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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

A Long Face about Nothing.[1]

'I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.'—Ph 1^{12}.

Do you remember we had a little talk, you and I—at least I did all the talking and you did all the listening—about those little glass tubes they found on a London street, and all the fuss and worry there was over them? For people said they were full of the germs of terrible diseases, and anybody might have got them, because somebody had so carelessly left these dangerous things lying about. And yet it turns out that it was all rubbish. The tubes, it seems, weren't filled with germs at all, only with medicine; they couldn't have made anybody ill, but might have made them better: and all the fuss was nonsense, and all the excitement fudge. So let us learn two things, and see that we never forget them. Here is the first. Get it firmly into your memory, with the prepositions that govern the accusative, and those that take the ablative, and those that have sometimes the one and sometimes the other, for this is even more important. Don't believe a thing is bad until you are sure. Of course, there are some things you know are bad, and there is no doubt at all about them. It is bad to tell a lie, it is bad to disobey mother, it is bad to be cross and grumpy and selfish, always bad. But don't put a bad meaning into things unless you are certain, for you may be quite wrong. Paul tells us that he thought he was having a very hard time of it, that everything was going against him; and yet he found that what he took to be hindrances were really helps, what seemed to pull him up gave him a lift on. So he was ashamed that he had put a bad meaning into what was really wise and right and good. You know how annoyed you are when other people do that kind of thing to you. You come home on a Friday, fling your books into the corner, are so happy that Saturday is nearly here that you go whistling and racketing through the house. And mother comes out holding her head and says, 'How noisy you are!' Yet you are not noisy, only in good spirits. Or the master at school says, 'You are just a lazy fellow!' Yet you are not lazy. The trouble is you have so many things to do, and want to get at them all, and all at once, and that's not being lazy. If he had as exciting a book as you, he too might find it hard to stop reading it! If he had as good a collection of stamps, wouldn't he want to take them out and look at them? If he had a new electric torch, wouldn't he like to flash it about on things? The trouble is that the world is so interesting you get lost among all the things you want to be at. But that isn't being lazy, even though your lesson wasn't really very well learned. Well, but if they were wrong about you, if the people were all at sea about those tubes, you can be wrong too. The other day I saw three girls wagging their heads, and one of them was saying as she passed, 'I'm quite sure it was just because Mary Jane is a stuck-up thing!' Well, I don't know Mary Jane, nor what it was all about. Perhaps she had passed them on the road and not noticed them, and they were hurt, and thought her too proud to know them out of school, because she lives in a bigger house than they do. But it mayn't have been that at all. Perhaps Mary Jane was thinking about something, or perhaps Mary Jane has short-sighted eyes, or maybe Mary Jane was going a message and was repeating it over and over that she might not forget it, as she did the last time; like a girl I know who got hers mixed up and couldn't see why the butcher laughed when she asked for 'a pound of shoulder steak off the leg'; or another who wanted 'a mound of pince.' Why were they so sure that Mary Jane was stuck-up, when it really may have been whole heaps of other things? Or are you certain that boy really tripped you in the playground? May you not have tripped over his foot without him meaning anything, the merest accident? Don't put a bad meaning into things till you are sure. There were some people who did not like Jesus Christ; they even said, because He went with poor sinful folk, that He was a bad man Himself. 'For look at the company He keeps,' they cried. But now every one despises them for their nasty, unclean, suspicious minds, knows that Jesus went with these people because in His kind way He wished to try to help them; and that He really was far the best man

[1] By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

that ever lived. After all it wasn't germs that were in these tubes, as people said, but only medicine.

Don't put a bad meaning on things till you are sure. Have you got that in your memory? Then here is the second thing. Remember that lots of things aren't nearly as bad as they look, are often just nothing at all, though you are quite afraid of them. Take going to the dentist's. What a row you make about it before you go, and yet you come back saying it was nothing after all! Of course not. Or there's the doing of your hair. You get quite 'teary' at the thought of it; and, though mother promises it won't be bad, are certain it will be dreadfully tuggy and knotty and sore. And yet it really isn't bad. Or there is going to bed. Some of you don't mind, though you like to sit up as long as you can. But when you have to go, you march away quite happily. But some of you hate the dark and are afraid of it, and the stairs and the silent house, and the long passage; you don't feel happy till you reach the lighted room. That's all right. But when the light goes out, you don't like that either; you see things, or hear things, or imagine things that aren't one bit nice. Stevenson felt like you. You remember his poem:

All round the house is the jet-black night;
  It stares through the window-pane;
It crawls in the corners, hiding from the light,
  And it moves with the moving flame.

Now my little heart goes a-beating like a drum,
  With the breath of the Bogie in my hair;
And all round the candle the crooked shadows
    come
  And go marching along up the stair.

The shadow of the balusters, the shadow of the
    lamp,
  The shadow of the child that goes to bed—
All the wicked shadows coming, tramp, tramp,
    tramp,
  With the black night overhead.

But who told you all that nonsense about the kindly darkness, that puts us to sleep and rest and keeps us well, as we couldn't be without it? And why ever are you afraid of it? Ghosts, what? But there aren't any ghosts. There is only God in it, the dearest, kindest, nicest person who could possibly be there. You know when you are lying wakeful in the dark, and mother comes up the stair with a light. You can see it through the crack under the door, getting bigger and brighter, till she comes in, and then you're not a bit afraid, for she is there. But when she goes, and the light gets smaller and disappears at last, you start it all over once more, the seeing things, the hearing things, and all the rest of it. But why? You aren't really alone. For God is there, far kinder even than mother. And the dark isn't awful, but very friendly, and there is nothing dreadful in it, only your dear Heavenly Father who will sit beside you all the time. Afraid! Why ever should you be? How silly!

