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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

drags. It is the very fire of hell, cries James, aflame in our own nature: and as he cries the man tears at the Nessus shirt that stings and burns him, yet which he cannot get off. It is what makes hell hell, and it is ablaze in us, and will not be trampled out; leaps into flame, tread desperately on it how we will. All which seems unreal and exaggerated to us, who keep stumbling half a dozen times a day into such sins, and think no more about them, never remember our hot words or our idle chatter about other folk, account these very little faults hardly worth chronicling. And yet, as James looks back, the thing about Christ that appears to have remained most vividly with him, the characteristic that bewildered him the most, was just His perfect mastery of His tongue. Often as James as man and boy had been irritating, often as he had spoken woundingly, often as he had misjudged and misunderstood Him, never once had Jesus been betrayed into passion or ill-humour or one unguarded word. That seems to have been the element in His perfection that haunted James, and humbled him, and stirred him to a wondering envy. If any man seemeth to be religious and bridled not his tongue, he has but small resemblance to the Master as I saw Him.

Well, we have a great fight before us! Yet, as we enter it, let us catch something of James' intrepidity and sheer gallantry of spirit. There never was a finer spiritual fighter, one with steadier eyes, and a heart less afraid. When a temptation leaps at us we, for the most part, whimper and snivel and pity ourselves, go into action whipt before the issue is joined. But not so James, who exults in battle—'Count it all joy,' he says—hails a temptation from afar as a new opportunity of victory, another field where freedom can be won and shrewd blows struck, defines it as a chance, not of sinning, as we do, but of winning.

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
 Never doubted clouds would break,  
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would  
 triumph,  
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
 Sleep to wake.

The soul that faces what life sends so gallantly and with such utter faith cannot be vanquished. Could we but gain the spirit of this doughty fighter, we too would pass on from strength to strength, from one impossible triumph to another and yet greater, would really find that all things work together for our good.

## In the Study.

### Virginibus Puerisque.

#### No Excuse!

'They all with one consent began to make excuse.'—  
 Lk 14<sup>18</sup>.

IF I were to ask the boys and girls who had never made an excuse to hold up their hands, I wonder how many hands we should see? I should not be surprised to see no hands at all. Certainly nobody would see my hand.

Making excuses is one of the commonest habits and one of the silliest. Very few people wish to hear excuses. They can't be bothered with them. And yet we go on bothering others to listen to them and bothering ourselves to make them. About the one time when an excuse is excusable is when we are likely to be gravely misjudged or misunderstood on account of some big thing of which we are entirely innocent. As for the little

things we get blamed for in everyday life, it is better just to bear the blame and say nothing, rather than get into a habit of excusing and explaining. Perhaps you will think that sounds rather hard, but every sensible boy and girl knows these little hardships are the things that make men and women of us.

Have you ever met a person you could never put in the wrong? They had an excuse for everything. Other people might be wrong, but *they* were right. They had knocked a cup off a shelf and broken it. Oh yes, but some one else had placed the cup on the edge of the shelf, otherwise it would never have been broken! They had lost their temper hopelessly, and scratched their small sister's face. Yes, but the small sister was so provoking! They had told a lie. Well, no, they hadn't exactly, they just didn't understand what you meant. Aren't people like that annoying,

and don't you want to give them a good shaking?

Now, there are two kinds of excuses big and little people make—the excuses for *having* done something they *ought not* to have done, and the excuses for *not having* done something they *ought* to have done.

1. First we shall take the *excuses for having done something we ought not to have done.*

There are several varieties of this kind, and the first variety is that which puts the blame on persons. I'm not going to say very much about this variety, because most boys and girls are above that sort of thing—all honour to them! They would rather bear the blame themselves than get another boy or girl into a row.

But while few of us would descend to blaming a particular friend, a good many of us are not ashamed to accuse our friends in general. If we have done something wrong, it somehow doesn't seem quite so bad if other people have shared in the wrong-doing. But remember—'Other fellows do it' is no excuse. It doesn't take a bit of the blame off you. It just shows your weakness. If you know a thing to be wrong, it doesn't become any less wrong because 'other fellows do it.'

The second variety of the 'having done something we ought not' excuse is the variety which puts the blame on things. Mary was playing with a valuable drawing-room ornament and dropped it so that it smashed in bits; but it wasn't she who dropped it, it was the silly ornament that fell out of her hand.

