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the standard Assyrian one embodied in the Epic of Gilgames is a combination of at least two of them.

Professor Clay, however, is not content with giving the text and translation of the Babylonian versions with full notes and commentary; he is the protagonist of the theory which would derive Babylonian culture from the Amorites or Western Semites instead of the contrary, and he endeavours to show that there are 'Amorite' and non-Babylonian words and other elements in the Pierpont Morgan version of the legend of the Flood which justify him in calling it a Hebrew story. I confess that here I cannot follow him; his evidence for 'Amorite' words and expressions seems to me to rest either upon more or less arbitrary interpretations or upon the assumption that because a word has not yet been met with in Babylonian literature, or occurs in it but seldom, it must therefore come from a foreign source. Nor can I follow him in rejecting the North Arabian origin of that portion of the Semitic-speaking populations which have the physical characteristics of the dolichocephalic Beduin. How, for instance, would he explain the fact that the Semitic *âlu* 'city' originally signified a tent (Heb. *ohel*), while the Hebrew *'îr* is borrowed from Sumerian?

Nevertheless, the arguments with which he enforces his theory are suggestive and stimulating, and there is an element of truth at the bottom of them. If the Amorite peoples of Western Asia first received their culture from Babylonia they afterwards repaid it. Amorite dynasties held sway in early Babylonia and brought back to it a civilization and literature which they had modified and improved.

The book is full of new and interesting matter and abounds in points which suggest further notes. Thus in the quotation from Ælian the statement that the father of Etana-Gilgamos was 'a man of low degree' is explained by our finding in the Babylonian annals that Arwium, the predecessor of Etana, was 'the son of a plebeian.' *Dap(i)nu*, again (p. 37), was a royal title, and we may therefore conclude that the object of Etana's flight to heaven on the back of an eagle was to obtain possession of the royal insignia stored up there and thus establish himself as 'a mighty one' upon earth.

Professor Clay translates *ummu khubur*, the title given to Tiamat, 'the Deep,' in the Creation Epic, as 'mother of the assembly'; I should prefer to see in Khubur the name of the river of death which the dead had to cross and which was located in the north. Tiamat is called *Tiumê wê muqribat*, 'the Deep which collects the waters,' in one of the Assur tablets (*Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts*, p. 40, l. 22).

I have discovered only one error in this beautifully printed volume—'Erechian' instead of 'Eridian,' p. 41.

A. H. Sayce.

Oxford.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

A Field Preacher.

'Look at the flowers of the field.'—Mt 6^{28}.

Isn't it a pity that we hear so very little in the Bible of what Jesus did when He was a small boy like you? It would have been fine to know who called in for Him on a morning on the way to school; and how He managed to do all His lessons, and yet help the little ones at night; and how He did at games. I'm sure that they picked Him at once when they were choosing sides, for He would always play His best, and never be selfish, would think always of the side. We don't hear much of that, only of what He was and did when He grew up, and became a man and a minister. And yet we do know something of Him as a little chap. You very little bodies have a game that you call 'Houses.' You aren't just you. Oh no, you're Lady this, and Sir Somebody that, and you do the most wonderful things. And I think that, as a wee man, Jesus must have played too at 'pretending'—funerals and marriages, and all the rest of it. And perhaps they had great frolics of an evening at that home in Nazareth, with the workshop for a glorious playroom. At all events, Jesus seems to know about patches on boys' clothes, had seen His mother turn them round and

round, and shake her head because at last they wouldn't mend any more; remembered that one day when He was preaching. And He was very fond of flowers—was always, I think, that. Once, when He was preaching, He stopped and said, Oh, don't listen to Me, look at those flowers over there! They are far better preachers than I am! Look at them, and listen to them, and learn what they keep teaching you. Well, that's a funny kind of preacher, isn't it—a flower? And yet, you know what daisies are—those pretty little flowers that blush so prettily at the tips of their petals when the sun looks at them, like shy wee girls? Well, a wise man once said that he had learned far more from a daisy—one of these little things you pulled and threw away when you were making chains of them—than from all the wisest men in all the world. So let us take a flower, say a white lily with its golden heart—for all the world like your little yellow-haired brother lying fast asleep in his white bed—or any flower at all, even the commonest of them, and look at it as Jesus bids us do, and see what it can teach us—this little 'field preacher,' as Wesley called the men that preached out in the open air.

The first thing is Perseverance. What a great big hard word! Yes, and the thing itself is often just as hard to do, though not to understand. For Perseverance just means keeping on; trying, and trying, and still trying, and never giving in though nothing seems to come of it. Some of you aren't just very clever, you haven't a quick brain, get puzzled over sums and things. And by and by you lose heart. It's not a bit of use, you pout. I can't do it; and never will, and so you throw the book away; and only do your lessons well enough to be able to say you did them; and don't stick in and do your best and most at all. I did, you say, but nothing came of it. I did try for a whole long week, and was as low down in the class as ever. It's no good. But if the plant said that, it would never have a flower at all. All through the winter it keeps working, working, working; and there is nothing to show for it all; never a shoot of green. But it keeps working, has made up its mind, and doesn't care how long it takes. And at long last up the little nose comes peeping through the earth; and the shoot grows, and leaves come out. Yet weeks and months go by and there is never a trace of any flower, but still it keeps on working, working, working. And, at last, look! There's a bud! A few weeks more of hard, hard toil, and the splendid blossom will be really there. And are you going to be beaten by a plant, to give up trying any more so soon, because it doesn't come at once?

But it's no use trying to be good, you say. I'm not that kind, am far too tempery and quick with my fists; just can't help being cross. I did try, but it made no difference. Last Saturday I had to field for hours and hours, and then they said that I was l.b.w. first ball, and I was sure I wasn't, and got ratty over it. Or Mother sent you for a message, and you went, sulky as a bear. Well, that was a pity, but do you know there are some flowers that work on for a whole hundred years with not one thing to hearten them. But they keep at it, and it really comes some day; and they keep trying, trying. I have seen a plant have its first blossom after a whole century. Up again, and stick in, and you will gain yours yet, if you keep trying like the flowers.

