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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

## Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON has published the Sermons and Addresses which he delivered between Easter 1918 and Easter 1919. They have all to do with the War and what the War has left us. He calls the book *Victory and After* (Wells Gardner; 3s. net).

In one of the sermons Dr. INGRAM recognizes the duty of the Church, now that the War is over, of concentrating upon the Re-evangelization of England. It is the Archbishop of Canterbury's Report on the Evangelistic Work of the Church that has made him recognize it. And with his usual plainness of speech he says that the way to re-evangelize England is to convert the men and women that are in it. He does not seem to think that their need of conversion will be disputed. He takes that for granted, and he makes no exception. He proceeds at once to tell us what they have to be converted to.

They have to be converted to childlikeness. His text is, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven' (Mt $18^3$). And he tells us what childlikeness is.

There are certain characteristics, he tells us, which belong to children. These characteristics must be ours if we are to enter the kingdom. What are the characteristics of a little child?

They are Arbitrariness, Attractiveness, Catholicity, Charity (Love), Cheerfulness, Confidence, Criticism, Curiosity, Dependence, Directness, Docility, Earnestness, Expectation, Experimentalism, Faith, Fear, Fearlessness, Frankness, Helplessness, Hero-worship, Humility, Humour, Imaginativeness, Imitativeness, Immediateness, Impressionableness, Innocence, Joy, Justice, Modesty, Obedience, Observation, Receptiveness, Religiousness, Repentance, Resignation, Responsiveness, Restlessness, Sensitiveness, Simplicity, Sincerity, Sorrow, Spontaneousness, Supernaturalism, Trustfulness, Weakness, Wonder.

Is it a long list? It could be lengthened. Why is it so long? We shall answer that in a moment. But first of all let us glance at the distribution of it.

Who suggests Arbitrariness, Imaginativeness, and Experimentalism as the characteristics of childhood? Who but Canon Scott Holland, with more than the memories of childhood fresh upon him, with childhood its very self remaining with him all through life. He names those characteristics, and then he says: 'All this is what childhood means. This is its charm, its glory.'

And it is the more charming in himself because he thinks he has left all this behind him. For he names those characteristics, not in a sermon on the entrance into the Kingdom, but in a sermon on St. Paul's declaration that he had passed from childhood into manhood. When 'I was a child . . . but now.' St. Paul *has* left his childhood behind him. 'It is past and over, that delicious day of expansion and ease and splendid illusions.' But Canon Scott Holland never left it behind him. And when in another volume he tells us seriously that the characteristics of the Child of the Kingdom are Wonder and Trust, we are not disturbed. We go back to the charm and the glory of the child—Arbitrariness, Imaginativeness, and Experimentalism.

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Principal Rainy was more like St. Paul. 'When I became a man, I put away childish things.' 'Some of us have come a good way from the country where the little children dwell; but, by remembrance or by observation, we still know something about it.' By observation, more than by remembrance. You have read his biography. You remember his emphatic 'Oh, man, I'm happy at home!' when they wondered that he could bear the persistent nagging of the newspapers. What did he see at home? Responsiveness, Spontaneousness, Impressionableness, Expectation, and Obedience.

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In the first series of his *Essays on Some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, Archbishop Whately has an essay 'On the Example of Children as Proposed to Christians.' It is stately and slow, very philosophical and very heavy. 'The subject is naturally divided into two branches; first, our analogy to children in respect of the *knowledge* we possess; and, secondly, in respect of *duties*—of the rules of conduct we may derive from contemplating the condition of childhood.' When at last he comes to contemplate the condition of childhood, he finds that children are 'held out to our imitation' because of their Humility, their Docility, and their Resignation. We shall return to Whately.

If Whately is the philosopher, Ruskin is the artist. But take an expositor or two between. Bishop Chadwick, like Archbishop Whately, begins with Humility—we shall see why. He adds only Dependence. Adolph Saphir, has a longer list—Docility, Earnestness, Frankness, Helplessness, Immediateness, Justice. The surprise is Immediateness. 'A child,' he says, '*lives in the present.* It is not anxious for the morrow. A disappointment does not crush it; it springs back again, because the undercurrent of its life is joy and confidence.' Justice also we have not seen before. 'Tell a child a story in which the wicked go unpunished, and it is disappointed; its tiny conscience rebels.'

