
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.

Blackies and Nightingales.[1]

'And they sung as it were a new song . . . and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.'—Rev 14^3.

HAVE you heard the nightingales over the wireless, or did Mother bundle you off to bed? Ah, well, bed is very fine and cosy, once you are really in it! But the nightingales were very interesting too—to hear what has never been heard before up here in Scotland, to listen to a tiny brown bird no bigger than a sparrow pouring out its song away down in some wood in Surrey, just as if you were standing there beside it, it was very wonderful! And yet, if you were up and had the phones on, weren't you just a teeny-weeny bittie disappointed? I was. It seemed very like a blackie. And I think a blackie can hold up its head. The nightingale has more notes and cleverer trills, and it is mellower, they tell me. And yet—I don't know what I had expected, but the men in the poetry books have said so much about the nightingale, that I had an idea that its song was somehow altogether different from other birds', something quite new. And it isn't. It is just the same thing, only better done.

And isn't that a mistake that we are often making? We think that things are quite different, and they aren't. They are just the same, only better done. The Lord Jesus Christ was once a laddie like you. Oh! not like me, you say. But yes, He was. He had a life just like yours, with the same little duties, the very same things to be done. For Him, too, bedtime often came when He wasn't one bit sleepy; and some nights there were lessons when the sun outside was very tempting; and often He had thought of doing something, but when the time came Joseph looked tired, and so instead He offered to help in the workshop; or Mary was dreadfully busy, and He took the little ones and kept them happy. It was just your life, only it was better done. I remember once in Glasgow saying something like that about Jesus and His lessons. And a clever woman who was in the church, a person who writes books, wrote to the paper saying it was scandalous. She thought the nightingale was somehow altogether different from other birds, but it isn't; that Jesus wasn't a real boy like you, and yet He was. Only He did it better. When bedtime came He went off without the wheedling and the uproar that you make, when lesson time came round stuck in to them and did them thoroughly, played with the wee ones even when He was getting big Himself, and wasn't cross or crabbed over it as you are who let them see you only do it because you have been told, are bored, and won't really pretend, and spoil it all. He was by far the happiest of them all. It was the same thing as you have to do, only He did it better.

And that is what it means to be good. You think of that as something you could never be, that is only for grown-ups, Dad, or Mother, or a minister, not for a rough-and-tumble little soul like you. Ah! but it is. For goodness isn't something dreadfully difficult, and different from anything you know, like the Latin that they do up at the top of the school, but which is not for you at all. No, no! goodness is just doing what you have to do, but doing it better. At games, if that old trouble about l.b.w. crops up, and you feel certain your leg wasn't in front at all, never mind; if the others think it was, go out and grin about it and don't make a fuss. Or if your innings is over and you are set to field, don't lose interest in the game, and take to playing with a dog, so that they have to yell to you when the ball comes in your direction, and point out where about it is, and get quite hot and cross about it, and no wonder! I am sure that Jesus was picked early when they did their 'eenie meenie' long ago in Nazareth, because they knew He would do His best for the side, and play His hardest all the time. And when there is a chance of being greedy and grabby, and you feel so inclined to cry out 'Me first,' don't; but let the wee ones have a chance of choosing what they want, even though you are bigger. And at home be sunny and happy. Mother does a lot for you. Well, let her hear that you are having a good time. And long after this, when you are grown up and away, or perhaps have gone farther still, she will sometimes say to Dad, 'I sometimes

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

think I can still hear him singing through the house, as he always used to do.' The song of the nightingale isn't something different from all the other birds', but just the same thing, only better done; and goodness is just your day, with its joys and troubles, better done. Here we are told that up in heaven they sing a new song no one else can sing. The sparrow cannot learn to sing like a nightingale, no, nor a blackie either; but you and I can learn that song they sing up yonder. For heaven isn't a place where we all get whatever we like; it's where no one is cross or grumpy or selfish or unkind; and that is why they are so happy and keep singing. It is just our kind of life, only they live it better. And if we are ever to sing that wonderful song of theirs, we must begin to learn it now; and if we are ever to be happy as they are, we must start putting off all silly, angry, sulky ways. That is what goodness means. The wonderful nightingale sings very like a blackie, but it does it better.

Cross Words.[1]

'How forcible are right words.'—Job 6.[25]

I want to speak to you about cross words. Don't misunderstand me. I don't mean angry words. I mean cross words in puzzles. You know! The sort of thing you find in nearly all the papers. Even some fathers are sitting up at night wrestling with them, and some mothers, as they do their household work, are wondering how they can find the name of a Cossack chief that will fit in with the name of a lake in Ireland, and at the same time supply a letter for the name of a town in Japan.

Girls and boys are trying to win prizes with their solutions. It is quite a fascinating game. It isn't bad either, because those who play it are refreshing their memories and learning how to spell.

