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Him, as they had to hear with growing perplexity His now constant insistence on the nearness of His death. Ought it not to have confirmed their faith in His assurance that He had power to fulfil His Father's commandment 'to lay down his life, and to take it again' (Jn 10^{18})? Ought it not also to have warned His enemies that there was nothing they could do against Him though they put Lazarus to death, and Himself also? And still a question haunts us which must be reverently considered—had this incident not some relation to our Lord's own faith in the prospect of death? Was it a light on His way to the Cross? Was it for His strengthening (Lk 22^{43}) to hold fast as the Father's pledge to Him the words of Ps 16^{7-11}:

I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel;
Yea, my reins instruct me in the night seasons.
I have set the LORD always before me:
Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell confidently.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.
Thou wilt make me to know the path of life;
Fulness of joy is in thy presence;
Pleasures are in thy right hand for evermore.

Surely it was from Himself the apostles learned the meaning of that Psalm (Ac 2^{25-28}) as the assurance of His rising again the third day. Does not this constitute the chapter a narrative of our Lord's own faith—its trial, and its source of strengthening to victory?

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

God's Star.

'We have seen his star.'—Mt 2^{2}.

WHEN Christmas comes we love to remember the Christ-child who came to dwell among us. We think of what it cost Him to leave His heavenly home and His loving Father. I wonder if we sometimes think what it cost God to send Him? Perhaps a story which I heard the other day may help us to understand it.

During the War those families in America which had sent a son to fight were allowed to put a star in their window. When the light shone inside the room the star showed up.

One evening, just at twilight, a small boy was walking with his father along the streets of New York; and as they walked they were counting the stars in the windows. 'See, Father,' said the boy, 'here's a window with one star, and here's another with two—they must have sent two sons—and here's another with none at all.' They came at last to a break in the houses where the evening star twinkled in the western sky, and the boy whispered, 'Look, Father, God has a star in *His* window. God must have sent a son too.'

Yes, God has sent His Son too. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.' He gave the very best He had, and He gave it because He loved so much.

Once a famous preacher asked the scholars of a certain Sunday school whether God loved boys and girls when they were wicked. Some answered 'Yes,' but most of them said 'No.' And then the minister told them that if God didn't love them when they were wicked, He could never love any of them at all, because 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' It was just because God loved boys and girls and men and women when they were wicked, that He sent His Son to save them, that He gave the gift that cost Him so dearly.

That story reminds me of a tale that is told of another famous preacher, the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse. One day he overheard one of his children say to another, 'You must be good or Father won't love you.' He called the boy to him and said, 'Do you know what you are saying, my boy? That is not true; it is not a bit true.' The boy was astonished and asked, 'But you won't love us if we are not good, will you?' And the minister replied, 'Yes, I will love you when you are not good. I love you when you are good with a love that makes me glad, and I love you when you are not good with a love that hurts me; but I cannot help loving you, because I am your father, you know.'

God cannot help loving us, because He is our Father, God could not help sending His Son, because He loved us so much.

So, when you walk abroad in the twilight and see the evening star twinkling in the sky, will you think of the love that made God give His dearly beloved Son; will you think of the Christ who is Himself the bright, the morning star; will you think of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men of old to the very feet of Jesus?

'Say Grace.'

'He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them.'—Lk 9^{16}.

Did you ever wonder why we 'ask a blessing' or 'say grace' at meals? A blessing is one of the very first prayers we learn. Indeed, we are usually so tiny at the time that we can't say a grown-up blessing, and are taught a special one of our own made up of short words, such as—

'God bless this food,
And make me good.'

or just, 'Thank God for my good breakfast'; 'Thank God for my good dinner.'

I once knew a little girl who was so small that she couldn't even speak, but she understood about a blessing. She watched her father and her mother and her older sisters all bending their heads when food was on the table, and she too shut her eyes tight whilst father reverently said grace. One day, about Christmas time, her mother was preparing the fruit for the plum pudding. The raisins and the currants and the candied peel were laid out on plates on the dining-room table, and just before mother began to stone the raisins she drew Kitty's baby chair up to the table beside her. What was her astonishment when Kitty bent her curly head, folded her little hands, closed her eyes and solemnly said something that sounded like 'M—m—m' over the fruit for the Christmas pudding?

Yes, saying grace is one of the first things we learn. But do you know it is one of the oldest customs in the world? It is a custom we have borrowed from the Jews. The Jews believed in blessings. They believed in blessing people. They believed in blessing food; and by and by the blessing grew into a thanksgiving to God the Giver. The first blessing of food we read about is in the ninth chapter of the First Book of Samuel. There we are told that the people would not eat of the sacrificial meal till Samuel the prophet had blessed it.

