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In the actual examples given we note a rather tell-tale inconsistency. 'He will come and destroy the husbandmen'—in Mk 12⁹ these words are treated as one line, the same words in Lk 20¹⁶ are taken as two lines. Is a verb prosthetic or not just as the *strophe* requires?

2. That such strophism as this was a Semitic notion of verse-form is a big assumption. That the Evangelists deliberately introduced this Semitic conception into a Western language and into books read mostly by people whose ideas of verse were totally different, that such strophism would ever be recognized by any but a few of the readers and the transcribers of the Gospels—all this is an hypothesis which seems to us very improbable. It appears to us that the theory requires us to believe that our Greek Gospels are nothing but close translations of four Aramaic Gospels, and this not merely necessitates reconsideration of the Synoptic problem, it makes it unthinkable.

3. As to how this discovery is to help N.T. criticism—that seems to us very questionable. Strophic criticism of the O.T. has been such that we doubt if it will impress any one as a welcome new instrument to apply to the Gospels. That it confirms the historicity of Jn. we fail to see. Rather do we feel that it reflects upon the historicity of all our Gospels. Did Christ and His interlocutors converse in *strophes*? In His discourses, answers, and prayers, was our Lord concerned not to spoil the *strophe*? If not, then on this theory we have nowhere *ipsissima verba*, but everywhere an artificial manipulation of them.

4. That such strophism as this could possibly help the memory of any human being is, we think, absurd.

5. Such are the difficulties which this theory suggests to our mind. Another, of course, lies on the surface—Schmidt himself is fully aware of it—How did it happen that this strophism lay unnoticed for over nineteen centuries? Eastern as well as Western scholars during that long period have minutely studied the Text. If this strophism be really a genuine Semitic verse-form, why has no Syrian ever been able to observe it? We are tempted to raise the question, Were the writers of the Gospels themselves aware that they were writing *strophes*? If they were, their literary fate has been one of the most tragic we know. This wonderful artistry of theirs aroused no interest, received no attention, evoked not a single comment; in short, was observed by not a soul, until, after ages had rolled, Schmidt arose to do them belated justice. This is not sarcasm. Schmidt deserves none. He is as modest as he is in earnest about his discovery. But, as he admits, the difficulty is there. If this strophism were ever intended and ever recognized, how did it become so immediately and so completely a hidden secret?

To avoid misunderstanding, let us state that we fully accept what is coming to be the generally held opinion, that behind our Greek Gospels there lie extensive Aramaic materials, and we think it not unlikely that some of this material may have had a certain strophic form. We quite admit that in the Gospels, as elsewhere in the N.T., there are strophic passages. What we doubt is that Schmidt's theory of the 'verse' is a tenable one, and that the whole of each Gospel is strophic.

W. D. NIVEN.

Aberdeen.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

The Man of Perfect Service.

'I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.'—Jn 13¹⁵.

'Whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord.'—Col 3²³.

Boys and girls, which do you prefer—a sermon or a story? I need hardly ask that question—need I?

Well, to-day I am not going to preach a sermon. I'm just going to tell you a story. I'm not going to give you even a text. That is to be your share of the programme. For, when you have heard the story, I want you to think about it, and after tea to-night, when everything is quiet and you have time to spare, I want you to get out your Bibles and hunt for the texts that fit the story. Perhaps I should warn you that there are several texts that

fit. But the two special texts I have in mind are—well, I'll give you a broad hint—the first is in the Gospel of John, and it's more than half-way through the Gospel; the second is in Colossians, and as that book has only four chapters you won't have far to hunt, especially if you take my advice and skip the first two.

Then if you will just write down the texts you think most suitable on half a sheet of paper, and put your name and address under them, and hand in the papers next Sunday, I'll tell you the following Sunday how many of you found texts to fit, and especially which of you have hit on the two texts I'm thinking of.

And now for the story. In a little mountain village of Serbia there lives to-day a man called Marko. He is only a poor peasant; but he is the best loved man far and near in all the countryside, and he is known as 'the Man of Perfect Service.' What a strange name! How did he get it? What does it mean? And why is he so beloved? Listen.

Before the Great War, Marko was just a very ordinary man—not particularly good, not particularly kind, not particularly loved by anybody. But the War broke out and he marched away to battle, like all the men of Serbia who were able to fight; and when the War was over he came back to his little village another Marko, a new Marko, the wonderful Marko whom every one now respects and loves. And here is how the old Marko was changed into the new Marko.

He and nine other privates were told off to be orderlies to a certain general and his staff. They had to dry and clean the officers' boots, brush their uniforms, polish their belts and buttons, sweep and dust the hall, fill the water-jars and attend to the fire. But, alas! Marko and his companions did their duties anything but well. They shirked those they could shirk and scamped those they could scamp, till the officers were forced to complain to the general.