And then our wee field preacher shows us how to keep clean and beautiful. You know how bees love to go in and out among the flowers, how, getting pollen on their legs, they carry it from one flower to another, and spoil the colour of them, sometimes. I remember a bonnie flower of a lovely new colour, and all the summer people always stopped and said how beautiful it was. And next year we watched, and we waited for it, and then buds formed, and then they slowly opened, and—whatever was wrong? The beautiful flower was quite spoiled: it was all blotchy, like your little brother when he had measles—or scarlet fever was it?—only it had all kinds of colours mixed up in little bits. And the wise people told me that it was the bees that had done this. Ah, but there are some wise plants that shut up, and won't let insects in. No, no, they say, none of you and your meddlesomeness. I don't want to be made all queer and different colours, I want to keep white and clean, and they shut up tight. Remember that, and when some fellow wants you to listen to a nasty story, or tries to lead you into what you know is not playing the game, or tempts you, shut up at once, keep out these tiresome bees, and don't allow them to meddle with you.

But our little field preacher assures us that the most important thing of all is to remember to sow the proper seed. Don't forget, it says, that you can only have what you sow. It's no use sowing chickweed, and expecting to have sweet-peas or

mignonette. If you sow chickweed, you can pick only chickweed; if you want forget-me-not, then you must sow forget-me-not. And that's what we forget. Sometimes when you're late for breakfast you have been lying dreaming of how brave you're going to be when you grow up, of the daring and splendid things you are to do. I hope you will; but I don't think it's likely, because the other day at school, when the master was in a bit of a temper, you got scared and looked along at what the other chaps had written. But that's chickweed you're sowing, not sweet-peas. You can't do that kind of thing now, and be a brave man later. You're not sowing the proper seed. Or, you girls sometimes tell yourselves, Poor Mother looks dreadfully tired. Wait till I'm older, and how I'll look after her, and let her have a splendid time! Yet when she asks you to help her, you're so sulky, and so petted over it. You're sowing the wrong seed, you'll never get the flowers you are expecting. Root out the weeds and nettles, and begin to be what you would like to be, that's the one way of reaching it.

And lastly, says our wee field preacher, we must remember, that like flowers and weeds, we are all sending seeds flying about the world and making others round us either worse or better, either happier or else less happy. We mayn't believe it, we may never know, but it is true. And so it is very important what we do and are. There is a flower called ragwort, but most people call it Stinking Willie. It's rather pretty, but it has a horrid smell; and folk in Scotland say that it wasn't always there, that it was never seen until the Duke of Cumberland, who fought against Prince Charlie, brought some hay from Holland or from Denmark which had the seeds of ragwort in it, and they took root and grew, and sowed themselves further and further and still further, until all over Scotland you can find it now. And so if you are cross, you know well how that tends to sow itself, and spread out to the others; and soon they are as cross as you. We must take care. Ah, but the other side is just as true. Do you know the mimulus? It's rather like a little fool's cap for a fairy's head. It's yellow, with red spots; and people sow it in their gardens. But there's one place in Scotland where it grows wild like a weed; all along the burns and streams and the banks of a great river, there are lovely sheets of its living gold. And how did it get there? A wise man traced it back and back, until high up among the hills he came upon the ruins of a cottage, the garden of which lay beside a little burn. Some one had had a mimulus there, and its seeds fell into the water, and were carried down, and grew along the burn's banks; and the next year these seeded themselves further down; and so on every year, and then along a bigger stream, and so on to the river, here and there, over half a country. And all that beauty was traced back to that one plant up there beside the lonely cottage. The shepherd's wife was very busy. She had heaps of important things to do. There were the children to be sent off to school; and it was washing day; and before she was finished, she saw, far off, a visitor coming across the moors, and had to hurry and bake scones and oatcakes to be ready for her—there were all kinds of really important things to be put through, and she was rushed and tired, and when the visitor gave her the mimulus, she thanked her, and just stuck it in anywhere. And yet that was a really important thing, with far bigger results than all the rest, that will live on and on and on, far down the years. It must be fine to win a big war, or to write a great book that will never die, but is there anything more beautiful than to make a whole countryside bright with a new and lovely flower? And she did that, not knowing she was doing it, just sticking in a plant into her garden-bed. And every time that we are leal and true and honest and unselfish in little things that seem to us quite small and unimportant, seeds are carried, further than we know, and other folk are helped to become leal and true and honest and unselfish too.

Let us remember that, and always do our best. There is a bonnie little flower that grows near Rome, so I have heard, and nowhere, I believe, in Britain, except in one place, near Hexham. And they tell us that just as Scottish soldiers love the Scottish heather, like to have it sent to them, so, long ago, the Roman soldiers loved this little flower because it reminded them of home, and so they tried to grow it here and there; but it wouldn't take root; and by and by they gave it up, as hopeless. But at Hexham there was a cavalry depot, I've been told, and some hay that happened to come in a transport from Rome was sent up for the horses there. It had, it seems, the seeds of this little flower in it, and they took root, and sowed themselves, and there it grows unto this day, at Hexham as at Rome. They weren't think-

ing about it, it just came. And so I don't know that we need to worry too much about things. If we just do our duty, like these Roman soldiers in their barracks there, if we stick in to our lessons, and try to be unselfish in our homes, and good-natured at our games, perhaps the lovely plant of Christlikeness, which we can't grow at all, will spring up of itself, before we know.

Footprints.

'The way of his steps.'—Ps 85^{13}.

