like the walls of Jericho, fall down flat before Him. His conflict with temptation is like the historic battle which was fought on Look-out Mountain with the clear of heaven above and storm clouds far beneath. The world is so little now! Heaven so fair, eternity so vast! Duty is so important, character so inestimable! God has been taken into the reckoning; and God and the verities which centre in Him are all in all.¹

Faith no doubt admits of growth, but how? just by the performance of those practical duties which the Lord had

enjoined; it is not for a man to say, I cannot do such and such things because I have not faith enough, but rather to strive to increase his faith by doing God's will.²

The doubts of some are more indicative of a love of truth than the belief of others. They arise from a sense of the awful importance of the issue and an agonizing desire to be sure. But wherever this interferes with practical duty it is wrong; for duty is always incumbent, and generally clear, and it is God's way of leading to truth.³

First Sunday after Trinity.

FAITH'S INCREASE.

'And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.'
—Lk 17⁵.

Faith must be there first. It may be feeble enough but it must exist. Then the increase is both God's and ours.

1. The Value of a spark of Faith. What a wonderful gift is a spark of genius! It is indefinable, elusive, incalculable, yet the difference that it establishes between men is immense; they who possess it are seers looking straight into the secret of things, and by their knowledge of the laws and forces of nature they make us masters of the situation. A spark of genius constitutes a unique personality, one gifted with vision and sovereign skill, a miracle-worker in the natural sphere.

What the spark of genius is in the mental world—the gleam of spiritual faith is in all that pertains to the higher life of man. One vivid vision of God—His goodness, holiness, nearness; one real sight of the Saviour's all-sufficing merit and love; one heartfelt experience of the virtue of heavenly grace; one flash of the eternity which awaits us and which is so surely ours—these, or any of these, inspire a power which can remove mountains, reveal all life in a new light, and bring into the soul consolations and hopes far beyond anything known to the natural man.

How wonderful it is when a man is born with a grain of poetry in his brain! That fact differentiates him from the vast majority of men, and gives to his words and work charm and power. In his imagination common things are mysteriously enhanced, the splendour of nature unseen by other eyes dazzles his, and human life, so prosaic to the mass, is romantic to one in whose soul shines the poetic gleam. We may inherit only a grain of poetry, yet that mystic atom makes an almost infinite difference; the world that otherwise were a dustheap is a jewel-heap, and life that otherwise were dark and dull is sprinkled with azure and gold. And this mere

² Harvey Goodwin.

³ J. Ker, *Thoughts for Heart and Life*, 112.

¹ D. J. Burrell.

dust of poetry in the brain creates the picture, the music, the song, the oration about which men talk, which they do not willingly let die.¹

2. 'Increase our faith.' There is no doubt that the Apostles felt their need of faith, and that they realized that they could not create it for themselves—that it was God's gift both in its original germ and in its growth and increase. They had a work to do—a life to live—needing powers far beyond their own natural powers; they had a world to overcome, which they could overcome only by the power of God. And our Lord's command, 'Have faith in God,' given as it was in connexion with the life of difficulty which lay before them, acknowledges this and provides for it. St. Paul puts this very beautifully when he says, 'For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God'; and then, 'For we are his workmanship,' *i.e.* 'He hath made us what we are; all our faculties are of Him.'

People say, 'Lord, increase our faith.' Did not the Lord rebuke His disciples for that prayer? He said, 'You do not want a great faith, but faith in a great God. If your faith were as small as a grain of mustard-seed, it would suffice to remove this mountain!'²

3. But all this is not enough. The faith here spoken of is not simply a developing energy; it is expressly connected with our own act and deed. All development, whether in nature or in grace, is according to the law of numberless interventions of the divine hand giving new directions and new vigour to existing power of life. In our personal religion the law of development has much to do with our own hand and our own voice hastening and invigorating the work of grace in our souls. We have to speak the word of faith as well as to exhibit the secret operation of faith without the word. The divine power is at our disposal to use it for overcoming of evil and removing of difficulties and obtaining all good. It is obvious that it is only the divine power that could accomplish all this. The Saviour uses these extraordinary similitudes purposely to express that: no other meaning could justify such unlimited hyperboles. But no one can fail to see with what marked emphasis He makes the act our own. We might have expected to hear Him say, 'It shall obey me'; or, 'I will see that it be done'; or, 'You shall find all things possible with God.' But that is not the style: 'It shall obey you.' Your voice shall command the

¹ W. L. Watkinson.