So one day the general called the ten before him and looked at them very straight. 'Brothers,' said he, 'you are called to do service to me and to my officers. Do it perfectly and joyfully.' Then he dismissed them. For a short time after that the ten did improve; but the War dragged on and on, and they grew wearier and wearier, and began to long more and more for home. Every day they talked of the mountains, and every night they

dreamt of them; and the more they talked and dreamt the slacker they grew in their work, till the officers could stand it no longer, and once more complained to the general.

That night as the ten were settling down to sleep the general drew back the flap of the tent and looked in. 'Brothers, are you all right?' asked he, and walked away. 'All right, indeed!' grumbled Marko loudly. 'Why is *he* a general, I'd like to know? He does nothing. We do everything. It's easy enough for *him*!' Then he rolled over and fell sound asleep, as did all the other nine.

They slept sound and long next morning, but when they sat up, grumbling as usual at the thought of the day's work, what was their amazement to see standing in rows in the tent their own and the officers' boots, all cleaned and ready to put on. They rubbed their eyes and looked again, but that was only the beginning of wonders. In the officers' rooms all the uniforms were brushed and hung up, all the belts were shining, and all the buttons glittering. Not only that, but the hall was swept and dusted, and a great fire was burning on the hearth. It was a miracle. All day they talked and marvelled, but they talked and marvelled even more when they woke the second morning to find the miracle repeated. They began to tell each other stories which they had heard when they were children—stories of elves and fairies who did the housework while the household slept. Some of them even thought that God might have sent an angel to do their tasks, but others shook their heads and said 'No,' that was impossible. At last they agreed that they should take turns to keep awake and watch. Soon after midnight, the man who was acting sentinel saw a figure steal quietly into the tent, and his cry of astonishment woke the others with a start, for lo! it was the general.

Next morning Marko was sent for by the general. He went trembling, for it was plain that his chief had heard the rude remarks of two nights before. But, surprise of surprises! the general was not frowning; he was smiling.

'Brother Marko,' he said gently, 'did you ever read the story of how Jesus Christ came to earth? Yes! Well, read it again to-day, and note how He who is the Captain of men, the Lord of lords, the King of kings was the perfect servant of man.

'Two nights ago, brother, you asked why I was

a general. I am going to tell you why, now. I am your general not only because I am supposed to do the duties of a general—which you consider nothing—but because I am supposed to be able to do perfectly the service which you privates are called to do.'

The general paused for a moment and bowed his head. There was an awful silence, and Marko wished that the earth might swallow him, or a bullet come along and make an end of him, he felt so ashamed. Then the general raised his head again, and continued: 'Brother, we must do our duties, not because we are ordered to do them, or cannot escape doing them, but because of the joy hidden in doing them well, the joy of perfect service. I enjoyed cleaning your boots, Marko, for I was repaid for doing so. Every service perfectly done hides a perfect payment, because it hides God in itself. That is all, brother. You may go.'

After that need I add that neither the general nor the officers had to complain of the service in the camp. And when the War was over and Marko returned to his home among the mountains he carried with him the ideal of perfect service. To-day if any one in his native village or in the country round about wants help of any kind they have only to go to Marko. He never fails them. And so beloved is he that when the last election came round and the people had to choose some one to represent them in their Parliament, with one voice they chose Marko. But Marko shook his head. 'No,' said he, 'that post is for generals. I am a private still.'

Boys and girls, do you think you can find me either of those texts? ¹

A Letter for You.

'I write unto you, little children.'—1 Jn 2¹³.

Here's a letter come for you! Did you know that? A letter all your very own! Isn't that exciting? It always is, isn't it, to get a letter? It feels so big and grown-up and important to read one's own name on the envelope, really and truly, and not just pretending; to be not just allowed to open it; for it's yours. And no one else, not even father, has the right to touch it—no one—except you.

The other day father wrote some of you wee

¹ For the story of Marko the writer is indebted to the *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 128, pt. i.

folks, and you wouldn't part with it; you carried it off to bed with you: and when mother came to look at you before she went to sleep, there in your hot little hand was still clutched tight the precious letter—your letter!

Well, here's one come for you. It's rather exciting, isn't it? And you would be far more excited if you knew who sent it. It's always grand, yet a letter from some folk is far better than from others. I knew a little girl who once during the war wrote to Lord Kitchener, the great soldier. And though he didn't know her, he answered her, and she was sinfully proud. If I remember properly, it wasn't specially pretty writing, and it wasn't very long, but it was from Lord Kitchener, the great Lord Kitchener, about whom every one was speaking, and whose picture was in all the papers. She read it and re-read it; she showed it to every one; she carried it about until it fell to bits; and the last I saw of it it was held together with sticking plaster.