Not long ago I was told about a stone up in the north of Scotland, at Inverness, I think. I am not quite sure that I have got the story altogether right; but, as I remember, it was something like this. It seems that there is this stone. If you were to look at it you would say, 'Well, what about it: it's just a common bit of rock.' But look at it again! Don't you see that there is a footprint in it, a step made by a naked foot. What does that mean, do you think? Is it that once upon a time, long, long ago—oh yes, even before father was born, a great while before that—some man was walking, and set his foot down here, when the stone wasn't a stone as yet, was still loose sand wet by the tides of some forgotten sea? I wonder what kind of man he was. Well, we don't know. He left just this one footstep and passed on, and so we've lost him.

But you remember Robinson Crusoe, how in his lonely island yonder, one day, as, dressed in his goat skin and his peaked fur cap, he was wandering along as usual, he stopped with his eyes staring out of his head, staring at something—at a footprint in the sand. It wasn't his, for the tide would have washed it out since last he was that way. And what could it mean, for there was no one else? For months and years he had heard nothing but the sound of the breakers, and the wind in the trees, and the screaming of the parrot. And with that his heart leaped up. This may mean home, for somebody has come. And then it sank again. But who? For it might be a murderous gang of pirates, who would take his life.

And so he crept on, following the footsteps, to find out what kind of man it was, and came, as you remember, on a knot of cannibals getting ready to eat up poor Friday. He found out what they were like by following their footsteps.

Well, this man tells us that God too has been walking through the world, and if we follow in His steps we will come upon Him, and find out what He is like. And the best way to do that is to follow Jesus Christ. You know there was once a little laddie in a Highland village, just a wee fellow like you, who had to get up when he was sleepy, and go to bed dreadfully early as it seemed, who had lessons to do, and messages to run, and Mother to help, and the little ones to amuse, sometimes when the other boys were away out to the hills. He was just a boy like you, with little things like that to do. His footsteps are quite small, no bigger than your own. Yet follow him up and down that village, and you will learn what God is like. For that wee laddie was the very likest thing to God in all this world. Now, why? Why when people look at Christ do they think of God, just as when people look at you they think of Mother, and say how like her you have grown? Did you ever think what God is like? He is the very dearest, and nicest, and most unselfish Person in the world. And it is because Jesus was so unselfish, so good-natured, so sunny, so kind, so thoughtful for others, so forgetful of Himself in the little things He had to do, that people said, 'Why He is just like God, exactly like, has got God's very ways.'

And then when He grew up, follow His footsteps then. How many there are, all over the country, for He was always helping people. You can see them easily in the dusty roads. Look, here He went into a house. Yes, there was some one there tired or ill or unhappy, and He went to cheer them. And here He stopped short in the middle of the road. Yes, there was a woman whose son was being carried to his grave, and He stopped and gave him back to her. And here He went into a place where all kind of ill folk were lying wearily. Ah, yes! you are sure to find Him here. Always, you see, He is working for other people, never thinking of Himself, is being kind and good and generous and unselfish. And that is what God is like. We've found it out by following Christ's footsteps. He is the dearest, and the kindest, and most unselfish Person ever seen. He never thinks about Himself at all, but always what more can He do for some one else. Look at the things He does for you, day after day, and never tires of it. Wouldn't you like to put your arms about His neck, and thank Him for it all.

Well, but about my little story and the stone.

It seems it wasn't always here in Inverness, but once lay out on a hillside; and always when a chief of a certain clan died, the new, young chief put his foot into the footprint in the stone, and swore to be true to the clan; that he too, like those who had gone before him, would live for the clan, work for the clan, die for the clan.

And here are the footprints that Jesus Christ has left. And it is not enough to look at Him, and say how splendid and brave and kind He was. We must make up our minds to be so too, to follow in His steps. There's a man in the *Pilgrim's Progress* —don't you know the *Pilgrim's Progress*! well, you keep asking Mother to read it to you till she does, it's just dreadfully exciting—who says that whenever he sees a footprint of Christ on the ground, he covets to set his own foot in it. You see what that means, don't you? Here are you getting quite old, the young chief of your own life, won't you put your foot into the print upon the stone, Christ's print, and swear that, like Dad and Mother, and those who went before you, you too will think of others, work for others, live for others, and for Jesus Christ and God, will follow in Christ's steps? If you do, says this Psalmist, God will be on your side, and He will help you, guide you, strengthen you, show you how to follow in the way of His steps.

The Christian Year.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Heavenly Pattern.

'See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.'—He 8^5.

We have in the Book of Exodus the account of that visit which Moses paid to Jehovah Himself in the excellent glory above Mount Sinai—a visit lasting forty days and forty nights, during which time Moses received from God most explicit instructions concerning a tabernacle which he was to make for the particular dwelling-place of Jehovah among His people. And not only did he receive instructions —or, as we might say, specifications—concerning the structure of that building, but he also saw the heavenly things, the heavenly purpose, the great truths of which that building, when it should be finished, would be but a type, a kind of parable in gold and linen and brass and silver.

In other words, Moses was invited up into the presence of God and into the vision of the heavenly things in order that he might reproduce in type the things which he had seen. Again and again was given to him the solemn exhortation: 'See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.'

Just so, we are set in the world to have visions, to go up into the mount, to see, in the presence of God, the divine truth concerning human life, and then to work it out into character and conduct. It may be said without exaggeration, without qualification, that in a very real, thorough, broad sense, this sums up the thought of Christian living and of the purpose of God in our redemption. What may we learn from the tabernacle in the wilderness that shall help us in reproducing, in character and conduct, heavenly things? The commission to Moses was that it was to be beautiful. The life that you and I are commissioned to live, and the character you and I are under responsibility to form, must then be, first of all, beautiful.