Later in their history the Jews became very particular about grace before and after meat. They had quite a number of rules on the subject. The grace which they said before eating bread was very probably the grace which Christ used when He looked up to heaven and blessed the five loaves and the two fishes before dividing them among the multitude. Would you like to know that blessing? The Bible does not give it us, but other Jewish books do, and here it is: 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who bringeth forth bread from the earth.'

Besides this grace before meat, there was another to be used before drinking; and there were no fewer than four graces after meat from which to choose. At the feast of the Passover too there were special blessings at certain stages of the meal.

The early Christians continued the custom of thanksgiving at meal times, and so the practice has been handed down from generation to generation; and although we don't have so many blessings as the Jews had, most of us still thank God before meals, and some of us thank Him after meals as well.

Now, sad to say, there are some people who thank God for His goodness *neither before nor after* meals. They simply leave God out. These people remind me of the story of the hungry man who was once taken to a hall where plates were laid for no fewer than 1460 persons. The tables were groaning with tempting food of all kinds, and the hungry man felt his teeth water. 'Would you like a meal?' asked his guide. 'Rather!' replied the man. 'May I sit down?' 'Not till I have told you something,' said the guide. 'These plates stand for the meals you have eaten during the last twelve months. There are 365 breakfasts, 365 dinners, 365 teas, and 365 suppers. You see what a lot of food they amount to; yet you have never thanked God for one of them.'

But there are others who do thank God for His mercies and then immediately start to grumble right through the meal. 'The soup is too hot; the meat is tough; and ugh! they hate milk puddings!'

These people remind me of the little girl who always said as grace, 'For what we are about to

receive, O Lord, make us truly thankful.' But until she grew quite big she thought the words were 'For *quarter* about to receive, O Lord, make us truly thankful.' She imagined she was to give thanks for only the quarter of what she ate. I'm afraid some of us are not truly thankful even for the quarter.

You have heard of Dr. Paton, the famous missionary to the New Hebrides. At one time there was a famine in the islands, and the natives looked forward eagerly to the arrival of the missionary ship, the *Dayspring*, because it brought food. One morning the vessel arrived, and the stores were unshipped and carried to the storehouse. A group of native children watched the scene, and when all the goods had been packed away they asked Dr. Paton if he had forgotten his promise that they should each have a biscuit. Oh no, he had not forgotten, but he had waited to see if they would remember. Of course they had remembered, and would he please open the cask quickly for they were dying for biscuits. So Dr. Paton opened the cask and gave each boy and girl a biscuit. To his surprise they all stood round, but not one of them began to eat. He asked them why they were waiting. They had said they were dying for biscuits, and yet nobody was eating. Did they expect another one? Then one of the oldest said: 'We shall first thank God for sending us food, and ask Him to bless us all.' And so they did, and then they all munched happily God's latest gift.

I somehow think those little black boys and girls could teach their white brothers and sisters a lesson. Don't you?

The Christian Year.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent.

Poverty.

'The poor ye have always with you.'—Ja 12[8].

1. He understood the word 'poor' better than many of us do. For Him it meant not an abstract idea, but a lifelong experience. Each Christmas brings home to the Church afresh the hard, mean, prosaic realities of our Lord's earthly lot. To be born in a barn, and brought up in a cottage, to earn His bread at a labourer's bench, to choose workmen for His familiar friends, to wander without home or shelter, to borrow His very grave at last—this was the life which He chose, who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor. And even in His acceptance of the spikenard, Christ identifies Himself with man's low estate. It might have been sold and given to the poor. 'The poor?' He seems to say; 'I am the Poor.' He claims in His own Person to be the image and representative of all human need and hardship—just as He felt in Himself the anguish and bore the sin of the whole world. How calmly He said it: *The poor ye have always with you.* Yet even as He spoke He must have realized those multitudes for whom existence is one 'long doing-without, more or less patiently'; He must have seen the vast armies of poverty 'passing in sad procession from the cradle to the grave.' Surely He saw also moral and spiritual compensations which are hidden from us. He who knew what is in man regarded wealth, not want, as one main hindrance and drawback to the soul. He looked upon the state of the humble as actually a privilege in disguise.

2. At any rate our Lord treats the existence of this grim fact, not as a problem, but as an appeal. He assumes and implies that poverty, as such, has a claim for spikenard. And *spikenard we have always with us.* We all possess something costly to communicate, we all have something precious that is worth giving away. Mere money is generally the cheapest of gifts, and the least useful. The poor who have the chief claim on us to-day are not perhaps the destitute; they are the stupid, the ignorant, the weak, the lazy, the coarse, the sensual, the unstable, the forlorn—those folk whom we class consciously as 'inferiors.' Multitudes of them would be unhappy if they were transported into an earthly paradise to-morrow. But so much the more does their moral poverty plead for our sympathy and our devotion. In so far as we feel ourselves richer than they—richer in faith and affection, in energy and patience and self-control—they call for our spikenard. And each of them stands to us in the place of Christ Himself. Though they be idle or dissolute or undeserving, this is the very measure of their claim. Him we have not always; but we have always those with whom He has made Himself one, with whom He bids us deal as though they were He. Our gifts carry virtue only in so far as they are fragrant with the spikenard of the heart.

