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διηγήσεις of previous writers which he had read, as Dr. Cadbury properly observes.

It will be seen that at almost every point I find myself in agreement with Dr. Cadbury's fresh and illuminating discussions of Luke's Preface save in his denial of research by the author. It is quite likely that some writers have insisted too strongly that παρακολουθεῖν can mean nothing else but to make research. Dr. Cadbury has done a good

service in showing the variety of uses of this interesting verb. But he has, I think, gone too far in urging that the author's information 'was not the result of special reading and study.' Dr. Cadbury offers no real proof for that denial. The very context in Luke's Preface disproves it.

The use of ἀνωθεν with παρεκλογηκότι falls in also with the idea of careful preparation before writing.

In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

Found Out.¹

'There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.'—Lk 12².

OF course you have heard of Tutankhamen. 'Rather,' you say: 'our cat's called Tut.' I know, and there are two more in your street, and three others in the road round the corner. But I'm talking of the man after whom they are all named, the poor old king of Egypt who took such pains that he should never be disturbed after his burial, who had himself built in, with all his chariots and carvings and treasures and wonders, behind door after door after door, so that he has lain there for three thousand years, and all down the centuries no greedy robber ever found him yonder in the hush and quiet of the desert. And now that they have broken in on him they stand, hardly able to believe their eyes, staring at all the lovely things that they have stumbled on. How ever did they do it, these men of so very long ago, who had no cunning machines to help them as we have now.

And so folk started talking, telling us these were the times when people really worked, and didn't shirk or scamp things as they do to-day; kept wagging their heads, as father does when he begins to tell you about when he was a boy, and things were all so different and funny. For then, it seems, every boy loved to get up on the coldest and the darkest morning and just sprang out of bed: and all children liked their lessons better even than the most exciting story. It seems so very strange to you. Do you think father could have forgotten just a teenie-weenie little bit? Well, I don't know: I wouldn't like to say. Dad is very

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

wise. But things do slip from one's memory sometimes; and I'm bound to say that in my day I remember one small boy who never found it very easy to get up, and had to drag himself to lessons very often. But, anyway, people were speaking just like that. These were the days when people really worked, and put their heart and their back and their skill into things. And then they came on something, upon something horrid, and their talking died away: came on a heap of shavings where no shavings should be, and on a splendid bit of carving not fitted carefully into its place but jammed down anyhow. And that proved that long, long ago there were men who scamped work even then, and didn't do their best or really stick in as men should. It was a great shame, wasn't it? All the others had done so perfectly, and here at the very end there came along two or three idle fellows and let down that old world. It's like as if one coward spoiled the fame of a whole battalion that had been won by years of splendid heroism by thousands of men; or like a fellow in your team who won't get down to the ball, and lets the other side score, and so you lost, though all the rest did gallantly; or like some silly ass who gets you all a hundred lines, and what he was doing wasn't even funny!

It was too bad of those fellows long ago. Yet I think I know how it all came about. Perhaps the architect, who was a glorious architect, had said to his wife that he would go visiting with her at three o'clock. But things at the very last had taken a bit longer than he had expected and now it was four. And so he said to the men, 'Well, you're just finished, clean things up and tell the man who is to lock up when you're ready'; and away he went, for he knew his wife would be fussing. And the carpenter man

said to himself, 'This is Saturday afternoon, and there are chariot races on, if I hurry up I can still be in time. These shavings, who's ever going to see them? The old king is going to be locked up here for ever in the dark. Why bother clearing them away! No one will ever know that they are there.' And so he made off. And the man with the last bit of carving said, 'Hold on, where are you away to? To the chariot races! I'll go too!' 'But you're not finished.' 'No, this wretched thing won't fit exactly. But I'll just jam it down. Who's ever going to see it anyway.' And so they told the man to lock things up. And he looked round, not very carefully, for they had been such splendid workmen that he trusted them, and locked one door, and then another, and another, and then the last. 'No one will ever know,' said the fellows on the way to the chariot races, 'why should we bother over it!'