I think that cross-word puzzles are something like life. In life you often get very different things mixed up with each other. People from the other side of the world may influence your home. Things you have never thought of may be affecting your life. If you are to live properly you have to be experts at cross words.

1. Take the word MINE. You know what that means: there is something that belongs to you. You say, 'This is mine.' It pleases you to say that. Now what word will cross with 'Mine'?

I think of one: HIS. Try them: $\begin{matrix} & \text{H} & \\ \text{M} & \text{I} & \text{N} \\ & \text{S} & \text{E} \end{matrix}$

One of the things we have to learn, even when we are little, is how to cross 'His' with 'Mine.' I know a little boy called Jack. He is only about six, but being the only child in the house, he has quite a lot of toys. He has a little friend called Andrew, and Andrew is one of three children, and he has not so many toys, and Andrew does not know that 'His' crosses 'Mine,' because, when Jack is not looking, he will cram some of Jack's toys into his pockets to take them home.

Jack found this out, and he did not like it. He is only six, but he is a kind little boy, and is not at all unwilling to give his toys, but he does not like them to be taken. So what do you think he does? He searches Andrew's pockets before he goes home.

One of the things we have to learn and carry out in life is that the word 'His' crosses the word 'Mine.' That, whilst we have our rights, the other boys and girls and men and women have their rights too, and we have to learn how to fit them into the great cross puzzle of life.

2. Take another. Look at the short word 'On.' Think of another short word that crosses it. Here it is: 'No.' In life we have often to cross the word 'On' with the word 'No.' $\begin{matrix} \text{O} & \text{N} \\ & \text{O} \end{matrix}$ Many people think that what they have to do in life is to get on, on with their learning, on with their play, on with their business, always getting on, getting richer, cleverer, bigger. Get on! That is their great idea. Ah! sometimes we must say 'No' to things that look like getting on.

I knew a boy who, when he grew to be a young man, went to take a situation in Russia, and he came to be trusted by his employers. After some years they brought him to England, to help and advise them about buying a lot of machinery. They went to one great workshop, and the heads of the firm drew the young man aside, and said: 'If we get the order, there is £500 for you.'

That looked like 'getting on.' £500 for a young man with his way to make, and a home to make, and a girl waiting for him to make it. Ah! but this young man had been brought up in a Christian home and a Christian Sunday school, and he knew

[1] By the Reverend Cecil Nicholson, Darwen.

that the machinery at that place was not quite the best, and he said 'No.'

You will find as you get older that the word 'No' has often to be fitted to the word 'On' in the great cross puzzle of life.

3. Just one more. Take a longer word this time. The word FRIEND. That is a beautiful word, and it stands for one of the best things in life. A friend: one who loves you, knows you and yet likes you, and will stick to you. 'Stick to thy friend though he be in the fire' is a proverb amongst the Arabs, and it is a very good one, and if you have got a friend in the world who will do that, you are very lucky indeed.

Can we find a friend like that? Let us see if crossing will help us. F, R, I, E. There is something sounds like E. Try J. J, E. That is it. The first syllable of Jesus. Like this:

J
FRIEND
S
U
S

The best friend to have is Jesus. He can do more for you. He can make you happier than any one else can. Make Him your friend and stick to Him, and He will stick to you all through life, and right on to the end of the world.

The Christian Year.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

He must needs Suffer.

'Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?'—Lk 24^{26}.

There is more in this conversation on the road to Emmaus than at first meets the eye. Cleopas and his friend may well be taken as types, and while they speak for themselves they speak also for multitudes of men and women since their day. They had shared the opinion of many other Jews in their time that Jesus of Nazareth might be the Messiah. They had at least hoped that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel, and the news of His trial, condemnation, and death had come upon them as a shock. Their hopes were dashed to the ground. They could no longer believe in Jesus as the Christ. The cross was an offence to them. And it is an offence that never ceases. The mystery of the sacrifice of Jesus continually blinds men's eyes. The secret of the salvation which is in Jesus is continually evading us—we find it hard to conform our ideas to God's.

Here, then, is the question before us, not a riddle for our solution, but a deep and solemn challenge to our better selves, a call to believe in the absolute fitness and justice of God's way with men in Jesus Christ, His Son—Was there not a moral obligation upon Him to suffer?

And in order fairly to discuss the question we must be quite clear as to what it was that Jesus Christ came into the world to do. Students of mankind tell us that, roughly speaking, three stages may be distinguished in the history of human progress: (1) the stage of barbarism, when the body is cultivated; (2) the stage of civilization, when the mind is cultivated; (3) the stage of religion, when the soul is cultivated. Now the coming of Jesus marks the dominance of this last stage. He has to do with the soul first, and opens to men that larger life which we call spiritual. True, He profoundly affects the physical and intellectual life, and His teaching has its social and moral aspects; but that is because He goes first to the root of the matter, and touches man at the core and centre of his being.

