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the connexion is really quite arbitrary, for the section on the Baptist, 3^{22-30}, is out of place and should be placed after 2^{12}, the real connexion of 3^{31} being with 3^{21}.) By adopting the final order suggested in paragraph 5 above, it is the officers who are sent to arrest Jesus in 7^{32}; they form part of his audience during the whole discourse 7^{33-36} plus 8^{21-59}; they allow him to escape at 8^{59}, and are themselves called to account by their masters at 7^{45}.

In conclusion it may, I think, be fairly claimed that the final order suggested above is the best obtainable, while the application to it of Spitta's theory, though admittedly purely tentative, at least serves to corroborate the results previously arrived at from a study of the internal evidence, and, in addition, suggests a possible explanation for the insertion of the much-debated Pericope de adultera.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

God's Lamp.

'The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord.'—Pr 20^{27}.

ARE there any words in the English language you specially like or dislike? I'm sure there are. For most people have words they love and words they hate. Now, if it comes to hating, there's one word I really do hate, and I wonder if any of you hate it too. It is the word 'conscience.' To begin with, it's a horrid word to spell. You get so mixed between 's's' and 'c's.' And then there is a sound of reproof and blame and disagreeableness about it. It always seems to be pointing a long finger at you and saying in a hoarse whisper, 'Oh! oh! who did wrong?'

I know some one who hates the word just as much as I do. She has hated it ever since the first time she heard it, and that was when she was a very small girl indeed. She was a lucky little girl, for her home was in the middle of a large garden. All day long she played in that garden, and James, the gardener, allowed her to help him with his work, and even gave her a little spade and rake and hoe for her very own. One day there was great excitement, for Nancy's father had brought home a wonderful new thermometer for the garden. It was a very delicate kind of thermometer, and instead of standing up like most thermometers it had to be kept lying on its side. It was carefully fixed to a cross board nailed to the top of an upright, and Nancy and her two sisters and the gardener and the gardener's boy were all well warned that they were on no account to touch it, as moving it would put it wrong.

Well, that thermometer fascinated Nancy. She passed it fifty times a day, and every time she passed it she felt she *must* give it ever such a little wiggle just to see what would happen. This went on for about a week, and then one morning Nancy stretched out her hand and was going to give it the little wiggle when she suddenly heard the gardener's step coming round the corner, and the little wiggle changed into a very big wiggle. But what happened Nancy did not stay to see.

That evening father was very angry. 'Some one has been touching that thermometer!' he said to mother. 'Was it any of the children?' Mother walked into the nursery. 'Did any of you children touch the garden thermometer?' she asked. And two surprised little girls said 'No' quickly, and one guilty little girl stammered 'No' slowly. I suppose mother heard the guilt in the stammered 'No,' but all she said was, 'Ah, well! It must have been James. Your father is very angry about it. He will have to speak to him.' Then she shut the nursery door, and Nancy felt as if she had been shut into some horrible torture chamber. A voice inside kept repeating, 'You touched that thermometer, and you told a lie about it, and you are so mean that you are going to let James be blamed—James who is such a friend of yours—and father is so angry, perhaps James will lose his place.' For half an hour that went on, over and over again, till at last Nancy felt she must scream with the agony of it. Instead she flung open the nursery door, rushed through to the sitting-room, and, burying her face in mother's lap, sobbed, 'Oh, mother, *it was me, not James*, who touched that thermometer! And I told a lie about it!' Later in the evening Nancy overheard mother

say to father, 'I knew the child's conscience would trouble her and make her confess.' And ever since that day Nancy has hated the word 'conscience,' and thought of it as a horrible thing that tortures you till you confess.

Now I don't want you, like Nancy, to think of 'conscience' as something that tortures you till you confess. I want you to think of it as our text does. For 'the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord' just means 'conscience is God's lamp.' Suppose we think of conscience as a *friendly lamp* instead of an instrument of torture. That is the right way to think of it. You know how it is if you are sent into a dark room to hunt for mother's scissors. Before you begin to find the scissors—if there is no electric light to snap on—you have to find the matches. Unless you have eyes like pussy, who is said to be able to see in the dark, you bump against the sharp edge of the sideboard, and come a cropper over a footstool, and almost knock over one of the ornaments on the mantelpiece before you get those matches. How thankful you are when your fingers touch the box! You strike a match and stretch up to the gas bracket and suddenly everything in the room becomes visible, and the furniture is no longer dangerous to meet.