And it did lie hidden for three thousand years. But now it has come to light at last! Everything always does. You scamp your lessons, and get off all right, get an easy bit that you can do. And who will ever know, you say? Ah, but it won't be always hidden. The exam. will show, weeks later. Or, if you are lucky again there, still it will all come out years after, when the head of the office sends for you in a temper, and says, 'What school were you at?' And with that he will begin to run it down. 'What kind of a school is that where they can't teach you to spell?' and he will shake some letter of yours in your face. You will let down the school, just as those workmen did that early world of theirs. Or some day the clerk who does the French letters will be away, and 'Can anybody here read French?' they'll ask. If you had learned your French you would be able to say Yes. But no, you scamped, and so years after you will lose your chance. Or you fly into a temper when you get a hack at football. And then you forget about it. It all went past in a minute. No, it didn't. Years and years after this when you are an old man with a beard and a wife and family, the servant will give notice because she is not going to be spoken to as you have done, and your wife will go about saying, 'It isn't my fault, he was spoiled before I got him!' Of course you were. It's because you lost your temper at football that you got into the way of it, and it is showing years later. Years, says Christ, far longer than that! But it was only a little heap of shavings. Yes, but enough to show those men weren't good workmen. And, says Christ, the way you do your lessons and

stand up to things is quite enough to show what kind of girls and boys you are, and those who do them well will be given ten cities to rule by and by: but those who do them badly will be given only a little job that any one could do. It is not really hidden, it will all come out some day. So that you and I had better do our very, very best.

Learning by Heart.¹

'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.'—Ps 119¹¹.

Every boy and girl knows what it means to have to learn something by heart. It means learning a thing so well that you can repeat it afterwards word for word without making any mistakes. The other day I was at a school breaking-up party, and I heard some quite small boys and girls repeat pieces of poetry like this, and they did it wonderfully well. And I expect most children who go to day school or Sunday school have to learn portions of the Bible and some of the Psalms and Paraphrases like this, and they learn them so well that they will never really forget them. And that is an excellent thing, but it is not everything. For I want you to realize that a good deal of this learning is not what the Bible means when it says, 'Thy word have I hid in mine heart'; it is really learning by head rather than by heart. Some of you have had a clever parrot in your house, and have taught it to say all kinds of things till it can repeat them over and over again, but you know that it does not really understand them a bit. It has just learned to make the sounds and nothing else. So sometimes, I fear, boys and girls who repeat the words of the Bible are doing very much what the parrot does—repeating the sounds without ever thinking of the meaning, or understanding the words, or trying to do what they say.

Many years ago I heard the story of a curious experience that happened to a man in the South of England whose work it was to travel about the country from house to house selling copies of the Scriptures. One day in his travels he met a ragged, dirty tramp who asked him for a copper. And they got into conversation, and when the tramp found out that the other man was selling Scriptures, he said, 'Look here; if you will give me sixpence, you can start any part of the New Testament you like and I'll go on repeating what follows.' So a few

¹ By the Reverend A. Warren, B.A., Errol.

words from the Gospels were chosen at random, and the tramp was able to go on repeating word for word, and earned his sixpence. Naturally the Bible seller was astonished, and said to the tramp, 'Tell me, how is it that you have the Word of God stored in your memory like this, yet you have come to be nothing but a tramp?' Then the tramp told how he had come from a good home, and in his boyhood had been made to learn the Scriptures till he knew them word for word in this wonderful way. But he had yielded to temptation and fallen into sin and gone from bad to worse. You see, he had learned the Word of God with his head and could repeat it with his lips, but it had never gone down into his heart, to be loved and obeyed.