And the work of Jesus with the human soul was not merely to educate, but to save it.

And what men need to do to-day is still to accept the moral and judicial necessity for the sufferings and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but no longer to express it in legal phraseology, but in terms of spiritual life.

In seeking to do this, let us look at the sufferings of Jesus, (1) in the light of His relation to men. There is no name more characteristic of Him, and none which He Himself more frequently used, than the title 'Son of Man.' Jesus never anywhere explains this name, but as we study sympathetically His use of it we cannot miss the deep undercurrent of its meaning. It signifies His solidarity with the race, and it gives to His humanity a representative and, if you will, a vicarious character. But there is more in it than this. It means that He stood frankly for the human race and identified Himself with outraged human interests. His relation with men was not in any sense official, but one of simple human fellowship. And the aim of this fellowship was apparent. It was that He might raise men to His own level, lift them above the miserable contradictions of the flesh and the spirit, change the

discord of their being into harmony, and help them to share His nature and His life. As the Son of Man Jesus set before the world a lofty and still unattained ideal. His life gave practical expression to a doctrine of humanity such as few philanthropists have ever reached. He made it possible for every sufferer to say:

This fleshly robe the Lord did wear:
This watch the Lord did keep:
These burdens sore the Lord did bear:
These tears the Lord did weep.

And because He suffered He was forced by the folly and prejudice of the day to share the lot of those for whom and with whom He stood.

And when we realize the sense of a unique relationship with mankind which lay upon Jesus, sometimes as a burden, sometimes as a holy joy, and when we add to this His nature, sensitive beyond the common and quick to know what was in man, we may well believe that the spectacle of human sin and misery which met Him at every turn here on earth made no small part of the cup of bitterness He had to drink.

It may be that this formed only part of His suffering, and that it did not necessarily exhaust His love; but we shall never realize what that love involved until we see that it was sympathy with human woes and needs which led Christ to share them. For we cannot read the Gospels carefully without understanding that there is indicated in them a certain unknown, mysterious element in His sufferings. Apart from the last agony His lot was not a specially hard one. True, He was despised and rejected of those He came to save, and He knew the meaning of poverty and toil. But in this experience there was nothing unique, nothing to account for the burden that He evidently bore. This arose—partly, at least—from His sense of oneness with men and from the grave responsibility which that involved. To Him it meant, from the first, sacrifice. He could never escape the sound of human sorrow.

But there was more in His suffering than this. The moral necessity laid on Jesus Christ cut deeper than this. If there is any meaning in words we have His own testimony for so saying; and we are bound to ask further, What was the work, and what were the conditions which made this submission to suffering necessary? What more was behind it than a mere moral impression and the sacrifice of a natural love? We can gather some hint of the answer to the question from the words 'and to enter into his glory.' He was not content until He should have finished the work of saving men from their sins. This was what He came to do, and it was for doing this that He needs must suffer.

Now we must ask ourselves here to look at the whole matter as with the eyes of Christ, from the standpoint of the love of God.

The great mass of the religious ceremonies of the world have had for their object the quieting of conscience, the winning by some strange device of that peace and pardon for which the instinct of man has ever told him no price was too great to pay. The ritual and sacrifice which play so large a part in all the religions of the world simply shadow forth the long-drawn agony of the human conscience, the passionate desire to escape the stain and consequences of sin. Now in speaking of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we generally seek to explain it from the side of God. It is the outcome of God's grace. He willed it so; it was the work of His good pleasure. That is true, but there is another side to the picture. We must not forget that it is demanded also by the conscience of man. The 'needs must' in the suffering of Jesus means that nothing short of this could satisfy the clamant needs of man's moral and spiritual nature. Given a real and keen sense of sin, and man knows that forgiveness is no child's play. To say that God forgives weakly, as one who would hush the matter up and say no more about it, is to attribute to Him what has been called the 'asses' milk of human kindness.' In our heart of hearts we have nothing but contempt for action such as this, and, what is more, we know that it does not and cannot satisfy our need. Conscience is, above all things, inexorably just. It is a commonplace to say that men will always be more severe with themselves than they are with one another. We pay no small tribute to the real grandeur of our human nature when we say that a man who is in his right mind will never receive forgiveness and the remission of his fault till full restitution has been made. And for all we may say to the contrary, man feels this most keenly where God is concerned. He is not content to think that his forgiveness comes spontaneously when he has paid his price, or made his prayer, as though the universe were an automatic machine. And the one difference between Christianity and all other religions is, that while they make man

pay the whole price for his wrong-doing, in Christianity the price is paid by God.