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When we come to Ruskin we encounter a difficulty. Are we speaking of the child as it is, or as it ought to be? Canon Scott Holland took it as it is—arbitrary, imaginative, experimental. Ruskin takes it as it ought to be. He speaks of 'right childhood,' and in the next sentence of 'a well-bred child.' We shall deal with that difficulty also in a moment. Meantime Ruskin's list is Humility, Faith, Charity, and Cheerfulness. And for him it is evident that the greatest of these is Cheerfulness. 'You hear much of conversion now-a-days: but people always seem to think they have got to be made wretched by conversion,—to be converted to long faces. No, friends, you have got to be converted to short ones; you have to repent into childhood, to repent into delight and delightsomeness.'

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Another list will be enough. It is Blake's, and it is surely the most wonderful of all. It is not found solemnly set forth in the firstly, secondly, thirdly of a preacher. It had to be gathered from his poetry with care. Berger has gathered it.

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'If we wish'—this is Berger—'if we wish to give a definition of childhood as Blake saw it, we can only arrive at it by a progressive elimination of psychological characteristics. The mystic's vision never grasps the whole complex nature of living

reality; and Blake perceived in childhood only two or three very simple fundamental traits. We can never understand him if we say, with La Bruyère, that children are already men; for it is only when they grow up that they become men, and as yet they have not lived at all. We must, on the contrary, go close to their cradle. "There is a time," says this same La Bruyère, "when reason does not yet exist, when we only live by instinct, like the animals; and of this time we can remember nothing." It is to this time that we must carry ourselves back. We shall find all our lost memories of it reflected in Blake's vision; and that animal instinct which La Bruyère seems to despise is, in Blake's eyes, a spark of the eternal fire. No wonder, then, that he saw in childhood the realization of his ideal of Eternity, as far as it could be realized on earth.'

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Then Berger gives the list. 'The elements that combine to form this ideal are, seemingly, very few. They are: perfect happiness, resulting from ignorance of all evil; perfect innocence, which is chiefly due to the absence of any restrictive law; unhindered communion between the child's own life and that of the animals and the things that surround it; and, lastly, the clear vision of the divine world, and of those spiritual beings who are always ready to protect and love the child. All these elements are very simple. They are seen intuitively; felt rather than analysed by Blake, and expressed in a language which is as simple as his conception of them.'

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Now the thing that surprises us most in these lists of the characteristics of little children is the prominence given to Humility. For Humility is not a characteristic of childhood. The association is absurd. What is the explanation of its recurrence? Whately begins with it; so does Chadwick; and Professor J. E. B. Mayor (whose list we have not quoted). Others give it a place, though not the first, as if they felt that it must come in, though not very clearly a characteristic of the childhood that they know.

The explanation is quite simple. They begin with Humility, or give it a place, because they read that Christ said, 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven' (Mt $18^4$). Professor Mayor quotes this passage, and then says: 'The disciples, fishermen and publicans, had been quarrelling for a high place (as they thought) in a king's palace; they were to become like children, who know nothing of these names; for the king's son will play with the beggar child.' Is that our Lord's meaning? Let us understand.

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Our Lord had to do with two classes of persons —those who had gone wrong and knew it, and those who had gone wrong but did not know it, or at least did not acknowledge it. The one class He called Sinners, the other Righteous—accepting, no doubt, names which were already in use. Upon both classes He pressed one thing and one thing only—return. They had gone wrong, both had gone wrong, whether they acknowledged it or not; they had to come back and begin again.

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He had most difficulty with the Righteous. Working along the lines of the Law, with more or less fidelity, they had built up a character for religiousness which was accepted by the multitude —accepted apparently for much more than it was worth. It was peculiarly difficult for them to forfeit their good name, admit their imperfections, more than that their utter failure, and begin life again on wholly different lines. Yet that, and nothing less than that, was what they had to do.

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The clearest case is Nicodemus. He came to Jesus by night. We do not know why he chose the darkness to come, but we do know why he came. He came to Jesus by night to see if there was any omission in his righteous observance of the Mosaic Law. Like that other Ruler, and apparently younger man, he had kept all these things from his youth up—*what lacked he yet?*

Jesus answered, and said unto him, 'Except a man *be born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' It is not something lacking; it is everything wrong. He had been building up a house of outward observance—a new Tower of Babel, to reach to heaven before he died, and he was told that it had all to come down. He had been living a life of righteous merit without the spirit that makes the motive right. He was told that he must be born again.

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Were the disciples Righteous or Sinners? It really does not matter. The necessity of being born again is on both. This is the necessity which our Lord laid upon them, though the words are a little different in St. Matthew. He said they must be converted—they must convert, turn about, as the true translation is—and become as little children. He told them, as He told Nicodemus, that they had to begin at the very beginning.