And now I must tell you another story to show the other side; the story of a man who did really learn by heart. Away in Calcutta I once met an old man, a Spaniard, who told me the story of his early life. He had run away from his home in Spain when he was a boy and gone to sea. And his ship had taken him to Calcutta, where he fell ill and was taken to the hospital, and the ship sailed away without him. When he began to get better, the nurses tried to talk to him and give him things to read, but he did not know any language but Spanish, and they could find nothing for him. But one day an old sailor in the hospital died, and when they were looking through his belongings they found at the bottom of his box an old book without covers and with some pages gone, but it was in the Spanish language. So they brought it to the boy, and he was so delighted to get a book he could read, that he read it over and over again. It was a copy of the Bible, and the lad, being a Roman Catholic, had never seen one before. And he told me how it opened his eyes to the truth, and how, when he left hospital, he became an earnest Christian and joined a church, and all through life made the Word of God his guide. He had learned it really by heart; he had understood it, and loved it, and it had kept him from sin.

That is the kind of learning by heart which makes God's Word a lamp to our feet, and a light upon our path.

There is a story told of an old Chinaman, who had been a Christian for many years, and when he died the people said of him, 'There was no difference between him and the Book.' So learn the Word of God till you can repeat it correctly, but, above all, hide it in your heart, understand and love it, and

it will lead you more and more to a knowledge of His love.

The Christian Year.

PALM SUNDAY.

The Supreme Decision.

'Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?'—Mt 27²².

It is a surprising fact, but it is none the less true, that this is still a living and up-to-date question. A crucified Jew still fills the religious horizon of the civilized world. The men of England have not yet done with Jesus Christ. How do men to-day answer Pilate's question?

1. There are some who give an answer inspired by open and avowed hatred. Many secularist lecturers and writers plainly loathe Christ, and would do anything in their power to destroy the hold which He still has upon the hearts of men. We have heard the pure and holy Jesus blasphemed in the public parks.

2. There are others who are trying to explain Christ away. There He is, strange, persistent, powerful, the author of a unique religion, with an extraordinary appeal to the heart and a tremendous claim upon the will. How awkward He is, and what a nuisance! He will not tolerate sin, and make Himself at home, like other men, with common failings which must not be too much talked about, but are absolutely necessary to the man of the world, unless he is to enter upon a fight with his lower nature for which he has no appetite, and for which he sees no necessity. What shall be done with Him? Explain Him away! Call Him one among many, the last of a series—Buddha, Confucius, Moses, Mahomet, Christ! It sounds so satisfactory, and takes the edge off His authority. Drag Him down from His ancient throne, supreme above all heavens. Silence His imperative claims by bracketing Him with others. Call Him a dreamer, an impossible poet, a hero with a touch of the fanatic.

You cannot explain Him away. You say He is a dream, a birth of idealism, a telegram from heaven, a creation of the ever-purifying Spirit who guides men upward and onward, and uses illusions such as this, and this more than others, as steps in the staircase which leads man at last to perfect knowledge and reasonableness and goodness! How and why was that dream dreamed? And

how did men and women come to believe it? And how did a dream so clothe itself with personality, and become the dynamic centre of spiritual power, and exercise an influence to redeem, to sanctify, to save, which is a thousandfold greater than the influence of all real personalities put together upon the hearts and lives of humankind?

3. To-day men are rather doing what Pilate did. They claim to be irresponsible, and profess to ignore Him.

There are three ways in which men attempt to wash their hands of Jesus and ignore Him. First of all, they meet Him with the moral and intellectual apathy which the reformer always finds his worst foe, and never face the necessity of really making up their minds about His claims. Could anything be more unintelligent than to refuse to place Christ? To leave out of one's reckonings Him who has proved Himself to be so great a force in history is like building up a system of physical science without taking into consideration the law of gravitation. But it is worse than folly, it is sin. 'If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.' Christ claims to be absolute Lord of your life and mine, and to decline that claim is to deny His right to it, at any rate in conduct, which here counts more even than creed.

Again, men wash their hands of Jesus, without directly denying Him, by filling their lives with interests other than, or hostile to, Him. With many men so far as any evidence on their part of interest in Him is concerned, Jesus Christ might just as well never have lived and died and risen again.

And some men, thirdly, play the part of Pilate and refuse a right decision because they prefer to drift. The present Archbishop of York tells of a man whom he, as a curate at Leeds, met in a tramps' lodging-house, obviously in surroundings foreign to his class and station in life. 'This is no place for you,' said Mr. Lang; 'what has brought you to this?' The man gave his name and his college at Oxford, and, shrugging his shoulders, said, 'I have just drifted.'