But this of yours is a far more wonderful letter, from a far more wonderful Person. From whom? Guess. I'll give you twenty guesses. Mind it's from the greatest and nicest Person in the world. No, better than that! No, far nicer than that! No! no! no! Well, I'll tell you; it's from God. God has written to you; isn't that a letter worth the getting? When Dad writes mother, sometimes he encloses a wee one that drops out for you. So God, writing to the big grown-ups, puts in a wee note, and says on it, This is for my own wee lassie, or for my own lad. This is a bit of the Bible that is all your own and no one else's. 'I write unto you, little children.' Isn't that exciting? A letter from God! a letter for you! Whatever does He say? Well, *you* must open it. It's yours, not mine. Your name is on the front, and I hope you'll be quick and let me read over your shoulder. What does He say? Let's look. I'm sure it'll be a splendid letter, because God is so nice. You always know that mother's letters will be splendid, because mother is mother, and there is no one like her. No one—but God. But He's nicer still. What does He say? You read it:

'MY OWN DEAR LITTLE CHILD,—I write to tell you that all your sins are forgiven.—With love, from your own FATHER.'

Well, that *is* a nice letter, isn't it?

You know what forgiveness is? What a glorious

thing it is He has given you! Sometimes you've done something wrong. You promised mother you would go to bed at such and such an hour, before she went out for the evening. And you forgot, or perhaps you didn't forget; anyway you didn't go until a good bit after when you said you would. And you felt horrid and ashamed and miserable; and everything was black and wretched, and you wished you hadn't done it. If only you had known how wretched it would be, you would never have done it. And then mother forgave you! And what a difference that made! It was like when the sun comes out on a grey sloppy day, when you had to stay in, and it rained and rained and rained, and your nose got quite flat with being pressed against the window-pane; and then suddenly it stopped, and the sun shone, and the raindrops on the fences glistened like gold, and it was on with your boots, and out at last. Well, it felt like that. You were as cheery as a cricket. It is a splendid thing forgiveness. And that's what God sends you. All the naughty, sulky, selfish things you've ever done He forgives them. There couldn't be a better message than that.

Why ever has He done it? He tells us. It's for 'His name's sake.' I wonder who the He is? He must be the dearest person, don't you think? Perhaps it's God Himself. Perhaps it means He forgives you just because He is your Father, and, of course, He is not cross and angry, but loving and kind. He's your own Father, and you are His own child. For His name's sake He does it.

But perhaps the He is Jesus. Perhaps He's done this for Christ's sake, as a kind of present to Jesus, to please Him as well as Himself. And that reminds me of this story. They tell me—I've never seen it—that in Paris there is kept a huge book in which were entered all the taxes to be gathered from each town, and village, and city, and hamlet in all France. Here, among the C's, was 'Calais': and all the folk at Calais had to pay was entered there; and here, among the O's was a page headed 'Orleans'—many pages—and all the Orleans people had to pay was entered there; and among the D's there were some pages with the heading 'Domremy,' and there were entered long lists of the taxes that that village had to pay. But across it, they tell me, there was written in red: 'Free for the Maid's sake'—Joan of Arc, the Maid, was born there; and out of gratitude to their great townswoman, who freed France from

her enemies, the people there were let off all their debts to the State. Well, we are told in the Bible that there is a great book kept—many of them—and all the nasty, evil things we do are entered in them day by day. There are some pages with your name on the top, and all the naughty things you've done are there: that time you were sulky, when you wouldn't play, when you were cross, when you said what wasn't quite true—they are all there. But across them is written in red, 'Free for Christ's sake.' Perhaps that's it, don't you think?

At any rate it's Christ who brings us this glorious letter. God wrote it. It's God who forgives you; it's God who says to you, as you sit sulky and unhappy, 'Come, little one, let us be friends again. I have forgiven and forgotten it all.' He's the dearest and kindest Father. The message is His; but it's Jesus who brings it to us, and for that we must love Him too. Out at the front I used often to wonder at the 'runners,' the men who carried messages to and fro up in the front line where the shells were falling. They would be lying in a 'pill-box,' and an order would come: 'Runner wanted,' and at once one would rise and start off through the dark and danger to the officer who had to get the message. Always they were in danger there, alone; often they were hit; sometimes they were found lying dead. But they dared everything to get a message through. There were no braver, no more utterly unselfish men, in all the army than the runners. And when God said, 'Who will take this message for Me, who will let these children know that I'm not cross or angry with them,' Christ said, 'I will.' And He did it. It cost Him His life on Calvary; for lots of people didn't want us to know about it, tried to stop Him, so that we might never hear. It cost Him His life. But He brought the message through, from God to you.