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Now when He said, as in the passage which we are considering, 'Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child,' He did not mean to say, and He did not say, that the child is humble. The child is not humble. What He said was that they were to come down from the height of their manhood and become as little children. It was to be a humbling enough experience. And it would be only the more humbling that their manhood at the moment was expressing itself in a dispute as to which of them should be greatest.

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This, then, is the first characteristic of the Child of the Kingdom. He is a beginner. He *is* a child.

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He is not a child physically. Ruskin has settled that. 'Not of children themselves,' he says, 'but of such as children. I believe most mothers who read that text think that all heaven, or the earth—when it gets to be like heaven—is to be full of babies. But that's not so. "Length of days and long life and peace," that is the blessing; not to die, still less to live, in babyhood.'

And he is not a child mentally. St. Paul has settled that. 'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things' (1 Co $13^{11}$). St. Paul, interpreted by Canon Scott Holland, has settled it: 'Childhood foresees infinite possibilities, and refuses to limit its aims, and is endlessly irrational, and incalculable, and wilful, and arbitrary, and sudden, and abrupt, and freakish, and whimsical. It surrenders itself to fancies and feelings; and it requires a wide area in which to disport, with abundance of opportunities.'

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'And all this St. Paul has left behind him. If we look for any of this in him we shall find none of it. It is past and over, that delicious day of expansion and ease and splendid illusions. He had had it once—thanks be to God! There was a time (how well he remembers it!) when that happy liberty had been his. He had thought as a child thinks, had spoken as a child speaks, had understood as only a child understands. But now, as we first know him, he has come through it; he has stripped himself of its beautiful gifts, of all those privileges, those endearments, those fascinations, which are the heritage of children, for which we love them so. They are gone. He has not been afraid to put them aside. For he has become "a man."'

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'A man! He is a man, in that, looking all round, reviewing the entire area of possibilities over which youth had vaguely experimented, he has by a motive of victorious will, strung into activity by grace, made his one overmastering, absorbing, irrevocable choice of what he will do with himself and his life. He has gathered his whole being together, drawn in upon itself all the loose and unhindered expansiveness of childhood, and deliberately, in vigorous consciousness, with precise intention, committed himself to a selected career. He has withheld nothing from that act of choice. He can never go back on it. He has "burnt his boats." Every fragment of his life to

come must take its colour from that imperious decision. By it he is made or marred for ever. Right on, into the eternity beyond death, he will still be stamped with its brand. He will be the man who pledged himself in that fashion; who sent his whole self down that channel; who made that great and final committal.'

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That is Scott Holland. And it is true. It is true and wonderful for a man who never left his own childhood behind him. But the point for us is that the Child of the Kingdom is not a child mentally.

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No, the Child of the Kingdom is not a child physically or mentally. He is a child spiritually. He is 'born of the Spirit.' Not that the Spirit of God is more available now than when he was born of the flesh, but that *he* is more responsive. It is not the child, whether as it is or as it ought to be, that is greatest in the Kingdom, it is he who responds most utterly to the approach of the Spirit of God, surrendering the old life with its sin and its righteousness and beginning anew.

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Surrendering the old life—in that lies the difficulty. And it is more difficult for the Righteous than for the Sinners. 'The publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of heaven before you.' Nor was it ever more difficult than now. For never was righteousness more truly righteous, never respectability more respectable. So subtle has self-righteousness (for it *is* self-righteousness) grown that we cannot believe the pharisees of our Lord's condemnation to have been so pharisaical. But we have to give it all up and begin again.

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'There is a state of mind,' says William James, 'known to religious men, but to no others, in which the will to assert ourselves and hold our own has been displaced by a willingness to close our mouths and be as nothing in the floods and waterspouts of God. In this state of mind, what we most dreaded has become the habitation of our safety, and the hour of our moral death has turned into our spiritual birthday. The time for tension in our soul is over, and that of happy relaxation, of calm deep breathing, of an eternal present, with no discordant future to be anxious about, has arrived. Fear is not held in abeyance as it is by mere morality, it is positively expunged and washed away.'

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Surrender—that is the first of the characteristics of the Child of the Kingdom of Heaven. If he has been a sinner and acknowledges it, the surrender will be called Repentance, and it will be followed by restitution—'If I have taken anything from any man.' If he has been a sinner and does not acknowledge it, the surrender will still be called Repentance. In the one case it is the surrender of open and acknowledged sin; in the other of open righteousness, with the acknowledgment of sin also at the last, and again with restitution—'Ye devour widows' houses.'

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Then will appear some of the characteristics of the little child, the very characteristics which make the child so charming. And first of all simple, affectionate Trust.