In the past man has made almost superhuman efforts to atone for wrong done and guilt incurred. He has not even hesitated to give the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul. And for all that he has not won peace, and the story of his struggle for it is a long wail of despair. Now he has still to pay. The consequences of sin are not to be escaped; it can still wreck bodies and blight lives, and wreak ineffaceable mischief, but it need not kill the soul. The last agony of it is removed, and the crushing sense of guilt, the burden of conscience, the quenching of hope, once inevitable, are no longer necessary. The reason for this is not that man's quest has succeeded at last, but that God has taken His place and achieved the impossible for him. And this again completes the answer to the question, 'Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?'[1]

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

Redeeming the Time.

'Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.'—Eph 5^{16}.

The passage of time is one of those things which are much talked about, but in practice a great deal overlooked. It is with a start of surprise, like some suddenly waked sleeper, that we realize from one year to another how quickly and silently our span is being measured. The season of childhood and youth may seem long enough while it lasts, and the child may heave many a sigh for the coming of riper age. But when that age of maturity is reached, the feeling is certain to arise—'How quickly time has fled!'

George Eliot, in one of the essays of 'Theophrastus Such,' has painted, with all her own keenness of insight and boldness of portraiture, the delusive sense of youthfulness in which some men spend a large part of their life. She takes the case of some one whose talents as a youth and young man have won the delighted plaudits of surprised observers. He carries off the chief prizes at school and college, although he is 'so young'! He makes a brilliant appearance in literature or in public work, although he is 'so young'! This idea of juvenility at length becomes part of his own self-consciousness. He is in no haste to do anything great, because he is 'so young'! And yet, alas! the unpitying hand of time, scarcely noticed by himself, has been tracing its usual marks of advancing age on his person and mind. Some sad day, the comfortable fancy of perpetual youth is shattered, and he suddenly feels that he is no longer young.

The text is a warning against letting our time lapse from us carelessly, so that age or serious changes come on us unawares. The writer exhorts Christian people to redeem the time. When he uses that special word he is thinking of the market with its commodities laid out for sale. The wise merchant does not linger at home during marketing hours, but hastens to mingle with the busy throng, and to buy up those articles that offer him a particular advantage. It is this promptness and activity that we are urged to apply to our general life. Our time is something that must be redeemed, turned to account by special effort, not suffered to pass from us unheeded. In itself, time may be utterly worthless to us: it may leave us neither wiser nor better than it found us; but if we gain and use its possibilities, it may enrich us beyond our hopes. And let it be observed that to turn our life to account, we must make an effort. Let us cast off the drowsy robe of discontented dreaming, and take a manful part in every daily duty. If our life is to be made interesting, we must labour and struggle, as well as wait. Those moments spent in dull complaints and weary longings are so much precious time unredeemed, and never to be bought back.

And further, let it be observed that time and opportunity are things to be purchased. They can be won only at a certain cost. Time is like an investment yielding pecuniary interest. What we get back from it depends on the amount we put into it.

And in order to buy we must have something to spend. If our brain and heart are empty, as our hands are idle, we cannot fairly complain of our failure to secure bargains. Too often, on the other hand, an opportunity meets us in the face, and we shrink from the cost of making it our own. How much better men and women we should be to-day if only we had had the courage, at some bygone time, to forsake all and follow Christ, to spend ourselves in some supreme effort of the soul, to imitate the apostle whose life-story is summed up in his own burning words—'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ!' But

[1] W. B. Selbie, *The Servant of God*, 135.

we shrank from the cost; the happy opportunity flew past us; and our life is all the poorer and feebler now.

Nor must we excuse ourselves by pretending that such critical opportunities were beyond our reach and strength. Look back to the memorable time when you felt in your conscience that heavenly love held out its hand to you, and would have caught you up above your own mean and frivolous life, but that you drew back. Was it, after all, a great cost or a mighty effort which God demanded of you then? No: it was only to yield yourself to His love, only to make one little step forward to meet a Father's embrace. The opportunity passed; has it returned since with equal reality and power?

And if such prompt and active effort be needful at all seasons, it is specially called for when 'the days are evil.' It is then, in days of darkness, sorrow, and defeat, that we are specially tempted to let ourselves drift we care not whither. While our life is fairly happy and successful, while we have our loved ones near us, while the aching void of sorrow and loneliness is still unfelt, men may more easily redeem the time. All is interesting and pleasing at such periods. The days seem too short for happy work and affectionate intercourse. But parting and grief and misfortune will come, and the days will seem dark and evil. The terrible words of ancient denunciation will come true—'In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.' In such seasons of darkness above all, we must redeem the time—redeem it from idle regrets and vain longings, from selfish and benumbing grief, from morbid apprehensions. For even the saddest times are full of blessing, bought, it may be, with tears and anguish, but destined to yield, somewhere and somehow, a rich harvest of peace.[1]

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Perils of Routine.

'But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean.'—Ac 10^{14}.