Isn't it a wonderful letter, this that has come to you? Wonderful because it's yours. Look, it's your name and your address upon it. Wonderful when you think who sent it. Fancy God making time to write to a wee bit lad or lass like you! Wonderful because of the glorious news it brings; wonderful because of the great Messenger who got it through to us. I think that, like my small friend and Lord Kitchener's letter, you should prize this one that has come to you, and treasure it, and take it out and read it and re-read it, till

you also have to fasten it together lest it fall into bits. A letter from God, and all to you!

The Christian Year.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Vision.

'He saw in a vision.'—Ac 10³.

There are four words in Scripture translated 'vision.'

1. The first word means 'to gaze [at, to perceive, to behold, look, see.] Those who do not get no vision. Seeing is an art which brings far more knowledge than mere book-study. In Samuel's day the people would not open their eyes to see, and so they had no seers. There were no prophets. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' And the vision can only be had by cultivating the art of expectation. That is what the motto really means. Contemplation brings revelation.

2. The second word means 'to see something beautiful.' It is easy to see the ugly, the vile, the bad. It is only a spiritual genius who can see some beauty in ugliness, and something worthy in the most unworthy. The legend contains the suggestion of truth which tells us that only Christ, among the observers of the carcase of a dead dog, remarked, 'What beautiful teeth!' Only the trained eye—the eye touched with the finger of God, can see the mountain thronged with chariots and horses. To others it is nothing but a bare, bleak, barren hill. That was why Ezekiel saw 'the glory of God in the midst of the jealousy' (not in the jealousy, but in spite of it). No power can ever supplant God; and wise is he who, in everything and everywhere, looks for the evidence of His working and grace. And there is no place where it cannot be found.

3. The third word means 'to see something beautiful to be.' The development of the word is as follows: to see something beautiful, comely, handsome, goodly—something that can be held as a pattern worth copying—something that reflects the best, as a mirror, a looking-glass.

The mirror is suggestive. Look in this mirror. What do you see? Yourself. Is it beautiful? The gift of vision is to see something beautiful. Apart from all vanity of appearance, is there any real beauty in your character? It is wonderful

how ready people are to forget plain features in a really beautiful character. 'Handsome is that handsome does.' In the language of the poet Donne:

The eloquent blood spoke in her cheeks—
And so distinctly wrought,
That we might almost say
Her body thought.

Will it surprise you if I remind you that this word has the suggestion of a spy? A spy is one who must be unusually clever in detecting things, and he is willing to face all dangers to gain his end. Well, in the quest of the beautiful we are to be like that.

We are to be spies. It is the Christian inquiry for the best in others, the search for the pearl in the oyster, the coral in the depths, the gold in the quartz, the search for the best. What a magnificent vision!

What an inspiring quest, to find the best in everybody, and in everything; to believe that there is something worth loving in even the meanest creature you know; to believe that your worst enemy may be won by love—your love! Oh! it is a great thing so to be able to live that with the keen eyes and ears of the alert spy we shall be on the look out for only the best, the beautiful in every one. In this Christ has set us a wonderful example. He saw Zacchæus to be a large-hearted philanthropist when others saw him to be but a mean money-grabber.

4. The fourth word means 'to see something beautiful to do.' There are many who see, but who see not the beautiful; and there are others who are admirers of the beautiful who seldom do anything beautiful themselves. The fullest and best meaning of the word 'vision' is 'to see something beautiful to do, and to do it.' The genius of the seers, the prophets of old, was that they saw, they heard, and they did.

We have seen that the first word meant 'to gaze at.' Some people do nothing else. With them it is the empty stare of negligence. There is very little grace in a mere gaze. The real process is to see, to heed, to do.

You remember the disciples standing on the Mount of Olives, after the ascension of Christ, how they kept their eyes fixed on the cloud which had received Him out of their sight! As they stood thus the angels touched them, and said,

'Why stand ye gazing into the sky? Go to Jerusalem, and tell what you have seen.' That is the Divine message always to Christians—not gazing, but going; not contemplation, but consecration; not rapture, but readiness for service; not stars, but souls; not clouds, but courts. 'Go ye, and tell what ye have seen.' That is the beatific vision.

'Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled'; and because the monk neglected not the drudgeries of his daily duties, he had 'the vision splendid.'

Singularly enough, there is a picture in this use of the word which suggests a vulture, from which, indeed, the vulture gets its name. Now a vulture has two special powers—sharp sight and rapid flight; and we know how these are used to pounce upon its prey. We too possess, or should, these very powers—or at least we should be zealous in the cultivation of them—but for a different purpose. Not to kill, but to help. Sharp sight—that is eagerness to see. Rapid flight—that is eagerness to help.

God grant us wisdom in these coming days,
And eyes unsealed, that we clear visions see
Of that new world that He would have us
build,
To life's ennoblement, and His high ministry.

Only have vision and bold enterprise!
No task too great for men of unsealed eyes;
The future stands with outstretched hands.
Press on and claim its high supremacies.¹

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Women in the Church.