And so with heaps and heaps of things: they aren't anything like as bad as you think. It wasn't tubes of horrible diseases to make folk ill, it was only medicine to cure them.

Are you a Dodo?[1]

'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'—Gal 6[2].

When I was a young man I used to live in Liverpool; and on the wonderful river yonder there used then to be more ships coming and going than anywhere else, I suppose, in the whole world; not only steamers by the dozen, but many sailing ships as well, beautiful creatures with their graceful lines and tall tapering masts, and white sails gleaming and glinting in the sun, that made the steamers passing them look squat and fussy and vulgar. But there are none now: the last time I was down in Liverpool I don't think I saw any. There are no lovely clippers racing one another from Scotland, as they used to do, to India and China and Japan, and back again. They have all been raced off the seas, because steamers are faster and surer, and can do the work better. And in this busy world there is no room for old-fashioned things that have got out of date. And so the sailing vessels are all gone. But do you know how it happened? It was all the work of a man with no arms. He had been a soldier, had got badly wounded, and yet he had to make his living somehow. And he thought he would be a ferryman. But how could he be that with no arms? Well, he managed, rigged up the oars so that when he put his feet against them and thrust out his legs, the oars rose

[1] By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

and came back a bit, and when he drew in his feet again the oars fell into the water and slid back to the first position. And so the boat moved, slowly and clumsily, but it moved. That was rather clever, wasn't it? You boys like to be handy. Well, here is something for you to think about. Can you be as handy, with two hands to be handy with, as this man was handy with no hands to be handy with? It's fairly difficult to be handy with nothing but feet! But, anyway, what happened? One day a great engineer came down to the ferry, and as he watched the man he said to himself, 'Now there is an idea. If I could get steam to move a propeller back and forth, as that man is doing with his legs, I could drive steamers across the seas twice as fast as ships go now.' And he thought and thought until at last he thought it out, and changed the whole world. But really it was all the work of a man with no arms!

But that's nothing. There was once a boy as small as you, who lived in a Highland village. You and I would have thought He would not come to anything particular, for His people were too poor to send Him to college, and He was going to be just a country carpenter. And He lived a boy's life, just like yours. He too had to rise of a morning when He sometimes felt sleepy, and had to bundle off to bed at nights when the time came, though He wasn't one bit tired; and there was school, and there were lessons, and messages, too, to run—a life just like yours. But He lived it all in a new way, so new that it has changed the world. For people said, If I stick to the old-fashioned way of doing things, with this far better way made possible, I'll get completely left behind, I'll be quite out of date. The old way was the savage way, though many people who weren't savages stuck to it. The savage's way is to bear no burdens, to let other people carry theirs, and his too. When a savage is on a journey, he heaps all his goods on to his wife, who goes crawling along half-doubled underneath it all. But he carries nothing, strolls along with his hands in his pockets, if he has got any pockets to put his hands in; or wishing he had, if he hasn't. There is a comic story of some British Tommies who, somewhere in the East, came on a man riding in state, and his wife tramping behind him. 'Sonny,' they said, 'it's time you came down and gave the old lady a chance,' and they pulled him off and set her up; and a very frightened woman rode for once, and a very sulky man carried the goods for once. What happened when the Tommies left them I don't know, but I have my fears! The savage way is to have a good time and not bother about other people, to make them carry for you everything you can, and carry nothing for them at all. Dr. Donald Fraser, the great missionary, tells how some one from a mission station was bathing in Lakè Nyassa when a crocodile seized him, and, instead of plunging to the bottom, swam along the surface holding him in his mouth. And the man screamed to those on shore, 'Save me! save me!' And they came down and put their hands to their eyes and looked out over the waters. 'It's none of our people,' they said, and drew up their boat, and went their ways. But Christ's way is to help every one, and to spend one's life for others, and to carry as many burdens as one can get on one's back, as in a long march in France I've seen a young officer, when the men were tired and footsore, carrying two or three packs and a couple of rifles. That's the way to make the most of life; the old selfish way is out of date, like a sailing vessel that goes crawling about only to find that the steamers have nipped in before it at every port and taken all the trade. Now which is your way, the old or the new, the savage's or Christ's? I know that savages aren't altogether selfish; they think of their families and friends a bit. And I know you're not altogether selfish either. Selfishness won't do. At football if a boy sticks to the ball and tries to break through every time on his own, he will soon be put down into a lower eleven or fifteen; you must play for the side and be unselfish; and you know that, and do it there.

But do you live always like that, like Jesus Christ, who spent every day trying to help all kinds of people? Look at your day. You waken, and there are your clothes waiting for you; someone has been thinking of you. And perhaps you don't like that very much, for the fresh flannels are itchy and scratchy a bit, still there they are. And you want breakfast, and there it is ready for you; some one has been bearing your burden, for you didn't get it for yourself. You go to school, and when you come home there's dinner; some one has been at work for you; you go out to play, and come in hungry again, and there's tea; you get sleepy, and 'I'm off to bed,' you say, and there is bed, cosy and clean and comfy and waiting. Always some one is carrying your burdens for you. But what about you; are you helping any one at all,

or just taking it, like a savage, and forgetting to help, as was Christ's way? Think of His day! I fancy He would get up early as a wee chap, and give a help in the house; and before going to school He would get the water from the well, could do that for His mother; and on the way to school He would call for that new boy who was feeling strange, and at games He would pick some one who was never picked until the very end, to encourage him a bit; and in the evening He would help in the workshop; and at night, when His mother was tired, get the wee ones round Him, and tell them those wonderful stories He could make. He was the happiest little fellow in the village, I'm quite sure; and that because He was always helping somebody. And if you are living in the old way, the savage way, the out-of-date way, why, you ought to be put in a museum under a glass-case. And people will come and squeeze their noses flat against it, and say, 'Whatever dreadful kind of beast is this?' And they will read the label—'This ugly creature, thought to be long extinct, was discovered at' (where is it you stay, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow? well, was discovered there) 'in 1923. It is hoped that this hideous beast will soon die out.' Don't you think that would be a sorry end for you? Far better live in Jesus' way, not selfishly, but carrying other people's burdens, in the new, true, proper, happy way. For you really aren't a 'Dodo,' but a girl or a boy.