Jack and Margaret were late for school this morning. Margaret took forty extra winks, and Jack loitered by the way to watch a performing monkey, and superintend an excavation in the road. But the dining-room clock got blamed by both. Poor, dear clocks! Aren't you sorry for them, and aren't you glad they haven't any feelings? They get such a lot of blame they don't deserve!

Such excuses remind me of a story I read not long ago. In a certain office in a large city it was the custom for the clerks who were late to write down the reason for their want of punctuality. If there was a fog, the first clerk who came in late would write 'Fog,' and all the clerks who followed would write 'Ditto.' One morning the first clerk wrote as his excuse—'Sudden illness of my mother,'

and all the other clerks, without reading, wrote 'Ditto.'

Then there is the excuse which says 'I didn't think,' or 'I didn't know,' or 'I didn't understand.' We seem to have the idea that because we 'didn't think,' or 'didn't know,' or 'didn't understand,' therefore we are quite free from blame. Do you know, I think I should be rather ashamed to make an excuse like that. It is giving oneself away dreadfully. It is showing that that is just where we *were* to blame. We are all given a certain amount of common sense, and it is our business to use it. And if we don't use it, both we ourselves and those around us are bound to suffer. Remember that—

Evil is wrought by want of thought  
As well as want of heart.

2. But there is the other kind of excuse altogether—the *excuse for not having done what we ought to have done.*

What is it we omit to do? Is it some little everyday duty? Is it some act of kindness that will cost us a little trouble or bring ridicule upon us? We are lazy, or selfish, or afraid of being laughed at, but we excuse ourselves by saying that it is not our business, or that other people could do it better. Boys and girls, if the duty or the kindness is there for us to do, then *we* are the very best people, and the only people, to do it.

There is one very big thing that many, many people omit to do—to come to Jesus when He calls them. And there is nothing in this world about which people make more excuses.

Do you remember the story from which our text was taken? It is the story of a man who made a great supper. And when all things were ready, he sent his servant to summon those who had already been invited. 'And they all with one consent began to make excuse.' One had bought some land: he wished to go and see it. But the land would not have run away whilst he was at supper. A second had bought a yoke of oxen: he desired to test them. But, having purchased the oxen, he could easily have waited to prove them. A third had just married a wife. Could he not have brought her with him? If that were impossible, could he not have left her for a few hours, when they were to spend all their lives together? The truth was the men did not *want* to come.

Don't you think they were rather stupid? If

you were invited to a very, very nice supper-party, wouldn't you like to go to it?

And yet Jesus has spread a splendid feast for us all—the feast of His grace and love—a far better feast than any earthly one; and we are so stupid and so ungrateful, that we invent all kinds of excuses why we should not come to it. The chief excuse with young people is that they are too young. They will think about it later. No one was ever too young to come to Jesus. He called the little children to Him, and He calls them still.

#### A Chat about the Clock.

You may have heard people speak of a clock as a good one, but do you know what clock-goodness is? The two things are not quite the same.

Of course, a clock has a nice clean face, but then yours is always clean, even though it is not kept under a glass like the clock's. The clock goes on with its work whether any one is looking or not, but you never want watching, for you always get your lessons done, and you have never to be reminded to do what mother told you. The clock keeps its hands out of mischief, and it never strikes any one. Even when it strikes the hour, the hands do not do the striking. But I can tell you what they do. They are very wonderful hands, for they can teach us what clock-goodness means.

The hands teach us good behaviour: Twice in every twenty-four hours, the hands point straight up and down. That means 6 o'clock, but it means something else. Can you guess what? Straight up and down means we must be upright in conduct; down-right in duty. We must strive to do the right, and we must do it with our might. Being down-right in duty means working hard at our lessons and never complaining when we have to do something that is hard or unpleasant. But there! You are always like the clock in that!

Those hands teach us to pray, for at the beginning of each day, say one minute past 12 a.m., again at 12 noon, and again at 12 midnight, the clock puts its hands together before its face just like a child saying its prayers. Is that too often? No one says his prayers in the middle of the day? Well, you will find that one brave man used to pray three times every day, although the king had forbidden it altogether. His name was Daniel.

Here is just another thing. They teach us how

to be helpful. Twice every twelve hours—at 9.15 and 2.45, you see them stretched out as though they were saying, 'Here are two hands willing to do any good we can. We are ready to carry or lift, ready to do a little kindness for any one, ready for any duty the day may bring!' And this is the readiness that pleases mother so much. How delighted she would be if you really tried to help her—and did it willingly, too! Just fancy how she would feel if you were to go to her before you went out for that game of which you are so fond and said, 'Is there anything you want me to do before I go?' What a light would come into her face!