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'For, if you will think of it,'—this is Rainy, and at his very best,—'what mainly makes the grace of childhood? Is it not this, that the child being set in a world of persons and forces, far stronger than itself,—beyond its grasp and reach,—to which notwithstanding in the very roots of its being it is related,—this being so, all is happily adjusted by the presence of great and strong affections, which bring everything into sympathy and rest, into happy and hopeful life? But, is not that just *Christianity*?—*we* find ourselves in a world how great, high, far reaching — in which wonderful affections on God's side and, through His grace, on ours come in to bless us? It is so; but how truly we hardly guess. In this direction Christianity has secrets we have but partially found out as yet. Let this be believed. Some know much,

perhaps, of the dust and toil of conflict; of the weariness of the way, in the great enterprise of walking with God; of the pain of loss; but when we are fighting and burdened, what is it about after all? Is it not about realizing Christ in His grace and help; is it not about retaining faith and hope and love? But in holding on to these it is the child nature and the child destiny we are holding on to—not that which has passed away, but that which is coming, that happiness and freedom the secret and security of which are God Himself.'

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Next, Receptiveness—the receptiveness of the unspoilt child. How receptive children are, 'how ready to receive, to take quickly with open hand whatever you have to give, never fancying they must give something in return. People grow away from that. "I take nothing that I don't pay for; I'm obliged to nobody; I give as much as I get and keep square accounts."' We have to return from that. We have to begin again.

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And then Obedience—the readiness to do as well as the willingness to receive. Archbishop Temple tells us that 'it is natural and easy to a child to obey.' He must have known only Ruskin's 'well-bred child.' The ready obedience of the well-bred child is as charming as any characteristic that childhood offers us. But 'it will be obvious,' says Dr. F. R. Tennant, 'that the sin which is most likely to beset the child most importunately at the commencement of its moral life must be disobedience.' And Professor Sully tells us why: 'He is full of fun, bent on his harmless tricks. He has a number of inconvenient, active impulses, such as putting things in disorder, playing with water, and so forth. As we all know, he has a duck-like fondness for dirty puddles. Civilization, which wills that a child should be nicely dressed and clean, intervenes in the shape of the nurse and soon puts a stop to this mode of diversion. The tyro in submission, if sound in brain and limb, kicks against the restraint, yells, slaps the nurse, and so forth.'

But the Child of the Kingdom is a well-bred child; he has learned obedience. Like the Saviour Himself he learns it by the things which he suffers. How often has he to say, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.' Whereupon he is well on the way to bring forth, not the characteristics which give the charm to the little child, but the fruits of the Spirit, which make the charm of the Child of the Kingdom. For the fruits of the Spirit are these—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.

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Nevertheless, it is not to be denied, rather is it gladly to be acknowledged, that in those who are most manifestly bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, there often remains a certain childlikeness, which is truly attractive and truly consistent with Christian manhood. Sir James G. Frazer, in relaxation from the writing of books about the 'Golden Bough,' has been visiting Coverley Hall, the residence of Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley. Searching in the archives of the Spectator Club, he came upon some manuscripts which *The Spectator* had either rejected or perhaps kept by him on the chance of their serving as stop-gaps when he had nothing better to offer for the entertainment of the day, and selected four for publication. And this is what we read about Sir Roger in one of them: 'The longer I stay at the Hall, the more I love its master. For there is about him a sweet simplicity, a sort of childlike frankness and innocence, which wonderfully pleases me and puts me many times in mind of Our Saviour's words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." I think I never met one who seemed to me to need less preparation for death and for that communion with the spirits of the just made perfect, to which Scripture teaches us to look forward as a principal source of the happiness that awaits us in the life hereafter. Not that Sir Roger is either very wise or very witty; for in truth he is neither, unless, as I am sometimes prone to think, the greatest wisdom consists in the greatest purity

of the heart, for judged by that standard I would be bold to match Sir Roger against Socrates or any sage in history.'

Perhaps Sir Roger de Coverley is not wise enough for our purpose. Take a wise man, then. Take the successful Headmaster of a great Public School, Dr. Edward Carus Selwyn. His biography has just been written. We read: 'There was always in him something of the child. It showed itself in his fun, his simplicity, his ready appreciation of things and people. And all this was the more marked and the more charming in one of his intellectual distinction and with his always stimulating though often combative or provocative ideas. Truly a most lovable man, who had never lost the freshness and unexpectedness of a child.'

Finally we will remember that Elizabeth Barrett Browning made it her prayer—the most ambitious prayer she could put into poetry—that the newly born child might retain its childhood to the end:

Therefore no song of mine,—
But prayer in place of singing; prayer that would
Commend thee to the new-creating God,
Whose gift is childhood's heart without its stain
Of weakness, ignorance, and changing vain—
That gift of God be thine!