The Christian Year.

First Sunday after Easter

Victorious Faith.

'This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.'—1 Jn 5[4].

1. What shall we expect to follow? What does '*this*' represent? Does it stand for perfect self-control acquired after many years of severe self-discipline? Does it represent a kind of self-culture secured through perpetual crucifixion of vicious ways, and the continual cultivation of pleasant pursuits? '*This*' is the victory; is it the quality of myriad-mindedness? Is it the special endowment of natural gifts and graces which make right easy and wrong difficult? Nay, the secret of victory is not to be found in any or all of these things. 'This is the victory that hath overcome the world, *even our faith*.'

Gibbon ascribed the triumph of Christianity to five causes. They were: (1) The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses. (2) The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth. (3) The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive Church. (4) The pure and austere morals of the Christians. (5) The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing State in the heart of the Roman Empire.

But these causes are only, as he called them, secondary causes. Those five reasons or causes are nothing more than five different expressions or creations of a spirit of life and power behind themselves. They mark certain places in the region of thought and in the region of moral practice where the new Spirit from God came into contact with the natural and social order of those days. But by themselves they could have effected nothing, had it not been that behind them and within them there surged and beat an elementary Power.

What was the force behind those men, and behind those beliefs and that discipline, which gave to them their overcoming power? To such a question there is but one answer; and it is this. Just as behind those waves which in a rising sea overcome all oppositions there is the inexhaustible might of the sun, moon, and stars; just as a tide owes its triumph to the fact that it is in obedience at the moment to the whole nature of things, in harmony with physical omnipotence: so the triumph of Christianity in those first days, and in any days when Christianity honourably triumphs, is due and can be due to nothing except this—that at such a time, by the peculiar disposition under God of certain human hearts, at the call of some new moral sensitiveness and spiritual necessity, there was let loose upon the world a Power for holiness, for suffering, for patience, for gratitude, which found a scarcely hindered way.

To explain the progress of Christianity as due to this or that expression or method of Christianity, and to suggest that by the mechanical adoption of those expressions and methods the Church in our own day might at once resume her conquering

career, is as though you were to explain the grinding of corn in a mill by the arrangement of its wheels, and were to omit that flow of concentrated and passionate water which turns the wheels and sustains the movement—water which receives its power by virtue of its descent from a higher plane.

2. It is, of course, true on the other side that this power from God in Christ which fulfilled itself in Christianity and overcame the world was not something which existed as a pure idea and *in vacuo*. It had to come into contact, and indeed it insisted upon coming into contact, with the world-forces and world-systems, and these determined the kind of outward appearance which the conflict between the two should assume.

Christianity can never be entirely separated from its own manifestations in word and life. Just as we have no experience of a spirit without a body, so we have no knowledge, and can have none, of truth, except in conflict or correspondence with the actual world. The efficacy of Christ in the world is demonstrated still and always by the vitality and distinction of the personalities whom He creates, and by the changes and revolutions which His Spirit makes inevitable in our human arrangements.[1]

Commissioner Railton of the Salvation Army wrote: 'The faith of these people, familiar as they are with God, seems to me to be only the faith of a baby—charming, demonstrative, fleeting; the faith that claps its hands and crows when mother presents a lump of sugar at nine inches distance, but screams the moment she draws it a foot or two back. It is not the faith of a *man*, settled, calm, desperate, unmovable, which confides to the end in a love ever so diligently concealed and opposed, and *wins*. I will go on trusting in God. He will do in me and by me all He can, and without any pressing; He knows I expect it.' '*In me and by me*,' he says. Faith to him meant that which overcame 'the world' within and 'the world' without.

Another illustration is found in the life of William Penn—indeed, he made this text peculiarly his own after being 'exceedingly reached' when he heard Thomas Loe preach from it.

(1) 'The Lord first appeared to me,' he says, in his *Journal*, 'in the twelfth year of my age, and He visited me at intervals afterwards and gave me divine impressions of Himself. He sustained me through the darkness and debauchery of Oxford, through all my experiences in France, through the trials that arose from my father's harshness, and through the terrors of the Great Plague. He gave me a deep sense of the vanity of the world and of the irreligiousness of the religions of it. The glory of the world often overtook me, and I was every ready to give myself up to it.' But, invariably, the faith that overcometh the world proved victorious. In his monumental 'History of the United States,' Bancroft says that, splendid as were the triumphs of Penn, his greatest conquest was the *conquest of his own soul.*

(2) It was by his faith that William Penn obtained his second great triumph—his *conquest of the world without.* He disarmed nations by confiding in them. He bound men to himself by trusting them. He vanquished men by believing in them. It was always by his faith that he overcame.