3. The conventional marriage of religion and respectability was never made in heaven. Mediæval

artists loved to paint a very different bridal—the marriage of Francis and Poverty. The men who gazed at that fantastic picture felt that it expressed in a parable the very genius of the gospel. And it is repeated as often as gifted men and women quietly forgo their position and forget their pleasures, that they may claim kinship with the disinherited and pour out their spikenard on the travel-stained feet of the poor. The aroma of such devotion puts new meaning into our hollow phrases. It proves how that poverty which seems to impeach our faith in God's mercy can serve to strengthen and confirm it. For the gospel remains vague and theoretical to every man who does not lay hold of the mighty truth at his heart—the truth of the redeeming sacrifice of love. It reveals its secret to the man who is overwhelmed by a sense of the evils and sorrows of his race, and who grasps its divine power to succour and to save his fellows. Christian faith flickers and dies away in the breast of the student, the dreamer, the religious sentimentalist. It flames up in the heart of the man who pours himself out for the needy, and spends himself in patient fidelity to unthankful and unstable souls. There is a blessing even in the dreadful fact of poverty, when it pierces us and makes us real.[1]

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

Seeing Jesus.

'Sir, we would see Jesus.'—Jn 12^{21}.

Jesus has exerted an undying attraction over the minds of the centuries. Whatever position Jesus comes finally to occupy in the minds of free, thoughtful men, a place for Him is assured among the great teachers of the world, which will nearly always be the highest. Every one must realize that there is in His teaching a wealth of meaning which can hardly be matched even in the greatest philosophers. His sayings have nothing of the volume which, for instance, those of Plato have; they cannot be easily made into a system held together by a few dominant ideas. But, for that particular type of aphoristic speech, it measures a considerable quantity, and there seems such a tremendous deal tied up in almost every word. The very form of the teaching of Jesus has helped to secure for it immortality, for its meaning does not lie upon the surface. And yet it is never mere enigma, which one soon gets tired of investigating; obscure symbolism, which we soon conclude means nothing at all. Confronted with a saying of Jesus, all the instincts of the soul are aroused, as if behind its form it detected the savour of its natural food. The teaching of Jesus sets one craving for its secret, not only that we may know it, as one might learn a scientific secret, or gain occult knowledge, but in order that we might find it operative in one's life. We have the feeling that the teaching of Jesus matters—matters for our own peace of mind, matters for the righting of our wronged and ruined society.

1. The first desire that is awakened is, therefore, to discover the *mind* of Jesus, to be able to find the angle from which He viewed life, to get down to the great principles which governed His thinking. Yet whenever we do this we find ourselves baffled; to systematize His thinking seems to destroy half its power.

(1) Take the popular principles of 'the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man,' to which some thinkers have reduced His thinking, and how tame it seems beside His own pregnant words.

(2) Or take the idea that all His teaching is by reference to the inner point of view, judging things by their motive, seeing to it that the heart is right; how much this seems to leave out, and when stated thus how much less disturbing than the words He flung about Him like firebrands.

(3) Or take His outlook on social wrong as able to be reduced to the one principle of using no violence to restrain evil, which Tolstoy seizes upon as the centre and core of Christ's moral teaching; it throws a confusing light upon our own institutions, but it seems to produce nothing but wild and academic discussions as to what would happen in a society which dispensed with coercion.

(4) Or take the principle which some have felt to be determinative for His attitude towards moral problems, the principle of regarding sin as injuring only the sinner, and therefore something to be sorry rather than angry about, something from which we should wish to save the sinner rather than punish him for; how merely passive and pathetic this is in comparison with the great passion of Jesus, which was as hot with sorrow as we ever get with indignation.

2. But we must see Jesus Himself. We are bound to feel that there is something deeper in

[1] T. H. Darlow, *Holy Ground*.

Jesus than His mind, profound as that is. He is not mere thinker only; behind His thought there is His personality; and that is the modern quest. We want to see the man, not merely find His mind as recorded in a book; for the teaching refuses to yield the ultimate secret of Jesus. This search is for His 'personality' in the modern sense of the term; that is, for the impression that the whole man makes upon us. For Jesus was more than a teacher; He lived a very active life; He was caught in the swirl of circumstances, and extricated Himself in a most wonderful way. For while in one sense He was the victim of blind circumstance, as tragic as human history can present, it is also perfectly clear that He not only conquered circumstance, in the sense that He triumphed in spite of it; he actually used all the untoward things in His career as the instruments of His purpose, and turned every detail of His terrible defeat into the emblems of His victory.