1. *The Significance of the Vision.*—The story of this vision is deemed worthy of insertion in this book because it was pregnant with results for the future development of Christianity. Christianity has always had to 'live dangerously.' But the deadliest menace of all threatened it while it was still in its cradle. That menace was that it should never become a universal religion at all, but should degenerate into an obscure Jewish sect. We speak of Paul as the Apostle of the Gentiles, and regard him as the great champion of the universality of the gospel—and so indeed he was. But if the Gentile movement had been started by those unknown evangelists who preached to the Greeks at Antioch and then carried on and developed by St. Paul—with the Jerusalem Apostles hostile to it because still enchained by their Jewish prejudices—the Church would have been rent in twain from the very start. It was necessary to begin with, therefore, that the Jerusalem Apostles should be converted to the larger vision and the freer faith. It was necessary that they should be emancipated from their narrowing notions and made to realize the largeness of God's purpose and the freeness of Christ's love.

This story of Peter's vision tells us how the emancipating process was begun. The vision was given specially to Peter because he was the recognized leader of the Twelve. It is worth noticing that the vision was given before any preaching to Gentiles on the large scale was begun. That tremendous innovation might have evoked opposition and condemnation in Jerusalem, had not Peter's mind been prepared by this vision for startling developments of that kind.

2. The universality of the gospel, the equal rights of men in the Kingdom of God, are truths surely believed amongst us. What drew our attention to the text was *the reason Peter assigned for refusing to kill and eat.* 'Not so, Lord; for I have never . . .' He refused, not because it was wrong, but because he had never done such a thing in all his life before. This is an illustration of the deadening influence of routine, of the crippling and enslaving power of custom.

Now we would not have been calling your attention to this protest of Peter's if the attitude which it represents were peculiar to himself. But it isn't.

That was a favourite saying of Silvester Horne's: 'The difference between a groove and a grave is only a matter of depth.' And many a man and many an institution have found their graves, so

[1] H. M. B. Reid, in *Sub Corona*, 243.

far as useful service is concerned, simply because they refused to be lifted out of their grooves. They have met every proposal to adopt new methods with Peter's protest, 'Not so, Lord . . . for we have never.'

3. *The Christian Church.*—What God was doing by this vision of the great sheet was this, He was summoning the Church, through Peter its leader, to a bolder and larger policy. The obstacle in the way was the prejudices of the Christians themselves. They had never thought of the Gentiles as fellow-heirs. They had regarded them as outside the pale. When the summons came to offer the gospel to them, they said, 'Not so, Lord; we have never.' And how much it cost to overcome that prejudice, and how long it took, any one may discover who will read the Book of the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul. Ultimately, after the destruction of Jerusalem, that prejudice was destroyed, and what was a dangerous innovation in the hands of St. Paul became the regular and accepted practice of the Christian Church. But again and again, in the course of the centuries, the Christian Church has displayed exactly the same spirit.

In the eighteenth century the Church in its relation to the heathen world occupied much the same position as the primitive Church did to the Gentile world. It felt under no obligation toward it. It neglected and ignored it. The Christian people of a land like this scarcely looked beyond their own borders. Then it was borne in upon the mind and heart of William Carey that those dim and ignorant millions were also God's children, and that Christ had died to save them. He ventured to speak about all this to a ministers' meeting one day, and this was the reply he got from the president: 'Sit down, young man; when God wishes to convert the heathen He will do it without your aid or mine.'

4. *The Sphere of Doctrine.*—'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' We can all heartily say that, but we do not all accept what that faith involves. For to believe in the Holy Ghost is to believe in growth in our perception of Christian truth, for the Spirit is constantly taking of the things of Christ and revealing them to men. That this is so is abundantly clear to any one who studies the history of the Christian Church. Men have grown in their understanding of Christ's mind. And the growing understanding of Christ's mind has necessitated changes in the statement of Christian truth. That such changes have taken place in the course of the Christian centuries is undeniable. Doctrines have again and again had to change their form because of the advances of knowledge. The heterodoxies of one day have become the orthodoxies of the next. But there is nothing so distasteful to the average man as to have to change the form of his belief. 'Not so,' we say; 'for we have never.'

Judaism might have had a glorious Resurrection in Christianity had its leaders possessed the open mind. As it was, their house was left unto them desolate.

We need to learn the lesson in those days. For once again the Church finds itself in a time of vast and far-reaching change. New discoveries have necessitated new statements of our faith.

The Church's business in this world is to proclaim a gospel—the great and wonderful gospel of the grace of God in the redemption of mankind through the sacrifice of Christ. It is not here to insist upon a certain cosmogony or a certain theory of inspiration. It is here to proclaim the gospel.[1]

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Cry for Sympathy.

'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.'—La 1[12].