When his father died, the nation was in his debt to the extent of sixteen thousand pounds. This amount—on its recovery—Sir William bequeathed to his son. In due time the matter was compounded, William Penn agreeing to accept an immense belt of virgin forest in North America in full settlement of his claim. He resolved to establish a new colony across the seas under happier conditions than any State had ever known. It should be called Pennsylvania; it should be the land of freedom; its capital should be named Philadelphia—the City of Brotherly Love. He was reminded that his first task would be to subdue the Indians. The savages, everybody said, must be conquered; and William Penn made up his mind to conquer them; but he determined to conquer them in his own way. He approached the chiefs unarmed; and they, in return, threw away their bows and arrows. Presents were exchanged and speeches made. Penn told the natives that he desired nothing but their friendship. He undertook that neither he nor any of his friends should ever do the slightest injury to the person or the property of an Indian.

'His character always triumphed,' says Bancroft. 'His name was fondly cherished as a household word in the cottages of the old world; and not a tenant of a wigwam from the Susquehannah to the sea doubted his integrity. His fame is as wide as the world: he is one of the few who have gained abiding glory.'[2]

[1] J. A. Hutton.

[2] F. W. Boreham, *A Handful of Stars*, 15.

3. To-day the answer to the question, What will give the individual Christian or the Church the victory? is the same—'Faith.' A complete abandonment of ourselves to God, at all cost, and in face of every risk, will change our lives, our outlook, our service, and our influence in the world. Such faith will livingly unite us to Christ. It will make us, and all we have, His. Reciprocally it will make Him, and all He has, ours. For us to live will be Christ. This is the only key to the present situation, the open secret to the spiritual power that will bring inspiration and revival, achievement and triumph equal to those of any age since Pentecost.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Good Shepherd.

'I am the good shepherd.'—Jn 10^{11}.

Down the wide street they press and flow
With a rustling, hurrying, gentle sound,
As of crispèd, withering leaves that blow
Over a frosty ringing ground.

With golden, stupid eyes the sheep
Surge by in waves of dirty grey;
The clamorous mongrels snarl and keep
Their going to the middle way.

And as the acrid smell of wool
Stings in my nostrils, once again
The frostbound thoroughfare is full
Of ghosts of vanished shepherd-men;

Grey-eyed philosophers whose years
Were full of tinkling bells of rams;
Whose deepest thoughts and gravest fears
Were for the little new-born lambs.[1]

Do not despise the shepherd-folk. There have been great souls among them, and their trade is one of the oldest in the world; so, when we begin to track out the antecedents of the thought in Christ's words, we come upon the roots of history. We see Abraham and Lot coming out of the dim distance with flocks and herds so great that they have to divide their new inheritance between them and turn in different directions. We see Jacob making his fortune among Laban's flocks, and his sons given a separate dwelling-place in the land of Goshen, because 'every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.' We see David taken from following the flocks to be a king. With such memories to be their teacher, it was natural that the poets and prophets of Israel should turn the thought into a parable—should speak of their nation as the flock, and of God as the great Shepherd upon whose care they were dependent. 'The Lord is my shepherd. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.'

Our Lord took up the parable, and filled it with uttermost beauty because He filled it with Himself. When He entered upon His public work, His heart was saddened, because the multitudes were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. And now, moved perhaps by the example of bad shepherding, recorded in the previous chapter of this Gospel, He extended the thought into a complete parable.

The Church loved the thought, and dwelt upon it from the beginning. 'That great Shepherd of the sheep,' says the Epistle to the Hebrews. 'Ye are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls,' says Peter. The popular religion of the first Christians, Dean Stanley says, 'was in one word the religion of the Good Shepherd. The kindness, the courage, the love, the beauty, the grace of the Good Shepherd was to them, if we may so say, Prayer Book and Articles, Creed and Canons, all in one.'

Notice how the idea of the Good Shepherd throws a threefold light on the character of our Lord.

1. The thought gives us a picture of *tender care*. That is the very purpose for which a shepherd exists—to care for his flock. This care was doubly necessary in a land like Palestine, where at many points the pasture-land was upon the very borders of the great desert. The thieves and robbers and the wolf are touches of colour taken from real life.

And even as the shepherd cared for his flock, Christ cared for human souls—for the great multitude with its unreasoning movements and its unuttered wants, and for the single soul with its special needs. He cared for those who did not care for themselves. And as for those who were not cared for by the

[1] L. M. Priest.

religion and the respectability of the day, He cared for them most of all.

O Shepherd with the bleeding Feet,
Good Shepherd with the pleading Voice,
What seekest Thou from hill to hill?
Sweet were the valley pastures, sweet
The sound of flocks that bleat their joys,
And eat and drink at will.
Is one worth seeking, when Thou hast of Thine
Ninety and nine?

How should I stay my bleeding Feet,
How should I hush my pleading Voice?
I Who chose death and clomb a hill,
Accounting gall and wormwood sweet,
That hundredfold might bud My joys
For love's sake and good will.
I seek My one, for all there bide of Mine
Ninety and nine.[1]

The figure of the Good Shepherd occurs frequently in early Christian art. Usually there is a lamb upon the Good Shepherd's shoulders. But it was not always a lamb. The lamb is a symbol of innocence and purity, and the early Church seemed to think that this was not a clear enough picture of her Lord's compassion; she felt that the goats as well as the sheep must have some place in His great love.

And then she smiled; and in the Catacombs,
With eye suffused but heart inspired true,
On those walls subterranean, where she hid

Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,
She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew—
And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid.[2]

It was a fine instinct that made her do so; He was the *Good* Shepherd, better than all that ever came before Him.

2. It gives us a picture of *intimate knowledge.* We may not forget this, because so the Master Himself explains His own meaning—'He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out: and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.' 'The flocks mixed with each other,' Sir George Adam Smith says,[3] in describing a noonday scene by a Judean well, 'and we wondered how each shepherd would get his own again. But after the watering and the playing were over, the shepherds one by one went up different sides of the valley, and each called out his peculiar call; and the sheep of each drew out of the crowd to their own shepherd, and the flocks passed away as orderly as they came.'