² Hudson Taylor.

mountain to be removed; your voice shall bid the tree to be uprooted; and both shall obey you. By no method could the Heavenly Master have more effectually taught that our faith is the link between His power and ourselves. By faith we make His voice, His might, His omnipotence our own: so far, that is, as we need them all. Precisely as we receive the benefit of His righteousness, we receive the benefit of His strength. His obedience is not reckoned to us; but its benefit becomes ours as believers. So His effectual power is not vicariously ours, but only as it is made our own. Hence the word is not, 'The Lord is my righteousness and strength,' but, 'In the Lord I have righteousness and strength.' But we must not diminish the prerogative. There stands the saying: an everlasting argument that 'the disciple is to be perfected as his Lord'; that he shares the supremacy of the Second Adam even as he shares the debasement of the first; that he has in and with his Lord 'all things put under him,' and that even he also may 'speak, and it shall be done.' 'It shall obey You.'³

Second Sunday after Trinity.

FAITH'S PROGRESS.

'From faith to faith' (R.V. 'By faith unto faith').—Ro 1¹⁷.

Faith has a threefold function. It is a vision of the ideal in Christ, it is participation in the 'good' of Christ, and it is obedience to the law of Christ. As the principle of moral appropriation it has its root in personal trust and its fruit in Christian service. It opens the understanding to truth; it quickens the spiritual imagination; it contributes moral earnestness to character. It brings the whole life into the domain of spiritual freedom, and is the animating and energizing principle of all moral purpose. Faith, in short, may be considered as the characteristic attitude and action of the whole Christian personality in its relation to the spiritual good offered to it in Christ.

1. It is a *free active* principle of appropriation of the offered good. There is indeed a certain element of passivity in it, for there is always implied in faith a quiet acquiescence in the divine will which is described as a waiting on God. But such calmness of spirit is not to be confounded with apathy or the unconscious assimilation of grace.

³ W. B. Pope.

Even in submissive trust there is a free disposal of oneself. By an act of will we assume the receptive attitude and wait upon God. The Spirit of Christ does not enter a man against his will. The door must be opened from within. The heart must be turned to the light. The hand must be put forth to receive the proffered gift.

Some people stop short with believing and do not receive. But our faith is certainly an appropriative faculty; a sort of hand of the soul that can be stretched out to take hold of God's offered gifts, or to link itself on to God's hand outstretched to guide us. Of what use would a hand be that never grasped anything? Perhaps some promise stands out before us, telling us His Mind, or it may have been impressed upon us by His Spirit. Even from a weak faith we can obtain promises; because faith apprehends the nature of God; and as soon as we begin to apprehend that, we see that certain things ought to happen, and ere long these things shape themselves into definite promises which faith applies. So the life is one of believing and receiving; and as our faith pleads the promises, and the appropriative power of the soul is exercised, we find the kingdom of God come to us not in word but in power.¹

2. It is the free and active determination of the whole man. All the faculties of man must unite in one receptive act. Faith is not the property of any single power. It is not with the mind only that we receive Christ. Nor is it with the heart, the feelings, or the will alone that we respond to His Spirit and obey His commands. In belief the entire manhood becomes receptive. Faith is the resultant of all the forces and experiences of the soul. It is the animating principle of every activity. Life answers to life. It is with his whole strength and heart and mind that man must believe.

3. It follows that the appropriating power of faith is not at once perfect or complete. It is a *growing power*. Christ may be really, though not yet fully, formed within us. We receive according to the measure of our faith. The moral life is in Paul's view a progressive life. Growth is the proof of its original vitality. Man is not a thing to be acted upon, but a free spirit to be transformed from within, and it is in accordance with this that the work of faith is not a complete and ready-made product, but the slow and gradual assimilation of grace. There is a going from faith to faith and from strength to strength. Salvation is potentially given at the beginning, but it has to be worked out through the various experiences of life into all the

¹ Rendel Harris.

departments of character and conduct, and faith is the continuous endeavour of the soul to realize the possibilities of its ideal.²

Virginibus Puerisque.