'I remember,' says the Rev. James Rutherford, 'on my first visit to Switzerland years ago, coming upon this text, as you meet it often in the Catholic countries of the Continent. Passing through one of the beautiful Swiss valleys, up the steep path and along the mountain-side, one comes upon a little recess, a covered place by the wayside, with a Crucifix in it, and underneath it this inscription: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." You can fancy how striking it is—there, in the midst of all the glory and the gladness of God's fair earth, is the symbol of shame and suffering and sorrow. To turn from the smiling beauty of Nature to this sorrowful mystery of grace, from the gladness of the living world to this picture of agony and death! As men are passing by, up and down the mountain path, here is the call to turn aside and think and pray. "Jesus our Lord was crucified."'

[1] J. D. Jones, *Christian World Pulpit*, cvi. 283.

1. But the text, as we find it here, does not refer to the sufferings of Christ. Still, there is a kind of inevitable association when we remember Him and His sorrow, so pre-eminent among sorrows, and so despised and forgotten. But there is another reference here, and another lesson before we apply it to Him.

First, it refers to Judah and Jerusalem. This Book of Lamentations is a book of five poems, five dirges, five laments, over the desolation of the Holy City. The first, in the first chapter, gives us a picture of the distress of Jerusalem after its siege by the Assyrians. The city is pictured as a widowed and discrowned princess, a widow bereft of her children, sitting solitary in the night, weeping sorely. She sits, and the night comes, and still she sits. She does not stir. The tears come in the silent solitude of the night, and there is no one to wipe them away. What a picture in contrast with her past! She was not always a lonely widow, but a proud princess, a happy mother. So the poet speaks; and then the deserted city herself takes up the lamentation. It is here that the text comes in, when the dirge is taken up by the desolate daughter of Jerusalem. She begins with this heart-piercing cry to the thoughtless passers-by. This is her complaint against indifference. 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?'

2. Is it not true of every sorrow that comes to press sorely on the human heart? This is a very common feeling and a common cry. How painfully we feel the awful indifference of the world! It is a strange feeling we sometimes have when we come out from the darkened room into the light of day—out from the sickroom into the street. See the bright, busy, noisy, laughing world, heedless of the man dying there. How indifferent the great world seemed to your sorrow! How true it is of every heavy trial when we feel the weight of it, and see the world not feeling it at all! 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?'

3. But there is another thought here. You may turn the text round against yourself. The cry is not your own but another's. It is not my complaint against the cold world, but the complaint of another against me. For this is what life is like—an endless procession along the great highway; and there are always those who sit apart in sorrow and those who pass heedlessly by. We go past cares and sorrows, disappointments, and bereavements, pain and sickness every hour of the day; and voices we do not hear are whispering as we go, 'Is it nothing to you?' In ordinary life men mostly know very little of each other and care very little. Every man for himself.

Now surely this text is meant to remind us of this—that the human heart has a great craving for sympathy. And the heartlessness and the heedlessness of the hurrying world becomes at times crushing. If only some would come from the careless crowd and let us feel that we have the compassion of other human hearts, our trouble would not be so hard; and the times come when we almost cry out against it, times when we see the face of One who comes with a word of compassion like the face of an angel.

4. The lesson is not far to seek—that we should do our part to diminish the feeling of neglect, of indifference, to bridge the distance between those who sit by the wayside and those who pass by. Not that we can really make every distress we encounter our own, but we may learn to feel more, to be more ready to comfort, to speak a word in season to him that is weary. What we need is the sympathetic heart.

Think of Christ and mark His ways. He was no lonely hermit, no dweller in the desert. His life led Him along the ways with men. He was found where men were busiest. He was ever 'passing by.' But 'as he passed by,' how keen His eyes were for those who sat by the wayside! Never a longing look cast towards Him remained unanswered; never a sight of suffering met His eyes which did not touch His heart and win His help. His sympathy was perfect.

And what can we ask for ourselves but more of His spirit in us—quick and sensitive and responsive? Opportunity will guide us for the rest, if His spirit is ours; and we shall learn that this is the secret of the happiest life.

5. The words of the text have been taken as prophetic of the sufferings of Christ, but it is not so. They are not Messianic. It is not Jesus but Jerusalem who speaks here. All the same, when we read our text, we remember Him. Our thoughts go to the Cross reared on the hill beyond the city-wall and beside the highway; our thoughts go to the pale figure whose sorrow was as nothing to those who passed by. Inevitably we think of Christ. If ever any one could say it, it was He. Never was there sorrow like His; and though it was the greatest and the grandest and the most fruitful of

blessings to the world, never was there sorrow so despised.

This is the sorrow it most concerns us to remember—the sorrow that saves the world: for what does it mean? It means this. It is the last expression of the sympathy, the compassion of God. He could not pass us by—could not forget us. He looked upon us, loved us, stooped to help us. In His love and pity He redeemed us.