It is worth trying to be as good as the clock! And you can easily remember what the clock says, for it is—

|                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Hands up and down . . . | RIGHTEOUSNESS |
| Hands together . . .    | REVERENCE     |
| Hands open wide . . .   | READINESS     |

And as you are now getting big, you will know that just as the hands of the clock depend on what is going on behind the face, so our hands move according to the heart. 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.'<sup>1</sup>

### The Christian Year.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Lord of the Ages.

'He is risen from the dead.'—Mt 28<sup>7</sup>.

Faith in the risen Lord does not rest upon the resurrection as an historical fact. It rests upon the existence of a world of love and grace in the midst of which we live and for which we must provide an adequate source. The manner of the resurrection is secondary. What we need to know is that the Lord is with us, leading the forces of civilization, and that He will be with us to the end. Of this fact the resurrection is the assurance; of the resurrection this fact is the evidence. The resurrection of Jesus is the point of transition, where He who was a single figure in history becomes the Lord of the ages.

1. For two thousand years He who was dead has been leading the forces of civilization. When they have halted, His word of command has been

<sup>1</sup> J. W. G. Ward, *Parables for Little People*.

heard ; when they have wavered, His hand has led them back. This statement is writ so large that it scarcely requires evidence to support it. Take our conception of time. Of old there was no universal time-measure. Early peoples dated events by the foundation of their city or the reign of their king. But Jesus stamped His name upon the calendar of the civilized world. He began a new era, alive with meanings drawing their inspiration from Him. Here was furnished a point of time about which might be assembled the facts of history. From henceforth time was divided into divisions—before Christ and after Christ. There was one event that stood in such vital relation to all history that all before it was preparation and all after it result. And to-day business and politics, legislation and literature, are all adjusted to the chronology of Jesus.

How does this come about? How is it that a native of a subject province, a Man who during His lifetime exerted a narrow influence, who was cast out by His own people and died a criminal's death, has written His name across the face of human history? He was a great teacher, but the world had had great teachers. He died as a martyr, but in this He was not alone. The answer is to be found in the fact that He who died is still in the midst of His people, directing the forces of life into new channels. He is risen from the dead, and goes before you. Whatever we may think of the event in Joseph's tomb, Jesus has been living in the life of the centuries, a spiritual fact working in the midst of men from out the unseen world. Despite continued opposition, His spirit has taken hold of the life of the race ; it has awakened, inspired, and instructed that life, and lifted it up toward better things.

'But,' you will say, 'this does not argue that Jesus rose from the dead. Other men, about whom no such claim has been made, have left an abiding influence behind. Plato lives and Cæsar lives.' You miss the point. The civilization to which we refer has not drawn its life from the personal influence of Jesus as transmitted through His words, but from the conviction that He is alive and in the midst of His people. This was the dynamic that impelled the early messengers of the cross, that made them equal to any task. This is still the motive power of all Christian endeavour. 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Plato could create a school ; Jesus created a civilization. Plato's influence was a memory ; Jesus' influence

has always been a presence. The belief in a living Christ has been the sustaining power of the Christian believer. It has inspired in the missionary that spirit of personal abandon necessary to the spread of the gospel in the land of danger. It has begotten a confidence that has lived and laboured in times of failure and defeat. The Christian has not only found instruction in Jesus' words, and direction in His example, but he has been sustained, day by day, amid the toils and dangers, the temptations and losses of life, by the sense of an abiding Presence.

2. He goes before you to-day. You may not call yourself a Christian man, you may not belong to the Christian Church ; but tell me, where do you get your ideals of right, the ambition you have to do good and to make humanity better?

What is the intelligent motive of effort in behalf of the common good and the increase of happiness to-day? What incentive lies at the back of our world of philanthropy? The desire to make the conditions of life more favourable. But is this desire sufficient to create a civilization that has as its aim to banish disease and lengthen life, to lessen trouble and lighten toil, unless it have back of it a supreme sense of the value of human life? Our civilization, comprising its manifold agencies for enhancing the meaning of man's existence, was born of an awakened sense of the value of the human personality. And whence came this sense of value? Human life, though endowed with its loves and hopes and aims, is an empty thing if these are shut within the limits of the world of flesh.

Any object acquires its value from its destiny. Things of little worth become worthful when they are made subservient to a worthy end. A block of refuse marble, outside the gates of Rome, becomes a treasure of art, when chosen by Michael Angelo as the instrument of his genius. Even so the human personality, valueless as a thing of time, gains merit when its destiny is revealed. Man, as a child of eternity, rises above the ills and hurts of time. His life wins an end within itself, and henceforth the aim of human endeavour is to employ the things of time so far as they are helpful, to eliminate them so far as they are a hinderance, to the attainment of that end.