JUNE.

The Call of the Summit.

'An ensign on the mountains.'—Is 18^o.

Hill-climbing is glorious exercise. Many a Saturday evening in summer you have said that. You were tired but very happy then.

What is there in hill-climbing that we all love? There is the ascent. You remember how you turned round every now and then and looked back. The view got wider and wider; you were able to see a very long way off; the whole country seemed within reach. You planned aeroplane stations, you thought what a great thing it was to be alive, you felt fit for any work.

Then there came the short hour of triumph when you reached the top and sat beside the cairn with the pole in it. You had comrades beside you; you shared each other's 'piece' and told stories. Of course you were comrades who meant to do the right thing in life; up on the hilltop a sneak seemed a contemptible individual. Then you remember looking down at the other side of the hill. It was like reading a new story, or making a discovery.

Of course you soon had to descend. You liked going down. But the dead level road became monotonous—tiresome.

It is in our nature to want to climb. Let a boy walk along the most beautiful road in the country; if there is a hill on one side, he will trespass rather than miss a chance of finding out what there is to be seen from the top. He has been made so. In sending a boy into the world, the Great Master has set him a climbing task; and He trains him for it in beautiful ways. Did it ever occur to you that we have been going uphill during these early summer days? While the days have been getting longer and longer we have been climbing all the time. June has brought us to the summit. You have loved this month of sunshine, and on the twenty-second—the longest day—you rest at the cairn, and wish that it were midsummer all the year round.

² A. B. D. Alexander.

But you cannot rest long. Down the hill you must go. July, August, September, October—you spin through them—days of lessons, but also of wild fruit, nuts, and lovely colours. But the dead level road of hard work comes at last, when there is a little sunshine and a great deal of mud. Will you be ready for it?

I knew a young student who slept in a little attic. He not only slept there, it was his study as well. He loved his attic. From the little 'skylight' he could see the summit of a hill he had often climbed. In September, when he was busy preparing for the University competition, he used to put his head out at the 'skylight' and take a look at his favourite hill, then a long sniff of the keen air which seemed to come straight from the top of it. 'I'll take a bursary; I've made up my mind for that,' he said to himself. He was getting inspiration from the hilltop. You want to be like him, don't you?

On a pinnacle in South America at the very summit of a lofty range of mountains, an immense statue of Jesus was placed. The sculptors had hardly realized the meaning of what they were doing, for hilltops have always been great places for meeting with Jesus Christ. Why should it not be so on a midsummer's day, the hilltop of the year? Try to be like the boy in his attic. Don't forget the hilltop.

The house of Blake the poet used to be called the 'House of the Interpreter' by some of his friends. They felt when they entered it that they were on holy ground. One of these friends asked Blake, who was sitting at tea with his wife, to give him advice about something. For answer Blake turned to his wife, and said, 'What do we do, Kate, when the visions forsake us?' 'We kneel down and pray' was her answer.

And, boys and girls, when there seems a danger of your forgetting the good resolutions that have come to you during the summer days, I can give you no better advice than, 'Kneel down and pray.' And the Great Father is calling you. Like an 'ensign'—the wooden pole that used to be set up on a hill as a signal for the mustering of troops—Christ stands saying, 'Remember.'

Out of Eternity
This new day is born;
Into Eternity
At night doth return.

Behold it aforeside
No eyes ever did:
So soon it for ever
From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
Another blue day:
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away?¹

Left Undone.

'Set in order the things that are left undone.'—Tit 1⁵ (A.V.m.).

If you turn to the first chapter of Titus you will find in the middle of the fifth verse these words: 'Set in order the things that are wanting.' Now if you look at the word 'wanting' you will see a little figure ² before it, and in the margin of your Bible you will see another little figure ² with the words 'Or, left undone' after it. That just means that the word 'left undone' may be read instead of 'wanting.' The translators have given us a choice.