But we cannot ignore Christ for ever; we have got to die. 'To die, perchance to dream, ay, there's the rub!' Our knowledge that we shall meet the inevitable Christ at last is not suspended upon the thin thread of speculation; it is a revelation hung upon the eternal chain of His own words.

Those words 'will judge us at the last day.' This Christianity which the world ignores is the final test of personal character and history. This Jesus whom men crucify afresh is to be their judge. Surely, surely it is but wisdom to listen to Him now, lest in that last hour He points us to the track by which we have travelled to meet Him, with a charge which we cannot deny—that we heard Him and knew Him and would not heed Him, but turned every man to his own way.¹

EASTER SUNDAY.

The Hidden Life.

'Your life is hid with Christ in God.'—Col 3³.

'Continue in prayer.'—Col 4².

These words were addressed to the Colossians, a people peculiarly open to the attacks of incipient gnosticism. The Gnostics sought after hidden mysteries until all the world about them was uncanny—full of whispers, presences emerging out of the mist of dreams, wraiths of thought. Here Paul offers them something in Christianity that will appeal to such tastes. There is no need, he would say, to go past Christ for mysteries. He, and men's relations with Him, are the deepest mysteries of all.

The words were taken up by Christian theology in its doctrine of the 'Mystical Union.' We died with Him, and the old life passed away—the life that had been mastered and bewitched by the world and directed by its instincts. In its stead a new life was born, higher and purer than the old, which we share with the risen Christ. But this is no longer a comprehensible or even a visible life. There is a secret element in spiritual communion of which the world knows nothing. It is hidden with Christ, who is Himself hidden in God—a very mystical conception.

Christian experience confirms this though it does not explain it. Like John Bunyan, we say with full security, 'My Righteousness is on high.' From ourselves even is this secret hidden. No Christian professes to understand his own spiritual experience or to be able fully to rationalize it. It all ends ultimately in the mystery of the Divine.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life.

¹ F. B. Macnutt, *The Inevitable Christ*, 205.

Thus, by its own exquisite confession, is humanity disappointed in its search, until only the more strenuous seekers retain the faith that there is anything to find. But the Christian knows where that treasure lies. He is confident of finding himself at last. Day by day, with recurring surprise he discovers some new aspect of that for which he seeks, or at least some trace of it. He knows—he is the one man on earth who does know—the secret of the buried life. His life is hid with Christ in God.

Under this light prayer takes on a new significance and interest. It is the search for hidden treasure. This is a broader and truer conception of prayer than many others. This explorer—this huntsman of his own soul—speeds along the whole line of his activities, across the whole field of his interests, until, in some hour perhaps of difficulty and of strain, he finds the sudden revelation of the meaning of unintelligible experience, and of the presence of an unseen Friend. In the heart of Christ the man has discovered his own life. He may not be able to give reasons, but he understands and is quite sure. He can go back now, and endure and be glad. Or again, at times when all is in perplexity, the very exercise of prayer shows him what he would be at. Free from prejudices, delusions, and temptations, the mere act of turning to the Highest gives him the truest expression of himself, the fullest and most exalted utterance of experience. He has sought and found his hidden life. John Knox's great words are true: 'We come to seek our Lyfe and Perfection in Jesus Christ.'

Let us keep to the lower ranges of life and we will see that these even cannot be explained without God.

1. *Physical life*, in which 'life' means health. Our bodily life is hid with Christ in God, and that is among the prizes which prayer finds and secures. Not only does the habit of prayer tend to restrain a man from hurtful excesses. He who prays learns to hold his physical life more precious and to regard it as a sacred trust, knowing its worth better than other men.

The effect of prayer upon the condition of one's physical health is a difficult question. Here, more than in most regions, it is necessary to avoid the extravagances of half-educated or rash speculation. Science is as truly God's gift and will as prayer is, and any prayer which sets itself up as a substitute for medical skill is mere presumption. Nor can

prayer and medicine combined effect more than a certain limited amount. The last factor in the case is the will of God, and our times are in His hand.