The resurrection of Jesus brought to the world a revelation of the destiny of human life. In the presence of the risen Lord belief in the eternity of the soul was born, and with that belief a civilization.

that seeks, through education, philanthropy, and the mastery of nature, the fulfilment of that destiny. And every man to-day who believes in education, science, and charity, and works for the betterment of human conditions, lives under the inspiration of a conception of life that was born of the broken tomb.

It is no mere accident that Christianity is the only type of civilization that has made for true enlightenment and for progress. Every other civilization has lacked the incentive to progress, because it has failed of its conception of the destiny of man. Christianity alone possesses the energy for advancement, for it alone reveals what man is to be and imparts the power to realize that end. The religion of Jesus, unlike other religions, calls a man, not to the performance of acts and ceremonies, but simply to the task of self-realization. Its very motive is development. But that motive would be powerless, were it not for two facts: that in the person of Jesus is given a demonstration of the possibility of life, and that the risen Lord has impressed upon the world a belief in the eternity of life. Under the inspiration of these two facts Christianity has become a power that has made for the emancipation and elevation of the human person and the awakening of the higher energies of man's nature. It has filled the heart of the world with a hope that has created new views of what man is to be and new agencies for the realization of that being.

3. He goes before you for the days that are to come. Humanity marches into the future under the inspiration of a dual hope, that the race will attain to a new world, that the individual will attain to a new life. This twofold hope was born of the resurrection of Jesus.

When the Great War began, and the ear of the world was filled with stories of the barbarities of cultivated nations, men of little faith complained, 'Christianity has failed.' This complaint was an unintended tribute to the power of Christianity. Why, Christianity has failed? Why not, education has failed, science has failed, humanity has failed? No, we have considered humanity a failure, and have not hoped greatly that science or education could redeem it. But we have believed that Christianity was accomplishing, and would ultimately accomplish its redemption. And why Christianity? It has given to the world the ideal of a new age, but this has not been the dynamic of the future hope

of the generations. Plato gave in his *Republic* a vision of what mankind ought to be. The dynamic of the world's faith for the future has rested in those words appended to the Great Commission, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Humanity has accepted the challenge of Jesus to bring in the future kingdom, because it has believed that He was present, working with it, and that in that presence resides a power that makes the impossible attainable. That belief was born of the word of a risen Lord.

Sin is the world's great problem. The hope of the future lies in breaking the power of sin. The bringing in of a new age is not primarily a matter of legislation, nor of education, but of regeneration. So long as sin remains, man's happiness is marred, and his possibilities destroyed, no matter what other gains are made. Therefore, from the beginning, humanity has looked for one who could save from sin. This Jesus claimed to do not merely by reason of His own example, but through His ability to bring into life a saving power. Belief in that power, and therefore the hope of a new age, was born on the day of the resurrection. For two thousand years the Christian army has been marching toward the future, labouring and praying for the coming in of that age. If Jesus is no Saviour, if the rock of belief in His Saviourhood is removed, all the worse for the world. Its hope of a redeemed humanity is gone. But while unbelief complains, millions in whose lives the reign of sin has been broken rise up to reaffirm their hope of a new world because of their experience of the power of a present Lord.

Furthermore, He goes before you into the valley of death. Life for each of us is filled with uncertainty, but in nothing is that uncertainty greater than in the event of death. Death is the great omnipotent fact, with which every one must reckon, yet about it we know nothing, except that it will come. The when, the how, the where are hidden from us. To-day the babe is snatched from its mother's arms, to-morrow the youth is taken in his strength, or the wife and mother in her womanhood. If we could only 'wrap the drapery of our couch about us and lie down to pleasant dreams,' but we cannot. No ministry that can come to human life can contribute more greatly to man's contentment and ambition than that which can create the belief that death is not an enemy but a friend. This the resurrection of Jesus has done. It has put in place of the grave the sun-lit splendour of the New Jeru-

salem. It has filled human hearts with a glad ambition to make the most of themselves and of their time here, not because death is the end, but because it is the true beginning.

Then let us rejoice in a risen Lord whose presence is certified, not by extraneous evidence, but by a world of life and love and hope, which bears witness to Him every day.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord is risen indeed.  
He is here for your love, for your need—  
Not in the grave, nor the sky,  
But here where men live and die;  
And true the word that was said:  
'Why seek ye the living among the dead?'