1. There have been many ideals of character, and each of them, no doubt, so formed under Christian influence that they contain important elements of truth. The Puritan character was, in many respects, most admirable. It had in it elements of strength, of sincerity, of simplicity, of great loyalty to God, and of obedience to what they understood to be the will of God. No fragmentary form of character could be more noble than the Puritan ideal; and yet, as we look closely at that ideal, and as we measure it up against Christ, we begin to see that it is lacking precisely in this element of beauty. In Him there is nothing lacking, nothing in excess. Jesus Christ was perfectly strong. No Puritan was ever such a rock-man as He, and yet there was nothing hard or repelling in Christ's firmness; it was clothed in gentleness, and because He was supremely strong, He could be supremely gentle, patient, and sympathetic. In everything God makes there is first of all order, then comes symmetry. You remember in the 21st chapter of Revelation the description of the heavenly Jerusalem and its proportions; the breadth and the length and the height of it were equal. That is God's idea of symmetry. First of all, then, that tabernacle was beautiful, and it was beautiful because there was an ordered harmony in it. Everything was beautiful. And if we are reproducing the heavenly character here, then will, according to the prayer of the Psalmist, "the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

2. The second characteristic which we need to notice in the tabernacle built by Moses is its costliness. It was not a cheap thing which Moses built. God did not propose that the building in which His glory was in a very particular and local way to be manifested—and in itself a type of the costliest of all costly offerings, Jesus Christ—should be without cost. Everything in it was of the most precious materials. The very boards were overlaid with gold, solid gold. The seven-branched candlestick was of gold. There was embroidery of purple and scarlet and red and blue, with costliest work. The Holy Spirit endowed the craftsmen with more than earthly wisdom and skill that they might carve and embroider and engrave the beautiful details of that edifice. Splendid jewels flashed from the breastplate of the high priest and glittered upon his shoulders. Infinite skill of weaving and carving went into it. The first thought was beauty, then, and the second, costliness.

So these lives of ours will be heavenly in proportion as cost has gone into them. First of all, the unspeakable, the holy, the immeasurable gift and cost of our redemption. The costliest gift that heaven had was given for us, and we shall never come to the acme of Christian character and life without sacrifice—the best and costliest we have to give. It costs the renunciation of the lesser that we may have the greater, that we may grasp the choicest things and build them into character.

3. The third striking characteristic of the tabernacle is that its beauty was chiefly inward. All the glory of the gold, and all the beauty of the engravers' and weavers' and embroiderers' art was covered from outward observation. Christ was like that. He was not a man of marvellous beauty of visage and outward splendour of appearance: "When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Here, eminently, is a lesson for our day. The great temptation is to make religion a matter of externalities alone; but *to be* rather than to do is the central thought of God with regard to the character of His people; to be beautiful within.

There is the danger of hypocrisy, the danger that we shall seem to be more devoted, more consecrated, more engaged with the things of God than we really are. There is nothing for which Christ feels such an aversion as for hypocrisy. And the essence of hypocrisy is trying to seem to be a little sweeter, a little better, a little more devoted than we really are. When Moses came down from his forty days' visit with Jehovah, he had caught the very radiance of God's glory, but "Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone." There is nothing more odious than self-conscious piety.[1]

SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT.

New Testament Certainty.

'That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.'—Lk 1^4.

1. The books of the New Testament—from the Gospel of Matthew onward to the Apocalypse—though differing in style, object, and feeling, are marked by one characteristic which pervades them in every page—and that is, the *solemn tone of certainty* which runs through them. This characteristic distinguishes the New Testament books not only from all the Roman literature of the same age, but from all other Greek books that ever were written. In those literatures you have argument on both sides, guess, divination, doubt, mockery, despair. But here every page overflows with the feeling of certainty. The Evangelists and Apostles exhaust all the language of certainty in giving expression to their ideas. There are no words expressive of absolute truth and trustworthiness, and intense faith founded on that trustworthiness, which these men have not employed. 'This is the victory which has overcome the world' of doubters —'even their faith.'

2. This tone of absolute assurance is present when they speak of the facts of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension; when they speak of what they call the 'doctrine' founded on those facts—the doctrine of 'the end of sins' made by sacrifice; of 'the abolition of death' by the resurrection of the Life-giver; of our 'gratuitous justification in Christ'; of our salvation 'by grace, not of works, lest any man should boast'; of the renewing work of the Holy Spirit; and of the resurrection to Eternal Life. And the same tone of certainty is present in those expressions which describe their own personal assurance of forgiveness, of salvation, of enjoying the present and everlasting favour of God. Look where you will you cannot discover a line, a word, a syllable, of uncertain, or less certain, utterance. The trumpet always gives a 'certain sound,' and it is the sound

[1] C. I. Scofield, *In Many Pulpits*, 269.

which proclaims the presence in the host of the Conqueror of Death.

3. Take the Evangelists. There are four biographers of Christ—men of as different make as any four biographers who could be found to-day—and yet, although two of them do not claim even to write as eye-witnesses; although they write from different standpoints, and give, so to speak, pictures from four different angles—yet nevertheless, amidst all diversities of style and treatment, the general spiritual result, as we know, is to portray one and the same majestic Divine Man—'the same Jesus' in all the four Gospels—that one Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the very memory of whose sanctity has consecrated the whole land of Palestine as 'holy,' chiefly because His footsteps pressed it—and who has become the spiritual Lord of the modern world. And in these four Evangelists, so differing in the details of their books, the one feature common to all is this awe-striking impression of Certainty.

In the process of writing these four histories, with their numerous reports of astounding miracle, they make no concealment of the fact that the majority of the Jewish learned men of their day who beheld the miracles were not convinced by what Christ did and said; while they describe in artless language the early and only slowly dissolving doubts of some of their own most intimate companions, and even of the 'brothers' of Jesus. Yet amidst this strange frankness of report as to contemporary doubt and denial on the part of persons of the utmost social authority, and amidst all minor differences of statement as to times and places and successions of events—there prevails throughout the same calm and absolute tone of certainty as to the reality and truth of the general history, the miracles—the divine purity and glory—the death, resurrection, and ascension—of Him who spake the 'true sayings of God'—of Him on whose word the world might rest, as they did, with a confidence which purges the soul from an evil conscience, and takes away the sting of death.

