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out of the great mystery of the Incarnation, in the actual manifestation of the life of God in human nature. We are not going to set our preconceived notions in battle array against the observed facts of the case. We are not going to lose our faith because the mystery of the Incarnation turns out in some notable particulars to be even more wonderful than we had thought. Once more 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men: the weakness of God is stronger than men.'

In the Study.

The Application.

I. WHAT has become of the Application? 'That sermon just lacked one thing,' said a man recently, as he left church with his wife; 'if it had had an application it would have been perfect.' 'What is an application?' she asked. 'I never heard an application in my life.' So that is one generation that has not known the application. But there must be more than one. For Dr. Dale, in his Yale Lectures for 1877, already spoke of 'what our fathers *used to call* the application of their sermons'; and Canon Hay Aitken speaks of 'the application that *used to close* the discourses of the evangelical fathers.'

What is the reason of its disuse? Canon Hay Aitken thinks it had become 'somewhat stiff and formal,' and coming punctually at the end of each discourse it was disregarded, 'much as a fable is usually expected to end with a moral which children are always careful not to read.' And so there came a reaction, which has lasted even until now.

Perhaps it was a mistake to leave the application of the sermon always to the end. We must recover the application, but we need not make it the formal close of the sermon every time. If the bearings of the subject on life and duty have been kept steadily in view all along, this is not necessary. If they have not, it is apt to be formal. People are little moved by admonitions that are railed off in a place by themselves, or that only come in by rule at the end as a concession to pulpit traditions. The mere suspicion that anything of that sort is said *pro forma*, or in cool blood, is fatal to its moral effect. Besides, it looks as if, until the 'application' is reached, both preacher and hearers might safely forget that the gospel has to do with the actual needs of living men. One must never suffer an audience to take the sermon for an academic or intellectual exercise through five-sixths of its length, only redeemed for pulpit use by a sting in its tail.

¶ Sometimes we may preach a sermon which is 'application' from the first sentence to the last, as an eloquent friend of mine once delivered a speech an hour long which was enthusiastically described as 'all peroration.' Mr. Finney's sermons were not unfrequently of this kind. I do not mean that he 'perorated' all through, but that the whole sermon was 'application.' I heard him very often during his visit to England when I was a student, and it seemed to me that the iron chain of the elaborate theological argument which sometimes constituted the substance of his discourse—an argument on Free Will, or on the Evil of Sin, or on the Moral Necessity which obliged God to punish Sin—was fastened to an electric battery. Every link of the chain as you touched it gave you a moral shock. But even in Mr. Finney's sermons the supreme impression usually came at the end; the effect was cumulative.[1]

¶ The published addresses of D. L. Moody are so astir with personal appeal from beginning to end that we can hardly say there is more of it in one part of the discourse than in another. 'Am I in communion with my Creator or out of communion?'—'Do not think I am preaching to your neighbours, but remember I am trying to speak to you, to every one of you, as if you were alone'—'And can you give a reason for the hope that is in you?'—'Father, you have been a professed Christian for forty years; where are your children to-night?'—'O prodigal, you may be wandering on the dark mountains of sin, but God wants you to come home'—'Oh, may God bring you to that decision'—such are the keen moral search-lights that flash out all along from introduction to conclusion. Brief statements of doctrine, scripture expositions (always purposeful, though not always correct), lifelike description, numerous pertinent illustrations, and *continuous application* are the materials of these revival talks that have been so greatly blessed in turning men to God.[2]

II. Yet, as the end used to be, so it still is, the most natural and perhaps the most effective place for the appeal of the sermon. For the end is more than the beginning. An English preacher of the last generation used to say that he cared very little what he said the first half-hour, but that

[1] R. W. Dale, *Nine Lectures on Preaching*, 146.

[2] J. A. Kern, *The Ministry to the Congregation*, 345.

he cared a very great deal what he said the last fifteen minutes. Dr. Dale says: 'I remember reading many years ago an address delivered to students by Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, in which he gave a very striking account of the sermons of Jonathan Edwards. Mr. Beecher said that in the elaborate doctrinal part of Jonathan Edwards's sermons the great preacher was only getting his guns into position; but that in his "applications" he opened fire on the enemy. There are too many of us, I am afraid, who take so much time in getting our guns "into position" that we have to finish without firing a shot. We say that we leave the truth to do its own work. We trust to the hearts and consciences of our hearers to "apply" it. Depend upon it, gentlemen, this is a great and fatal mistake.'[1]

We may have the appeal throughout the sermon and then brought to a climax at the end. This may be regarded as the perfect application. Scripture truth is so full of applicatory forces, of that 'strange movingness which is to be found nowhere else,' that, in the hands of an earnest preacher, it does not readily lend itself to a merely intellectual discussion, with the practical assigned its own place and restricted thereto. The spirit of application will pervade the entire discourse, and make itself felt again and again. But this same spirit of earnestness that prompts continuous application may prompt the compact application of the whole truth at the close of the discussion. And when both these can be employed effectually, the applicatory force of the sermon reaches its highest development.

III. Would it not be better, however, that people should make their own application of the truth? Undoubtedly; and, likewise, it would be better that they should not need to be preached to at all. But neither of these two preferable things is a fact. Men, being such as they are, need preaching; and, for the same reason, applicatory preaching. The time will come when no man will have to say to his neighbour, Know thou the Lord; for all shall know Him, and His law shall be in every heart. But that millennial day is not now.

Dr. Storrs tells of a fellow-student of his in the seminary who said: 'I like to discuss subjects, but I never know what to do with them after they are discussed. I can only leave them and go along.' This may be good theological lecturing, but is it preaching? It might be so regarded if the ethical doctrine of Socrates were true—that virtue is knowledge, and accordingly a man who clearly sees what right conduct is will be sure to practise it. But the fearful moral inertia and the evil passions of the heart are constantly impelling men, even in the clearest light of truth, to do wrong.

> Oft have I lain awake at night and thought
> Whence came the evils of this mortal life;
> And my creed is that not through lack of wit
> Men go astray, for most of them have sense
> Sufficient, but that we must look elsewhere.
> Discourse of reason tells us what is right,
> But we fall short in action.

Not only when we see the good, but even when we would do it, evil is present with us. That is human experience and New Testament doctrine. The preacher, though his teachings were absolutely perfect, must be more than a teacher. He can be satisfied with nothing short of persuasion. Sometimes he calls upon men to respond openly and immediately, at the close of the sermon, to his appeals—to commit themselves to the Christian life then and there. And always this urgency to immediate action is the true spirit of preaching.