Wherever are tears and sighs,  
Wherever are children's eyes,  
Where man calls man his brother,  
And loves as himself another,  
Christ lives! The angels said:  
'Why seek ye the living among the dead?''<sup>2</sup>

#### SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

##### Redemption from Fear.

'Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into Gehenna.'—Lk 12<sup>o</sup>.

1. The characteristic of practically all primitive religions is *fear*. That was true, so far as we can discover, of all ancient primitive forms of belief; it is certainly true of all primitive forms to-day. Man is at the mercy of unseen personalities of unknown power. He first becomes conscious of these personalities as he begins to seek for causes to explain the happenings of his life or the conditions by which he is surrounded. In the earliest stages of belief these personalities are almost always malignant and must be propitiated—that is to say that at first it is the evil happenings which most impress him. His first impulse is to give his gods something—to bribe them by sacrifice into at least benevolent neutrality if not into active co-operation on his behalf. It is not till a much later stage in his development that any ethical conception begins to appear.

On the other hand, the record of revelation and of development contained in the Old Testament

<sup>1</sup> H. B. Williams, *Fundamentals of Faith in the Light of Modern Thought*.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Watson Gilder, 'Easter.'

is full of the idea of conflict. Man is no longer merely the sport of unknown powers. He is conscious of himself and slowly becomes conscious that he can and must fight against evil. All the fervour and wrath of the prophets is stirred when men turn back to the old ideas and begin again to try to propitiate their strange gods. It is treachery against Jehovah, but it is treachery too of man against himself.

And Christian consciousness is quite clear about the fact of conflict. It is part of the education or growth of the spirit to become more sensitive to the fact. But in that growth or education what place are we to assign to this ancient consciousness of hostile spiritual forces actively at work, actively engaged in an attempt to injure or even to destroy that inner spiritual life by which man is conscious of God and of his own high destiny?

(1) Two factors must be noted in passing which do not tend to make our task easier. One is the deep-seated idea that in the process of mental and moral evolution we have reached a stage which warrants us (if indeed it does not insist) in discarding primitive beliefs as definitely belonging only to the earlier stages of man's development and definitely to be discarded by more enlightened folk. At one end of the scale are the affirmations of animism, at the other the negations of such systems of belief as Christian Science. But the persistence in one form or another of the belief in spirits would seem to challenge the validity of this idea as a sound canon of progress.

(2) The other factor to be borne in mind is the theological colour which Western Christianity has given to Omnipotence as an attribute of Deity, a colour which makes it difficult for us to realize any kind of limitation to Divine power or to make room in our thought for any other personalities besides the Deity and ourselves. It is due to this attitude that any discussion of our subject has for long been ruled out of court. Science has been called in to supplement by her doctrine of natural laws the defects of theological discussion. But the newer philosophy of vitalism has shown that natural laws are not the whole account of the matter—that there is a *causa causans* which has still to be taken into account, and this has directed our thought towards new ideas of personal and spiritual elements in the development of human nature. And, theologically, there has been a welcome movement towards re-examining our con-

ceptions of the attributes of Deity in the light of the broader *παντοκράτωρ* of the Nicene Creed rather than of the narrower and less adequate Omnipotens of the Western Creeds.

2. So far as the ancient Hebrews are concerned, their thoughts about the world of spirits were largely moulded by the early Semitic ideas which surrounded them in the dawn of their history. They come perhaps through the stream of polytheism, but they have deeper roots than that in primitive animism. And even at that earlier stage in his development man was seeking for causes of the phenomena of nature or of personal experience. He lived in a world peopled with superhuman agencies, some beneficent, others (and more of them) malignant. The strongest influences from outside on Hebrew thought came from Babylon. There are three strange passages in the Old Testament where this influence can clearly be seen: Is 34<sup>14</sup> (? not later than the Exile), 'the hairy satyr shall cry to his fellow, the screech-owl (=night monster) shall rest there.' Lv 17<sup>7</sup>, 'no more offer sacrifices unto devils' (satyrs; post-exilic). Best known of all is the 'scapegoat' of Lv 16<sup>8, 10, 26</sup> = Azazel (marg.). Azazel is not elsewhere mentioned in the Old Testament, but the Book of Enoch (second century B.C.) speaks of Azazel as leader of the evil spirits.