Now life without cons—I beg your pardon—God's lamp, would be like hunting in the dark for matches—nothing more or less than a dangerous fumble. But God gives us this precious lamp to shine on life's way and to show us what to avoid. And if we trust to its guiding we shall not readily walk into danger.

But I'm sorry to tell you there are some foolish people who refuse to be guided by God's lamp. Quite a number of them indeed turn it into a dark lantern. You know what that is. It is a lantern with a movable shutter which can be closed so that no light shows. You've all seen that kind of lantern in pictures at least. It is used mostly by policemen and burglars, who don't want to show a light except when it suits them. So some people don't care to have God's light always shining on their path. It interferes with their plans, so they darken God's lamp by putting on a shutter—that is, they disobey their consciences and that darkens them for the time being. A few of them have even been known to keep the shutter on all the time. These have been people like the cruel Emperor Nero. And no one wants to imitate people like that, who are wicked as well as foolish.

Seeing that God's lamp is so useful and such a safeguard, don't you think we'd all be wise to use it as much as we can? It's the wisest way and the easiest too, for no one is too little or too stupid to see and follow God's light. Why, even your doggie at home obeys the lamp God has given him!

Let me tell you a story to finish—and a true story too—of a dog who obeyed that lamp. In his master's house there was one room in which he was not allowed to have his food. Being a sensible, well-trained dog, he quite understood and agreed to the arrangement. One day, however, when his master returned from business he found Rover looking very unhappy and restless. He kept trotting into the forbidden room and trotting out again, and every time he trotted in he looked up at his master as much as to say, 'Please do come here,' and every time he trotted out his eyes said, 'Are you not coming yet?' At last his master followed him into the room. Rover led the way to a dark corner and pointed with his nose at something. Then he looked up as if to say, 'I know I did wrong. Please forgive me.' What do you think the something was? Why, a bone, of course! He had been eating it there and had felt that he couldn't be happy till he had confessed his fault and been forgiven.

I think that, supposing we ever do disobey God's lamp, we couldn't do better than copy Rover—confess our fault and ask for our Master's forgiveness. What do you think?

The Best Christmas Gift.

'They saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts.'—Mt 2^{11}.

Let me tell you a legend that has come down to us about a great artist.

A brother and sister stood together watching a horseman dashing along a highway. The boy had a dreamy look in his eyes as he turned to his sister and said, 'Think of it, Catarina, that road leads to the wonderful city—to Venice where our St. Mark is.' His sister was older and less of a dreamer than he was. She had heard of troubles being in the city, and how people were so poor there that they sometimes hadn't even enough to eat. 'But, Tiziano,' she said, 'there are no wild flowers in

Venice. Are you tired of your own home amongst the Dolomites?'

'No,' he answered earnestly and somewhat sadly, 'but the artists are there, and if I could go I might study with the great Bellini and become famous.'

Catarina's voice sounded disappointed and impatient as she said, 'Don't talk so much about painting, Tiziano. The villagers are beginning to make fun of you. They say that unless you give up your dreamy ways you will come to nothing. Can you not choose a trade? Father wants you to be apprenticed to the cobbler. There are other things in the world besides painting.'

But Tiziano did not answer, he just shook his head. A whistle sounded and someone beckoned. 'They must be beginning to weave the garlands,' Catarina exclaimed, and they both ran off towards the village inn. It was June, when the Dolomite valleys are glorious with masses of gaily coloured flowers: and the very next day the Festival of Flowers was to take place. In a few minutes they joined the other people and began weaving garlands, gossiping and singing as they worked. Jokes were pointed at Tiziano the dreamer, Catarina unconsciously helping them on.

Ah, if only I had some paints, Tiziano thought. Maybe they would stop calling me a dreamer, for I am sure I could make a picture. Then perhaps I would be allowed to go to Venice.

How Tiziano's desire came to be gratified is a wonderful story.

The day after the Festival he noticed stains on the stone walk—stains that had been made by flowers crushed there the day before. They were bright and fresh as if painted, and put a new idea into his head. He did not mention the matter to any one, but with the first chance he crept away from the merry-makers and went out into the meadows. Catarina saw him go, and wondered what was in his mind. She followed, and overtook him on a hillside that was all aglow with blossoms. Like most sisters, she was inquisitive over her brother's doings. 'Whatever are you doing, Tiziano?' she called.

He hesitated for a moment and then said, 'I am going to paint a picture.'

She stood and stared at him. 'Of course you are,' she said teasingly, 'and without any paints.'