I want to speak to you to-day about 'the things that are left undone,' because the world would be a very much more comfortable, a very much happier, and a very much better place, if it weren't for 'the things that are left undone.' You know it is a queer thing, but many good people are far more worried about the wrong things they *do* do, than about the right things they *don't* do. And yet Jesus condemned people not so much for what they *did* do, as for what they *didn't* do. Do you remember the Parable of the Good Samaritan? It was the priest and the Levite who 'passed by on the other side,' who just didn't do the kind deed they might have done, that were blamed. And do you remember that other parable of the Last Judgment, where the sheep are separated from the goats? It is the people who just didn't do things who are condemned, those who omitted to help the hungry, and the thirsty, and the wretched, and the needy.

1. Well, you know little things grow out of big things, and so I want to say to you first—watch the *little* 'left undones' of everyday life.

Don't leave bits undone in your work. Whatever you do, do thoroughly. Have the bits that don't show just as nice as the bits that do show. Little 'left undones' lead to big disasters sometimes. It was because the artillery failed to cut the barbed wire properly that one of the great

¹ T. Carlyle, 'A Blue Day.'

battles of the war was lost and thousands of brave lives were sacrificed unnecessarily.

When you take up a piece of work go right through with it till you have completed it. Finish off all your loose ends. It was said of Coleridge the poet that he was a giant in intellect but a child in performance. He was head and shoulders above his fellows in ability, but he was the greatest failure of them all because he seldom finished anything he began. If you want to accomplish anything worth doing, you must finish it right to the end.

And then when you have finished anything, whether work or play, don't leave your things lying about for other people to put away. It isn't playing the game, and if you continue to behave like that you will become a horrid nuisance when you grow up. You will never grow out of the need of a nursemaid to tidy up after you.

2. But there are bigger things in life that get left undone. There are kind words that are never spoken, and kind deeds that are never done, just because people are too shy, or too lazy, or too thoughtless, or too selfish to say them or do them. And so somebody goes sad because we forgot to smile, and somebody goes disheartened because of the word of praise we omitted to say, and somebody goes weary because of the burden we didn't help to lift.

Three hundred years ago there lived a great Portuguese poet—Luis de Camoens. As a young man Camoens fought bravely against the Moors and lost one eye. Later he travelled to India. There he protested against the cruelty of the Portuguese settlers to the native Hindoos. For this he was arrested and banished to China. On his way to China he was shipwrecked and only just escaped drowning. But he managed to save the papers on which was written his finest poem, *The Lusiad*.

After sixteen years Camoens returned to Lisbon with an old Indian servant, Antonio. The poet was penniless and sick, and Antonio begged for him in the streets. A nobleman visited him in his wretched room and requested him to write verses for him. Camoens asked for fourpence, just fourpence, so that Antonio might buy some coal, for they were starving. The grandee departed without giving any help, and shortly after the poet was removed to an almshouse, where he died.

Over his grave they placed a stone on which was

inscribed: 'Here lies Luis de Camoens; he excelled all the poets of his time; he lived poor and miserable; and he died so, 1629.'

But after a while people began to feel rather ashamed of that inscription. So they took away the stone and erected a fine monument in its place. And on this other stone they gave an account of the wonderful work of the poet and praised him as a great Portuguese. But they said nothing about his miserable death.

Boys and girls, do you think it made any difference to Luis de Camoens that his fellow-countrymen erected a grand tombstone to his memory? Would it not have helped him ever so much more if they had showed him a little kindness in his lifetime? He asked for bread, and they gave him a stone.

Don't wait till it is too late to be kind, don't be one of the 'left undone' people, for

It isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
That gives you a bit of heartache
At the setting of the sun.

3. There is some special bit of work in the world 'left undone' for each of you to do. You wouldn't be here if there weren't, and it won't be done if you don't do it. Find out what it is and do it. God will show you how if you ask Him.

The Agate.

'They occupied (R.V. 'traded') in thy fairs with . . . agate.'—Ezk 27¹⁶.