¶ A clergyman once told a friend of mine that he had laboured for eleven years in one parish without knowing of a single conversion. My friend and I knew very well that the man who made this confession was one of the ablest and most acceptable of teachers, honoured and loved by his people and all who knew him. But, as my friend explained it, 'the fact of the matter is, he provided a splendid meal, but he did not show the people how to eat it.' In other words, he was a teacher, but he did not apply his teaching and lead to immediate acceptance and obedience.[2]

¶ Sometimes, when I realize what trifling infirmities we allow to interrupt our appointed work for the Master, I reflect on such men as Knox with wholesome shame. With what ardour and zeal he wore himself out in the arduous campaign! Listen to this, of a certain James Melville, who had the eye and ear of a born reporter: 'Of all the benefits I had that year [1571] was the coming of that most notable prophet and apostle of our nation, Mister John Knox, to St. Andrews. I heard him teach there the prophecies of Daniel, that summer and winter following. I had my pen and little book and took away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening of his text he was moderate the space of half an hour; but when he entered to application he made me so to grue and tremble that I could not hold the pen to write.' Mr. Melville goes on to tell us that at the time Knox was so ill and weak that he had to be assisted to the church and actually lifted into the pulpit, 'where he behoved to lean at his first entrie . . . but ere he was done with his sermon he

[1] R. W. Dale, *Nine Lectures on Preaching*, 146.

[2] W. H. G. Thomas, *The Work of the Ministry*, 215.

was so active and vigorous that he was like to ding [beat] the pulpit into blads [pieces], and fly out of it.' Such was the victory of the spirit over the flesh. If only young preachers knew to-day the power of a 'mighty application' of their sermons, and the supreme art of training all their guns upon actual temptations and tendencies, upon actual sins and selfishnesses of their hearers, we should not have as much cause as we have to lament the decline of pulpit influence and authority.[1]

IV. To whom is the application to be addressed? It was once the custom to separate the congregation into two classes, the saints and the sinners—or even into three, the unconverted, the hopeful, and the faithful—and address the application to each class separately. Let us return to the application, but not to that. Rather the answer is that the appeal is to be addressed to every person present and to every part of their personality, but especially to their emotions. 'Owen preached earnestly to the understanding, reasoning from his critical and devout knowledge of Scripture; Baxter preached forcibly to the conscience, reasoning from the fitness of things; while Goodwin appealed to the spiritual affections, reasoning from his own religious experience and interpreting Scripture by the insight of a renewed heart.'

Now the understanding, the conscience, and the feeling all abide with us still, but for the preacher's appeal the greatest of these is the feeling. 'Of all life the very heart, the central fire, is feeling. On one hand of it stands truth: with that the speaker begins; it is his instrument for awakening feeling. On the other hand of it stands action: to that the hearer is to be led. Between the two, linking them together, there must be high, spiritual, noble emotion. Truth published in love breeds it and feeds it. Once generated, it sets the will in motion; impels it to righteous effort and generous deeds. No mistake is greater than when a young preacher sets out with a dread for emotional preaching, or with a contempt for it.'[2]

V. There are certain elements which belong to the effective appeal.

1. *Appropriateness.*—It should be appropriate to the hearers without formally separating them into saints and sinners. And it should be appropriate to the sermon. If the sermon is a unity, if it has had one leading idea running through it, then the application should be in harmony with or else in contrast to that idea. Dr. Shedd says always in harmony. 'If the law has been preached, then let the conclusion be legal, damnatory, terrible. If the Gospel has been preached, let the conclusion be winning, encouraging, and hopeful.' Dr. Hoyt corrects him. 'While the appeal should be single in its effect, the effect is sometimes heightened by *contrast*. The truth of Lk $13^{28.24}$ would not be served by an appeal in the same thought and tone as the body of the sermon. "The door is narrow; the duty is imperative, strive ye; the risk is real, many shall fail." The noblest appeal is not in the same key, but in a sudden change of thought. "The city of God stands four square, three gates on a side. There is room for all."'

2. *Authority.*—In an essay on the intellectual future of Romanism, Mr. Mallock endeavoured to show that 'if the Christian religion holds its own at all in the face of secular knowledge, it is the Christian religion as embodied in the Church of Rome, and not in any form of Protestantism, that will survive in the intellectual contest.' The fascination of the Church of Rome for many minds has been its claim of *authority*. To the false authority of the Church thus claimed we must oppose the truer and nobler authority of the Spirit of Life in the 'Word,' if our mission is to be rightly accomplished.

¶ Lean hard on authority. Keep yourself in the background, as far as possible, and let God speak through you. Paul's attitude is the one that wins a reverent hearing: 'I then, as an ambassador of Jesus Christ.' It is not what the man in the pulpit is or thinks himself to be, but what he stands for, that counts. Wherefore, keep your credentials in sight, and make yourselves impressive not by your 'cloth,' nor by any 'holy whine' or other ministerial airs or affectations, but by the faithful presentation of your message.[1]

3. *Sympathy.*—Authority may be claimed, but the claim will not be conceded unless we can also convince men of our sympathy and earnest desire to help them. The men who felt the authority of Christ admired the graciousness of His words. And our task is not accomplished when by our fervent appeals we have roused the aspirations of men, when we have revealed their need and helplessness—not even when we have led them to the Fountain of all grace and inspiration, and pointed them to Him who can beget in them the new life; we must endeavour to lead them on to perfection, and to show them the glorious privileges and the

[1] C. Silvester Horne, *The Romance of Preaching*, 174.
[2] J. Parker, *Ad Clerum*, 70.

[3] D. J. Burrell, *The Sermon: Its Construction and Delivery*, 193.

rich inheritance of the sons of God. We ourselves must know something of the Psalmist's experience, 'Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, the holy place of thy temple.' Unless we can offer certain and unfailing help and comfort, unless we can point to a source whence all the deeper yearnings of men can be satisfied, we shall not be able to justify our authority, or make our appeals authoritative.

¶ Let him not dart the lightnings, or roll the thunders, except with the utmost solemnity, the utmost fear of God, the utmost love of the human soul, and the utmost solicitude, lest he be actuated by human pride or human impatience. 'Were you able to preach the doctrine *tenderly*?' said M'Cheyne to a friend who had spoken to him of a sermon which he had delivered upon endless punishment.[1]

4. *Insistence.*—The addresses reported in the New Testament are tremendously personal. There is an insistent 'ye-ye' running through them all. Never does the speaker miss his mark. He always 'gets there.' We are not, indeed, bound by the mere style of New Testament preachers; but we shall be more than foolish if we miss their spirit. Salvation is an act which takes effect in the will of men. The Saviour is a Person, unknown and uninfluential, unless He receive personal homage in an act of trust.

¶ The application in the homilies of Chrysostom illustrates this spirit of insistent and irrepressible appeal. This great preacher—surpassed by none since his day—applies the Word as he expounds it all through the discourse. But not only so. His impassioned earnestness increases as he goes on; so that his last exposition is almost always followed by an application both more extensive and more intensive than any that have gone before. It would seem as if his soul has now become so inflamed with holy zeal to send the truth home to men's hearts that he can give no more exegesis, but must spend the whole remaining time in exhortation. It may be some sin that he is exposing—theatre-going, drunkenness, covetousness, an unforgiving spirit; or some Christian grace that he is commending—kindness to the poor, Christian communion in the house of God, family religion; whatever it may be, he is determined that this last truth at least shall make its due impression on the hearts and consciences of the people.[2]

5. *Persuasiveness.*—This is the end of all preaching; it is the immediate object of every application. To what motives can appeal be made that men may be persuaded?