'I shall use blossoms,' he answered, 'the colours on the stone walk.' Then the practical Catarina was herself set dreaming. Tiziano, she thought, might after all become a great man. She too had noticed the stains on the stone walk. She would help him. So both together they went and gathered flowers of all colours, reds, pinks, blues, yellows, purple, lavender—such shades as had been in Tiziano's mind. Then they hurried to an old stone house that stood on land owned by their father.

Catarina wanted to watch him work, but he objected. 'I don't wish you to see my picture until it is finished,' he said, 'because at first it will not seem like a picture.' So for many days he worked alone with his flower paints. Catarina put fresh blossoms in at the window, near which he worked, and the villagers never knew.

One evening he came to the door of the house and called to his sister outside, 'It is finished, Catarina; and it is the best I can do.'

She went dancing in, filled with the joy of seeing her brother's finished work. But the merriment went out of her face and she spoke reverently, 'Oh, Tiziano, a Madonna!'

'Yes,' he said, 'a Madonna and Child, with a boy like me offering a gift. It is what is in my heart, Catarina.'

She started out to tell the news. 'Come and see,' she called to the villagers as they passed. 'Tiziano has painted a Madonna on the walls of the old stone house.'

The boy had heard the wonderful story of the *Babe of Bethlehem* told in such a way that he could not forget it. The flowers had breathed it, the breeze on the mountains had sung it. Quite alone in the little stone house and having no one who believed in him but his sister, the presence of the Madonna and her Child seemed to make the place holy. He fell down and worshipped, determining to grow up to be not only a great but a good man.

The village priest came to look at the fresco and was awed. He spoke little, he was too full of amazement, but his words pleased Tiziano's father: 'And it was painted with the juices of flowers! Il divino Tiziano!'

Tiziano was sent to Venice to study and became one of the marvels of the city. That was long, long ago. To-day, the villagers point to a statue that looks out towards the meadows in which Catarina gathered flowers for her brother, and say, 'Il divino Tiziano! The divine Titian!'

At Christmas-time the old, old story of the birth of Jesus Christ is in all our minds. Boys and girls, imagine Tiziano showing you his picture this morning and saying, 'It is a Madonna and Child, and a boy like me offering a gift. It is what is in my heart.'

Don't you also want to offer a gift? The gift that Jesus Christ—the Babe of Bethlehem—wants from you most of all is your love.

Come sail with me,
O'er the golden sea,
To the land where the rainbow ends.
Where the rainbow ends,
And the great earth bends,
To the weight of the starry sky.
Where tempests die
With a last fierce cry,
And never a wind is wild—
There's a Mother mild,
With a little child
Like a star set on her knee.
Then bow you down,
Give Him the crown,
'Tis the Lord of the world you see.[1]

The Christian Year.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Revaluation.

'Behold, I make all things new.'—Rev 21^5.

The tragedy of our age is calling us to rethink and restate with courage what we truly believe. Our slushy optimisms and sloppy systems of sentiment have broken down, and resolutely we have to think out what are the enduring moral and religious verities. We have to state the Christian thought, which seeks to gather the fruit of mankind's passion, and which seeks to save this poor broken world of ours. This revaluation has to cover the whole ground of religion from the doctrine of God itself; for, as Bacon said, 'It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him.' Some changes of thought have to be made in our personal life as well as in our corporate life.

1. The first has to do with what we mean by faith. The war brought to men of imaginative mind a sense of disaster, as if the bottom had fallen out of their world. Men felt that life was of unstable tenure, and our footing at best was insecure, but to many this brought also the sense of a great adventure. Life itself was seen to be a venture. The war in disclosing so dramatically a moral issue came as a challenge to faith. We surely came to see that faith at bottom is only venture, the venture the soul makes on life, the venture it makes on the world, the venture it makes on God. We had hardened it down to opinion and creed, but the essence of faith is simply venture. Donald Hankey, in *The Student in Arms*, said, 'True religion is betting one's life that there is a God.' We were forced to bet our life on a venture.