The modern mind loves to study Jesus in the great crises of His career, and watch His personality as it is revealed in the moments of temptation, difficulty, or even despair. The modern method of studying Jesus is to ignore the details of His life, but to grasp its general outlines, and to fasten attention upon the turning-points of His career, such as the baptism, the temptation, the march to Jerusalem, the agony in the garden. Here we come across an unexpected discovery. It is an extraordinarily human personality that is thus revealed. He feels so intensely; events smite upon Him; He is so temptable, as temptable as any man; He shrinks from pain, shame, and failure, and groans and sweats under the prospect of death. Sometimes concentration upon this aspect alone has produced the impression in superficial minds that Jesus was either cowardly, or else very highly strung, and almost neurotic. But this is corrected by the least attention to facts, because the temptation is so splendidly rejected, the fear is so gloriously overcome; and whatever the dread He had in anticipation, when the end is arrived it is faced majestically. There are some natures which seem superior to either temptation or fear when it is presented to them beforehand abstractly, yet they go down in the actual test without a fight; and though they are brave enough in contemplation of the event, they are utterly undone when suffering is upon them. Jesus is exactly the reverse. He fights the temptation in the desert, feeling it as something desperate, a struggle with wild beasts and against all the wiles of the devil; and then when the actual temptation comes to Him afterwards in His career, there does not seem a moment's hesitation. He weeps and prays in the garden at contemplation of what He has to go through; but once in the hands of His captors, judges, and executioners, He is all dignity and calmness. It is upon the total character and temperament which we call personality that the modern mind fastens, and in this it finds a most extraordinary attraction.

3. But there is another sense in which we wish to see Jesus. We want to see not only what He is, but *who* He is. It is a curious question, and some have declared that it is vain and irrelevant; but it has always been asked, Who is this Christ? Objectors to this question, which they say will only involve us in metaphysics, where we shall lose all reality, tell us that we never ask such questions about Plato or Shakespeare or Darwin or Napoleon or Nietzsche. We do not say, Who is this person? It is meaningless to do so: personality in this sense is unique; it is a special creation. Shakespeare is Shakespeare, and that is an end of it. But there is just the difference: we do ask this question about Jesus.

Many answers have been returned, and they are all of them worth considering. Modern thought is determined to answer the question freely and without reference to the decisions of the past. The modern occultists believe that Jesus is one of the great supernatural personalities who rule the destinies of the human race; but that is a very odd answer; for who are the *other* great supernatural personalities? The answer of liberal theologians is very various, but it hovers round the idea that Jesus is some specially endowed being who has been commissioned by God to carry out certain religious purposes of revelation or redemption. But this is really only the Hebrew Messiah notion in modern form, and it was this very idea that Jesus both accepted and rejected; which, because He could neither deny nor fulfil, He was handed over to death. Other liberal answers content themselves with what in the absence of a theory of divinity amount to adulation or even idolatry.

There is a mass of clear teaching which either directly or indirectly assumes a special relation of Jesus to God and man. The former has been

stretched on proof texts until we are weary of it; but the other is still unspoiled, and is probably unspoilable. Jesus has a strange habit of regarding Himself as integrated in the life of humanity, and has a curious personal concern for men. It comes out in: 'Whoso receiveth a little child in my name, receiveth me'; in the 'inasmuch' judgment; in the weeping over Jerusalem, and in the call 'Come unto me'; to take only a few of those less used as proof texts. Jesus seems to stand in the heart of humanity and call from thence. And that is precisely what gives Him His unfading power. It is the sense that He is not far back in history, but here—wherever humanity is; that He speaks not from a printed page, but from somewhere within the heart.[1]

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

The World.

'My kingdom is not of this world.'—Jn 18^{36}.

Although Jesus said this, we are not to conclude that the world is wholly evil. Our Lord did not say that the world is wholly mad or wholly bad, that it means simply nothing or means only ill. He did not hate it, nor did He despise it. He certainly thought and taught that the other world is the only one which it is worth our while to live for; yet He recognized all along the importance of the present world as the sphere in which human spirits are to be disciplined for that other. This world is, in fact, a school or training-ground or gymnasium; 'just a stuff,' as Browning writes, 'to try the soul's strength on, educe the man'; just a great apparatus of drill for eliciting our faculties and preparing us in a thousand ways for our future destiny. 'Call the world, if you please, "The Vale of Soul-making,"' wrote John Keats, in one of his letters. 'Then you will find out the use of the world.' 'How are souls to be made?' he continues. 'How but by the medium of a world like this?' We may, perhaps, liken it to the environment of a boy at college. That school-life is only an episode, merely an introduction to a career; yet how ill-equipped and inefficient the adult man would be, were it not for the class-rooms and playing-fields wherein his powers have been developed! Even so this world is necessary as the scene of our education. Through the gladness, through the sadness, through the work and recreation, through the crowded events and circumstances of our everyday life here, we are being exercised and matured for the fuller, larger, higher, greater life hereafter.