(1) Perhaps to *Fear.* We hesitate to appeal to fear, forgetting how often our Lord does so, and forgetting how many of the greatest and best on the roll of Christian saints were first driven to Christ by fear. Henry Ward Beecher said that preaching that is wanting in shadow will want in power. If we would persuade men, we must be able to appeal to them by the tragedy as well as by the glory of human life, by the depth and the height of its responsibility and of its hope.

(2) Certainly to *Love.* For the mightiest of all motives is *love.* In the relations of the present life, love is the greatest antagonist of selfishness. They who 'have none to love,' by any natural ties, must always interest their hearts in the needy and the afflicted, or they will grow more and more narrow and selfish. Accordingly, we may constantly appeal to men's love of their fellow-men, as a motive for doing right. Parents may be urged to seek personal piety, and higher degrees of it, for the sake of their growing children; and so with the husband or wife, the brother or sister or friend. Now to this motive the gospel appeals in a very peculiar manner. We *ought* to love God supremely, and such supreme love would be our chief motive to do right and to do good. But sin has alienated us from God, so that we do not love Him. And Christ presents Himself, the God-man, the Redeemer, to win our love to Him and thus to God. 'Whosoever shall lose his life *for my sake*,' are words which reveal the new and mighty gospel motive—love to Christ.

[1] W. G. T. Shedd, *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, 181.

[2] J. A. Kern, *The Ministry to the Congregation*, 346.

Mephibosheth.

A Study in Remembrance.

'And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?'—2 Sam. 9[1].

To come upon this beautiful story of faithfulness to the memory of a dead friend amid the noise of battle is like coming upon an oasis in a wilderness. David, however busy and perplexed he might be, could never forget Jonathan. The cares of his official life and the attractions of an exalted position had not yet done him spiritual damage. The man was not lost in the king: it was as yet the golden era of David's life, and the story of Mephibosheth is reminiscent of it.

I.

THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION.

1. Mephibosheth has been called an enigma of motive and a study in self-interest. The same author goes on to say: 'The sacred writer sets us the enigma of Mephibosheth and his servant Ziba; but he gives us no hint at all as to how we are to decipher that enigma. He tells us Mephibosheth's story from the outside and on the surface, and so leaves us to make of the inside of it what we can. By that time both Mephibosheth and Ziba and David had long passed away; and already their motives and their mainsprings may well have become a sacred riddle in Israel. Given the story of Mephibosheth, and the story of Ziba, first at the flight of David and then at his victorious return, and then—was Mephibosheth a heartless, selfish, contemptible time-server, while Ziba, his servant, was a prince beside him? Or, was Ziba a lying scoundrel, and Mephibosheth a poor, innocent, ill-used lameter saint?'[1]

¶ There is a great deal of unmapped country within us which would have to be taken into account in an explanation of our gusts and storms.[2]

2. On what was doubtless one of many similar occasions David wondered if possibly there might be some descendant of his beloved comrade Jonathan still living. Jonathan's name had been written on his heart when it was impressionable, and the lettering was as if 'graven on the rock for ever.' A heart so faithful to its old love needed no prompting either from men or from circumstances. Hence the inquiry after 'any that is left of the house of Saul' was occasioned by nothing external, but came welling up from the depth of the king's own soul.

Now 'there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. Then king David sent, and fet him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.'

Mephibosheth's history had been a sad one. When Israel was defeated by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, and Saul and Jonathan were slain, he was but an infant; and his nurse, terror-stricken at the news of the disaster, in her haste to escape had let him fall, and caused an injury which made him lame for life. He had been taken for safety beyond the Jordan, and brought up in the house of the generous and wealthy Machir, the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar, in Gilead. There he remained, probably in such obscurity as left few aware of his existence; for it could not have consisted with the policy of Ishbosheth or Abner to bring him conspicuously into notice, and David could have had little opportunity of becoming acquainted with a fact shrouded from view in a quarter so remote, and in the dominions of his rival. Besides, if David had ever heard of his existence, it had been by his rightful name of Merib-baal, and he would hardly recognize him under the altered name of Mephibosheth. This nickname was not at all a pleasant one for any man to be called by; but, having got into use, it would be preferred by those anxious for his safety on the one hand, and by those whose interest it was to keep him out of mind on the other. When Ishbosheth was slain, and all Israel went over to David, Mephibosheth was about twelve years old, and there were obvious reasons why the friends who had taken charge of him should desire his existence to be forgotten.

3. The staunchest supporter of the ruined house could never have made of Mephibosheth a Young Pretender. He would live on, in the house of the rich sheikh, unknown and unhonoured, but happy with little Micha—when suddenly the uneventful days are broken by the galloping of the couriers from the king. Can we not picture the dread that would fall on Mephibosheth when he heard that he was summoned to the court? It is said that the most powerful governor in Afghanistan used to tremble when he received an unexpected letter from the late Ameer. But the message of David was rich in loving-kindness—it was the beginning of the kindness of God. The king, in a tone which no written words can indicate, said, 'Mephibosheth!' We all know what volumes of meaning may be conveyed by addressing an individual by

[1] A. Whyte, *Bible Characters*: Ahithophel to Nehemiah, 21.

[2] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*.

his name in a certain tone. And, lest this should not suffice, there came the words, 'Fear not!' As a brother and friend, on the same level, he speaks to the heart of the weak and troubled one.

¶ Ma Eme, who heard of a certain slave-transaction but paid no attention to it, had a respectable slave-woman at one of her farms whom she ordered to come and live in her own yard. The woman obeyed somewhat unwillingly, and in the village began to grumble to others about her enforced removal. The new slave-girl was cooking her master's food when she heard the voice. As she listened memories were stirred within her and she ran out and gazed at the woman, then went nearer and stared closely into her face. The woman demanded what she was looking at. The girl screamed and caught her round the neck and uttered a word in a strange language. It was the name of the woman, who, in turn, stared at the girl. When the latter called out her own name the two embraced and held each other in a grip of iron. The daughter had found a mother who had been stolen many years before. Both went into the yard and sat on the ground discussing their experiences and receiving the warm congratulations of the other women in the village.[1]

4. Doubtless David again recalled the dear memory of Jonathan, and was, no doubt, stirred to deeper tenderness by the sight of his helpless son; but he swiftly passed to practical arrangements, full of common sense and grasp of the case. The restoration of Saul's landed estate implies that it was in David's power. It had probably been 'forfeited to the crown,' as we in England say, or perhaps had been 'squatted on' by people who had no right to it. David, at any rate, will see that it reverts to its owner.