It is to be noted that the creation of the angels is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Like the existence of God, their existence is presupposed. In He 1<sup>14</sup> they are called 'spirits,' but not in the Old Testament, where not even God is yet called Spirit. They belong to Jehovah's retinue, they are an element of His majesty, but it is not till later ages that their relation to man gains real definiteness. Generally in the Old Testament 'angel of the Lord' is a theophany, though sometimes, as in Gn 16<sup>11</sup> 32<sup>94</sup> 33<sup>2</sup> (but interpreted in 33<sup>14, 15</sup>), a distinction appears. It is when Greek influence makes itself felt that angels become intermediate agencies between the absolute transcendent God and the world of men.

3. The Old Testament is as much a record of the education of man's spiritual faculties and perceptions as of the actual content of revelation. In the New Testament we enter a new atmosphere. It is specifically the record of *redemptive* history, the final emancipation from the religion of fear. We see at last in clear light not only what God's purpose for man is, and what His work; we are

taught not only to realize and explore the relation in which man actually stands to God—'God so loved the world,' but, too, we are taught something of the character of that conflict which God wages on man's behalf. We leave the atmosphere of primitive ideas, the influence of animism, Semitism, of Babylon, Persia, Greece. They have had their place in the education of the religious sense, they have helped to mould man's conception of the spiritual world. They have contributed much towards his understanding of the universe and of his relation to it. But their chief work has been educative, formative, preparatory. In the New Testament we are in presence of the great central Fact of human history, and in the light of that Fact we gain new understanding. The Incarnation shows God interpreting Himself in terms of human life—but it also shows God interpreting human life and all that touches it in terms of Divine knowledge and Divine purpose. And apart from the last and most terrible conflict with evil on the Cross, we can see coming athwart that Life of serene strength and clear vision a growing knowledge that that serenity and clearness involves issues with a hostile and malignant power which is something vastly more and vastly stronger than moral depravity in man. There are some instances in the Gospels where our Lord's consciousness of contact with an evil personality or power seems to be clear and outstanding.

(1) *The Temptation.*—The form of the story is, for our present purpose, immaterial; we are more concerned with the fact that 'the ultimate source of information must have been our Lord Himself, as the most vigorous criticism admits.' We may then believe that 'the account was given as part of the whole revelation of spiritual fact which it was our Lord's mission to give to men. And the outstanding fact of the Temptation was that of conflict. While 'the meaning and essence of the Temptation is wholly spiritual; it is the problem of what is to be done with supernatural powers: shall the possessor of them use them for his own sustenance or for his own aggrandisement?' the *source* of the Temptation must be recognized as lying outside our Lord's personality. It is unthinkable to ascribe the Temptation to anything approaching 'moral turpitude' in the Incarnate God. It is equally unthinkable that the Father should be the source of any such testing for the Son. There remains only this: that the source of the Temptation lay



in that evil personality whose hold on human nature it was the Son's purpose to subdue, and both the Father and the Son refused to evade contact with that evil personality which was the common lot of that humanity with which the Son had clothed Himself.

If this is the right point of view from which to regard the Temptation, it will fall into place not merely as a preliminary to our Lord's teaching with regard to the evil that is in man, but also with His attitude towards the evil which is 'outside' of man and of which he is the victim, not only in his moral, but in his physical being.

(2) When, for the first time, He has called His followers to His help in liberating their fellows from bondage, and they report that even the devils (*τὰ δαιμόνια*) (Lk 10<sup>17</sup>) are subject unto them in His Name, there comes that strange comment: 'I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven . . . howbeit, rejoice not that the spirits (*τὰ πνεύματα*) are subject unto you. . . .' Is there not a sense of personal conflict between God at work in men and through men and an evil power holding men in thrall? Nor can we fail to notice that in the commission given to these seventy men there is given unmistakable evidence of the presence of this hostile power in the 'serpents and scorpions' on which they had been given authority to tread. It would seem that these poisonous creatures, hostile to man, were in some mysterious way a manifestation of the 'power of the enemy,' and that the coming of the Incarnate Power ultimately involved their subjugation or even their destruction. Mark has already hinted that they were powerless in His Presence.

(3) Or in that scene where the Lord reveals so much of the spiritual conflict of His life (Lk 22<sup>28ff.</sup>): 'Ye are they that have been with me in my temptations'; and He adds, addressing that disciple so fervent in emotional love, so lacking in perception of spiritual danger, 'Simon, Simon, Satan asked to have you (pl.) . . . but I made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not; and do thou when once thou hast turned again establish thy brethren.'

(4) Or, once more, in Gethsemane: 'This is your hour and the power of darkness.'