4. Take the Apostles. The Apostles agree with the Evangelists that absolute certainty of truth, as far as they go, made known to them by inspiration, is to be found in their words. *Our* certitude, they say, is to be gained by receiving the gift of certainty in their instructions. In modern times men hold many different opinions on religion, most of them loosely and doubtfully, and they exert comparatively little influence on life. The Apostles, John, Peter, and Paul, very seldom express opinions of their own; but when they do, they carefully distinguish these from the absolute certainties which they set forth in the name of God, and which God had *revealed by His Spirit.* They set forth, not as a speculation but as certain truth, that Jesus was the predicted Christ—the Son of God; that His body was a temple of the Divine 'Logos,' or Word; that His death was a 'sacrifice' through which 'God reconciles the world to himself'; that our eternal life is a free gift in Christ; that our justification is gratuitous; that God's Spirit is given to renew man's nature in eternal life and holiness—and that such second birth is a pledge of everlasting salvation. And the very same temper of confident assurance of pardon, of acceptance with God, is inculcated on those who believe in Christ—the *assurance* of forgiveness, '*boldness to enter into the holiest,*' certainty of Resurrection to immortal life; so that we are to *rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

The Apostles do not teach a doctrine merely, they declare an experience. They never try to assure themselves. They do not argue as if they were doubtful; they do not asseverate as if they were afraid. When they speak about Christ, and about salvation in Him, they speak about what they have personally 'handled and tasted.' And they are always confident, enthusiastic, jubilant. They manifestly rest in indubitable conclusions, both of intellect and heart. The life has proved the doctrine; they are virtually one with Christ, in life and in death.

The New Testament is so familiar to us that we read it often without realizing this quality in the tone of its writers, in comparison with that of our contemporaries. With few exceptions the tone of all modern writing is that of inquiry, investigation, opinion. The exceptions are in mathematical works, where perfect demonstration permits absolute certitude; and in physical science, where up to certain lines (sometimes transgressed by eminent popular writers who mistake the opinions or theory of scientific men for science), there is reason for the expression of a similar degree of confidence. But with these exceptions the modern tone of writing in matters of historical criticism, of art, of morality, of policy, is limited by the sense of fallibility.

But the writers of the New Testament, one and all, set themselves forth as 'foundation stones' of

the moral edifice, of the new humanity—the living temple. 'Ye are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.' And respecting Him they say, speaking in the name of GOD, 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a ROCK, a solid rock, and he that believeth shall not be confounded.' [1]

5. Are we warranted in cherishing, in reference to that which they have communicated, anything like the same assurance as that which they possessed? On what grounds, if on any, are we justified in affirming that we, too, are certain that it is, in truth, the word of God that is revealed to us through them?

In nature, God may be said to be, in a sense, objectively revealed to men; but it is only when, and in so far as, a theistic interpretation is intuitively given to the facts of observation and experience. In like manner, it may be claimed that the facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ present objectively the truth which God would have us receive concerning His relations to us and our relations to Him; but here, also, it is only when by our own spiritual faculties we apprehend the spiritual significance of those facts that they become the medium of a Divine revelation to our minds and hearts. Of course, we could not have the revelation apart from the facts in the one case or in the other. Jesus Christ Himself is the grand central fact upon which all Christian revelation of the reflective and mediate types must rest; but it is by our own faculties that the revelation given through Him must be discerned. In the influence of His teaching and example upon us, we instinctively recognize the presence and power of the Divine. Our confidence in regard to this is confirmed when we find that many of our fellow-men bear testimony to the manifestation in Him of the same high ideals of character and life, and gratefully acknowledge the helpfulness of the influence which He exerts upon them. It is in this way that the testimony and fellowship of others corroborates our personal convictions and assurance.[2]

The Apostles were not ashamed of their message; they gloried in their Lord; the thought of the Church kindled in them all the passion of loyalty which youth has in its pure love and the patriot squanders gladly for his fatherland. They commended their gospel to the world not with the voice of deprecation, but with the confidence of a passionate faith. No other way: no other name: no other king!

The Church must regain that note if it is to be heard again by the world. Colourless, tame, trembling societies do not last. The gospel, with all its myriad points of contact with things human, with all its tenderness and sympathy, has nevertheless a challenge and a defiance, implicit in its very being. The Word of the Christian Church may be true or false, they say; but if any company of human beings believe it whole-heartedly they have no right to be apologetic. They must proclaim it proudly, with heads uplifted and voices straining to tell its glory. The Church will only regain its true pride by thinking more of its Lord, and His work and commission. The words used by Spenser of his love should be true of the Church:

In that proud port which her so goodly graceth,
While her fair face she rears up to the skies,
And to the ground her eyelids low embaseth,
Most goodly temperature ye may descry,
Mild humblesse mixt with awful majesty.

Such 'humblesse' may be blended still with the majesty and dignity of the Church, which is the Bride of Christ, and the Pillar and Ground of the Truth. Of all apologies for the Faith, the only ones to receive a hearing are the proud and fearless words of men or Churches which are not ashamed of their confession and do not shirk all that is involved in it.[3]

[1] E. White, *On Certainty in Religion*, 14.
[2] J. M. Hodgson, *Theologia Pectoris*, 89.

ADVENT SUNDAY.

'When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son.'—Gal 4[4].

St. Paul tells us here that the birth of the Redeemer and the manifestation of God's love in the Incarnation did not come haphazard. It came 'in the fulness of time,' and it is of the first advent of Christ and the preparation of the world for it that we would think to-day.