But what could a lame man do with land? It was assigned for cultivation to Ziba, who, with his sons and servants, was to devote himself to it, and was to retain one-half of the produce in recompense for his expense and labour, paying the other moiety as rent to the owner of the land. The numerous landowners in Israel so generally cultivated their own grounds that there is scarcely another instance which enables us to see on what terms farming was conducted. It was probably on some plan like this, which is indeed a very common one in the East. It is found to be in most soils a very equitable arrangement, especially when, as is usually the case, the landowner supplies the seed.

Mephibosheth was thus enabled to keep up a becoming establishment for his family in Jerusalem, while habitually taking his principal meals at the royal table, and associating with the king's sons, some of whom were nearly of his own age. As men do not, when at home, sit down at table with their wives and children in the East, this constant dining at court was a distinction unaccompanied by any of the domestic drawbacks it would bring to us.

[1] *Mary Slessor of Calabar*, 133.

¶ It has been suggested that David's disposition of affairs was prompted partly by affection for Jonathan and partly by policy. 'It was prudent,' says Dr. Maclaren, 'to keep Mephibosheth at hand. The best way to weaken a pretender's claims was to make a pensioner of him, and the best way to hinder his doing mischief was to keep him in sight.'

II.

Ziba's Story.

In the subsequent history of Mephibosheth and Ziba we are brought face to face with the 'enigma.' The general impression formed is that the former was slandered by the latter. There was treachery somewhere, and it is for us to consider whether or not Ziba was the treacherous person, and Mephibosheth the innocent and injured party.

1. David had the hard experience of being compelled to wander forth in his old age from his beloved city, his pleasant home, and the place of the Lord's tabernacle, and of finding himself forsaken by his own subjects who owed so much to him and by the friends in whom he had trusted; and all this at the instance and by the contrivance of the son whom he loved so well. No wonder that he departed as a mourner. 'David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.'

When he was a little past the summit of Mount Olivet, and had just sent back Hushai, Ziba came after him. He brought gifts—'a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.'

Where is thy master's son? David asked. Ziba's account of him was that when he heard of the insurrection he remained at Jerusalem, in the expectation that on that very day the kingdom of his father would be restored to him.

2. On Ziba's behalf it is pleaded that he demonstrated attachment to David at the time when self-love would have kept him silent. It took some

courage to come with gifts to a discrowned king; and his allegation about his master has at least this support, that the latter did not come with the rest of David's court to share his fortunes, and that the dream that he might fish to advantage in troubled waters is extremely likely to have occurred to him. Nor does it appear clear that, if Ziba's motive was to get hold of the estate, his adherence to David would have seemed, at that moment, the best way of effecting it.

On the other hand, Ziba knew what David had done for Mephibosheth, how generous was the king's heart, how he would appreciate fidelity in the time of trouble and scorn ungrateful conduct, how his associates in trial would approve of any favour conferred on the loyal at the cost of the disloyal, and how it was within the prerogative of a monarch to confiscate the property of a traitor. Avarice is a careful student of human nature and of the usages of the world. Its success often depends on quickness of discernment, and a practical application of the knowledge of men and things to the purposes of a base, greedy heart. A good and generous man may be as quick in discernment, and may in the intercourse of life gather as much knowledge of human nature, but he differs from the avaricious man in that he scorns all this to the sole promotion of purely selfish interests.

There is a fiendish sagacity in avarice. Ziba, we must believe, saw that the sorrows of David furnished a choice opportunity for making an impression on his generous sympathetic nature by a manifestation of loyal interest and kindly consideration for his comfort; and he saw also that the bodily infirmity of Mephibosheth would prevent his going out to David to express his own loyalty. How splendid the opportunity of so representing matters as to secure the confiscation of Mephibosheth's inheritance to himself as a reward for his personal faithfulness!

¶ The s.s. *Dixiana*, bound from Savannah to Havre, with a cargo of cotton, was passing Ushant on May 28, 1915, when her captain observed what looked like a small craft with her sails up. Suspecting no harm, he continued his course, until from the innocent-looking sailing-boat a shell was fired which struck his ship. Beneath those spread sails was a German submarine, intent on the destruction of merchant shipping. Too late was the real nature of this crafty foe of humanity discovered. After eight shells had been received into the hull of the *Dixiana*, a torpedo from the submarine sank her.

There are men in ordinary life like that submarine. To all outward appearance they are harmless, seeming to be occupied like other folk in the usual business and routine of a useful life. They are pleasant in manner, hearty of speech, sometimes even pretending to be religious. But beneath the outward veneer of a smooth tongue and a frank bearing there beats a heart full of wicked thoughts. The real man in his private life is known only to a few, like-minded with himself. Woe be to those who are deceived by him! When too late, perhaps, his real nature is discovered. His only purpose is to prey on innocence and to destroy virtue.[1]

3. That Ziba was calumniating Mephibosheth is sufficiently obvious. How could Mephibosheth, an insignificant cripple, who had never claimed the crown, or taken any part in politics, expect to be made king, even in the confusion of parties which might ensue upon Absalom's rebellion? Ziba's story was an audacious one, invented in the hope of getting a grant of the estate which he was cultivating for Mephibosheth's benefit, and, in spite of its improbability, it passed muster in the haste and confusion of the moment.

We can only say, in vindication of David, that his confidence, even in those who had been most indebted to him, had received so rude a shock in the conduct of Absalom that he was ready to suspect every man of deserting him, except those who gave palpable evidence that they were on his side. In this number it seemed at the moment that Ziba was, while Mephibosheth was not; and, trusting to his first impression, and acting with the promptitude necessary in war, he made the transfer.

¶ Was any woman, do you suppose, ever the better for possessing diamonds? but how many have been made base, frivolous, and miserable by desiring them? Was ever man the better for having coffers full of gold? But who shall measure the guilt that is incurred to fill them? Look into the history of any civilized nation; analyse, with reference to this one cause of crime and misery, the lives and thoughts of their nobles, priests, merchants, and men of luxurious life. Every other temptation is at last concentrated into this; pride, and lust, and envy, and anger, all give up their strength to avarice. The sin of the whole world is essentially the sin of Judas.[2]

III.

In Vindication of Mephibosheth.

1. David was a man of many crises. The day of victory had come once more to him, and his return to Jerusalem is described minutely and graphically. In the course of his journey from Mahanaim several interesting episodes occurred.

[1] J. W. W. Moeran, *Illustrations from the Great War*, 46.
[2] Ruskin, *The Ethics of the Dust*, § 10.

Among these was the action of Shimei in coming to meet him with a considerable following, which included Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant. Shimei's purpose was to beg to be pardoned the insult he had offered the king when he left Jerusalem. Then came the meeting with Mephibosheth, which probably took place at Jerusalem.