2. Along with this revaluation of faith comes a revaluation of some other qualities, like courage. The opposite of faith is not doubt, but fear. This is the New Testament contrast: 'Fear not, only believe.' Courage is the root virtue of human nature. You can cut a figure out of wood or stone, but you can do nothing with mud. Putty and clay are useless, unless they can be made to harden. This is the truth which in depraved form lurks in the German militarist mania. Courage is also the root of all the other virtues. Without it all the others fail at the pinch. A man may believe in truth and may love truth, but without courage in a crisis he will lie. Good intentions, without the courage to carry them out, are useless and only deceive the soul. Moral courage is closer than has often been thought to physical courage; for man is a unity. The average man's ethics which stigmatizes cowardice is right. The unpardonable sin is cowardice. The world never had more cause to admire and wonder at human courage than to-day. We cannot hold mean views of men who displayed such indomitable, inexhaustible courage. It makes no difference whether we explain some of it as mass courage. Men who could be made, however it was done, to face death so resolutely can be made to face the hardest tasks of life. There was no hope so forlorn that it could not get its volunteers. What this can mean for the huge problems of our day is incalculable. The misgivings in men's minds, the heart-sinkings about the future, the timidity which looks with shrinking on untried paths, can all be dissipated by courage. To conquer fear is the soul's triumph, and such triumph we now know is not rare.

[1] *Rough Rhymes of a Padre*, p. 38.

3. There is also a revaluation of life itself. This has been a common experience of our time. The sense of disaster caused by the shock of war, which drove so many to make a great affirmation of faith, forced them also to ask the old question, What is life? When a boy could write from the trenches that he had learned that it does not matter when a man dies, that it only matters how, all of us were compelled to make our judgments of life in *terms of quality* and not merely in terms of quantity. Many a mother asked in anguish if she had nurtured her son carefully and trained him lovingly only to have him cast in his youth as rubbish to the void. But many must have found some comfort from the thought that success in life means more than mere length of living. What more could a man ever achieve, lived he for centuries instead of years, than give his life to the highest he knows and for the highest? What more could he do in all the years of living than give himself to the greatest cause that comes his way? This is the power of the religious appeal, that it ties a life up to the greatest cause of all, and so saves it from failure. What takes the heart out of men is the thought of amounting to nothing, living for nothing, and dying for nothing. To give the full measure of devotion to a great cause is success in life. Ben Jonson long ago made the contrast in the judgment of life according to quantity or to quality.

> It is not growing like a tree
> In bulk, doth make man better be;
> Or standing long an oak three hundred year,
> To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:
> A lily of a day
> Is fairer far in May,
> Although it fall and die that night . . .
> It was the plant and flower of Light.
> In small proportions we just beauties see;
> And in short measures life may perfect be.

We too naturally take the vulgar standard of judgment by bulk, and value men and things by the splash they make. If we can keep this finer standard, which was forced on so many through sorrow, it will make life simpler and nobler.

4. We are losing one of the great opportunities of our time, if we are failing also to put a new emphasis on sacrifice and service. Surely they have acquired a deeper meaning. In the mass, as we view the tragedy of our day, we see this torn human life of ours with an infinite pity for its infinite pathos. Left there, it would be only empty sentiment, this vainest and most dangerous mood of the soul. To be content to speak sentimentally of the countless sacrifice in the colossal struggle would be to turn it into an idle spectacle. We must use our natural feeling to impress character and to affect life. For one thing we must surely have a new humility of soul as we think of what men have done for us. It was for us they held at such cost the frontier of civilization, for us they were wounded and bruised, for us they suffered and died; 'the chastisement of our peace was upon them, and with their stripes we are healed.' It is our flaming faith that one day they and we shall see of the travail of their soul and be satisfied; but only if we are one in spirit with them in the sacrifice. What of us, if we do not even see the burden and the glory of our generation?

We are bound up in a brotherhood of sacrifice and service. We will be unworthy of all that our heroic dead have saved for us, if we lose the conception of life as held for public ends. All our social selfishness and cruelties are due to a lack of imaginative insight, for which to-day there is no excuse.[1]

> Snug in my easy chair,
> I stirred the fire to flame.
> Fantastically fair,
> The flickering fancies came
> Born of heart's desire.
>
> I shut my eyes to heat and light;
> And saw in sudden night,
> Crouched in the dripping dark,
> With steaming shoulders stark
> The man who hews the coal to feed my fire.

Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity.

Sleeping.

'Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.'—Mk 13^{36}.

1. There is a sleep which is begotten of familiarity with the truth. That which once startled us may ultimately minister to a deeper slumber. The Christmas bells awoke me in the hours of night, but I lay awake until they lulled me into sleep again. The alarm bell which originally stirred us into the brightest vigilance may act at last as a

[1] Hugh Black, *The Cleavage of the World.*

lullaby to lead us into deeper sleep. The green of the spring-time arrests us by its novelty, but by summer-time the observation of most people is satiated, and the attention has gone to sleep. The permanent grandeur of the night sky has long since induced the majority of people into a profound sleep, while a display of fireworks will stir them into most deliberate attention. What is the principle underlying all this? Unwilled observation is soon satiated and goes to sleep. Willed observation, vision with executive force behind it, is full of discernment, and is continually making discoveries, which keeps the mind alert and interested. Get a will behind the eye, and the eye becomes a searchlight, and the familiar is made to disclose undreamed-of treasure. We must 'stir up the mind' by allying it to a strong, deliberate, and directive will. If the familiar thing is to abound in fruitful revelations, if I am not to sleep in mental satiety, I must control my observations with a strong hand, so that, in all its work, it is as sharp and penetrating as a needle.