Let us first, then, consider the Time. It was the time when for the first time in its history the Pax Romana, or Roman Peace, gave rest to a world distracted by almost continuous war. From the accession of Augustus, about twenty years before the birth of Christ, to the year A.D. 230, when the Goths, Vandals, and other northern nations began

[3] *The Times*, 2nd February 1918, p. 9.

their attacks upon the Roman Empire, that is, for some two hundred and fifty years, peace reigned generally throughout the civilized world. There had been many great empires before that of Rome—Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Phœnician—but none of them had ever succeeded in bringing about a world peace, nor has such a peace ever happened since in the history of the world. It is not a little remarkable, and cannot be accidental, that the birth of Christ happened at the beginning of this period, and that the preaching of the gospel was followed by this quiet time, which did so much to help forward its spread throughout the world. The Romans contributed to the spread of the gospel unconsciously in other ways. First by the magnificent roads which they built all over Europe, and in parts of the East. They were built on a six-foot foundation of rock and were perfectly straight. Many of them exist to this day in England. An excellent system of post-horses made travelling as quick and easy as it was anywhere, until the invention of the steam-engine, and a system of fast posting carried letters to all parts of the empire as quickly and more safely than mails were conveyed a hundred years ago. Intercommunication was also largely helped by the army system, under which recruits from all parts of the empire were constantly being transferred from one part to another. We know that many of the early Christian converts were soldiers, and especially officers, and they helped largely to spread the gospel. The system of appeals to Rome, of which St. Paul took advantage, also helped to circulate persons and intelligence from one part to another. The general decay of national religions, consequent on the conquests of Rome, which caused people to lose faith in the power of their national gods, was also a potent instrument in preparing the world for the coming of Christ. We know that there was a very general expectation of the coming of a world-Saviour testified to by the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil (in which he speaks of the expected birth of a Child in whom the golden age of happiness and innocence should be restored, and who was to be the moral regenerator of the world), as well as by the Sibylline Books and other writings.

Secondly, consider the people among whom Christ was born. It is said that Frederick the Great once asked his chaplain to give an argument for Christianity in a word, and that he replied, 'The Jews, your Majesty.' The Jews had had a unique training among all the peoples of the earth. Starting from a faith but little in advance of that of their other Semitic neighbours, they had developed a far more spiritual belief, at first in Jehovah as the local and national God of the Jews, and then, under the teaching of the great prophets, in Jehovah as the God of all mankind. They had not escaped contamination from the idolatry around them; but the lesson of the Captivity, by which their faithlessness was punished, sank deeply into their minds, and they returned from captivity purged from every trace of idolatry, and the most intensely monotheistic people in the world, with a noble ideal of the Majesty, Might, and Righteousness of God, and a religion not approached in spirituality by any faith in the world. It is obvious how such a people, reverencing their great evangelical prophets and looking forward to a long-promised Messiah, were peculiarly fitted to be the race whose nationality the promised Deliverer was to assume. God had trained them to be the spiritual teachers of the world.

Thirdly, note the country in which Christ was born. We might have expected that Christ would have been born at Rome with all the power and prestige of a Roman citizen; but in that case the Faith would have won its way by the might of human power, and not by its own intrinsic worth. Instead of that, Christ was born amid a poor and despised subject race, a byword and scorn of the polished Romans. Note again that He was born on the extreme Eastern confines of the West, and on the extreme Western confines of the East, just where East and West met, for He was to be, not a Western, nor an Eastern, but the perfect man, in whom East and West alike could find their perfect ideal of manhood. It is true that hitherto it is chiefly in the West that Christianity has developed, but there is much in the teaching of Christ that is more akin to, and more easily understood by, the people of the East, and when the East turns to Christ the Christian Church will be enriched and deepened by much that we people of the West have imperfectly understood or practised.

Fourthly, even the actual place of Christ's birth has its meaning and significance. Bethlehem was associated with all the memories of David, and the hope of a Messiah who was to spring off David's line. At the same time it was too near to Jerusalem for the bringing up of the Messiah. To come from

Jerusalem would, in its measure, be open to the same objections as coming from Rome. It would have meant close association with the minute observances of the Law, and identification with the narrow traditions of Jewish orthodoxy. Though Christ was born at Bethlehem, He was brought up at Nazareth far away in the country among simple hill folk. His training was not that of any particular school of thought, or political or social party. He was brought up simply as a man among men.

Lastly, consider the language in which the gospel was introduced to the world. The language spoken in Palestine was Aramaic, a form of Hebrew, but the language of educated men and also of business was Greek. It is very probable that most of the people were bilingual, as the people of England were, largely, after the Norman Conquest, or as the people of Wales are to-day. Anyhow, the gospel was promulgated not in Aramaic or Hebrew, not in Latin, the language of the dominant race, but in Greek, the language of the most intellectual race in the world, who had formed their language into the most perfect vehicle for the expression of human thought that the world has ever seen. The language which had been used by Plato and Aristotle to express the highest philosophy that the world had seen, and by Homer and Æschylus, Thucydides, and Demosthenes, to express the perfection of art, history, and eloquence was the language that was most suited to convey to the world the sublime truths of the gospel. When, later on, Greek was almost forgotten, and the truths of the gospel were conveyed to the world chiefly in Latin, the change was certainly not for the better, and showed the wisdom of God in seeing to it that the first and authentic proclamation of the gospel in its written form was in Greek. We may thus begin to understand how it was that Christ came 'in the fulness of time,' and how the three great nations of the world contributed each their share in the preparation of the world. The Jews gave their spiritual ideals and their intense belief in the greatness and majesty of God and the need of righteousness, the Romans their profound respect for law and their wonderful capacity for order and government, and the Greeks their incomparable language.

The thought cannot but rise in our minds, 'If God took such infinite trouble to prepare the world for the first coming of the Saviour, how is it that we are doing so little to prepare the world for the full coming of His Kingdom upon earth, and so little to prepare our own hearts and lives for that Second Coming when He shall return to judge the world, seated on the clouds and attended by the holy angels?' For that day may God prepare our hearts.[1]

Second Sunday in Advent.

Fall and Rise.

'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.'—Lk 2^{34}.