1. Perhaps you will realize this better, if you consider for a moment how the world fulfils its function as the divinely appointed instrument of our spiritual education. Take the world of natural beauty. Have you not proved again and again its power to arouse and stimulate the higher faculties? Those sights and sounds of Nature—the glimmer of the dawn as it breaks over the moors, the green fields sleeping in the noontide sunshine, the hills empurpled at evening, the murmur of the wind amid a forest's endless leaves, the lark's song 'like a waterfall in the sky'—are they not invaluable elements in our spiritual development, refining sense and soul for yet more subtle and sweet experiences? Let no one be afraid of enjoying to the full all this wonderful, glowing universe. For he, without doubt, is more ready for the glories of the other world, who more perfectly appreciates the beauties and splendours of this; and he is the better fitted for the revelation of God hereafter, who has learned even here to say, in the words of the blameless king:

> I found Him in the shining of the stars,
> I saw Him in the flowering of His fields.

2. Or take, again, the world of business. This, too, is a 'school for spirits' that is recognized by our Lord. Mark how friendly Christ was, how sympathetic He was, towards all whom He found engaged in any honourable activity. What a value He set upon work! Why, the pictures of the religious life that are presented in His parables are simply palpitating with the strenuousness of the business world. The merchant, the farmer, the bailiff, and the builder, the servant who trades diligently with his master's money—such are the types with which He illustrated His discourse. He had never a word of blame for the men who were doing their work. He never once rebuked them because they were not employed about something more religious, something more spiritual, something higher; nay, He taught that it is only right performance of the lower that can fit men for the higher. 'If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?' Other-worldliness, therefore, does not necessitate the abandonment of our law-

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

ful occupations. God has placed us where we are, and God would train us where we are. Through the special exigencies of each special calling He would develop in each of us just those faculties and powers which will specially be needed for our future ministries. All that He looks for meanwhile in our work is the spirit of consecration.

'Plough, if you are a ploughman,' cries Clement of Alexandria, 'but know God as you plough; sail, if you love seafaring, but call on the heavenly Pilot.'

3. Or take once more the world of human friendship and affection. Here, surely, least of all is it permissible to cultivate an attitude of detachment. It is an awful mistake to fancy that heavenly-mindedness means absent-mindedness in respect of earthly relationships and ties, or that the love bestowed on man is so much love withdrawn from God. Is it not rather the case that all these tender human intimacies are the steps upon which we rise to the supreme passion of the soul, so that the more closely we attach ourselves to those who are made in God's image, the more nearly are we drawn to Him in whose image they are made?

St. Catherine of Genoa, according to the legend, once complained to her Divine Spouse, 'Lord, You bid me love others, and I can love only You.' 'Catherine,' He replied, 'whosoever loves Me, must love those whom I love.' And one of the greatest of the mystics has written, 'Be assured that the further you advance in the love of your neighbour, the further you are advancing in the love of God likewise. . . . Satan himself would not be Satan any longer if he could once love his neighbour as himself.'[1]

The First Sunday after Epiphany.

The Social Question.

'Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us.'—2 Co $5^{13.\ 14}$.

The social question of the twentieth century is the child of Christianity. The impulse that gave it birth, and the spirit which has nourished it throughout the centuries, came directly from Jesus Christ. There is no consciousness of the social question where Jesus Christ is not known. Pagan Africa and heathen India have the social question, but they have not the consciousness of it. They are not discussing equality of opportunity either before God or before the law, nor are they deeply concerned with the rights of women and children, and the welfare of society.

[1] F. Homes Dudden, *The Dead and the Living.*

Were it not for Christian ideals, which abhor injustice and inequality, we should not be conscious of this question to-day. Injustice and inequality could not long exist in a world where religion taught that all men have equal rights before God, and that every soul is of equal value in His eyes (Jn 3^{16}). When religious equality became the faith of mankind, there could be no peace until law recognized political equality. Men realize to-day, as never before, that happiness depends upon development, and development upon opportunity. The essence of the social question to-day is the demand for equality of opportunity,—free scope for the development of such gifts as we have. This demand is the logical conclusion of the Christianity of Christ.

And Christianity is the solution, and the only solution, of the social question. This solution is embodied in the three elemental laws of Christianity, namely, the law of regeneration, the law of righteousness, and the law of love.