So wilt thou aye be young,
In lovelier childhood than thy shining brow
And pretty winning accents make thee now.
Yea, sweeter than this scarce articulate sound
(How sweet!) of 'Father,' 'Mother,' shall be found
The ABBA on thy tongue.

And so, as years shall chase
Each other's shadows, thou wilt less resemble
Thy fellows of the earth who toil and tremble,
Than him thou seest not, thine angel bold
Yet meek, whose ever-lifted eyes behold
The Ever-loving's face.

Having written the Notes on the Child of the Kingdom, we returned to the reading of Harold BEGBIE'S *Life of William Booth, the Founder of the Salvation Army* (Macmillan; 2 vols., 42s. net). Immediately (for we had reached the middle of the second volume, reading with great enjoyment), we came upon this: 'I do not know whether it was the mention of religious books that led to it, but Mr. Gladstone remarked with some emphasis, that there was nothing that surprised him more than the objection he found running through many religious works to what was described as "Self-righteousness."'

The sentence occurs in the report of a conversation between Mr. Gladstone and General Booth, which took place at Hawarden in 1896. The report proceeds: 'While I cannot understand,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'how any man with any true knowledge of his heart, or of his life, or of the Holy God whom he worships, can possibly conceive that anything he can think, or feel, or say, or do, can be deemed worthy of presentation before Him, as constituting any meritorious ground on which to claim His favour, I do think that, instead of condemning righteousness, in any form, its cultivation should be encouraged, and its all-important need insisted upon.'

Now Mr. Gladstone was undoubtedly correct when he said that the objection to self-righteousness runs through many religious works. But one of these works is the Bible. If the writers of modern religious works object to self-righteousness, they never feel the objection more keenly or express it more vigorously than St. Paul. And St. Paul was undoubtedly in this respect at one with his Master.

It is truly surprising that Mr. Gladstone, who read the Bible regularly, did not remember that. But this is not the only surprise. Immediately afterwards, we see, he confounded self-righteousness with righteousness. 'I do think that, instead of condemning righteousness, in any form, its

cultivation should be encouraged.' Who condemns righteousness? Who condemns it in any form?

Certainly not St. Paul, and certainly not our Lord. 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.' There is no condemnation of righteousness in that. No more is there condemnation of righteousness in St. Paul, or in any 'religious work' worth mentioning.

But when a man assumes that he is righteous, or even honestly believes that he is righteous, when he is not, that man's righteousness is condemned at once, and ought to be condemned, both in the Bible and in every other 'religious work.'

And we must go further than that. We must ask what righteousness is. It is harmony with God. The man who is in harmony with God is a righteous man; the man who is out of harmony with God is not righteous. We miss that essential fact by separating righteousness from holiness. Holiness, we say, is our attitude to God, righteousness is our attitude to man. The separation is false. It is even foolish. We cannot be right with man unless we are right with God. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself'—it is not two separate commandments side by side, it is one commandment, the last half of it issuing inevitably and indissolubly out of the first.

The question accordingly is this: Can a man obtain harmony with God, or can he even maintain it by his own righteous acts or life? The answer is obvious. Any man who thinks that he can is mistaken. If he is doing righteous deeds he is to that extent a righteous man, and no 'religious work' will condemn his righteousness. But if he believes that his righteous deeds are good enough and numerous enough to bring him into harmony with God or keep him there, he is self-righteous, and (to use the emphatic language of our Lord) 'is condemned already.'

How like a mere theological logomachy it looks. How impatient with it is the man in the street. How ignorant of it is the reader of 'many religious works.' Yet how fundamental it is, how utterly essential, to religion and to life.

For it is not merely a matter of degree. It is not that the righteous man is not righteous enough. Certainly he is not righteous enough, and cannot be. When the rich young Ruler said, 'All these have I kept from my youth up,' Jesus did not contradict him. He simply told him that it was not enough. 'If thou wouldest be perfect, go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.' For nothing is enough that is short of perfection. Imperfect harmony is not harmony with God.

But it is more than that. Not one single righteous act of the righteous man is righteous enough. It does not make him right with God—not even at the moment. It does not make him right with man. 'All these have I kept'—'Go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor.' In order that a single righteous act may be righteous enough it must have in it the whole power of love. Now we love because He first loved us. And it is only when we cast ourselves on the love of God, and allow the love of God to work in us and through us—it is only then that we can do one righteous deed. What doth the Lord require of us, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God? Nothing else. But we cannot do one of these things unless the love of Christ—not our love to Him but His love in us—constrains us.