Yet prayer may be a real means of finding a healthy life. So closely are body and mind connected, that the very moods which prayer induces will react in health upon the body. In prayer the thought and desire, set upon healthy conditions, may awaken the will and purpose, and the chances of health are vastly better for those who will to be well than for those who have lost heart and energy. For the rest, the abstract question of how prayer is answered is, and must always remain, obscure. Sir Oliver Lodge strikes the true note when he says that the fatalistic attitude is the unfilial one. We are but children who say to their father what they want. We shall never get beyond that to any higher thought, and if we insist on passing on from it, it must be to a lower one. This, at least, is true, that the life even of our flesh is hid with Christ in God, and that in prayer we are approaching its quickening springs.

2. *Emotional life*, in which 'life' means harmony and peace. The first promise of Christianity is keen vitality. That hidden life which we go to find in Christ is not passionless. The moods are legitimate elements in experience, though they require harmony and control. When the strain is felt, before the mood expresses itself, go to find it as it is in Christ. There it will be safe for you to be true to it, and frankly let it find expression. So the depression of drudgery will become the earnest enthusiasm of labour. Battle will change from a squabble to a crusade. Sullenness will change to sympathy that feels the sense of tears in mortal things. Exasperation will lose its blindness and yield instead a swift and brilliant vision of the mind of Christ regarding wrong.

3. *Social life*, in which 'life' means love and service. Our social instincts tell us of a larger self which includes our relations to others. Social science is doing noble work in its efforts to understand and adjust these relations. To suggest prayer as a substitute for sound economics is mere cant, which those who feel the pressure of present conditions will justifiably treat with scorn. Yet that which lies at the root of all these disputes is not details either of present injustice or of future amendment. It is the spirit of men's minds towards one another. In that lies our true social life. That life of right social spirit is hid with Christ in God.

Prayer alone can find it. So, through prayer, we pass on to that widest charity which is the true spirit of public life. Paul exhorts that 'intercessions and givings of thanks be made for all men.' Such intercession if it be intelligent and honest will open the intercessor's heart to the sorrows of his fellow-men. Such thanksgiving will be impossible except to those who are prepared to right their wrongs. That is the true hearty Christian spirit—intercessions and thanksgivings for all this crowded world of human life. It is not pity, far less scorn, but the true spirit of public life, the insight and goodwill without which no man's manhood is complete. In prayer we go to find that life also, hid with Christ in God.

In a word, our true life in all its relations is hid with Christ in God. The solutions of critical problems, the answers to great questions, require more than painful thought. They require that we be our true selves to think and act truly among them. By prayer we go to seek and find our true selves in Him. In His will is our peace, in His favour our life, in His love our power of loving wisely so that we may rightly serve our generation.¹

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Peace and Wounds.

'When the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had said this, he shewed unto them his hands and his side.'—Jn 20^{19, 20} R.V.

I. 'Came Jesus.'—No one can follow the story now without feeling that Christ is inevitable. It is the key to the whole record. We are swept into a movement which we realize is irresistible, and the secret of its power is the irresistible Christ. We feel this not merely because Christ exercised an extraordinary influence and became the centre of a unique attraction, but because of what He was. His words and His works alike are significant first and chiefly of what He is in Himself; they are the revelation of a Person who more and more completely wins our absolute trust. When the Cross comes into view, crowning the path up which He is moving, we follow Him, knowing that, though it seems to be inexplicable, it comes within His purpose of redemption, and He fully understands it, however blind we may be to what it means. 'I lay down my life for the sheep. No man taketh it

from me; but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' It is all a complete unity, the one perfect whole in a world of fragments. And so when we hear the 'It is finished' ring out through the gloom of His death-hour, we are ready for the glory which will soon be breaking from the opened grave. And as at last we see Him coming to the disciples on Easter evening, though the doors are shut against Him, we know that always and everywhere He is and must be resistless. Always and everywhere He is the inevitable Christ.