This very chapter ends in an appeal to Heaven. When the passers-by are heedless, the stricken city turns from man to God for pity; and this is the message of the Cross. If your sorrow is nothing to those who pass by, it is something to God, who is afflicted in all our afflictions. That figure of the Crucified is the embodiment of the seeking love of God, of His compassion humbling Himself, identifying Himself with the world's sorrow. It is the last expression of that Divine sympathy which stoops and dies to save and bless.

When we truly know what it means, when we ourselves are saved by such a sympathy, it makes a difference, as we look upon our brothers. It cannot be denied that this story of the Cross has changed the world and the ways of men, as these have been softened and sweetened by thoughtful, tender sympathy. The charity of the Cross makes us charitable, and we love because He first loved.

God sets it before us again and again in Word and Sacrament. The centre of our faith is the Cross—the sorrow that saves the world. It is the sorrow it most concerns us to remember. We would not forget its immense meaning for the remission of sins, but let us not forget that it saves us only as it makes us like Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Beside that Cross, believing in that Christ, we cannot keep our pride and selfishness or live any longer unto ourselves. 'We must love Him too, and love like Him, and try His works to do.'[1]

SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

'The glory of the only Son sent from the Father.'—Jn 1^{14}.

Glory is one of the great words which cannot be defined. It is not possible to say what it means. Not because it means too little, but because it means too much. It is one of the words that are used at points where human speech fails, as an attempt to express the inexpressible.

There are many such words in every language, and they have always been great powers in the world. Liberty, Justice, Honour, Equality, Progress, all have this in common, that they defy definition. Libraries have been written to define them, but they remain like mountain peaks refusing to be climbed. The truth is that they all penetrate beneath the reason and the intellect to that underworld of the human mind wherein the primitive, passionate forces of life, the impulses and instincts, exercise their vital power for good or ill. It is for this reason that they are great fighting words. Whenever men are called to battle they are used like drums and trumpets to sound the challenge and stir the blood of men to war. They are the words for which men slay and suffer death. That is why the reckless use of them is mortal sin. They are not words which should be used without a solemn sense of responsibility. The man who plays with them is playing with what Dr. William McDougall calls, 'the central mystery of life and mind and will.'

The glory of Jesus Christ—what is it? What picture was in St. John's mind as he wrote? Was it the picture that he painted elsewhere, 'His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last'? Or did his mind swing back to the mount of Transfiguration, to the Jesus whose face did shine as the sun, and whose raiment was white as the light? If we are to judge by the story which follows, the Gospel according to St. John, it is to neither of these points that his mind turns, but to the hill outside the city, and to the central Cross, and the figure hanging serenely patient in His agony upon it. Even more than the others the Fourth Gospel is dominated by, and finds its dénouement in, the Passion. It is at the crowning point of the Passion that he breaks out again into a direct personal testimony. 'He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.' 'But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water'; 'and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father—full of grace and truth.' The glory of all the great words finds its only meaning in the

[1] J. Rutherford, *The Seer's House*, 85.

glory of the WORD who became Flesh—the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.

It was the Cross that was the glory centre of the Christ for St. John. It was through the Cross that the gates of the highest heaven were opened wide and he could see within, and in that heaven's very heart he saw the Crucified. That is the central Truth of the Christian Faith, and the hardest Truth to bear.

We cannot believe that God is like Christ, so we make Christ like God to compensate. We are still mostly Greeks or Jews to whom the Cross is either foolishness or a stumbling-block. We are a proud, independent, self-reliant people, and have never been happy with Christ crucified as revealing the glory of God. To us it would degrade God and demean His dignity to suppose that He was harmless, and could not hurt any one physically. What we think is, 'Christ was meek and gentle once, just to give us a chance, but now He is gone up on high, and when He comes again it will be altogether different. He will come in glory, and of course that means with a sword and a host of heavily armoured angels, and torments for the wicked in His hands.' So we interpret the passages that tell us of His coming in power and great glory, as though His power and His glory could change their nature, and from being the power of Love become the power of force and fear, and from being the glory of service and humility become the glory of domination and pride. Christ was Jesus once on earth, but when He comes again He will be like God, a super-super-Napoleon. Thus we do not see the glory of Christ, but give Him a glory of our own.

We do this inevitably until we really see Him. Then we realize that it is not Christ that changes His glory, but we that must change ours.

There are many modern thinkers who call upon us loudly to take the way of the world, and take it with vigour; to close our ranks against the common foe, which is the coloured races and the submerged masses of the world; to reassert our natural supremacy, brush aside all scruples, and boldly adopt a thoroughgoing policy of world-wide domination and repression.

It is evident even to these men that the sands of time are running out, and that we must decide. What shall we do with the man Christ Jesus? Put Him to death as a silly-dreaming fool, who betrays and cannot save the world? or hail Him King of kings, and Lord of lords, the only Ruler of peoples? We must do one or the other, unless we are to drift to our destruction.