'Let your women keep silence.'—1 Co 14³⁴.

Is there any definite principle upon which the sphere of women in the Church can be determined? The solution of the difficulty can be found only by the frank acceptance of the fact that there is no objection in principle to the admission of women to any of the functions to which laymen are admitted in the Church, and that there are no legal restrictions upon the services of laywomen other than those which apply to laymen. This proposition possibly may be opposed from the standpoint of Scripture and of Church tradition, of sex and the effect which such a proposal might have upon reunion.

¹ Fred A. Rees, *Honour and Heroism*.

First. It may be argued that such a proposition is not in conformity with, but rather is opposed to, the teaching of the New Testament. It may be shown that Christ dedicated His ministry only to men, and that our Lord never was known to commit any definite commission to women. I admit the strength of such a contention; but if our Lord's teaching is examined as a whole, I venture to think that there is not a sentence of His which by any kind of implication could be thought to oppose the statement that in His Church the position of women was equal to that of laymen. On this question St. Paul's teaching is quoted, especially his statements 'let your women keep silence' (1 Co 14³⁴), and 'every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonoureth his head, and every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head.' On this question let me quote some words by a distinguished scholar and High Churchman, Canon Mason of Canterbury. He said: 'Prophets and prophetesses alike were both to prophesy and pray aloud in the assembly, but the prophetess was not to forget she was a woman, and behave as a man. She was to cover her head while she made her voice heard. When later he bids women keep silent, it is unnatural to suppose he withdrew a permission so recently acknowledged. The simplest interpretation is that he will not allow prophetesses to rise to utter a revelation received while another prophet was speaking. That was not consistent with the position of women.' There are other interpretations of the passage quoted, but Canon Mason's opinion is held by others of equal eminence, who give the same interpretation as he does.

Surely St. Paul's teaching in Corinthians must be viewed in the light of that to the Galatians (Gal 3): that 'there is neither male nor female, but ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' Bishop Lightfoot's paraphrase on this text is worth quoting: 'In Christ ye are all saints; every barrier is swept away. No special claims, disabilities respecting sex, exist; for in Him none can exist. The conventional distinctions of religious caste or of social rank—even the natural distinction of sex—are banished hence. One heart beats in all, one mind guides all, one life is led by all, ye are all one man; ye are members of Christ.' Ramsay, commenting on the same passage, and contrasting it with that quoted from Corinthians, says that the

real reason for the difference is to be found that in Antioch and Iconium the position of women was one unusually high and important, and that they were often entrusted with offices and duties which elsewhere were denied them. Hence the allusion to the equality of the sexes, and the perfect form which the Church must ultimately attain, would not seem to the people of Galatia to be so entirely revolutionary. Holy Scripture must be regarded as the supreme authority on this and on all questions of faith and order; but the teaching of St. Paul must be read and interpreted in the light of the New Testament as a whole. His statement in Corinthians must be governed by the one in Galatians, which is borne out by the teaching of the rest of the New Testament.

Secondly. With regard to the custom of the Church. Church history makes it clear that down the ages two forces were at work, one seeking to utilize the services of women, to extend those services, to recognize them; the other tending to put women on one side, to keep them completely in the background and accord them no real voice in the management or government of the Church. It was not surprising that the latter of the two forces gained the upper hand when it is realized that women throughout Europe had no political status, that the Church, represented by the Church of Rome, gradually became more and more political and more powerful, and was inclined to rely upon the male population, who really governed the situation.

Thirdly. It may be argued that women are incapable of exercising the same functions in the Church as laymen owing to their sex. But surely a great change is coming over the attitude of the public mind towards the position of men and women. This change of attitude had grown and expanded during the war in every direction; and when we contemplate the work which laymen or women can do in the Church, is there anything in that work incongruous with the life of a true woman of God? Would it unsex a woman to be put upon an equality with a layman in the Church of Christ?

Fourthly. It may be objected that any such attempt would retard reunion with the great Churches on the Continent. Can any one prophesy as to what grave changes are likely to take place within the Orthodox Church within the next few years? If ever reunion comes, it will result

from a different kind of Christendom in Europe from that of to-day. It will not be a Christendom as represented by the Orthodox Church, or by the Roman Church, or even by the Anglican Church. It is probable that when the time arrives for reunion there will have been a vast change over the whole situation, so that a question such as this will loom very small and seem very petty in the light of the great reunion then contemplated. We need not fear that any question such as this will ever for a moment retard reunion when the time arrives for such a glorious event.¹

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

No More Curse.

'There shall be no more curse' (K.Vm. 'No more anything accursed').—Rev 22³.

1. There is no doubt whatever that many of the human shadows that blot out the sun and make our feet stumble are *gratuitous*, and may be got rid of whenever man pleases. That this condition, 'whenever man pleases,' is not easily fulfilled we are well aware. But there is no doubt that we can get rid of many social handicaps, and go on to higher adventures, discovering more and more of the goodness of God in the land of the living.