Is not all this equally true as to our familiarity with Christian truth? Here in the Word of God we have pictures of the life of Christ, revelations of His mind and disclosures of His heart. We may become so familiar with them that our attention goes to sleep. There are no further unveilings, no novelties, nothing unexpected, and the familiar vision ceases to arrest our attention. What do we need? We need to 'stir up the mind,' to put some force behind it, to direct it in a strong, fresh, eager inquisitiveness. We need to put it into the attitude of 'asking,' 'seeking,' 'knocking,' and the familiar presence will reveal itself in unaccustomed guise. The familiar puts on wonderful robes when approached by a fervent inquisitor. Truth makes winsome revelations to her devoted wooers. Every day the ardent lover makes a new discovery. If men would come to the familiar pages of God's Word with mental alertness analogous to that which they bring to the inspection of a stock-and-share list, they would have gracious surprises, which would make the heart buoyant and glad. The Book promises its wealth to the wakeful. There is no book has more to say about 'unfolding,' 'revealing,' 'manifesting,' 'showing,' 'declaring,' and the only condition is that the spectator of the promised apocalypse should be an ardent seeker, stirring up his mind in eager and determined quest.

2. There is a sleep which is begotten of decided opinions. There is a very suggestive sentence in one of John Stuart Mill's essays: 'The fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful, is the cause of half their errors.' That is to say, a decided opinion may make a man thoughtless about his opinion and may induce a mental sleep. It so frequently happens, that when a man has attained a decided opinion he ties a bit of tape about it, puts it away in a pigeon-hole, and lapses into unconscious slumber. He leaves off thinking about it. When the matter was still doubtful, he was engaged in constant examination. While the conclusion was still uncertain, he remained a persistent explorer. But now that his judgment is decided, the explorer goes to sleep. What is the issue? We lose a thing when we cease to think about it. It is well to have decided thoughts, but it is bad and fatal to stop thinking. There is need in every life for a fresh stream of thought to be continually playing about the most cherished opinions, principles, and beliefs. When the photographer is developing his plate in a dark room, he keeps the liquid in constant motion, moving over the face of the plate, and evolving into clearer outline its hidden wealth. Our thought should be continually moving over the face of truths and beliefs, bringing out into discernment lines and beauties never before conceived. You have a very decided opinion on the Atonement? Then there is a peril that you may cease to think about it. The thing is settled and you may go to sleep. The man who has not a very decided opinion about the Atonement may be moving with doubtful thought round about the great mystery, and may, after all, be gathering fruit which may be unknown to you. Let us 'stir up our minds' and turn the stream of our thought on to our accepted beliefs and our decided judgments, that the wealth of these may not remain stationary, but may reveal more and more of the hidden wisdom of grace.

3. There is a sleep which is begotten of failure. Success can make a man sleep by making him cocksure. Triumph can make men careless and thoughtless. The glare of prosperity can close men's eyes in slumber. There is a 'destruction that wasteth at noon-tide.' A perilous sleep can also be begotten of failure. When repeated disappointment visits the life, when the 'wet blanket' is frequently applied to our fervent ambitions,

when the fire in the soul is damped, and enthusiasm dies out, the life is inclined to a most dangerous sleep. How many there are who were once awake and enthusiastic in civic service, or in seeking social ameliorations, or in the ministry of Christian instruction, who are now sunk in the indifference of a profound sleep. They were disappointed with the results. The grey conditions at which they worked never gained any colour. The unattractive lives to which they ministered were never transfigured. The desert never revealed even a tiny patch blossoming like the rose. And so their enthusiasm smouldered. They became lukewarm. Their reforming energy abated. They went to sleep. This is 'the pestilence that walketh in darkness.' Is not this the peril that the Apostle Paul anticipated for young and enthusiastic Timothy? He was beginning his Christian discipleship, fervent, hopeful, optimistic, with the eager consecration of his entire strength. The Apostle knew that disappointment would confront him, that cold water would be thrown upon his enthusiasm, that many a hopeful enterprise would issue in apparent failure, and the young recruit would be exposed to the indifference of a fatal sleep. 'Stir up the gift that is in thee.' Stir it into flame! Keep thy first love ardent and vigorous. Feed thy fires. Let disappointment only deepen thy consecration, and failure keep thee near the well-spring of eternal life.