There is no trace of Mephibosheth's having by treasonous means done wrong to David, though it is possible that, in real Oriental manner, he, like the sons of Zadok, may have assumed an outward prudential appearance of fidelity to the cause of Absalom. He was a helpless man, deceived and oppressed, and placed, by reason of his physical infirmity, in such a position as not to be able to extricate himself from trouble. His only chance was to wait and cherish hope that the generous king, who had so bountifully befriended him for his father's sake, would return to power. On being asked why he had not gone with the king into exile, Mephibosheth explained that it was owing to the deception of Ziba.

¶ But what, then, is meant in 2 S. 19[24] by his 'going down' to meet the king? If, too, he had been at Jerusalem all the while, how could he come there? Some, therefore, translate, 'Then Jerusalem came to meet the king'—a possible, but not a natural, rendering, nor one that agrees with verse [30]. Others consider that he had withdrawn to his house in the highlands of Benjamin at Gibeah of Saul; but David had given these lands to Ziba, and the crippled Mephibosheth would have met with rough treatment had he endeavoured to contest the ownership. The Arabic Version reads, 'when he came from Jerusalem'; but it is not confirmed by any trustworthy authorities. The view of Kimchi is probably right, that Mephibosheth did go down to the Jordan fords to meet David, and certainly his duty required of him no less. He had been slandered and ill-used, but the king believed him to be guilty, and regarded him with displeasure. To have remained, therefore, at home when all Judah and half Israel had gone to welcome David back, would have been culpable remissness. And though he was lame, yet the ride was not so long as to be very fatiguing. But he did not rush through the river, as Shimei and his thousand men had done; and when David had crossed, there was too much going on for him to get an audience. He followed, therefore, in David's suite; but in Jerusalem the meeting actually took place. Thus the verses briefly record different facts: v.[24] that Mephibosheth went with the vast crowd to welcome the king back; v.[25] that in due time, in Jerusalem, the explanation was given, and Mephibosheth restored to favour.[1]

2. The position in which David found himself when, on hearing the story of Mephibosheth and observing his distressed circumstances, he had to decide with respect to the property at stake was one of extreme delicacy and difficulty. In all good faith he had handed over the property to Ziba, and Ziba had befriended his friends in a time of need, and had been foremost to welcome himself back. The kindness of the man in the hour of need was a set-off to his deceit. On the other hand, the forfeiture of the property of Mephibosheth by royal decree was based on false information; and, being a member of a royal house, and not proved to have been openly disloyal, he certainly had a claim to restoration to rights. The brevity of the narrative leaves the actual decision of David in some obscurity.

3. It is probable that David was irritated at discovering his mistake in believing Ziba, and hastily transferring Mephibosheth's property to him. Nothing is more common than such irritation, when men discover that through false information they have made a blunder, and gone into some arrangement that must be undone. But why did not the king restore all his property to Mephibosheth?

It may be that David did not feel sure about him, and stopped his voluble utterances somewhat brusquely: 'Why speakest thou any more of thy matters?' That is as much as to say, 'Hold your tongue.' And the final disposition of the property, while it gives Mephibosheth the benefit of the doubt, yet looks as if there was a considerable doubt in the king's mind. 'And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.' He saw the injustice of his hasty action, and ought at least to have reversed it, if not to have punished Ziba besides. Either, however, because he had still some doubt of the real merits of the case, or more probably because he was unwilling for political reasons to offend Ziba, he resorted to that half-way and compromise course which was both weak and unjust.

¶ Will you let me ask you, without cavilling at words, whether the phrase 'a true mean' accurately represents your own present wish? I am sure we are substantially agreed on this head, and yet I could not use this language. Surely there is no mean between reason and authority. Does not the mischief consist in their separation rather than the excess of either?[2]

¶ If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do

[1] R. Payne Smith, in *The Pulpit Commentary*: 2 Sam., 467.

[2] *Life and Letters of Fenton J. A. Hort*, i. 145.

it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object, and confident promise, of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become lawful alike in all the States, old as well as new—North as well as South.[1]

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Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

Shoes that Never Wear Out.

'Old shoes and clouted.'—Jos 9^5.

'Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.'—Eph 6^{15}.

Read Jos 9^{3-16}.

There is no season of the year about which more beautiful things have been said than Autumn.

It is sometimes spoken of as the dawn of the year. That just means the morning—the opening of a new year—the time when we feel braced up for a fresh start in our work.

I believe most of your fathers look upon Autumn in this way. They plan out new work at the warehouse or in the office. If your father works under some master, in October he is probably feeling thankful that he has had a holiday, and thinking, 'If I only keep as fit as I am just now I don't care what happens.'

[1] Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln*, 145.

He may be a man who reads poetry. If he is, in these Autumn days many fine thoughts will pass through his mind. One poet says:

Red and yellow, russet-brown,
Claret, gold and green,
Underfoot and overhead,
Autumn walks a queen.

Fresh and crisp her healthy breath,
With a hint of frost;
Brilliant is her sunny heart
Though by storm-clouds crossed.

Rich and beautiful her reign,
Earth's best wine the last,
Ere in winter's arms she dies
Fast, alas! too fast.

I believe some of you boys can recall every Saturday in last year's October. You remember especially the one on which you went to gather nuts, and you count on having just such another this year.

What of mother? She may read poetry too—she did at one time, I feel sure; but she has generally a great deal on her mind in October. To her October is certainly the dawn of the year; but it is a dawn that makes her anxious and worried. She thinks of the coldness of winter; and she keeps looking through your clothes. 'John needs a new coat—that could be managed,' she says to herself, 'Annie a school dress, Katie a waterproof. And shoes—they all need to be seen to. Oh dear! where is the money to come from? I wish there were shoes that didn't wear out.'

You all hear a good deal about boots and shoes. When you left home to pay a long visit, or to go to school, mother put all sorts of clothes into your little box. If it were in October, there were changes of warm underclothing, and perhaps a big overcoat, and she always made sure that your shoes were in good condition.

Have you ever heard little children pitied in such words as these: 'Poor little girl, I am sure her shoes let in water; they are old, and they are past mending'? Be thankful for your mother's care. Even if, when the shoemaker's bill comes in, you think father looks cross and mother worried, remember that the worried looks are only on the surface, for when father's wages come in,

among the very first things mother does is to see to buying new shoes or mending old ones.

A wise general looks after his soldiers' boots. If they give out, nothing else they wear can bring any comfort. Many of the roads over which soldiers have to march are very rough and very long, so you see that their boots need to have strong soles and well-sewn uppers, and they are none the worse of a bit of iron on the heels and toes, that they may not wear out quickly.

The wily Gibeonites of the story from which our text is taken knew what meaning could be put into their wearing old shoes. They wanted to get round Joshua by stratagem, so they dressed themselves as if they were ambassadors from a distant country, and in their make-up nothing would be more convincing than the 'old shoes and clouted.'