The agate is our stone for June. Perhaps the name 'agate' doesn't mean anything to you. When people speak of a diamond or a pearl you have at once a little picture in your mind; but an agate! Let me see if I can draw a picture of an agate in your mind. Do you know a kind of sweet that is in layers—brown, cream, and pink, or green, white, and brown? Sometimes the layers are one above another, sometimes they are in rings, and the sweet looks like slices of a tiny jam roll with all the jam in the middle, or like the rings that you see in the trunk of a tree that has been sawn through. Well, if you can imagine something of that kind in stone you see an agate; only the colours are oftener grey and brown and red and yellow than green or pink.

Striped agates are known as 'banded' or 'ribbon' agates, and those with circles are known

as 'ring' or 'eye' agates. But there are agates with more curious markings still. For instance, some have a pattern zigzagging across them, and these are known as 'fortification' agates because the zigzags are supposed to resemble the walls and angles of a fortress. Others have feathery designs which make them look as if a piece of seaweed or moss had become embedded in them. These are spoken of as 'moss' agates.

The name 'agate' itself is taken from a river in Sicily which used to be called the Achates. It is now the Drillo. In the bed of this river the agates of ancient times were found. To-day agates are found in many countries—India, China, America, South Africa, Australia, Brazil. But you will find them also nearer home, for agates are discovered in many parts of Scotland—indeed, they are often known as 'Scotch pebbles.' You will see them in any shop where they sell Highland jewellery. But of course you won't mix them up with the clear yellow or pale brown crystal so often set in kilt brooches. That is the cairngorm or Scotch topaz.

The agate may not be so valuable as some other precious stones, but it has a beauty all its own, and it is useful as well as beautiful. It is very hard—harder even than steel—and because it does not rust as steel would, it is used in the making of certain scientific instruments. The knife-edge on which the beam of a chemical balance is suspended is made of agate; and pestles and mortars for pounding hard substances are also cut from the stone.

The agate's strange markings and figures make it specially suitable for amulets. And in olden times people who believed in such fancies used to attribute certain virtues to it. They said it was a symbol of strength and mastery, and that its wearer was sure of victory. Then, too, it was supposed to heal diseases of the eye, and to be an antidote against the bite of spiders or scorpions. It was also said to quench thirst and cure fever. It was a pet stone of the weather clerk, for it was believed to control the weather. In ancient Persia it was said to ward off tempests; and in Arabia prayers for rain were frequently made to an idol of red agate in the Muhammadan temple, the Kaaba, at Mecca.

We are inclined to smile at these ideas, for we know how untrue they are; but the poor agate

cannot help all the foolish fables that have grown up around it. If the agate could speak it would say, 'Forget all the stupid tales that people have made up about me, and I'll tell you a tale more wonderful—the true tale of how I came to be myself.

'Thousands of years ago when the world was being made there were certain rocks formed by matter boiling up from the hot centre of the earth. As these molten rocks cooled, empty air spaces like bubbles were left in them here and there. But these air spaces did not remain empty. Into them flowed gradually layer upon layer, coating after coating, of a stuff called silica. Sometimes the silica was grey or clear, sometimes it was tinged with red or brown or yellow. Occasionally it was coloured with pink or purple or green. At last all the air space was filled and became hard and solid.

'And there was I! By and by the stone round about me began to crumble and decay, but I was so hard that I did not decay with it, and so I was set free. I rolled from my old home into the bed of a stream, and here I am! Outside I am a plain uninteresting-looking fellow, inside I am a creature of lovely colours. Cut me and polish me, and you will have a thing of beauty for ever.'

That is the agate's story and its message to us comes from that story. It is this, 'Be beautiful within.'

The agate is not lovely to look upon till you cut it and see its heart. Its outer coat is not the best of it. Now, I am sorry to say, that with some people their outer coat—that is to say, their appearance—is the best of *them*. They are lovely to look upon, but their hearts are black and ugly. Perhaps we are inclined to envy beauty. We long for curly hair, or a straight nose, or a favourite shade of eyes, but our hair is lank, or our nose turns up, and our eyes are green. Well, the agate has a cheering message for us. It tells us that it is not less valuable though its outer covering is plain. What really matters is the beauty in its heart. And that is a beauty we too can have. We can all be kind and gentle, unselfish and loving, straight and true.

Beauty of heart! Let us all try to have it, for that is the beauty that lasts, that is the beauty that is loveliest, that is the beauty that is best beloved.