1. *The Law of Regeneration.*—Through the law of regeneration Christianity changes the nature of man, and ultimately the character of society. It is frequently said that no solution of the social question can be found so long as human nature is what it is, namely, selfish. Jesus Christ recognized this truth when He made regeneration the primary condition for entering His kingdom (Jn 3^{3}): 'Ye must be born again.' To attempt to solve the social question without regenerating men is absurd. There can be no regenerated society apart from regenerated individuals, men who have been made partakers of the divine nature, the essence of which is unselfishness. Regeneration always precedes reconstruction. It is fatal to attempt to solve the social question of to-day and to forget or ignore the source of all the selfishness and misery of the world, namely, the fact that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' Splendid work is being done to diminish the sum of human suffering and wretchedness, and we must not underestimate the value of various schemes of improvement, philanthropic, social, political, and industrial. But we must not forget that misery does not come from ignorance alone, and that it cannot be swept away by knowledge. Distress does not come from environment alone, and therefore it cannot be removed by improvement of circumstances. Suffering does not come from poverty alone, and therefore

economic changes will not annihilate it. The root of it lies deeper than these things.

2. *The Law of Righteousness.*—Through the law of righteousness Christianity has given man a new standard by which to regulate his relations with God and his fellow-men. This law is stated in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7), in the Golden Rule (Lk 6^{31}), and in the summary of the law (Mt 22^{37-41}). Christianity is law as well as life and love. Life imparted by regeneration needs development and guidance. The heart may be regenerated, but the head may be ignorant and badly informed. Regeneration merely creates the will to do right; it does not define for man what is right. This is defined for him in the law of righteousness, embodied in the teachings and the example of Jesus Christ. He is the final authority over all life, in its social as well as in its individual aspects. Christ is 'the light of the world' (Jn 8^{12}), the light of the political world, the industrial world, the intellectual world, the social world, as well as the moral and spiritual world. Christianity has not laid down definite economic rules, or enunciated political maxims, but just as it deals with psychological and ethical questions on broad general principles that are true to experience, so it takes all social problems, economic and political, and looks at them in the light of the eternal verities of the kingdom of God and the divine purpose. Christianity clearly enunciates the principles which make for social welfare, and supplies the strongest and purest motives for disinterested service.

3. *The Law of Love.*—Through the law of love Christianity offers the world an adequate dynamic for solving the social question. You do not make men good by merely telling them what goodness is; nor by setting forth the bitter consequences of wrongdoing. All this is surface work. Christianity offers us not only a power which regenerates, a standard which directs, but a dynamic which impels and empowers us to live the Christian life and apply the Christian law. It substitutes for all other motives for obedience the motive of love (2 Co 5^{14}): 'the love of Christ constraineth us.' The secret of Christian morality in both its personal and its social aspect is that it changes duty into choice, because love is made the motive for obedience. The special gift of Christianity to men is the gift of a new nature, which is created in righteousness that flows from truth and is impelled by love. To tell men what they ought to do is very little help toward doing it. The glory of Christianity is that it gives the knowledge of what we ought to do, and with and in that knowledge it gives the desire and power to be what God would have us to be, and to do what He would have us to do. By being both law and impulse Christianity offers the world the only dynamic adequate to the solution of the social question.[1]

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The Divine Image.

'Who is the image of the invisible God.'—Col 1^{15}.

1. The New Testament begins with an account of its ideal for the individual. This account is not a definition but a portrait, the portrait of a historic person, who called Himself significantly the 'Son of Man.' The discussion of the term's meaning has lasted long and still proceeds, but here it is taken to connote two closely connected things—that Jesus of Nazareth was the typical Man, and that He is therefore the natural head of a society whose members seek to be perfect. The proof that Christianity takes Jesus for the ideal Man need not be detailed, for it is the whole New Testament. The method, however, of defining an ideal by a fact, the perfect Man by a historical person, draws with it certain consequences.

It means that the ideal is practicable, for it has been practised. Herein the Christian ideal differs from the dreams of both the philosopher and common folk. The former frankly abandons fact in order to picture the perfect, while the latter relegate their ideal either to the dim past or the dim future—with a tacit condemnation and despair of the present. Christianity urges on every one the historic example of an actual man. It has the Hebrew genius for the practical.

This method also admits an adequate ideal. No principle or set of principles, however versatile, can be as manifold as life. This is true even of the lowliest kinds of life, but much more of the noblest. The only adequate account of any type of life is that life itself. The complete definition of the ideal life, therefore, can only be the actual. Without the historic Jesus, Christianity could at best be only a phase in human history; its ideal could not be final.

[1] J. McDowell, in *Record of Christian Work.*

The obvious objection to the definition of the ideal by the actual is that, however perfect the chosen individual may be, he must still be a particular man, and that the particular cannot be universal. A historic person must belong to a particular race, to a particular time, to a particular family, to a particular class of society, and these circumstances, it will be said, must of course affect his character. How could an Oriental, for instance, ever become the type of the Western world? Or a Jew the ideal of a Russian? Or a peasant of a merchant? Or a man of the First Century of the children of the Twentieth? A single historical person might perhaps be perfect in his particular lot, but it seems impossible that he be the pattern for universal man.