He meant, then, not only that He cared for the souls of men, but that He knew them. Perhaps it was because He knew them so well that He cared for them so greatly. He saw the great possibilities. You would not have it otherwise, would you? For it is not only knowledge; it is knowledge and sympathy. Napoleon is said to have had a wonderful knowledge of men. He had a quick insight into character. He knew instinctively the man who would be a good tool for him to use, and the man who was unsuited to his purpose. But he had no sympathy, and his keen glance was softened by no tenderness. Our Lord's knowledge was not only full of sympathy; it was the knowledge which only sympathy can possess.

3. It gives us a picture of *real self-sacrifice.* 'The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' Again we must turn away our thoughts from English meadows and the fields of peaceful lands to such pastures as the Bible shepherds knew—fringing the desert and open to many a foe. Sir George Adam Smith says again, in emphasizing 'the grandeur of the shepherd's character,' 'I do not remember ever to have seen in the East a flock of sheep without a shepherd. . . . On some high moor, across which at night the hyenas howl, when you meet him, sleepless, far-sighted, weather-beaten, armed, leaning on his staff and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart, you understand . . . why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice.' So sometimes, a little at a time, by a sacrifice which lasts as long as their calling, and sometimes suddenly and in desperate conflict, good shepherds lay down their lives for their sheep.

Here also our Lord pictures Himself truly—only the reality puts the picture to shame and towers high above all types. Why did Christ die? Not under external compulsion! He is careful to make that plain. 'No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself.' He died because He cared more for others than He did for Himself; He died because His death was needful to the purpose of God, and to the redemption of the world. And now this is His strongest argument as He pleads with men to enter His fold and become members of His flock—the fact that He laid down His life for them. Show us Thy wound-prints, O Thou

[1] Christina Rossetti. [2] Matthew Arnold.
[3] *Historical Geography of the Holy Land.*

Shepherd sent from God; teach us somewhat of their meaning; and surely the self-will shall be broken within us, and we shall follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest![1]

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Response of Faith.

'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.'—Heb 11[1].

Faith is the response of man to God, to His revelations, to His promises, and to His offers.

1. Take first His revelations, and especially *the revelation of Himself*. And here it must be pointed out that faith was not brought into the world by Christianity, and is not even peculiar to religion. Every human being is exercising faith every day of his life. All that we know about this world beyond what we perceive with our own five senses is known to us by faith. How do those of us who have never been out of Europe know that such places as Asia, Africa, and America exist? It is by faith in the testimony of those who have been there, or by inference from seeing things like black faces and white ivory, which are not produced in Europe, and which we therefore know must have come from other continents. All we know of the past of this world before we were living in it is known to us by faith, by the testimony of those who saw it and by belief on our part; and all we know of what is going on in this world at the present day beyond the range of our own senses comes to us in the same way, by testimony on the one hand and by faith on our part. Of course the testimony has to be tested: some of it is true and some of it is false, and it is the part of the wise man to sift the wheat from the chaff, and to give faith only to what is deserving of credence.

Now, among these testimonies coming from many sides calling upon us to believe in things we have never seen, there comes the testimony of God calling on us to believe in Him and His attributes. This is given us in many ways. It is given us in His works: 'The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.' It is given in His Providence, because we know that we did not bring ourselves into existence, and we know that the sweetness of life we taste is only to a very small extent produced by ourselves. It comes to us especially in conscience, where a will above our own is constantly announcing itself. Of course these evidences have also to be tested. To test them is our prerogative as thinking beings, but if they stand the test, then surely the Supreme Being ought to receive our admiration and worship and trust; and that is faith.

2. Then faith is the response of man to God's *promises*. God does not merely stand out there waiting till we recognize Him. He comes near and speaks: and His words are promises. You all remember how great a part was played in the experience of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, by the promise of God? God had promised him land, and seed, and a blessing, and Abraham laid hold of that promise and sacrificed everything to it, abandoning everything that stood in the way, because there is always involved in faith the abandonment of what is inconsistent with its manifestation. Abraham followed the star of faith and went without turning aside, wherever it led him, and you remember that, among his successors who are distinguished for their faith, this quality of clinging to the promises is so prominent that, in that great chapter already referred to, their biographies are summed up in these remarkable words: 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' The life of faith in our own day is concerned in the same way with the promises of God. These are in the Bible. The Bible is a book full of great and precious promises, and the reason why the reading of it is so essential to the Christian life is just because it is sustained by the appropriation of promises. The great promise is that of eternal life. Even among the heathen, before Christianity appeared, there was a dim expectation of immortality, and it is beautiful to see how noble spirits like Plato and Socrates followed that intimation, dim as it was, unlike some of their modern successors who, after two thousand years in the light, are still cold and negative in their thoughts about this subject. But it is in the Bible that this dim anticipation receives its confirmation, and it was Jesus Himself who spoke of the mansions that are to be our future habitation, as one well acquainted with them. And it is, above all, to the words of Christ Himself that faith clings when it lays hold of this promise.

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The Self-Portraiture of Jesus*, 115.