4. There is a sleep which is begotten of the enchanted ground. When difficulties appear to have vanished from our life, when Apollyon no longer encounters us with dreadful front, when there is no lion in the way, when the giants are miles in the rear, and the precipitous hills, that took so long to climb, are away back on the far horizon, then we are in imminent peril of a most dangerous sleep. 'I saw then in my dream that they went on till they came to a certain country, whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy if he came a stranger into it. And here Hopeful began to be very dull and heavy of sleep, wherefore he said unto Christian, "I do now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up mine eyes. Let us lie down here and take a nap." "By no means," said Christian, "lest sleeping, we never awake more. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober."' And how did these two pilgrims contrive to keep themselves awake as they journeyed over the enchanted ground? '"Now then," said Christian, "to prevent drowsiness, let us fall into good discourse." "With all my heart," said the other. "Where shall we begin? Where God began with us?"' The great dreamer has summed up their conversation in this marginal note, 'Good discourse prevents drowsiness.' They had an experience meeting. They began with the very first stages of their conversion, and told each other the story of God's redeeming grace. They reviewed the miracles of the Lord's mercy. That is the secret safety for any traveller over the enchanted ground. Begin your review 'where God began with you.' Tell over to yourself, or to others, the early story of the Lord's dealings with you. Stir up your mind with a rehearsal of the wonders and favours of God, and so far from lapsing into sleep, you shall be kept awake in a grateful song. The grace of the Lord will occupy your heart with such intensity that spiritual lapse will be impossible. 'Watch therefore . . . lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.'[1]

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Kingdom of Heaven.

'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'—Mt 4^{17}.

The royal note of an approaching kingdom is sounded in divers ways all through Jewish history. Prophetic messages ministered to the yearning hope from age to age. God would have His day when He would lead His people into a kingdom, glorious, triumphant, everlasting. Men watched with unsleeping vigilance for this realm of God, saluted it from afar, but never set foot within its sacred borders. At last the prophetic voice fell into silence, choked by the narrow legalism of the scribes; but the hope of the kingdom was imperishable, and soon the apocalyptic seers began to paint their glowing pictures of an imminent day when God should vindicate His holy ones by setting up the kingdom of their dreams. The Book of Daniel, the Book of Enoch, the Psalms of Solomon, and many other writings, express in varying strain these deathless aspirations, with renewed power and fascination.

Under such conditions of religious expectation Jesus began to preach. His opening proclamation was, 'Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Mt 4^{17}). Thus the people's phrase became the Master's theme. He associated Himself with

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Brooks by the Traveller's Way*.

their hopes, but gave those hopes a broader and more spiritual meaning. Although some writers have argued otherwise (*e.g.* Weiss), there is no trace in the teaching of Jesus either of a political or of a national kingdom of God. The vision of world-rule, presented on the mountain-top, which constituted the second temptation (Lk 4^5), plainly teaches that Jesus repudiated the narrow Jewish conceptions of the kingdom. The old phrase on His lips became the medium of a loftier idea. The genius of the Master, working with the brushes and colours of the Jewish seers, has painted a picture of the heavenly realm whose spiritual beauty far surpasses the cruder conceptions of former days.

What did Jesus mean by the kingdom of heaven? His conception had two aspects. It looked to the supremacy of God, and it looked to the blessedness of man. The former was the chief consideration, and the recognition of it was the necessary prelude to the realization of the latter.

1. Dalman in his book, *The Words of Jesus*, gives cogent reasons for the view that when our Lord spoke of the kingdom of heaven He meant the sovereignty of God. That is to say, He laid the emphasis on the supreme rule of God in human life as the essential mark of the kingdom. Once that rule is established and recognized the spiritual perfection and blessedness of mankind will follow.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this primary aspect of the kingdom has often been disregarded. Indeed, the notion of a golden age of prosperity, of perfect social conditions, in short of Utopia, is even to-day the chief element in popular ideas of the kingdom. Such notions are not wrong in themselves, but they err in placing first what should be second; what indeed cannot be fully realized except as a consequence of the recognition of God's sovereign rule. The teaching of Jesus does not countenance any view of the kingdom of heaven which either excludes God or puts God second. It is a capital error to throw out of focus the Master's vision of the kingdom by stressing the good of man and forgetting the supremacy of God. The kingdom that Jesus sees and pictures is one of human hearts rendering perfect loyalty and love to the Supreme Father of men. When He taught His disciples to utter the petition, 'Thy kingdom come,' the idea in His mind was adequately summed up in the succeeding phrase, 'Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth.'