The incidents and words ascribed to the risen Christ are so few that we treasure every detail. We sometimes wish more had been preserved. But we need not regret that, for there is sufficient in what we have to engage our thought. Moreover, the general purpose of the resurrection was not to communicate new truth so much as to confirm that which had been previously given. Its main purpose is to affirm the continuity and regnant position of the personality of Christ; not so much to make known to us the conditions governing Christ's exaltation to glory, as to assure us that His character and disposition remain still the same. There is plenty of evidence that in the risen Christ we are confronted with a new order of being, and with a kind of existence of which we can form little exact notion; but the revelation of the resurrection really centres upon this, that whatever changes have taken place, Jesus remains through them all, human, friendly and familiar as ever.

This persistence of the human nature of Christ is very significant. The resurrection has not altered His human disposition, changed His type of character, or even modified His manner of expression.

There is a whole system of unappropriated theology here. Theology, however orthodox, has always been inclined to look upon the human life of Jesus as a condescension, His earthly career as a humiliation, His incarnation as an obscuration of His glory. And therefore there has always been a tendency to maintain that Jesus did not give us a full revelation of the Godhead; which we have to balance by thoughts of God derived from other sources; the God of nature, or the picture of Jehovah in the Old Testament. Especially were the resurrection narratives appealed to as in some way complementing the revelation of the cross, and in some way correcting His earlier confession

¹ J. Kelman, *Ephemeræ Eternitatis*, 266.

that He was meek and lowly in heart. Somewhere the notion of power, the idea of majesty had to be superadded. But this is just what the resurrection itself disproves. Jesus has resumed His glorified state; but He remains of precisely the same human disposition. Therefore we must hold, if Christ is any clue to God, that the nature of God is conditioned by His ethical character.

2. *The risen body bears the scars of the crucifixion.*—There are details about the risen form which are of great interest. These details have too great a consistency to be referred to the working of spontaneous imagination; neither can they be traced to preconceived theories; for the only two ideas of the resurrection that were then current were those of a resuscitated body and a discarnate ghost: and Jesus was neither. Everything points to some revealed reality, surpassing anything earthly conditions have made us familiar with, and yet undoubtedly corresponding with spiritual laws analogous to those which govern the natural world.

But the retention of the wounds must be of more than physical significance. At first it is rather disconcerting to discover that the resurrection body of Christ should retain the marks of having been crucified. It is obvious that the nature of Christ's manifestations was assumed at will, and was not merely determined by His pre-resurrection body, or He would have been immediately recognized. Therefore, if His resurrection body bore the marks of the nails and the spear, this must also have been due to His will. And yet why should He will this? It cannot have been merely for purposes of identification. It is unlikely that it was merely because it was physically determined, or the whole physical appearance would have been similarly determined. There is only one remaining hypothesis. It is that the scars had gone deeper than the physical body; they were scars on the physical nature, they were wounds in His soul.

We can see that it was not only the wounds, but what they meant; the pain they caused was not physical agony only; it was pain for the hardness of men's hearts, for their cruelty, their blindness, their rage. It was more than the nailing of hands and feet, it was the bitter rejection of tender, ministering love; it was more than the piercing of the side; it was the callousness to which nothing is sacred when military regulations are considered. It was therefore the Divine nature that was hurt,

the mind of God that was in anguish; behind the crucifixion of Calvary was the passion of God.

And yet there must have been a willingness on the part of Christ still to bear those wounds. There was; for it is obvious that Jesus was rather proud of His wounds. They proved how much He was willing to suffer for love of man. Juliana of Norwich has seized upon this glorious idea and given it expression in her characteristic way. She tells us that the crucifix she was watching when she thought she was dying, seemed to her to be her Lord upon the cross, who, as she watched, looked down into the wound in His side, and exclaimed: 'Lo, how I loved thee.'¹

