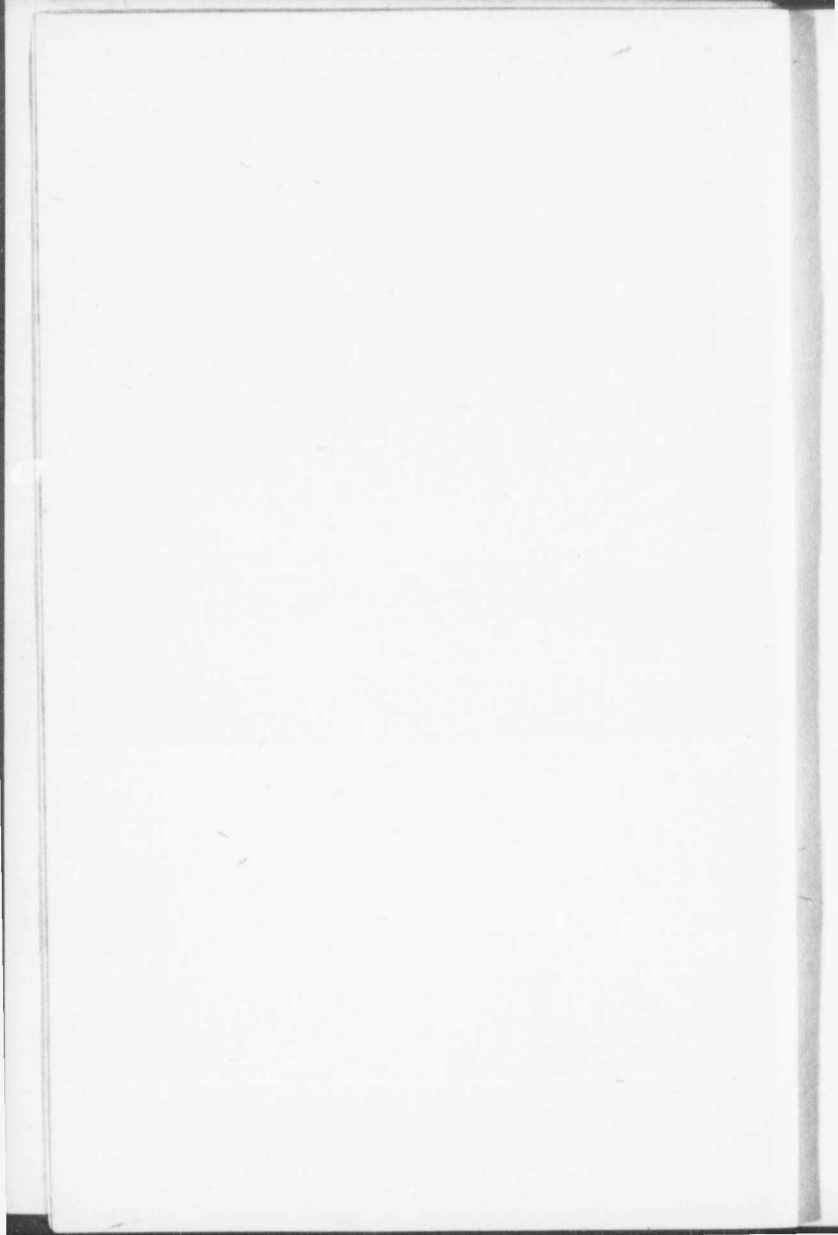




THE EDGE OF THE AGE



THE EDGE OF THE AGE

BY THE REV.
J. D. FREEMAN, D.D.

AUTHOR OF
"LIFE ON THE UPLANDS" AND
"CONCERNING THE CHRIST"

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

MCMXVII

A
BT 736.2
.57

TO
THE REVERED MEMORY OF
LANCE-CORPORAL WILLIAM DAKIN
FREEMAN

WHO FELL IN FLANDERS "WHILE SPLENDIDLY
DOING HIS DUTY," MAY 15TH, 1915
AGED EIGHTEEN YEARS AND SIX MONTHS

FOREWORD

WE are in contact with the edge of an iron age. Three years of unexampled warfare have ground it to the keenness of a razor. It is cutting up old conditions ; it is slashing into established customs ; it is shearing through ancient creeds ; it is sundering old ties ; it is hewing down cherished hopes and plans ; it is as a sword in humanity's stricken side. Deeper and deeper it sinks in as the slow days drag by, drinking ever more and more of the world's best blood.

The age to follow this will be one of larger liberty, but not of lessened labours. The end of the war will not land us "either in Utopia or in hell," but somewhere between the two. Vast works of reconstruction will challenge us, and all serious men and women will find high tasks to do. We are warring now to "make the world safe for democracy" ; we shall be working then to *make democracy safe for the world.*

To bring a cup of consolation to those of my readers who are in agony through the tragedies of the present time, and to somewhat hearten them for the "long, long trail" over which the future must wind its toilsome way, is the main purpose of this book.