2. But there was another aspect to the kingdom in the mind of Jesus. The reverse side of the sovereign rule of God was the blessedness of man. Dalman says, 'The completed establishment of God as sovereign implied, for those who experienced it, absolute happiness.' This accurately expresses the teaching of our Lord. The kingdom does indeed mean the supremacy of God, but the rule of God is the sufficient cause of the joy of man. Hence it is that Jesus associates with the kingdom those festal characteristics which appear in the joy of the man who found hidden treasure, in the parable of the Great Supper, and in the rejoicings of the Marriage Feast. The members of the kingdom freely obey a rule which inspires them with happy and abiding gladness, seeing that with full spiritual sympathy they enter into the joy of their Lord.

If we bring the message of Jesus concerning the kingdom into relation with modern life, and express it in common terms, what does it mean? It means that submissive love and loyalty to God in the hearts of men should be the end of our endeavour. It means that only so can those conditions be secured which result in permanent benefit to individuals and society. It means that the hope of a good time coming, apart from the recognition of God, is an unsubstantial mirage which will recede and fade as men toil painfully towards its delusive splendours. It means that whilst purer homes, better social conditions, and all modern schemes of social improvement are legitimate and desirable aims, they are not, in themselves, capable of creating the golden age of happiness which men see in wistful visions. These ideal conditions, with the ideal atmosphere of friendliness and love essential to their maintenance, can only come as men progressively acknowledge the supreme rule of a loving Father.[1]

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The Coming of the Kingdom.

'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'—Mt 4^{17}.

Is the kingdom a present reality or a future hope? At first the words of Jesus on this point seem to lack consistency, and thus some writers

[1] A. H. Lowe, *The Manner of the Master and Studies in His Teaching.*

maintain that Jesus always thought of the kingdom as present, whilst others as strongly affirm that He always viewed it as a future blessing.

There is, however, no reason to take an uncompromising stand for either of these positions. What Jesus has to say as to the time of the kingdom's manifestation is capable of being harmonized on broad and general lines, even though we may leave, here and there, some matters that cannot be fully explained.

The various sayings of Jesus which deal with this aspect of the subject need not now be set out in detail. It will be sufficient to notice that they fall into three classes, and to give an instance of each type. The first type consists of sayings which suggest the nearness of the kingdom, as when Jesus said, 'Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' The second implies that the kingdom is already present, as in the saying, 'The kingdom of God is among you.' The third contains sayings which seem to involve the gradual growth of the kingdom to a distant day of crisis. The parable of the Mustard Seed is an instance; and the figure of the wheat which slowly ripens and then is suddenly harvested is another example.

1. What did Jesus mean when He said that the kingdom of heaven was at hand? Schweitzer and his school might say that He referred to the great apocalyptic transformation and judgment which Jesus, in common with John the Baptist and others, was expecting in the immediate future. But the words do not necessarily carry this meaning. Do they not refer to the beginning of the kingdom rather than to its consummation? This seems more probable. The kingdom, foreshadowed for so long, is now definitely inaugurated. It is, so to speak, available in a new and special way. Jesus laid down the conditions of entrance, and defined its scope. The conditions were repentance and faith, and the kingdom was thrown open to all mankind. Never before had the kingdom of God been proclaimed on such broad and liberal terms. For the first time that kingdom was 'at hand,' that is to say, available in the living present to every class and race. Men needed not any longer to gaze across the ages for it; they had no more any need to yearn hopelessly for a kingdom which was the heritage of a select few. All might now come under this supreme rule of God, and in it find their highest good.

2. The next step in our study is to mark the kingdom as actually present. It was not very long after Jesus had proclaimed the imminence of the kingdom that He was able to say that it was being subject to violent capture, and that enthusiastic people were carrying it by storm. The facts of the gospel illustrate this word. Fishermen from the lake of Galilee, tax-gatherers from Capernaum and Jericho, teachers from Jerusalem, rich men from the country, sinners from the city streets, and strangers from Samaria and Sidon, were offering their allegiance to Jesus, in whom the sovereign rule of God was perfectly recognized and as perfectly obeyed. In other words, as men accepted Jesus they accepted the kingdom, and in His Person and work it was present. He Himself once said that His work of casting out demons was a proof that the kingdom of God had arrived (Lk 11^{20}). And in another place we read that He pronounced His disciples blessed because they saw what prophets and righteous men had in vain desired to see; which was nothing less than the kingdom. Moreover, when He said, 'The kingdom of God is among you,' He was only stating directly what is implied in many of His other sayings and parables. The theory that His work was simply a preparation for a future kingdom does not therefore seem capable of satisfactory proof.