All of it speaks of the personal contact of the Lord of Life with a supernatural power of evil from whose grip He has come to deliver His brethren. In St. John this note is specially strong and clear.

Thus 12<sup>31</sup>, 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out'; 14<sup>30</sup>, 'The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me' ('nothing that falls under his power,' Westcott, *in loc.*); 16<sup>11</sup>, 'The prince of this world is judged.' We note the likeness between these passages in St. John and Eph 2<sup>2</sup> 6<sup>12</sup>. The whole tone of them is in complete contrast to the received ideas of our Lord's time. There the devil is represented as the enemy of man rather than of God. Here it is a direct conflict waged by God to conquer the enemy of good, to recover the Kingdom, and therefore to set men free from thralldom.

Does it mean that those ancient intuitions, those dim fears of bygone ages, have been groundless, imaginary, false, or does it mean that, like law the schoolmaster, they were meant to lead to the great Healer and Conqueror, the Christ of God? For it is to be remarked with special care that while our Lord completely contradicts the primitive false notions of God as a tyrant who rules in blood, He as distinctly seems to emphasize and reaffirm the truth of those primitive convictions which personified evil and gave that personified power a large share in the happenings of human life. St. Lk 12<sup>6</sup> is His most impressive warning: 'Fear him who after he hath killed hath power (*ἐξουσίαν*) to cast into Gehenna.' And it is in absolute contrast to His teaching about the Father's thought of men which comes in the immediate context, 'Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows.'<sup>1</sup>

WHITSUNDAY.

Temptation.

'Tempted.'—Lk 4<sup>2</sup>.

1. Temptation or probation appears to be not an occasional but an integral and inseparable element in human action. It is the struggle experienced in acting fully up to our make, the painful struggle to be loyal to what we know to be best. In our action as purposeful, reasoning, moral, and responsible we seek ends and means which we fully approve. In the choice of means, when once an end is fixed, there is a process of narrowing of option enforced by our knowledge of the end, of laws and conditions which rule our choice, and of the conduciveness of means considered. Because we are reasoning and moral, our make forces us—

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Pridie, *The Spiritual Gifts*.

if we are completely loyal to it—to choose the best means. When the process converges on the means so approved, our self-committal to our end enforces our adoption of that means and no other; what is best becomes for us the sole means open to us. The earlier stages may be comparatively rapid and easy. The intensity of the struggle increases as the range of option is narrowed, when the persistent sifting of means at last drives us to pass judgment on the most desirable of the *rejicienda* and reject it.

(1) The issues of such action through struggle are manifold. The agent himself is profoundly affected. His qualities thus brought into play are strengthened or weakened for future action according as they are exercised or repressed. To have been true to what is acknowledged *in foro conscientia* as the highest is the pledge and the strength of being so again. Courage and discrimination are developed. Principles to which appeal is made as embodying the best, if bowed to, receive an enhanced, a more binding authority; they remain to rule. The discerning of an effective means and the sanctioning of it at real cost, confirm the agent in loyalty to his end; his persistence in pursuing it is more assured. Common experience illustrates the fact that steadfastness in adherence to both an end and an adopted means depends largely on the agony through which both have been determined.

(2) But the moral effect on the agent, great as it is, is not the whole issue of such struggle. The action—the use of the means and the attainment of the end—must not be lost sight of. It is an issue that enables us to judge clearly both an end and a means determined on. Often an agent himself can only long after the struggle articulately express what his decisions have been; and still more often to others it is the sequel alone which interprets the crisis, and reveals the choice made.

Thus a temptation can never be divorced from the course of a life. It is woven into the very texture of life's continuity. It is a temptation because we are what we are *at the time*. It is the conditions of the crisis which make a moment, a decision critical; mature years, with the mature ends and character which they bring, make what would be a sore temptation to youth, free from real agony. It is thus the whole setting of a life which brings temptation. So temptation is never clean detached from the past or the future of the

tempted; for there is no such thing as a human experience which has not its roots in the past and its fruit in the sequel. Nor does temptation come to men sitting absolutely still, vacuous or inert: it is the experience of an agent. For by our make we act towards ends by means, and we reason and act as moral and responsible; and while all such action involves temptation, so conversely all conception of temptation involves such action. It follows that, for a really adequate knowledge of a temptation, insight into the whole life, and particularly into its immediate conditions, is indispensable. The whole setting must be known—the framework—for a true interpretation of such a crisis.