3. And lastly, faith is the response of man to the *offers* of God. This third word is used in order to emphasize a little more strongly the personal element in God's dealing with us. He comes nearer to us than He comes even in the promises. Person to person He makes us offers. Now His great offer is His Son, whom He offers to be the Saviour of the world. This is a world of sin and misery, and the world has for thousands of years been looking for some one to heal its diseases. There have not been wanting practitioners and deliverers and reformers, but the poor human race is like an invalid who has been long under the power of a malady, and has spent all her living on physicians, and is nothing better, but rather worse. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? God's answer to that appeal of humanity is the offer of His Son. Why should I receive such an offer? The Son of God, I am told, has died for me. What need have I for an atonement to be made for my soul? What danger was I in that the Son of God had to come from heaven and to be incarnate, in order to save me? Along a line like that any man might come to realize the importance of Christ to him. And He is not dead, He is alive. He comes to me and asks if I will have Him for my Saviour, and when in timidity and humility, but in gratitude, my being rises up and accepts Him as He offers Himself to me, that is faith.[1]

Only by God coming down—
Only by Life divine,
Bearing the curse of mine,
Cometh my crown.

Only unspeakable love—
Only the love divine,
Finding response in mine,
Lifteth above.[2]

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The True Business of the Christian.

'And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'—Is 32^2.

1. *The words are a description of Christ.* It is not necessary for us to hold in any hard and dogmatic way that Isaiah, when he forecast this scene of human happiness and strength, saw precisely how it was going to be fulfilled. What concerns us to believe is that the Eternal Spirit, speaking through him, did describe a state of human society much nearer to the heart of God than anything which at that time existed in the world. It is a state of society much nearer to the heart of God than anything which exists now. In the prophet's view it is a condition of things which shall take form whenever true thoughts of God and of life control men's minds. And there Isaiah prepares us for the message of Jesus.

We Christians, when we read or when we hear these words, apply them immediately to our Lord: and this more and more. For as time goes on and the plot of life thickens about us, we more and more passionately, and even desperately, cling to Christ, because He alone meets our yearnings and necessities as men. Of course we will never know what Christ can be until we allow Him to have to do with our true and personal life. And many of us are not ready to admit Christ into our true life until we are in some stark necessity. We have gone to Christ only in our day of darkness. Even so, we have gone to Him, and we have found in Him—even in the bare fact that He was there and that He had said what He had said—we have found what humble and suppliant souls have ever found in Him. And to describe this experience no words are more natural and fitting than the strong words of the psalm which speaks about taking us from a 'fearful pit and from the miry clay,' or such words as Isaiah uses here, about an hiding-place, and a covert, and fresh-flowing water, and a shade from the glare of an intolerable sun upon an endless waste of sand.

2. *The words are a description of the Christian.* The charge is made against us who are called Christians, that we are apt to be indifferent to the social conditions in which we live. Where we are acutely religious we are preoccupied—so it is alleged—with our own soul, with its ups and downs of feeling, and away in the background, with an intermittent anxiety as to our destiny after death. When we have ceased to be acutely religious we have become really indifferent to everything except our own material interests, which we may go so far as to admit are secured to a certain extent by the prevalence round about us of those decencies and quiet habits which religion on the whole safeguards. And so we, without intending anything

[1] J. Stalker.
[2] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Rest*, 169.

so crude, may fall into a way of patronizing religion, on the ground that though we ourselves may not need its maxims or its threatenings or its promises, nevertheless it is good for masses of people who without it might become troublesome and dangerous. But whether we are acutely religious, or whether in our case religion, having lost for us its edge and direct necessity, has now become a merely decent custom for which we can see reason enough to be at some small pains lest it die and worse things befall us—in either case, so it is alleged of us to-day, sometimes sadly, sometimes with bitterness and contempt, we think of religion, of Christianity, as a plan or scheme by which our own individual interests, whether those be conceived as a deep thing or a shallow thing, are secured both in this world and in any world which may follow upon this one.

We must admit the enormous amount of truth there is in this charge. It is true there have been times when people who claimed to be Christian felt no responsibility for the world in which they lived. But it is difficult to be quite fair to those who live in any age but our own. Whilst a really good man in any age will resemble in certain matters a really good man in any other age, there will always be differences. On certain matters it will always be more tolerable for one age than for another in the day of judgment. There were good and serious men in the eighteenth century, or even early in the nineteenth, who looked round upon their fellow-men living in much poverty and distress, and, except for the responsibility which they would probably acknowledge of dispensing a little charity amongst them, not feeling that they were called upon to work up any further agony of sympathy. Because for one thing most men were poor. In the year 1801, the total currency in Scotland from John O'Groat's to Maidenkirk was 200,000 Scots pounds, each worth about five shillings in pre-war currency, that is, about one-and-eightpence nowadays. That was all the money that Scotland possessed, so that there were few people far removed from the grindstone.

And besides, whether it was a better state of things or a worse, the fact is that religion at that time was conceived by rich and poor, gentle and simple, as a matter between the individual soul and God. Anything which followed from a sound relationship between God and one's soul was, of course, an admirable thing—any kindness or charity. But such things were not of the essence of Christianity as then conceived.

It may seem to us strange that good people could ever imagine that they could be pleasing to God if they lived selfishly—no matter how fine that selfishness might be. Certainly we know better. Things do move. The true, and, when all is said, the only business of Christianity is that by the help of God working through its laws and promises and presences, souls may one by one be saved. But it may be that God has given to our time a truer, deeper understanding of what it means to have one's soul saved. Saved from the assaults of animal passion, from some numbing memory, from some maddening remorse? Yes. But saved from much besides all these. What is the spirit of self-seeking but the dominion over our soul of the animal propensity, from which a man is saved only when his heart is generous and kind. In fact, we are beginning to see that the phrase 'to be saved,' as expressing the business and fruit of the Christian faith and obedience, is a partial and incomplete expression. What we are always forgetting is that God's purpose is not to save us, but to save the world. It is because we form a part of the world that we come within His love. Whatever He has done for us, He did for the sake of the world through us. Whatever He has given us, He gave as a loan, that we might let it out to the world.