History disproves the argument. The unique quality of Jesus, the character that gives Him the right to the title 'Son of Man,' precisely is that He is universal. It is true that He was a Jew, of the First Century, of the Roman Empire, of the artisan class, of a village called Nazareth, but with Him none of these things were more than what the old logicians called 'accidents.' When the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews compared Him to Melchizedek 'without father, without mother, without genealogy,' he put in the phrase of the time the truth that Jesus had no limitations as have other men. An Oriental has in fact become the pattern of the Western world, a Jew of the Russian, a carpenter of kings, a man of one age of the men of many ages. The claim of the Church is that the Nazarene's dominion will spread still further, until every man of every race, language, family, caste, clime, acknowledges Jesus Christ as the ideal after whose life he ought to frame his own. The history of nineteen centuries at least saves this claim from folly. Even the enemy of Christianity must admit that it may be so. With a true instinct the Church has kept 'Palm Sunday' as a festival of joy. At first sight its shouts had better been omitted, for where were the acclaiming thousands of Olivet five days later when Calvary befell? But the deep meaning of 'Palm Sunday' was that the heart of man answers to the ideal Man. On that day 'deep called unto deep'; mankind recognized its Head. Missionaries witness that the wonder is repeated wherever Jesus is preached. In every nation men recognize the Man. Later followers of the pageant of Jesus have often, like the first, been false to their ideal, but He remains their ideal; nation by nation, mankind is coming to acclaim Him the Man of men; His particular race, tongue, calling, class, do not count; in Him the particular merges in the universal; Jesus is in the old true sense the 'common' Man.

2. Yet there is throughout the New Testament, often explicit, always implicit, another account of every man's perfection. Its definition is the likeness of God. To trace this it is best to begin with the later Books. 'He hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature'[1]; 'Like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy'[2]; '[With the tongue] curse we men, which are made after the likeness of God'[3]; 'Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children'[4]; '[We] have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him.'[5] There is in some of these texts a theoretic flavour, as of a conclusion reached by argument; what grounds had warranted the conclusion?

The Old Testament had taught that man is created in the image of God and that Righteousness is proper to both. This doctrine reached its climax when Paul used of Christianity the phrase 'the righteousness of God.' This ascription, however, belongs rather to Paul's theology than his sociology, and a scrutiny of the context of some of the passages quoted shows that the New Testament reached the idea chiefly in another way. In it man's likeness to God springs from the relation of father and child. The passage quoted from the Epistle to the Ephesians, for instance, bases the imitation of God on this relation—'As beloved children.' So the quotation from First Peter proceeds, 'And if ye call on him as Father.' Several passages in the Gospel now suggest themselves—'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God'[6]; 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven'[7]; 'Ye therefore shall be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect'[8]; 'Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful'[9]; 'And whensoever ye

[1] 2 P 1^{4}. [2] 1 P 1^{16}. [3] Ja 3^{9}.
[4] Eph 5^{1}. [5] Col 3^{10}. [6] Mt 5^{9}.
[7] Mt 5^{40}. [8] Mt 5^{48}. [9] Lk 6^{36}.

stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.'[1] While in the Old Testament fatherhood is only a secondary attribute of God, in the New it is primary, and the predominant notion in the Old Testament—that Jehovah was the Father of the Hebrew race—gives way in the New to the idea that He is each Christian's own Father. Both the nature of the relation and the usage of the New Testament require that there follows the likeness of the two. A son is like his father.

If now it be asked in what the likeness of God consists, or in what way the character of the great Father will show itself in His children, the connexion appears between the two definitions of a man's perfection so far named. For three things are clear—that no adequate account can be given of God's character, that man's likeness to God cannot extend to the whole of the Divine nature, and that here again the impossibility emerges of framing a theoretic definition sufficient for life. The New Testament's most frequent term for the Divine character is still Righteousness, but no attempt is made to delimit it. The nearest approximation in the New Testament to an account of Righteousness, the Sermon on the Mount, stubbornly refuses to be reduced to system. It is a description, not of the science of life, but of its proper temper. The only account of the likeness of God as pattern for man in the New Testament is the portrait of Christ. The later Books again express this in theoretic terms—'The effulgence of His glory, and the very image of his substance'[2]; 'Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation'[3]; 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'[4]; 'The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'[5]

But, earlier than the use of these philosophic phrases, the Christian consciousness had made a significant attempt to express the same thought. While Jesus' favourite name for Himself was 'Son of Man,' His disciples discovered Him to be the 'Son of God.' Whatever else this name meant, at least they saw that He was like His Father. Similarly, it is Jesus' postulate throughout all the controversies of John's Gospel that His adversaries ought to have seen for themselves that He was the 'Son,' the revelation of God—that they ought to have seen God in Him. If there be anything at all in the discourses of this Gospel that belonged to Jesus' own thought, it must include such universal pre-suppositions as this. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'—here is the natural complement of the Synoptic use of 'Son of God.' At the least the Church by the end of the first century had come to think thus of Jesus, and this creed has made Christianity. For it Jesus is at once the ideal Man and the image of God. The sonship of God, likeness to Jesus, Righteousness—these three are but different names for one thing.