A hundred years ago people shuddered at the name 'Gaul-fever,' a terrible pestilence which attacked judge and jury, prisoner and onlooker, at the Old Bailey. We call it typhus fever now, and it is rare in Britain, thanks to the enthusiasm of the early nineteenth-century hygienists. It is a dirt disease; it can be controlled by care and cleanliness. It is due to a microbe, not yet isolated, which is transferred from man to man by infected lice. As Sir Ray Lankester says, the Angel of Death they spoke of a hundred years ago is the clothes' louse, which can be readily exterminated by the use of benzine. We cannot but feel that it was almost contemptible to have submitted for centuries to a tyranny of dirt; but the point is that we are continuing to submit to similar things. We are slow to gird up our loins; we are slow to learn the lesson of the Control of Life.

2. It has been said that there are two views of this world—that which regards it as a swamp to be crossed as quickly as possible, and that which regards it as a marsh to be drained. The view to which the study of animate nature points is

¹ J. E. Watts-Ditchfield, *The Church and her Problems*.

emphatically the latter. Man must continue the struggle against inhabitants—the campaign in which living creatures have been engaged for millions of years, the endeavour to bring the inorganic into the service of the organic, to bring the body-mind into subordination to the mind-body, to eliminate the disorderly, the inharmonious, the involutory. For we adhere to the thesis that evolution is, *on the whole*, integrative, not disintegrative.

3. To put the same thing in a third way—which is more generalized—we are in profound agreement with the view well expressed by a contemporary philosopher, that it is man's part to build up, as he is doing, a scientific systematization of knowledge which will form the basis of an increasing control of life. The mundane goal of the evolutionary movement is 'the mastery by the human mind of the conditions, internal as well as external, of its life and growth. The primitive intelligence is useful to the organism as a more elastic method of adjusting itself to its environment. As the mental powers develop the tables are turned, and the mind adjusts its environment to its own needs. "*Mihi res non me rebuss ubiungere conor*" is the motto that it takes for its own. With the mastery of external nature, applied science has made us all familiar. But the last enemy that man shall overcome is himself. The internal conditions of life, the physiological basis of mental activity, the sociological laws that operate for the most part unconsciously, are parts of the "environment" which the self-conscious intelligence has to master, and it is on this mastery that the *regnum hominis* will rest' (Hobhouse, 1915, p. 443). Of a truth science is for life, not life for science.¹

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Gospel.

'That gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.'—Gal 2^d.

The Apostle Paul brought with him into that Greek and Roman world which was assigned as the sphere of his apostleship a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew religion in which he had been trained, and in which, as a preparation for the religion of Christ, he would find the vital beginnings of such faith and experience as came to fulfilment in what he afterwards spoke of as 'my gospel.' By this he meant the gospel as it had

come to him, as it had taken hold of him and transformed him, and as therefore it was his special mission to make it known to the world. But, distinctive as was his type of teaching and of experience, the essential principles of the gospel were the same, by whomsoever it was proclaimed.

1. First of all, we are faced everywhere in the Bible, even in the Old Testament, with a great *Divine Initiative*, becoming effectual through the co-operating faith of man.

When Paul was at Athens, he found an altar with the inscription 'To an Unknown God.' Its origin and exact meaning he did not know. But it seemed to him a true summing up of the findings, or non-findings, of the acutest racial intellect the world has ever known, when it would master the problems of human being and of human life. There was no negation of God on the part of such a prophet soul as Socrates; of such a dreamer of dreams and seer of visions as Plato; of such an explorer of the wide universe as Aristotle. In each of these, and in many another of the great thinkers of antiquity, the spiritual instinct testified of the Divine. But, when they essayed to determine its meaning, how impotent they were! And, whether they fell back, for popular effect, on the mythology of which Paul saw such abundant evidence in Athens, or sought in their speculation to soar to the ever-receding altitudes of the Infinite Reason, their very helplessness was spelling out their halting tribute 'To an Unknown God.' Thus they were left to the athletics of their own wonderful thought, to the unaided struggles of their own life, and to the delivery of a message which came to men only with their own authority, an authority greatly impaired by the radical divergence of the great systems each from each, and paralysed in any case by the fatal lack of any proffered power that should make it possible for men to respond to the claims of the message.