I once heard a Spanish lullaby that interested me very much. The tune of it was pretty and the words were so curious. The first verse was:

Little shoes are sold at the doorway of heaven,
And to all the tattered little angels are given.
Slumber, my darling baby.

The words were enough to make a baby frightened. A long journey, worn-out shoes, tired little feet. Happily, however, a baby does not understand everything that is said or sung to her.

Boys and girls, the road of life may be a long and rough one. There are sure to be parts where one has to climb up hard hills; and others where one has to go downhill into very gloomy places. Before setting out you ought to have shoes that will take hold of the ground, and help you to steady yourselves. You know that for a long tramp you don't want specially heavy ones; the best kind are those that make you forget about your feet altogether.

You have all heard of the wonderful book called the *Pilgrim's Progress*. I hope you will read it if you have not read it already, for it is one of the finest books in the English language. In it John Bunyan has set down the old idea of life being a journey, and in language that can be understood even by little children. Some of us read it before we could grasp what the book really meant. But how we loved the pictures that it brought before our minds! One was that of the Armoury in the House Beautiful. There Christian was shown all manner of *Furniture*—as Bunyan calls it—which the Lord had provided for pilgrims, Sword, Shield, Helmet, Breastplate, and *shoes that would not wear out*.

I read in a very interesting American book of a man called Dick Sunshine. That was just his nickname. His real name does not matter. He was partly a grocer, and partly an invalid. He spent half his time laughing and half his time coughing. You could tell by a glance at the shop what Dick was doing. If the shop was open, he was behind the counter laughing. If it was closed, you knew that he was in bed coughing. At the church to which he went, when things were going well, he made most of it, and drew attention to how God was helping them. If things went only so-so, he pointed out that they might have been worse.

Dick scarcely felt the rough road over which he was compelled to travel, for his feet were shod with those very shoes of which I have been speaking to you. He did a world of good, and shamed many out of the gloom in which they bore their little illnesses. You sometimes hear boys and girls asking each other, 'Where did your mother buy your new shoes?' And perhaps this morning you are asking yourselves, 'How can I get a pair of the shoes that never wear out?' You want to be able to go on your way feeling light of heart and happy, at peace with God and your companions. They are amongst the things that can be bought from your Heavenly Father without money and without price. If you earnestly pray every morning, 'Forgive my sins, and help me to do what is right to-day,' you will begin to understand the meaning of one's feet being *shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*. God is a loving Father; His children need never arrive at the doorway of heaven in the condition of the little angels of the Spanish song, for they will be wearing the *shoes that never wear out*.

II.

A Driven Leaf.

"A leaf driven to and fro."—Job 13^{25}.

If you take a country walk just now, or go down any road where there are trees, you will find my text. It may wear a crimson dress, or a brown one, or a gold, but it will be there sure enough along with many others of its kind.

Have you guessed the text, I wonder. It is 'A leaf driven to and fro.' You will find it in the

Book of Job, but I'm not going to tell you the chapter or the verse, because I want you to look for it.

I was watching some of those leaves the other day and they gave me a message to take to you. Would you like to know what they said?

1. Well, first they said, 'Tell the boys and girls *to be glad.*'

They seemed such jolly little fellows, and they seemed to have so very little to make them happy, I wondered if they never felt dull. But they answered, 'Not in the least! We've had a gay old time all summer up in the sunshine and the breeze, and this is rather a bit of a come-down, but what's the use of fretting? There's a nice gust blowing, so we're off for a scamper.' And away they went rollicking and frolicking, dancing and prancing down the path.

And so the leaves driven to and fro say to you, 'Be glad.' If you cut your finger, or break your toy, cheer up! The world isn't coming to an end because of that. Keep a bright face when things go a bit wrong. That's the plucky thing to do. It isn't always the people with the fewest troubles who smile the most.

2. But, next, the leaves driven to and fro said to me, 'Tell the boys and girls *to have a purpose.* Just look at us. We are at the mercy of every wind that blows. Sometimes we are scuttled away in one direction, then we are whisked away in another, and next minute we are whirled round and round in a circle. We have no stability of our own, and so we are influenced by the first breeze that comes along.'

And then they said, 'We are just a picture of the people who have no purpose in life, the people who are easily led astray. They are very lovable people often, but they have no high aim of their own, and so they just do exactly what the people around them are doing. They are influenced by whatever wind is blowing. If it is a good wind they are good, but if it is a bad wind they are bad. So tell the boys and girls to have a purpose.'

3. But lastly they said, 'Tell the boys and girls that *God has a purpose for them.* God has a purpose for us if we will lie still and rest. He will make us into a warm blanket to cover the seeds and the plants from the winter cold. He will send the rain and the snow and the worms to work on us and to turn us into food for the plants, and we shall be built up into some beautiful flower, or some fresh green leaf next summer.

'And God has work for the boys and girls too if they will lie still and rest. If they will come to rest in Jesus, if they will make up their minds to be His disciples and let Him do with them as He will, then He has a glorious work for them to do. He can use even them to make the world a better and a happier place, to make His kingdom of love come on earth.'

III.

The Lighthouse.

The Rev. Campbell L. Macleroy, B.D., of Glasgow, is one of the few preachers to children whose sermons are fit to face the light of day. We shall quote one of them. The title of the volume is *A Garden in the Waste* (S.S. Union; 2s. net). This sermon is called 'The Lighthouse.'

'Longfellow, in his poem, speaks of a lighthouse as "a pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day," compares it to the giant Christopher:

> "Wading far out among the rocks and sand,
> The night-o'ertaken mariner to save,"

calls it

> "A new Prometheus chained upon the rock,
> Still grasping in his hand the fire of Jove."

'Surely a lighthouse is one of the most beautiful things that man's hand has ever made. The story of lighthouses is a fascinating one—from the great tower of Pharos, at Alexandria—one of the seven wonders of the world—down to the splendid lighthouses of our own time. It is pleasant to remember that the first sealights of England were shown from monasteries on the coast as a religious service—at St. Michael's Mount and the Farne Islands and Ilfracombe and Boston, and many another place. Some of the splendid towers around our coast stand where once a candle, lighted by the loving hands of anxious and praying women, sent out its kindly beams to guide their beloved home.

'It is sad to think that the first lighthouses in our country had their enemies. In 1619, when the first light at the Lizard was to be set up, the people of the neighbourhood petitioned against it, alleging that it would guide pirates and foreign enemies to our shores, and "because it would take away God's grace from them, and they would

have no more benefits from shipwrecks." And there was an old saying:

"Save a stranger from the sea,
And he'll turn your enemy."

'When we ask the reason why each lighthouse stands just where it does, we get always the same answer. On that spot or near it many a good ship has been lost. The "Wreck Chart" of the British Isles has a black spot to mark every wreck, and several places show each more than a thousand marks.