3. There is, however, yet another way of putting the New Testament theory of a true man's Righteousness—a way as pervasive of the records as the two already named. When at Jesus' baptism 'there came a voice from heaven saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased,' there descended also 'the Spirit' upon Him. The New Testament everywhere teaches that a true man has 'the Spirit.' Not long since such a theory would have been dismissed by many as mere infatuation; 'Spirit' would have been paraphrased as 'influence'; and under this vague term its existence would have been virtually denied. But so unscientific a procedure—albeit perpetrated in the name of science—is no longer possible. To-day's thought has ceased to be contemptuous of everything but materialism, and the Bible's axiom that 'Spirit,' though immaterial, is yet real, meets with better treatment than a scoff.

But even though this were still its plight, it would be impossible to rid the Gospel of the doctrine. The Baptist's prophecy of his greater successor was, 'He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit'; the hopeless sinner is he who 'blasphemes against the Holy Spirit'; the accused Christian's encouragement is, 'It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit'; what one Gospel calls the 'good things' of the 'Heavenly Father,' another sums in the single gift of the 'Holy Spirit'; Pentecost was at once the Day of the New Mankind and of the Holy Spirit; the Acts of the Apostles is just the Acts of the Spirit; any who 'received the Holy Spirit' had a right to be reckoned Christians, and so true men; Paul connects the sonship of the believer directly with the 'Spirit'; Jesus was Himself 'declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness'; in the greatest

[1] Mk 11^{25}. [2] He 1^{3}. [3] Col 1^{15}.
[4] Jn 1^{1}. [5] Jn 1^{18}.

of Paul's chapters two definitions of the Christian ideal blend—'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God'; John makes Jesus stake the future on the 'other Paraclete.' These texts represent all schools of New Testament thought. Indeed, the New Testament is just 'the book of the Spirit.' It is not necessary to repeat the old proofs that in it the 'Spirit of God' and the 'Spirit of Christ' are one, nor to argue that he who has another's spirit and none other is sure to grow really like him. He who receives God's Spirit becomes Christ-like and God-like. This third notion of true manhood is synonymous with the other two.[1]

[1] C. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Society in its Historical Evolution.*

The Parable of the Unrighteous Steward.

By Frederick Eden Pargiter, M.A., formerly Judge of the High Court, Calcutta; Author of art. 'Puranas' in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.*

Sermons and discourses have often been delivered on the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward (Lk 16[1]), but none that I know of has seemed really to fathom his conduct, and I venture to put forward an explanation of it, which some insight into the devious ways of unscrupulous men, gained through twenty-five years' magisterial and judicial experience in India, has suggested. I set out the parable, quoting from the Revised Version with inverted commas, and inserting remarks and comments to elucidate the meaning of the various incidents.

'There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he was wasting his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, "What is this that I hear of thee? Render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward." And the steward said within himself, "What shall I do, seeing that my lord taketh away the stewardship from me? I have not strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed."' He had lost his position because of dishonesty and embezzlement, and no one would employ him. He was absolutely 'broke.' The only livelihoods open to him were manual labour and begging. He had led a life of respectability and ease, hence he was physically unable to do manual work, and he could not face the shame of begging. He thought a while and then decided —'I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they (the debtors) may receive me into their houses.'

The account required of him would have shown as income (1) all the money and goods he had received, and (2) all debts of money and goods outstanding due to the estate; and as expenditure (*a*) all payments made rightly by him, and (*b*) the amounts spent that he could not justify or account for and so had wasted (embezzled). He did not, however, apparently trouble himself to go through all his papers and draw out that account fully and correctly, but took a summary course. 'And calling to him each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, "How much owest thou unto my lord?" And he said, "A hundred measures of oil." And he said unto him, "Take thy bond (Greek 'writings,' that is, 'account'), and sit down quickly and write fifty." Then he said to another, "And how much owest thou?" And he said, "A hundred measures of wheat." He saith unto him, "Take thy bond (account) and write fourscore."'

He asked all those who were in debt to the estate to say how much their several debts were, and each one made his admission. Their admissions may have been correct or may have been understatements, but this question is immaterial, because he did not dispute over that and just accepted them as accurate. (If their admissions were understatements, this does not alter the following exposition, but only aggravates his and their conduct.) Instead, however, of taking from them their personal accounts accordingly, he proposed to them to write out that they owed less than they admitted. He thus offered each debtor a substantial reduction of liability. He himself was 'broke,' yet it still lay in his power to do them a seemingly good turn, and his proposal suggested to them that he was taking upon himself the liability for the difference between what they