Looking back over the last thirty years, and pondering the revelation of Himself and of life's meaning which God has been giving us all through the history and the literature of that time, one thing above all others seems to have been His intention—and that to teach us how we need one another, and how we depend upon one another.

The question for us, first one by one, and then in groups, communities, countries to be agreed upon, is as to whether the ideal in Isaiah's version touches our imagination—persuades us of its glory. A world in which men do not strive with one another, conceiving of success as something to be gained by another's defeat, taking pride in another's overthrow! A world in which one nation shall be as concerned for another's welfare as though it were her own—as indeed in the long run it is her own! A world in which a man shall be to another man as an hiding-place from the wind, as a covert from the storm; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a rock in a weary land!

A world in which anything conflicting with such an ideal shall be tolerated only under a sad sense of necessity and always only as a temporary thing, to be removed at the earliest possible moment and hurled into the limbo of shameful and discredited things! To believe in such a world, and to plan its coming—what is that but to be a Christian? [1]

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

A Bond-servant.

'Simon Peter, a servant.'—2 P 1[1].

The word is 'slave,' though even the Revisers have not dared to translate it so, the nearest they approach to it being 'bond-servant' in their margin.

St. Paul calls himself in five of his Epistles 'the slave of Jesus Christ' or 'of God.' And other writers do the same; we find it in the Epistles of St. James, St. Peter, and St. Jude. They all gloried in it—the glory of humility and the glory of being human. To St. Paul it was a peculiar dignity that he was able to say, 'I bear about in my body the brands—the slave-marks—of the Lord Jesus.' The humility is glorious just because a human being can render it voluntarily. He is an active, and not a passive, tool of God. The Old Testament writer who soared to the highest point of inspired genius was the prophet who pictured the ideal Israel as the 'Servant—the slave—of Jehovah.' And the New Testament seer, rapt in the mystic vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, delights in speaking of the Christian Church, the New Israel, as God's slaves. 'Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the slaves of our God in their foreheads.' 'Praise our God, all ye his slaves.' 'His slaves shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.' And our thoughts can travel from all these saints of God to the greatest of them: 'He hath regarded the lowliness of his slave.' 'Behold, the slave of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word.' And once more, our thoughts can take wing, and soar up from the mother to her Child: 'He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men.' Are we not right in saying that a slave is 'a vessel unto honour'?

'Peter, a slave.' Let us see what is implied in this suggestive word.

1. First, the term 'slave' implies the *acknowledgment of a fact.* He has been bought. He is the Lord's property. A great price has been paid for him. The apostle thought of his Master's weary days and nights, of the tears and agonies of Gethsemane, of the shame and darkness and abandonment of Calvary. By all this expenditure on the part of the Saviour the apostle had been bought. He acknowledged his Master's rights; he was his Master's slave.

2. Secondly, the term 'slave' implies *the assumption of an attitude.* The apostle puts himself in the posture of homage and obedience. His eye was ever watching the Master, his ear was ever listening. He was a slave, but not servile. If we would learn what 'slave' means in the text, we must go to the love-sphere and seek the interpretation there. We must go where the lover slaves for the loved, and yet calls her slavery exquisite freedom. A real loving mother, slaving for her child, would not change her slavery for mines of priceless wealth or for unbroken years of cushioned ease. 'Thy willing slave, I.'

3. And thirdly, to be a slave implies *the discharge of a mission.* 'Peter, a slave and apostle.' He is sent forth to do the Master's will. The Master bids; he goes. Anywhere! Through the long dusty, tiring highways of righteousness, or to the valley of gloom; 'through the thirsty desert or the dewy mead.'

> His not to reason why,
> His not to make reply,
> His but to do and die!

But in that bondage the apostle finds a perfect freedom. All the powers of his being are emancipated and sing together in glorious liberty. Life that is fundamentally bound becomes like an orchestra, every faculty constituting a well-tuned instrument, and all of them co-operating in the production of a harmony which is well-pleasing in the ears of God.[1]

ASCENSION DAY.

The Ascension of Christ.

'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led thy captivity captive: thou hast received gifts among men, yea, among the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell with them.'—Ps 68[18] (R.V.).

The translation of this verse in the Authorized Version has been influenced by the use made of

[1] J. A. Hutton, *The Victory over Victory*, 71.

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Peter*, 208.

the passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians 4^8, where it is definitely applied to the Ascension of Christ; for the translators of the Authorized Version were not above concealing difficulties, and they were very much under the dominion of theories of prophetic fulfilment. The mysterious premonition of the Ascension is somewhat dissipated by a more accurate translation of the Hebrew. If we follow the suggestion the critics make as to the original reference of this Psalm, we must understand it as a description of how the ark of Jehovah was brought over the mountains of Judea in triumphal procession and was at length lodged in the Temple on Mount Zion, the procession including prisoners taken captive from subjugated nations and bearing gifts from the powers which had rebelled against Israel. Now it is perfectly possible that this was the original circumstance which inspired the poet, but he has only taken this as a starting-point for singing of something far more wonderful. As a description of any actual transference of the ark of God to the sanctuary on Zion it is far-fetched and misleading. But he has seen in that event a symbol of the final exaltation of Jehovah over rival gods because His true sanctuary is in heaven, the seat of all power.

St. Paul's application of this verse to the Ascension of Christ only carries the suggestion embedded in the Psalm a stage further; he has altered received gifts 'from' men to receive gifts 'for' men. But he was probably not the first to make that alteration; it had already been made by the Talmudic commentators who thought this was more seemly as applied to God, who does not need to take anything from men's hands; so that it was now entirely suitable for a description of the Ascension, which was the prelude to the pouring forth of the gift of the Holy Spirit upon mankind. And it is no unwarrantable application of the verse. There is nothing which really does justice to the language of the Psalmist save the Ascension; he had spiritualized an ecclesiastical procession as a symbol of Jehovah's exaltation to the throne of heaven; here was its actual fulfilment. We are compelled to admit that a spiritual imagination was at work in this author, which was premonitory of that great triumph of Christ which is called the Ascension.