At the time referred to by these words, Joseph and Mary are seen presenting the infant Jesus in the Temple in recognition of the Lord's traditional right to the first-born male in every Hebrew home. The Benedictus had just been chanted, and the morning sacrifice offered, when an old man entered the court of the Jews. He was well known in Jerusalem as Simeon the Scribe, a devout student of the Scriptures. Inspired books needed inspired readers. Simeon knew how to read the Bible. Through the letter of prophecy foreshinings glowed of the advent of the 'Consolation of Israel.' The Coming was wrought into his brightest hopes, but he knew not when or where it would be. One day, however, touched by an excitement he could not explain, he went into the Temple and saw this peasant babe. Then a rush of revelation came to him as it comes to ready souls. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.' At once, therefore, this old seer apprehended the meaning of the Child. Unhindered by His infancy, or the poverty of His parents, or the absence of heavenly demonstration, but like one entirely sure of the facts, he went without misgiving to the mother, and taking the Child in his arms muttered that Nunc Dimittis which has been the death-song of thousands, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.' Turning to the mother, he said, 'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign to be hated, and as a sword which shall pierce thy heart to its core.' What a tremendous forecast! What a mysterious burden the old man held in his arms! The common notion about Simeon is that when he had finished speaking, 'he was not, for God took him.' It might

[1] G. White, *Fifty-six Short Sermons*, 193.

well have been so, for the sight he obtained of the scope of Christ's ministry was like a vision of heavenly things denied to men in life, but sometimes granted to the dying—a rending of the veil, a brilliant apocalypse.

1. He is the touchstone to Israel.

(1) *Their fall.* The learned classes—the Scribes—would have nothing to say to Him. The political religionists—the Herodians—they too, would have nothing to say to Him. 'The common people heard him gladly' in the earlier days of His ministry, but the time came when they too cried out. 'Let him be crucified!' Only a few predestined souls clung to Him; others came near, without doing more; the great body fell away. St. Paul reviews the whole case in his Epistle to the Romans. Israel as a whole, he admits, had fallen. Only a remnant was left, as in the days of Elijah. As to the majority, they were weighed down by a spirit of slumber—'eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.'

Religion does not save us by the mere fact of our being brought into intimate contact with it. Those who have known most about it in early youth, the sons of religious parents, sometimes turn out its worst enemies. They appear to speak with authority when they say that they have tried and found it wanting. They are like soldiers who, after making themselves perfectly acquainted with their general's resources and position, go over to the enemy and place their knowledge at his disposal. This sad sight, as many of us know, has been repeated in not a few conspicuous instances in this and the last generation, as well as in instances which are not conspicuous. Christ is set in the firmament of the spiritual heavens for the fall of these unhappy souls; He is to them 'a savour of death unto death.' He is ever in Himself loving and merciful, 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' But in all generations there are souls of whom He says in sorrow, 'If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin.' He is 'set,' against the tenor of His own Blessed Will, for the fall of many.

The rich young man who came to Him is a leading instance. His moral sense had drawn him to the Presence of Christ; he instinctively felt that here was a Teacher who could speak, at least, with that sort of authority which comes with goodness. He wished to be conscious of the entire approval of a Master like this, and so he submitted himself to an examination. He had kept the great commandments of the Law; he thought all was well with him: 'What lack I yet?' When our Lord laid on him the counsel to 'sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and come follow me,' he turned away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Somewhat different is a fall like that of Judas. Judas was already one of the chosen Twelve; yet he was also, in our Lord's words, 'A devil.' Judas fell through one besetting sin. But his covetousness, which might have worked only ordinary havoc on another theatre of events, was in that most sacred Presence nothing less than irretrievable ruin. The Presence of Christ was like the Moral Law; it stimulated into latent evil opposition to itself. Judas was irritated into treason by the tranquil unassailable Holiness with which he companioned day by day; but Judas fell, not merely from what he might have been but from what he had been. It would have been better for such a one not to have known the way of life. It would have been good for him if he had never been born.

There is a state of heart which naturally turns away from or hates the life of Christ and the spirit of its work. It may be reached through steady hypocrisy, which, being a lie, hates truth; through steady self-seeking, which cannot see God, for it only sees itself; through steady clinging to sin, which, living in hell, loves absence from God; through steady lightness and irreverence, which abhors the solemnities of righteous doing. That state of heart cannot recognize Christ. His voice is strange and dull or jars on the ear as hateful. There is no kinship between Him and it. When His goodness is flashed upon such men, it sends them into violent hatred of it. He is set for their fall. But it is their own deeds that have brought them to that condition, not God's will. This is the condemnation—that men loved darkness rather than light: why?—because their deeds were evil.

(2) ***Their rising.*** 'Risen with Christ' is an expression applied by St. Paul to Christians on this side of the grave; and the 'rising of many in Israel' was not the future resurrection of the body, but the present moral and spiritual resurrection of the soul. Something like this power is exerted upon us, but in an infinitely restricted sense, by eminently good men; they do by their mere presence, their looks, their words, their unconscious

ways, draw those of us who are privileged to be with them upwards towards that world in which they habitually live. In our Lord's case, while He was on earth, this power which went out of Him was unlike any witnessed before or since; and He exerts it still, though from the invisible world, and through agencies which appeal less powerfully to imagination, or rather, to sense.

The Gospels tell us of several for whose 'rising again' Christ was set. It was true of each disciple that persevered. It was conspicuously true of the Magdalen, whom He rescued from the grasp of seven devils; and of Peter, who denied Him; and of Thomas, who would not for awhile believe His Word. But in none of His servants is this attractive power of the Redeemer, mighty to raise from sin and death, more gloriously displayed than in St. Paul. St. Paul had 'fallen' so as to be, in his own estimate, the very 'chief of sinners.' He had been a blasphemer and a persecutor; he was not, he felt, even in later years, when he had long worked and suffered, meet to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God. But if our Lord provoked in him at first a bitter hostility, the time came when He inspired His fanatical opponent with a passionate affection which controlled all the faculties of his being. The point at which this great change took place is called his 'conversion'; in Simeon's language, it was his 'rising again' after his 'fall.' Thus, in his own person, St. Paul experienced this double effect of the Advent of Christ into the world; first, the repulsion, which made him so bitter a persecutor; and next, the attraction, which made him so glorious an Apostle. First the fall, then the resurrection.