There was no such lack in the great Hebrew Religion that had nurtured the apostle's earliest thought. The essential truths of that religion were indeed overlaid in his days by the meticulous puerilities of rabbinic teaching, even as they had had to contend from the beginning with what was often the coarse and crass religious symbolism of the old Semitic world, a system which had to be partially adopted, and at the same time so modified and controlled, that it might be purged of its baser

¹ J. Arthur Thomson, *The System of Animate Nature*.

parts, and made into a pictorial prophecy of better things, until such time as it might be altogether done away. But the essential truths were there, in quenchless splendour, burning their way on to the sovereign fulfilment in Christ. Of these, the supreme truth was the truth of a Living God. Such a God had come to men, had communed with them, had made His mighty impact upon their life. The I Am was no abstraction of thought, but the God who was present everywhere, and most intimately present where He was needed most; the One who, from age to age, is ever ready to be more to men than the most they can desire, supplying all their need. So said the Apostle: 'He made of one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being' (Ac 17²⁶⁻²⁸). That well describes the uncertain gropings of the Gentile world, which were now destined to meet their full response. But the Gentiles, in their turn, were to learn that God was in reality finding them, even as He had found Abraham long ago, and Moses: and not only every prophet soul, but every devout, inquiring spirit.

(1) The Divine Initiative is evident among the Hebrews in the Law; not the law of ceremony, nor even chiefly the Moral Law, as the law of the great Commandments, though this, in its august splendour, is of unique significance and value; but the Law as God's communication to man of such truth as bears upon human character and life. It is this of which it is said in the 1st Psalm, concerning the godly man, 'His delight is in the law of Jehovah, and on his law doth he meditate day and night.' It is a law that, far from binding him harshly, ministers to his refreshment, like streams of water to the tree whose roots they lave, thus making his life fruitful in all good. Even in its more imperative form, as finding utterance in the 'Ten Words' of Horeb, it begins, 'I am Jehovah thy God'—the God who has been to the people a God of deliverances, and whom they were thus emboldened to claim as their possession (Ex 20²). What an impulse to the keeping of the ethical precepts that follow, each of which was an expression of loyalty to their own God! Or again, when the spiritual essence of the Law of Command was gathered up into its positive and perfect form, it was this: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might' (Dt 6⁵)—a love responsive to the love of a God who gave Himself to His people, and in its turn giving inspiration to all other love (see Mt 22³⁷⁻³⁹), and impelling to ready duty and service.

(2) This same Divine Initiative is very manifest in Prophecy, which is the forthtelling of God's purposes of grace, actually by those who spoke in His name, but essentially by God Himself, who thus, so to speak, steps into the open, and becomes His own interpreter. There has never been any ethical teaching of nations—any 'Politics,' to use the Greek expression—that can compare for one moment with the ethics of Hebrew Prophecy, and certainly never any dynamic of motive comparable to the tender persuasion and promise with which the moral exhortation is urged. Nor, in the midst of all that concerns the nation, is the individual overlooked; for it is not forgotten that the individual is the living unit of the nation, and ever and again the appeal seems to be intentionally focused on the individual's need and welfare. The national and the individual messages are often fused into one, but it is never forgotten that the people of Israel was once the man Jacob. And as, by the intervention of God's exceeding mercy, Jacob became Israel, the conqueror of his baser self, so, by the same intervention of grace, may every one who belongs to the Israel community share in the same individual victory with the ancestor of his people. 'But thou, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' 'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour' (Is 41⁸⁻¹⁰ 43¹⁻³).

(3) Again, amid all the subjective piety of the Psalms, though here it is mainly man who is speaking to God, yet man is speaking out of his experience of God, and the Divine Initiative is still very prominent. If it were a question of applied ethics, the psalmists had much to learn, as regards, for example, their feelings towards their enemies; but the essential ethic of character is most impressively set forth in their experience. God, even the Living God, had begun everything for them; God was above, and around, and beneath them in everything; God was their all in all. To verify this statement in detail would be to quote from every page. In the 8th Psalm, it is said of man, 'Thou art mindful of him; thou visitest him.' In the 16th, 'O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou art my Lord: I have no good beyond thee.' In the 27th, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?' In the 34th, 'They looked unto him, and were radiant; and their faces shall never be confounded.' In the 36th, 'For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.' In the 40th, 'I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and he set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.' And in the 63rd we have the great central experience of the Bible, 'O God, thou art my God.' To pass over instances innumerable which show that the Divine intervention, the Divine Initiative, was ever present to the mind of the psalmists, and was felt by them to be the spring of all their good, the guarantee of their strength, and the inspiration of their life, we may close this survey with a glance at the 139th Psalm, in which these things are set forth at length: 'O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou dost enfold me behind and before, and lay thy hand upon me. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Thy hand shall grasp me, and thy right hand shall hold me fast. How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! When I awake, I am still with thee.'

This preliminary survey of the ethical bearings of the Old Testament, in its great commanding principles, has not only shown the power of a great Divine Initiative, as present alike in the Law, in Prophecy, and in the Piety of the Hebrew

Religion; it has also brought before our notice other factors in the religious experience of the Hebrew people. But all through, it will have been observed that there is no ambiguity nor uncertainty as to the Chief Good. This is nothing other than God Himself, the Living God, coming into man's very possession, living with man in the communion of love, through faith, and becoming continually a yet surer possession through the service of love. 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God' (Pss 42. 43). Such is the cry of the heart for God; such is the answer to the cry.