3. *Jesus can speak peace because He can show us His wounds.*—The Greek, with the natural love of pleasure in his heart, was wont to salute his friends with a 'Hail' or 'Joy.' The Roman, on the other hand, reflecting the traditional ideas of law and order, wished his friend 'safety.' But this salutation of Peace went far beyond these, for it was spoken by the Risen Christ who had gained the victory over all the enemies of Peace, and therefore the right to herald the blessing to His followers. Ah! but it was no bloodless victory. It was no mere pageant marching along amid the plaudits of the populace. It was a terrible struggle against forces which He alone could conquer. It was a fight of just one Person in His utter loneliness with myriads of opponents. You remember the prophetic picture we get of this terrible conflict in the 63rd of Isaiah. There the watcher of Israel appears to be standing on his place of vantage. He is looking down towards the valley which opens out into the mountain region toward Edom. He sees a mysterious stranger coming from Edom. He has all the proud bearing of a hero. He seems to have fought some great battle and to have been victorious, for his very appearance is elated with success. He is 'travelling in the greatness of his strength.' The watcher shouts down to him as he climbs the hill of Judea, 'Who is this that cometh from Edom?' and the answer comes, 'I that speak in righteousness mighty to save.' Then as he comes closer, his noble and kingly garments seem to be stained with crimson drops; not of the grape juice of Bozrah, as he at first supposed, but of blood. He cannot refrain from asking him what they mean. 'Wherefore are thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?' And

¹ W. E. Orchard, *The Theology of Jesus*, 145.

then the stranger tells his story, and makes everything quite clear, that he was the mighty one who conquered sin and came to present the fruits of his conflict and victory to the watcher and to the world. 'I have trodden the winepress alone, for I looked and there was none to help . . . therefore mine own arm brought salvation.' Is not this passage just a prophecy of all that Jesus Christ did in His agony on the Cross, in His Death and Resurrection? That victory was gained in the dark tomb; gained after that severest conflict, hidden away in the underworld of Death and Sheol; and the Living Jesus emerged for ever a Victorious Conqueror; ever living, ever present, now in His Risen Life, to revive the drooping hopes of men and to show to them that the Redemption was completed, and that man was saved from the power of Sin, and therefore from all that makes death terrible. 'Jesus said, Peace be unto you; and when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side.'

And when we all come to see that the wounds of Christ are the wounds we ourselves have made, then we shall be ready to hear His word of peace; for, if His wounds are the measure of our cowardice, and compromise, and complicity, they are also the sign of His great love for us, His imminent implication in all earth's sorrows, His refusal to leave us to ourselves and the enslavement of our fears. Here He stands then, still among us, and His wounds plead for our repentance, and bring us again the offer of peace.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The One Goal of Religion.

'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.'—1 Jn 3^d.⁸.

The pre-eminent debt which we owe to the Hebrew prophets is that they taught the people of Israel—and through them the world—that God, the Creator of all that is and the Judge of all rational beings, has moral character, that He is essentially righteous and good; and, inasmuch as man's happiness or blessedness can lie only in correspondence with God, the prophets of Israel are never weary of reiterating that the only religion which has any value with God is righteous-

ness, justice, purity, mercy, and truth. It would not be right to say that outside Israel there was no recognition of the essential moral character of God. Such recognition can be found, for instance, in the words of that great ancient seer, Zoroaster, and in some of the best teachers of Greece; but there is nothing in the world to be compared to the continuous insistence on this truth over many centuries by prophets of Israel.

1. *The prophets and the goal.*—We are apt to forget that in the religions of the world, religion and morality have been habitually dissociated. It is to the prophets of Israel that we owe their association. It is they who would teach us that the best definition of superstition is religion divorced from morality. The critical view of the Old Testament literature has done an immense service to religion by causing us to understand afresh that it is the religion of the prophets which has given to the Old Testament its special and permanent value. St. Chrysostom perceived of old, what modern investigation amply confirms, that the rites and ceremonies and sacred objects of Old Testament religion were akin to those of the surrounding nations. They had their origin, he boldly says, in pagan grossness, nevertheless, visible rites and ceremonies are essential to religion. Thus, when, after a long and severe struggle, in which the prophets seemed to be constantly defeated, they finally triumphed and brought Israel to believe in the essential righteousness of God and the uselessness of non-moral observances, which the prophetic teaching did not abolish but effectively remodelled, the traditional religious institutions and the religion of the ceremonial and the civil law, and the religion of personal devotion as we have it in the Psalms, and the practical teaching of the Wisdom literature, became all of them simply vehicles of the central dogma of the prophets, that God is essentially righteous, and that there is no service which is worth anything in His sight which has not for its motive and end the conforming of the human character, individual and social, to the character of God.