2. He is the touchstone to the Gentiles also. Do you ask, What has this Child to do with the fortunes of men? He is said to be 'set for the fall and rising again.' 'Set' as, *e.g.*, a doctor sets a test to determine a patient's temperature. 'Set' as a plumb is set against the mason's work to test its perpendicular. 'Set' as a foundation stone, or the keystone of an arch. 'Set,' *i.e.*, so as to be authoritatively and vitally connected with man's fate in every department of his life. How is He thus significantly 'set' in the centre of human life? It is truly a marvellous suggestion. We are thinking, remember, about an actual life. It would be easier to construct a perfect creed than to grow a perfect life. No; no man is good enough to be a spiritual test, true to every man and all latitudes. But that which Christ is entitled to claim is this—that with Him more or less has no meaning. Listen to the verdict of the Eternal Father: 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' No one landscape contains all nature's beauties; no one life embodies the fulness of truth and grace—infinite hate of sin, infinite love of goodness, together with infinite pity for wrong-doers, and an infinite yearning to lead their feet into the way of peace. But Christ's life did and does. 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' He is law perfected in love, and love justified by law. He has lived on the topmost heights of Divine righteousness, and in the lowliest vales of human temptibility. He is the Word of God, by His life 'quick and powerful, piercing to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and is a searcher of the thoughts and intents of the heart'; but He is also a Great High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Like us He has been in all points tempted; like God He has never sinned; and like Himself He is able at once to rebuke sin, and 'succour them that are tempted.' His rightness therefore is unique and complete. Now in measuring and weighing such a character as this, is it not fair to say that if men do not love a rightness like Christ's there must be something wrong not with Him but them? Can a man be disloyal to Christ and yet loyal to righteousness? Is it possible to love the sunshine, and yet hate the sun? Considering how completely inseparable perfect goodness and Christ are, it comes at last to this, that He is 'set' like a spiritual zöometer in our midst so absolutely that the measure of our goodness is determined by the measure in which we absorb His Spirit, and reflect the beauty of His life. As the Religious One, the transcendent pattern of the religious life, and the inspirer of the religious spirit, Christ has the right to touch everything, and 'try every man's work of what sort it is.'

There came a man, whence, none could tell,
Bearing a touchstone in his hand;
And tested all things in the land
By its unerring spell.

And lo, what sudden changes smote
The fair to foul, the foul to fair!
Purple nor ermine did he spare,
Nor scorn the dusty coat.

Of heirloom jewels prized so much
Many were changed to chips and clods,
And even statues of the gods
Crumbled beneath its touch.

When angrily the people cried,
'The loss outweighs the profit far,
Our goods suffice us as they are,
We will not have them tried.'

And since they could not so avail
To check his unrelenting quest
They seized him saying, 'Let him test
How real is our jail.'

But though they slew him with a sword
And in a fire his touchstone burned,
Its doings could not be o'erturned
Its undoings restored.

It is a solemn thing to watch a man when that testing comes to him. A duty is laid before him, its goodness clear as the day. A sorrow darkens his life, a trial rushes or steals to meet him; and in the sorrow or the trial, what is right and loving is unmistakable. The hour strikes when he is called on to choose between two ways of acting, and he knows God is in one, and the devil in the other. What is this? It is Christ set before him for his rise or fall; Christ comes to reveal his inward thoughts, his inward strength or weakness. It is a judgment hour; and years of evil, or of righteous growth, rest upon the hour.

Contributions and Comments.

Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon.

McGIFFERT'S THEORY.

TAKING for granted what is now generally admitted—that the ministry in the local Church was the result of a gradual development during the first sixty years of Christianity—we set ourselves the task of discovering the course of this development. As we examine the writings of the New Testament in pursuit of this task we are conscious that we have very little firm ground under our feet. As far as real history is concerned, we have one book which covers only the first thirty years of the period in question. Beyond this we are dependent upon a number of letters, which of course are not generally concerned with Church organization, and, when they do touch upon it, assume a knowledge of the subject on the part of the recipients, which knowledge may be the very key we require to make things plain for ourselves. Moreover, it is impossible for us to be certain of the exact dates of the documents we are dealing with, and this is important for our inquiry.

The Acts knows only 'presbyters' and 'bishops' so far as official titles are concerned, for there is no mention of 'deacons.' Many of St. Paul's letters are silent on the question, though we cannot assume from this that local ministries were unknown in the Churches to which he wrote. The circular letter known as Ephesians speaks of 'pastors' and 'teachers' who may belong to the local as opposed to the general ministry. The pastorals know 'bishops,' 'presbyters,' 'deacons,' and possibly 'deaconesses' and 'widows.' Philippians is most definite with its 'bishops and deacons.' Outside the Pauline canon Hebrews speaks of 'rulers,' and St. James and St. Peter of 'presbyters.'

At the close of the tunnel period we have the Johannine writings, which give us little help towards the solution of the problem. Nothing can be argued from the 'angel' in the Apocalypse, and the second and third epistles speak only of 'presbyters.' Beyond this there is a hint in the third epistle of a kind of *primus inter pares* among a group of presbyters, who was wrongly exercising the power of excommunication.

Outside the New Testament the Didache is as definite as the Philippian epistle in emphasizing 'bishops and deacons,' and Clement speaks of 'bishops,' 'presbyters,' and 'deacons.'

Putting on one side the less frequent terms, 'rulers,' 'pastors,' and 'teachers,' we have three words, ἐπίσκοπος, πρεσβύτερος, and διάκονος. As used in the first-century writings, do they represent three offices, or are ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος identical? If they are identical, in what sense are they so? The first of these questions we can regard as settled, for it is now generally conceded