2. Mingled with the gracious utterances that reveal a Divine Presence and Power at work in the world, especially in the history of Israel, is the insistence upon a great *Divine Redemption*.

This is made very impressive in such words of Prophecy as those already quoted. They need not be repeated, nor need others be brought forward to supplement their assurance. But the whole history of the Hebrews was a history of redemption. Their forefather Abraham was redeemed from Babylonian idolatry, and all its attendant evil; their father Jacob was redeemed from the 'Jacob' nature to the 'Israel' character; the people of Israel were redeemed from Egyptian bondage and degradation; they were redeemed from the wilderness wanderings and apostasies; they were redeemed at last from Babylonian captivity.

Along with this strange history of redemption, there was the equally strange symbolism of redemption in their ceremonial and sacrificial law—strange to us, but to be explained as God's allowance and adoption, for the purpose of what we may call 'kindergarten' teaching, of a system so thoroughly saturating that old Semitic world with its ideas and principles, that, humanly speaking, the only way of disentangling the Hebrews from its perilous materialism was by regulating its operation, gradually disparaging its sensuous, almost sensual, 'rudiments' (Gal 4⁸), by the searching message of the prophets and the piety of the psalmists, until at last, after 'being done away' for the enlightened, even while still running its course, it was altogether 'done away in Christ' (2 Co 3¹³⁻¹⁴). But the great idea, that was wrought into all that complex of human custom by the controlling

power of God, was the idea, and ideal, of Divine Redemptive Sacrifice.

3. We have again anticipated another factor in that old religious life of Israel, concurrent with the teaching of a Divine Redemption. There was a great *Divine Assurance*.

Most tenderly, and with infinite persuasion, does God assure His people, by the prophetic word, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake; and I will not remember thy sins.' 'O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick mist, thy transgressions, and, as a black cloud, thy sins. Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.' 'For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee' (Is 43²⁵ 44^{21, 22} 54¹⁰).

4. This leads us to yet another factor, closely connected with the former. God was seeking to lead His people to the anointing of a great *Divine Consecration*.

Not only the specific covenant made with the people at Horeb, as represented in Deuteronomy, so searchingly rehearsed in Josiah's time that it

led to an amazing reformation; but the whole character of Jehovah's agreement, or covenant, with His people in the old dispensation, was one prolonged re-utterance of the claim, 'Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.' God was pledged to them; they must pledge themselves to God. Hundreds of times we are confronted with the words 'holy' and 'holiness,' in the Hebrew Scriptures. The persuasion of the promises was at once the release from all bondage of fear, and a constraint to joyful service. The Law was a law of holiness; the words of the Prophets were a call to holiness; the piety of the Psalms shines with the 'beauty of holiness'; the Wisdom teaching sought to consecrate common life with holiness.

Such, then, is the Ethic of the Hebrew Religion—a revelation of grace, and of anticipated redemption, pressed home upon the hearts of the people, and finding its outcome in the praise of God and the service of man. The very commandments of Sinai, thus inspired, and transfigured by the prophetic teaching, become a law of liberty, anticipating the Sermon on the Mount, and preparing for One in whose life Holy Love was made perfect.¹

¹ T. F. Lockyer, *Paul: Luther: Wesley*.

'The Man Borne of Four.'

A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL HEALING.

BY THE REVEREND R. H. STRACHAN, D.D., EDINBURGH.

It is even more remarkable than it seems that our Lord says to the paralytic, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' The utterance is remarkable, because the man and his friends had come seeking healing for his body, not for his soul. It is far too easy an interpretation to say that no doubt this man was the victim of sensual indulgence, and that he reaped what he had sown. This is to narrow down the significance of the story far too much. The significant point is that Jesus assumes that a case of severe 'paralysis'—a very general medical term; for there can have been no proper classification of disease—requires for its cure an assurance of the forgiveness of sins. We know now that not only does actual sensual indulgence produce evil physical effects; we know that not merely a wrong

thing done by a man, but a wrong done to a man, may so *unconsciously* rankle in the abysmal deep we call the soul as to produce actual symptoms of severe physical malady. We are prone to assume that 'forgiveness' belongs to another region of things, to a 'world' separate from the 'world' to which bodily ailments belong. We set the two worlds, 'spiritual' and 'natural,' too sharply over against each other; we separate 'soul' and 'body.' To-day medical science is recalling us to another view.

It is well that, in dealing with this particular story, we should avoid an unnecessarily wide extension of the problem, and any general consideration of the question of miracles. Neither is it necessary to assume that all our Lord's miracles