2. In the many narratives of temptations in Scripture the interpretative element is predominant. Temptation is in Scripture a religious term; the tempted is viewed as related to God; and his experience is interpreted rather than merely analysed or described. Human knowledge of the highest, either in ends or means, is interpreted as being the voice of God in or to us. The laws which rule action are interpreted as expressions of His will. To obey Him: to disregard them is interpreted as defiance of Him and as obedience to Satan, for that which is lower than the highest is interpreted as the will set against God. In these narratives the issue, as interpreted in them, is usually the effect left on the tempted—his tried virtue or purification (as in the cases of Job and David), or his weakened loyalty to the will of God as an agent afterwards (as with Saul), his attachment to God and serviceableness as an agent of His purposes (as with Abraham or Joseph), or his detachment and rejection as unserviceable (as Saul or Judas). And this interpretation of temptation and its issue dictates the presentation of it as a whole. As belonging to the make of man, and as the divinely ordered method of progress towards tried virtue it is regarded as the will and act of God, as a perfect means to a good end; and we are called on to welcome it, to count it all joy when we fall into manifold temptations. Such probation produces 'patience,' and leads to our being 'perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.' So treated, temptation becomes actually one of the good gifts and perfect boons bestowed by the Creator who is Himself unchangeably good. The Lord Himself was made perfect so, and we now reap the blessing of the discipline through which

He passed. Thus we may with an almost fierce exultation and humble hope enter into temptation. God proves to bless and to use; and temptation is not beyond human power of endurance supported by grace. On the other hand, as involving facing the dread will opposed to God and as possibly

ending in a falling away to it, it is perilous and awful. We are taught to pray that it may not prove our master: *Bring us not unto temptation as unto a snare from which we do not escape* (cf. 1 Co 10<sup>13</sup>), *but deliver us from the evil one.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. J. C. Knight, *The Temptation of our Lord.*

## The Angel of God, or God the King?

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It is a commonplace to-day that, at one stage in the development of the Hebrew Revelation, the title 'Baal' was, without hesitation or offence, applied to Yahweh, while in later days the title became restricted to certain heathen deities, and the traces of the earlier Hebrew use were covered over by such means as substituting 'Bosheth' (abomination, idol) for Baal.

Some time back, it occurred to me to inquire whether, in a similar way, at one stage in the Hebrew development Melech (= King) did not come into use as a variant or synonym for Yahweh, and whether traces of this use might still survive, concealed in the Sacred Scriptures by replacing it with Malach (= Messenger, Angel). The late Principal W. H. Bennett, to whom I communicated the idea two or three months before his death, encouraged me to prosecute the search, and it is the results of this investigation which are here presented for consideration and criticism.

### I.

The conception of Yahweh as a King, the King of His people, was certainly familiar to Hebrew Psalmists or Prophets. 'The Lord is King' is the beginning of three Psalms, and the same phrase occurs twice elsewhere. Besides this, the identification of God with the King of heaven, of all the earth, and of the Psalmist is found some score of times in the Psalms. The second Isaiah speaks of Yahweh as the King of Israel (44<sup>6</sup>), and Zephaniah has the same title (3<sup>16</sup>). Isaiah, in the famous vision at the time of his call, says that his 'eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts' (6<sup>6</sup>). It is unnecessary to multiply instances. No one will be unaware that 'King' is constantly used by way

of apposition. The question, which needs further investigation, is whether in narrative 'the King' was ever used by itself as a title for Yahweh.

It is notorious that the title was used by other nations, e.g. the Ammonites. It will be noticed that the Rabbinic tradition has given to the name the vowels of Bosheth, so that for Melech they read Molech when it is a heathen god.

### II.

Are there any traces still remaining of a non-heathen use of the title Melech for Yahweh, expunged by later readers because of the heathen associations of the name? Many readers still remember the somewhat puzzling, or at any rate curious, way in which the story of Gideon's call is narrated, so that now the Lord and now His angel is represented as speaking to him. We have only to consider the following skeleton of vv. 12-20 in Jg 6 to feel the force of the suggestion that for 'the angel of the Lord' the original text was '*the Lord the King*': 'and the angel of the Lord appeared unto him . . . and the Lord looked upon him, and said . . . and he said unto him . . . and the Lord said unto him . . . and he said unto him . . . Depart not hence I pray thee, until I come unto thee . . . and he said, I will tarry until thou come again, . . . and the angel of God said unto him . . .'

In Gn 48<sup>15, 16</sup> we have, 'The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which hath redeemed me from all evil.' Here it is natural to suspect the true reading to be 'the King.'

In Ec 5<sup>1, 2, 6</sup>, if the Authorized Version and