'Every lighthouse is a monument of brave men—the men who built it, often at the mercy of the sea, the men and the women, too, who have kept the light burning through many a dark and stormy night.

'The lighthouse tells us of those things we need most, if we would live as God would have us live.

'1. It tells us first that we need a firm foundation. Amidst fierce winds and devouring billows, no life is safe that is not founded upon a rock—the Rock of Ages. "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11).

'2. It tells us that on this firm foundation it is our task to build the fabric of our life—strong and beautiful—according to the laws of the great Master-builder. Each stone of the tower must be sound, well hewn, truly laid, exactly fitted into the other stones. Every weakness is searched out by those terrible waves. At Dhu Heartach, when the tower was building, fourteen stones, weighing each two tons and joggled together, were washed away after being set in cement at a height of 37 feet above the sea. And in our character nothing will stand the strain of trial and temptation but what is true—like Christ the Truth.

'3. Then it tells us that our life's supreme purpose is to give light to our fellow-men. The lighthouse towers exist to bear the lantern, that it may send forth its light far over the sea, above the breaking and driving waves. And the higher the light is set, the farther does it send out its rays. No life can attain God's ideal that does nothing to save from shipwreck the mariners "sailing o'er life's solemn main," to show them the way, "'mid the quick-sands and the rocks," to the haven of peace. If we are disciples of Jesus, we must be "seen as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. ii. 15 f.).

'The lighthouse tells us also two things about the kind of light we must show.

'(*a*) It must be clear. The old St. Agnes lighthouse on the Scilly Isles was lighted by a fire of coals in a glass lantern, with a funnel on the top. And sometimes the lantern was allowed to get dirty, or was burned low on purpose, or not lighted at all, when the keeper was drinking. It was on account of such carelessness that Sir Cloudesley Shovel's fleet was wrecked on the Islands in 1707. Not dimly, but clearly, must we let our light shine before men.

'(*b*) It must be distinctive—easily known from other lights. In 1810 the ships *Nymphe* and *Pallas*, of the Royal Navy, were wrecked near Dunbar, through the light of a lime-kiln being mistaken for the coal light on the Isle of May. Now each light has its own character—white-fixed, red-fixed, revolving, flashing—and the sailor can identify it from his chart. The Lizard gives a short flash every three seconds, the Eddystone six flashes in quick succession, and nobody can mistake the one for the other. So must we also shine with our own light, not imitating others, that we may give true guidance to voyagers over the sea of life.'

Point and Illustration.

Perspective in Prophecy.

The third series of the Mendenhall Lectures at DePauw University was delivered by Dr. Francis J. McConnell, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The topic chosen was *Understanding the Scriptures* (Methodist Book Concern; 75 cents net). The choice of lecturer was as wise as the choice of subject was timely. It is distressing to receive so much literature from America that still ignores or opposes a critical study of the Bible. Bishop McConnell welcomes the utmost critical and historical study. Yet he is in no sympathy either with such critical study as would divide a verse of Scripture into several parts and assign each part to a separate author, or with such historical criticism as would eliminate all supernatural narrative from the Gospels simply because it is supernatural. It is altogether a sane and reliable book; and it is so carefully written that the least instructed may read it with ease and profit. What could be better or more effectively said than this?—

'We have come to see that any revelation to be

really a revelation must speak in the language of a particular time. But speaking in the language of a particular time implies at the outset very decided limitations. The prophets who arise to proclaim any kind of truth must clothe their ideas in the thought terms of a particular day and can accomplish their aims only as they succeed in leading the spiritual life of their day onward and upward. Such a prophet will accommodate himself to the mental and moral and religious limitations of the time in which he speaks. Only thus can he get a start. It is inevitable, then, that along with the higher truth of his message there will appear the marks of the limitations of the mold in which the message is cast. The prophet must take what materials he finds at hand, and with these materials direct the people to something higher and better. Furthermore, in the successive stages through which the idea grows we must expect to find it affected by all the important factors which in any degree determine its unfolding. The first stage in understanding the Scriptures is to learn what a writer intended to say, what he meant for the people of his day. To do this we must rely upon the methods which we use in any historical investigation. The Christian student of the Scriptures believes that the Bible contains eternal truths for all time, truths which are above time in their spiritual values. Even so, however, the truth must first be written for a particular time and that time the period in which the prophet lived. When the Christian speaks of the Scriptures as containing a revelation for all time, he refers to their essential spiritual value. The best way to make that essential spiritual value effective for the after-times is to sink it deep into the consciousness of a particular time. This gives it leverage, or focus for the outworking of its forces. No matter how limited the conceptions in which the spiritual richness first took form, those conceptions can be understood by the students who look back through the ages, while the spiritual value itself shines out with perennial freshness. Paradoxical as it may sound, the truths which are of most value for all time are those which first get themselves most thoroughly into the thought and feeling of some one particular time.'

Points of Departure.

Dr. Alexander Smellie has published 'a book of counsel and company for the Sabbath evening.' Its title is *Out of the Desert a Gift* (Melrose; 3s. 6d. net). It is no doubt a volume of evening addresses, but then such addresses. Only the reading of one of them will give the right impression. Let us take the sixth. Its title is 'Points of Departure':

'Here and there in the New Testament we come on a verse which commemorates a breaking-point. The listeners have heard God's messenger for a while, and are more or less impressed. But then he says something which repels. He advocates a belief, ventures an assertion, postulates a demand, which provokes his auditors to contemptuous ridicule or to hot anger or to sullen resentment. The intellect is displeased, or the conscience, or the will. And that terminates all real connection between him and them. Urgent as the truth may be which he rings in their ears, they have no more use for it or for him. Now, why do these foolish and fatal departures happen?

'I. Some are alienated, when the preacher passes from the temporal to the spiritual.

'It was the experience of the Greatest of preachers, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He began His ministry in a blaze of outward success. But the crowds followed Him for material advantages and political ends. Never was there such an incomparable physician; and they hurried to Him for physical health. Never was there a more magnetic leader; and the statesmen and the priests and the plotters would fain have employed Him to promote their own ambitions. That was all, with great numbers at least of those who thronged round Him, glancing and nodding and bustling by. One day He tested them. In the Capernaum synagogue He spoke of Himself as the Living Bread, and of the soul which dies unless it feeds on Him, and of how each man and each woman must by faith eat His flesh and drink His blood. But this deep regeneration, this Christ enthroned not in Jerusalem but in the humble heart, these spiritual liberties and satisfactions, were not what the people coveted. They were too intangible, ethereal, drastic, personal, pure. They failed to appeal and to attract. They irritated and annoyed. *Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him* (John vi. 66).