1. *The nature of the Ascension.*—It is both a physical event and a moral exaltation. What the whole series of events in which the life of Christ is set is meant to reveal is that fundamentally and finally the moral and the physical are not unrelated or opposed realms; but that the attainment of supreme moral excellence brings perfect control over the physical universe. Christ's Resurrection was a fact which had manifestation in the physical realm; but the power which brought about the Resurrection was spiritual—the effect of transcendent holiness. In the same way the Ascension was not simply an elevation to some point in the skies over our heads, but the elevation of Christ to spiritual supremacy. On the other hand, it was not simply an invisible moral elevation; it was also an elevation into the realm of ultimate power, which means power not only over spiritual things but over the material universe as well; therefore it had a corresponding physical manifestation. There is nothing we need to have more firmly fixed in our faith than the belief that spiritual forces can change the nature of the physical universe.

2. *The meaning of the Ascension.*—At no time has it been more necessary to try to recover the religious reality which the Ascension reveals. Almost all that was hoped from the War has failed to come. The great menace to peace has not been removed. We still have coercion, force as the cure for force; and the only protection against violence is in being violent yourself first. The vicious circles are found everywhere. What can be done? We must hold with joyous faith that the peasant Carpenter, by virtue of His triumph over the powers of this world, is at the Father's right hand in the one place of power; that among the spiritual realities He is enthroned as supreme, and by the spirits who understand He is recognized as the only Hope and Saviour of the world.

We must commend the faith in these realities to all sorts and conditions of men. We must seek to impress upon the rulers of this world the fatal policy they are pursuing in trusting to repression, coercion, and force, and urge upon them a new policy of trust in man's response to the methods of Christ; persuade them of the reasonableness of seeking a way of reconciliation, try to win them from their fearful statecraft to one of greater generosity. What we must try to get out of men's minds is the idea that the whole business of government is a thing that stands right outside the religious realm, and that here Christian principles are inapplicable. What the Ascension means is

that Christ is elevated to the position of supreme authority because of what He is and because of what He has done; because His way of friendship and hope and love is the only way that will work. Surely it needs little arguing at this time of day that whether Christ's way would work or not, no other way works, and whatever risk it entails, it entails no such certainty of failure as the way of war, threats, violence, and intimidation.

But to recommend any such method to men we must have a definite religious faith, a definiteness of which the belief in the Ascension of Christ is the test; the belief that God has highly exalted Him, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and dominion. Only if we believe this can we dare to put in operation the entire reversal of worldly policy that it recommends. What there is for us to do, who strive to hold both the doctrinal reality and the practical applicability of our faith, is to believe that since our Lord has been exalted to the place of power, the very evolution of history must in time reveal to all men that Christ is the only King, His way of life the only solution, and His authority the only authority that shall never be shaken, His power the only power we can dare to trust.[1]

[1] W. E. Orchard, *The Safest Mind Cure*, 145.

Herrmann of Marburg.

By the Reverend J. G. Tasker, D.D., Principal of Handsworth College, Birmingham.

In 1879 Wilhelm Herrmann, Privatdozent in Halle, was appointed Professor of Dogmatic Theology in the University of Marburg. In 1886, at the age of forty, he published the book which has had a widespread and abiding influence on theologians of various schools: *The Communion of the Christian with God*, translated into English in 1895[1] from the second German edition. Herrmann remained at Marburg, notwithstanding three invitations to other Universities, and resigned his professorship soon after his seventieth birthday. In the narrower sense of the word, he did not found a school, but upon the students from many lands who heard him lecture at Marburg he made a deep and lasting impression. Since his death in 1922, generous tributes have been paid to him as 'the most distinguished of the Ritschlians,' especially emphasizing his scrupulous regard for truth, and his 'unconditional respect for reality.' These were the chief characteristics of his theology as of his piety, for in his devout personality theology and religion were not only united but also unified. Amongst those who agree in this witness are Schäder, whose *Theocentric Theology* was written as a corrective to Herrmann's teaching, and the late Professor Troeltsch, who differed from his *Ethics* published in 1901.

[1] On the title-page of this edition, Herrmann's Christian name is wrongly given as 'Willibald.'

In a recently published pamphlet,[2] Lic. F. W. Schmidt, Privatdozent at the University of Halle-Wittenberg, announces the publication in the near future of a complete edition of Herrmann's works, to which he will contribute an Introduction containing, *inter alia*, an appreciation of the Marburg theologian's literary life-work. Meanwhile Schmidt has given some interesting details of the professor at whose feet he sat, and to whose teaching he confesses that he is greatly indebted. At the same time he points out what he has come to regard as defects in Herrmann's theology, and indicates directions in which his disciples are strengthening and supplementing his system of Christian doctrine.

Herrmann was a son of the manse, and in later years expressed his gratitude for the atmosphere of Lutheran piety which pervaded his home. As a student in Halle (1864–1870) his principal teachers were representatives of the 'mediating' school, namely, Julius Müller and Tholuck, in whose house Herrmann lived for two and a half years. 'It was owing to their piety rather than to their theology that the tie which bound him to these theologians proved to be permanent.' After the war with France in 1870, in which he served as a soldier, he made

[2] *Wilhelm Herrmann*: Ein Bekenntniss zu seiner Theologie. Von Lic. Friedrich Wilhelm Schmidt. Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr. 1922.