'Something has come over us all. We are not the men we were. But we will recover,' the strong men say. 'It is only a passing phase. The good old times will come back again. It is only shell-shock. This milk-and-water sentiment will die out, and we shall recover our nerves, take up the white man's burden, and go out to rule and punish.' I wonder! I wonder! I am frightened of Christ. I think those who rage and spit on Him, who declare defiantly that He is dead and done for, those who caricature and curse Him, as the terrified rulers of Russia and the strong men here at home do, scorning the Sermon on the Mount as an impossible dream—I think their fear of Him, which is manifest in their defiance, is nearer the Truth than the indifference of those who think He does not matter.

But this Jesus unmans us. Just when we are going to assert our proper rights, and claim our own position, He comes and looks at us, and asks us awkward questions as to whether our rights are right, and whether we have any position. He is dangerous. He takes the fight out of a man.

He is going to drive us to a decision with His wounded hands. He will not let us have His world for a playground, a battlefield, a factory, or an empire any longer; we must give it to Him.

That is the meaning of this Lent. As He looks down upon you—with anxious wonder in His eyes—He sees the world in you. He thinks the world of every one of us. Are you going to try and keep the world for a playground in which you have a good time, a battlefield on which you strive for your own personal ambitions, a factory to make wealth for you to spend, an empire to satisfy your pride? or are you going to give it up to Him? Half-measures are no good. Compromise without repentance and consecration will not save you or the world. It is the surest way to destruction. If all your Christ can do for you is to turn you into a caged beast, a respectable sinner, a half-hearted servant of the old red lusts, you cannot save your soul alive, or save the world in which you live. It is a personal matter—yet not a purely personal matter. You live in a world, and a world yet lives in you. For God's sake do not think you do not matter; you are all that matters, for you are in all, and all is in you. Make

up your mind. Do you believe in the glory of Christ—as of the only Son sent from the Father's side?

Do you believe that in reality this world is not a battlefield for opposing armies, but a home for a family? Are you prepared to risk your life and your children's lives, and to stake the honour of your country on that faith? Will you risk Good Friday to win an Easter Day?

Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief. I look upon the world and I see a Baby on a Mother's Breast, a Body broken on a Cross, an Empty Tomb with a great stone rolled away, and One like unto the Son of Man with wounded hands outstretched to bless, ascending in His Glory; and I believe that, right at the heart of the ultimate reality there was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, a Person expressing a rational purpose which men can in some measure understand. I believe that this Person, was, is, and ever shall be with God, and indeed is God, though it is nearer the Truth to say 'with God,' for 'the Father is greater than he.' I believe that through this Person all things came into being, and that, apart from Him, not a single thing came into being which is of the nature of reality. In Him are the eternal sources of life—that life which from the darkness of mere sensation becomes light of intelligence in men, a light shining in darkness which cannot overcome it. I believe that this Person took upon Himself, and expressed Himself through, our human nature, and lived out a human life among men, and that they beheld, and can now behold, His glory, which is the glory of the only perfect expression of Love, which is the ultimate and absolute reality of all things.[1]

[1] G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *The Lord and the Work*, 74.

The Religious Development of the Child.

By the Reverend T. Grigg-Smith, M.A., Director of Religious Education in the Diocese of Manchester.

No attempt at religious education can be considered worthy of the present day which does not take account of all the departments of knowledge which modern child study is placing at its disposal, and it would be faithless to think that anything but good can come of a reverent and scientific study of the religious development of the child. In a short article only a few main principles and one or two points of interest can be mentioned. Much further reverent research is greatly to be desired, for anything like a comprehensive treatment of the subject has still to be written.

A word of explanation of the use of the term 'mind' in this article must be given at the outset. It is taken as including all those activities and powers of the human being not usually assigned to the body; that is, as comprising all that in the older trichotomy was attributed to 'the intellect and the soul' or 'the mind and the spirit,' for, to regard the human being as a *body-mind*, with emphasis on his unity, seems a much truer and therefore more profitable way of thinking than to endeavour to divide him into body, mind, and spirit. This use of the term 'mind' also carries with it a better employment of the term 'religious,' which becomes inclusive of the whole range of life, declining to admit such a division as 'secular and religious.' The entire mind and every part of life thus become naturally included in religion. This, at least, is the goal of which most Christians would approve. 'He therefore is the devout man . . . who makes all the parts of his common life parts of piety, by doing everything in the Name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to His glory.'[2] In other words, Christ is sufficient to embrace the whole range of human life, sin only excepted, and just as the smallest acts of existence may be sacramental, with the Sacraments of the Gospel crowning them all, so the most insignificant experiences may minister to the child's religious growth. Is not one of the earliest sacraments of the child the look from his mother's eyes, speaking love, tenderness, protection, confidence, strength? It is one of those things wherein, even among the heathen, God has left

[2] Law, *Serious Call*, chap. i.