'That, first and last, Christ's salvation is spiritual, a salvation not from poverty or injustice or social disability but from sin—this is still the stumbling-block. There are thinkers and writers, eager to

commend Him because of what He is doing in the amelioration of external wrongs. They appreciate the change the Gospel has wrought in the State, the family, the relations between class and class, the very air we breathe. But bid them believe that they are perishing themselves with a hunger which the great globe itself cannot quell and cannot mitigate, and that only Christ can end this mighty famine within, and they may not understand what you mean, or, if they do, they are likely to resent the imputation that they are sinners who need for their redemption the Saviour of the guilty, lost, and helpless. And many of us, who have no claim to be thinkers and writers, resemble them. We are glad of the palpable benefits Christ and His Church confer. We have eaten of the loaves and are filled. But we have not seen and known in ourselves *the signs*—the new birth, the forgiveness of sin, peace with God, the communion of the Holy Ghost, the transfigured history, the hope of glory. That is an unexplored territory. That is a revolution of soul, of which we have little wish to be reminded. When Christ insists on it as the essential thing, we shut our ears, we take our departure, we break away.

'II. Others are alienated, when the preacher passes from the ephemeral to the eternal.

'The ephemeral may not be a matter merely of outward advantage and comfort. It may be an interest and engrossment of the mind. What a picture is that of the meeting on Areopagus between Paul, the wandering missionary of Jesus, and the teachers and senators of Athens—Athens, "the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence"! He has expounded questions of worship, problems of theology, speculations about God, such themes as they love to debate. He has quoted the aphorisms of their sages and the lines of their poets. He seems a man after their own hearts. But then he turns swiftly, imperiously, to that which he has come to Athens to proclaim—the risen Christ, Who will raise all dead men, and before Whose face all dead men will stand to receive His sentence. This vision of the future is incredible, unforgivable, intolerable. Paul's certainties are delusions and repugnances to these light-hearted Greeks. *Some mocked* (Acts xvii. 32); they laughed long and loud. *Others said, We will hear thee again*: they bowed the speaker out of court with polite procrastinations and empty courtesies; they were as sceptical as their franker neighbours. Athens and Paul had arrived at the breaking-point.

'Thus the best ephemeral things can be foes of the better eternal things. Science carries us across the spaces of the universe, and gives us many lessons about God; there is an amazing breadth in science, and we may be content with it. History and literature transport us through the past, and illustrate God's continual providence and manifold wisdom; there is an astonishing length in history and literature, and we may ask nothing more. Philosophy sounds the abysses of personality, and reveals the inner temple God has built for Himself; there is an extraordinary depth in philosophy, and it may be sufficient for us. Breadth, length, depth—but the fourth dimension, the most indispensable, that of height, is lacking; and we shall not find it apart from the exalted and everlasting Christ, Who comes again, first to take His people to Himself, and afterwards to judge the quick and the dead. Science, history, literature, philosophy—yes, and worship and theology—are useless, unless we are panting and thirsting to behold His face in righteousness. And how utterly unbelievable to clever and learned minds, in numerous instances, are the advent of the Lord, and the rapture of the saints, and the opening of the graves, and the decisions of the Throne! They *mock*. Even inside the Church, too many of us are impatient and critical. We say to the preacher, *We will hear thee again*. We are not captivated by the majestic facts in front of us. We disparage all other-worldliness; and the fleeting present is more enthralling than the unshakable future. God make us wiser! God enrol us among the servants whose loins are girt and whose lamps are burning! And may it be well for ever with you and me, "when the King comes in."

'III. Once more: Many are alienated, when the preacher passes from the centre to the circumference.

'When Paul left the little centre of Judaism, the garden enclosed, the chosen generation and the peculiar people, to announce God's mercy for the wider world, and Christ's purpose to gather in to His flock other sheep than those of the hills and fields of Palestine, at once his Hebrew listeners were up in arms. They had God's glorious Presence, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Temple service, and the ancient

ıises. They could not brook the notion that ised strangers were to be admitted to their mony and inheritance. They wanted to go orgetting the circumference, and the dying ons who peopled it. And they hated the who told them that God loved the circum- ıce as well as the centre, and that Christ's on and peace and holiness and heaven are for the Jews only but for the Gentiles also. e Gentiles!" "They gave him audience unto word, and lifted up their voices, and said, y with such a fellow from the earth, for it is it that he should live" (Acts xxii. 22).

ıre we so far removed from their selfishness we are at liberty to condemn them? Eight ıns out of ten in the Christian society do not ıathise with the yearnings of God and Christ for the world's salvation. What sympathy they have is academic, theoretic, ineffective. It does not compel them to intense and agonising prayer. It does not draw the tears from their eyes. It does not set them to the devising of all methods and means to save some, ere night falls and says, "Too late!" It does not persuade them to make real sacrifices for the sake of human souls, and for the Good Shepherd's sake Who laid down His life for us. *Far hence unto the Gentiles*—it is still the word which angers many, and still the dividing-line that separates the Christian in name from the Christian in deed and in truth. But may God help us to pass, with the preacher, out of the warm centre into the cold, dark, dead circumference, and to spend and be spent, until it too is bright, warm, alive.'

The Conflict of Faith and Unbelief in France: 1670-1802.

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)TABLE historical want has been supplied by ːssor Albert Monod of Paris, whose family have ɛred signal service to evangelical truth and ch Protestantism, by his comprehensive and erly review of French Apologetics from 1670 to (*De Pascal à Chateaubriand: les défenseurs ais du Christianisme*, pp. 607. Paris: Félix ɔ. Price 7s. 6d.).

ıe 18th century has been called the Pentecost nbelief, and might be expected, in France as here, to be also specially productive of apolo- ɔl literature. In Britain it was the age of e, Gibbon, and Woolston: it was also that of ːr, Paley, and Campbell. French religious ght was then largely dominated by Bayle, ıire, and Rousseau. But the opinion is wide- d that Christian defence during that period negligible. M. Monod quotes Professor tel of Geneva, who declares that opponents of ːtianity then 'encountered not more than four 'e apologists'; and the late Principal Cairns ː to the 'testimonium paupertatis' of the an hierarchy in France, while 'from the Protestant Church of that day,' he adds, 'I do not know of any reply at all.' Professor Monod's work will go far to alter such estimates. Starting from the *Pensées* of Pascal, 'the most original modern plea against irreligion,' he enumerates 950 apologetical works by 650 authors published in or for France between 1670 and 1802. He candidly acknowledges that many in this 'legion' are 'ineffective'; but there remains a series of treatises well worthy of recognition. Among Catholic defenders are the pulpit orator Bossuet, whose 'Universal History'—a Christian Philosophy of History—reached its fifth edition in 1732; Bishop Huet, whose erudite *Demonstratio Evangelica* passed through seven editions between 1679 and 1722, and stimulated the composition of other apologies; Dupin, the notable Jansenist, who replied effectively to the English Deist Blount's attempt to place Christ on the same level with Apollonius of Tyana; Abbé Houteville, whose *Truth of the Christian Religion*, five times re-issued, evoked an enthusiastic welcome and numerous replies; Abbé de la Chambre, the 'Catholic