2. *The way.*—Before the coming of the Christ, however, Jewish tradition had in many ways tended to obscure this central teaching of the prophets; as our Lord said, they had made the Word of God of none effect by their traditions; but the essential message of the prophets was renewed by the great forerunner of the Christ, John the

Baptist. It was iterated and deepened by our Lord, and it became the basis on which the Christian Church was built. Nothing can obscure the insistence of the New Testament that there is only one end in religion, and that is the becoming like God in character and aim. This principle was expressed in the first name of the Church, 'The Way.' The Christian religion is, first of all, a way of life, and a difficult way at that. During the first three centuries of the Church's life, when it cost men much to become Christians, and exposed them to many grave perils and annoyances, even to the risk of life itself, though the Church was very far from perfect, yet the moral standard was, on the whole, kept at its true and glorious level. After the so-called victory of the Church and the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Empire, we are forced by the facts to acknowledge that the average moral standard sank at a run, within a generation and a half, to the level to which we are accustomed in nominally Christian countries to-day.

There is no duty which is so pressing on the Church of Christ at the present moment as the duty of re-erecting the ethical standard of Christ or reasserting the only way. The real character of the Eternal God has been disclosed in the human character of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son, and there is no possibility of sharing the eternal life, which is the fellowship of God, except by becoming like Him. So the message of the prophets is deepened and glorified. Nor is it possible to read the Gospels without feeling that our Lord refused under any pressure to allow the tremendous moral claim which He made upon men to be lowered to the point where men in general would be ready to accept it. When one asked Him a plain question, 'Lord, are they few who are being saved?' He gave no plain answer, but only, 'Strive to enter by the narrow door.' He was infinitely patient with men in their failures on the road, but He insisted on their having the true end in view, on their walking by the right road.

3. *The duty of the Church to-day.*—There are essential means which God has devised that His banished should not be expelled from Him, such

as the establishment of the Church and the Sacraments, and the canonized Scriptures, and the proclamation in Creeds of the essential facts of God's redemption of man. But these are essentially means, not ends. The end, the only end, is that man should be, individually and socially, redeemed from sin into the moral likeness of God. It is evident to-day that the current rejection of Christianity is not mainly a rejection of its theology, but a rejection of its moral standard, its moral claim.

To-day the first duty of the Church is again to study and teach the Way, as William Law taught it again in the eighteenth century in his 'Serious Call.' This demands from the preachers and teachers of the Church very serious study, and it will involve very serious alteration of emphasis in our preaching. The emphasis has been too much laid on doctrines and sacraments. We have not made it constantly evident that the doctrines and the sacramental institutions of Christianity are means, not ends; that there is only one end, and this is the likeness to God.

'I,' says Jesus, 'am the Way.' 'God is love,' says St. John, 'and he that abideth in love,' which is brotherhood, 'he,' and he only, 'abideth in God, and God abideth in him,' and to abide in love is to frame one's life in active correspondence with God's purpose. It is not merely a negative attitude. It is not abstaining from doing evil; it is the devotion of one's life to promoting the kingdom of God, which is justice and peace and love, as well as purity and self-control, in every department of human affairs. And for this every individual is responsible. 'Inasmuch as ye did it not,' our Lord says, 'depart.' And at the last God is coming to His own, the Kingdom of God is to come, the Son is to be manifested. That is the central moral meaning of all that magnificent symbolism in which the last days are described. Through whatever failure, through whatever convulsions, God in Christ is to come to His own in the whole universe. And when He is manifested, St. John tells us, it is only those who are like Him who can see Him as He is.¹

¹ C. Gore, in *CWP*, civ, 271.