3. But the third class of sayings mentioned above does find a place for the consummation of the kingdom in the future. The kingdom already inaugurated is destined to grow in the souls and societies of mankind. The parables of the Tares and Wheat, the Mustard Seed, and the Leaven seem clearly to teach this, and in the face of them it is difficult to maintain that Jesus looked for an immediate appearance of the perfected kingdom. He saw rather a process of development, an historical unfolding of the glories of the kingdom as men more and more submitted themselves to the rule of God. This process would have its stages, which in one parable He refers to as the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. And there are some of us who are inclined to believe, in view of the unimaginable periods of physical evolution, that the moral kingdom of Jesus is yet but 'a blade,' whose perfect beauty has still to come.

Such a view of the future development of the kingdom is not inconsistent with the belief that the kingdom will have its times of special crisis, its 'days of the Son of Man,' when there shall

suddenly break upon the vision of men a fresh revelation of its glory and power, such that the rule of God will seem to be on the verge of perfect victory. Was not Pentecost such a Day, when men felt the quickening winds of God's power and its cleansing flame? Was not the Reformation such a Day, when hoary superstitions perished and an epoch of living faith began? Was not the eighteenth-century revival another such Day, when vicious and hardened sinners came, with broken cries of penitence, to the feet of Jesus? Are not such momentous experiences worthy to be described in the glowing colours of Jesus, as a coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory?[1]

[1] A. H. Lowe, *The Manner of the Master and Studies in His Teaching.*

Thirty Years of Palestine Exploration.

By R. A. S. Macalister, Litt.D., F.S.A., Professor of Celtic Archæology, University College, Dublin; Formerly Director of Excavations in Palestine.

Just thirty years ago there was published a brochure of modest appearance, bound in cardboard, containing 62 pages and 10 plates, and bearing the simple title *Tell el Hesy* (*Lachish*), by W. M. Flinders Petrie. This little work, of which it is now extremely difficult to obtain a copy, was nothing less than the foundation-stone of a new science. It was the report of the first excavation made in one of the many mounds that cover the ancient country towns of Palestine.

Petrie's excavation of Tell el-Hesy was of course not the very first excavation that had ever been made in the country. Some tentative work of this kind had been done by others in previous years, at Jerusalem and elsewhere. But it was the first conducted on modern scientific lines. In previous excavations the directors were not aware of the immense importance of the 'unconsidered trifles' that an ancient site contains. Large buildings and, especially, written documents were their objective; and their work was, if not actually, at any rate unconsciously, subservient to the definite aim of finding answers to the many questions regarding the nature and authenticity of the Biblical texts, which were being asked with more and more insistence from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. It is not too much to say that the excavator who works with any *arrière-pensée*, however honourable it may be, courts disaster. His sole aim must be to find what is in his site, and then to see what legitimate deductions can be drawn from what he uncovers.

Petrie was the first to attach especial importance to the most seemingly insignificant finds — the chips of broken pottery, lying in profusion on the surface of the earth, or scattered through the buried strata. To his expert eye these fragments told a tale to which his predecessors had been blind and deaf. As a result of his six weeks' exploration, the science of Palestinian ceramics was established on a sound basis, and a powerful new instrument was put into the hands of excavators to enable them to date their sites. It was proved that every age had its own special style of pottery, distinguished by ware, shape, ornamentation, and manner of baking; and that, therefore, when a site or a stratum contained pottery of a certain kind, its date was fixed as absolutely as though a stone inscribed with the name of a historical monarch had been found there. Indeed, the evidence of the pottery is even more certain than that of an inscription. Thrown-away potsherds lie where they fall, and date the accumulation; but an inscribed stone may be moved from place to place, and may be discovered at last in very different surroundings, both topographically and chronologically, from those in which it was first set up.

Tell el-Hesy was an ideal site for beginning this work. It had been occupied for a long time, and had had its share of misfortunes, all marked in one way or another by traces left in its debris. Beds of ashes were a permanent record of conflagrations, and gave a chronological fulcrum—for everything under the bed must necessarily be older than the catastrophe, everything above it must be later. A river had scarped the side of the mound, so that the edges of all the strata were exposed; it was