J. D. F.

CONTENTS

PART I

	PAGE
I. WHY GOD DOES NOT STOP THE WAR	11
II. THE CHALLENGE OF THE CRISIS	22
III. MAKING DEMOCRACY SAFE FOR THE WORLD	34
IV. PLOUGHMAN'S PHILOSOPHY	48
V. OLD TREES AND YOUNG BLOSSOMS	60
VI. CONSCIENCE	69
VII. COURAGE	82
VIII. WORLD-BEAUTY AND SOUL-BLOOM	95
IX. PULPIT DYNAMICS	105
X. THE FITNESS OF THINGS	117

PART II

I. CALL OF THE DEEP	127
II. LADS AND THEIR DADS	136
III. HOME	146

	PAGE
IV. HOME (<i>continued</i>)	161
V. THE SPACIOUS LIFE	171
VI. THE SPIRIT OF BURNING	180
VII. POETS AND PREACHERS	187
VIII. POETS AND PREACHERS (<i>continued</i>)	195
IX. CLIMAX IN THE COMMONPLACE	207

PART III

I. "LIKE AS A FATHER"	217
II. A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH	226
III. GRANNY'S FIRST COMMUNION	236
IV. JOE	245
V. TAKING THE MESSINES RIDGE	259
VI. SECOND LIEUTENANTS	269
VII. SINCE THE BOY WENT HOME	277

PART I



I

WHY GOD DOES NOT STOP THE WAR

HONOUR BOUND

I SEE the new day thro' the dawn mists burning,
I hear the blast from Freedom's silver horn ;
Yet, 'midst the majesty and music yearning,
Lo, wraiths of legions slain, or battle-torn !

Beloved forms of maim'd and martyr'd brothers,
Woeful with wounds, or dumb in death for me ;
These—tott'ring and a-tremble here, those others—
Mould'ring in gun-clang'd graves beyond the sea.

Dare I, with flesh unscath'd and strength unbroken,
Grudge Honour's guerdon when they proffer'd all ?
Do deeds like theirs demand from me no token
That I am left to play their seneschal ?

Nay ! Take my breath, my brain, my blood, my being !
Use them to shape the new time to their trust ;
Lest I, apostate, and with hell agreeing,
Go down in unresurgence to the dust.

WHERE is God ? Why does He not stretch forth
His hand and stop the war ? Does He behold
this sickening slaughter of the flower of the nations ?
Does He care ? Or is He asleep upon His throne,
nodding in sleepy indifference to the world's
affairs ? Is not this the devil's world ? If there

12 WHY GOD DOES NOT STOP THE WAR

is a God awake, aware, concerned for goodness and for happiness, how can He permit this carnival of blood to go so long unchecked ?

On the face of it it looks as though the war goes on because of a failure on the part of God. A superficial logic declares that God does not stop it for one of two reasons ! He either lacks sufficient interest in men or sufficient power over men. There is either a flaw in His love or a limitation upon His ability. Of these two suppositions the second comes nearest the truth. There is a sense in which it is quite true to say God cannot stop the war. Nor is there anything in this to weaken reverence for God, nor yet to cause dismay concerning human life and destiny.

What makes it hard to think comfortably about God in a time like this is the fact that our minds have been so long held in bondage to a crude and false conception of God's Almightyness. The word "almighty" is one that lends itself to misconception. It looks like a word upon whose meaning and scope no limits of any sort may be put. It looks like an absolutely absolute word. And that is where we go astray. As an attribute of God almighty is not absolute but relative—relative to Himself, to His own nature and character. The devil can do things that God cannot do, because the devil is evil and God is good. You and I can do things that God cannot do, because we are human and sinful. We can lie ; we can deal corruptly ; we can do thousands of wicked and foolish things. God can do none of those things. His glorious inability in these directions

is our ground of rejoicing in Him. Were it otherwise we should have no God at all. God is almighty *as God*; that is to say, He has infinite capacity for doing the things which are becoming to Him. For God to be almighty does not mean that He can do any conceivable thing; that would make Him an irresponsible freak or a conscienceless tyrant. God's almightiness does not consist in ability to do any conceivable thing, but to do all consistent things, all wise and good and holy things, and to keep on doing them unweariedly for ever. God's almightiness is moral, not immoral, not un-moral. God is a constitutional monarch, self-restricted by His own nature to the doing of what is wholly wise and good and consistent.

In His dealings with men God bows to certain self-imposed laws of government. God is not another name for lawlessness. With God, all's love, yet all's law. It is this which gives the universe a stable base. Otherwise, 'twere built on stubble.

God treats men—He must treat them—according to the nature He has given them. Having made men for moral government He must govern them in moral ways. God governs men through the understanding, the heart and the conscience. It is conceivable, it is thinkable, that God might instantly stop the war by some sudden transcendent exercise of physical power. He might put such an embargo upon humanity that no man henceforth should possess the power to make a weapon of war or lift one against his fellow-man. That would effectually stop the war. But it would stop

14 WHY GOD DOES NOT STOP THE WAR

more than the war. It would stop everything : all industry and business and commerce ; all writing of books and printing of newspapers and painting of pictures ; all making of laws and building of churches and singing of songs and offering of prayers. It would mean the debacle of humanity. Stop the war by destroying man's physical power to make war (the only conceivable way to stop it suddenly), and you stop all wheels of human progress. You stop the clock of the universe. We may say it reverently, God cannot afford to do that. We may say it intelligently, God cannot consistently do that. We may say it confidently, God will not do that.

In complete harmony with what has just been said, it may now be affirmed that

GOD IS STOPPING THE WAR

Some day, in the not far future, He will bring it to a dead stop, and we may cherish the hope that no man or nation will be able to start it going again. But God is stopping the war by methods that will still leave Him a world of men and not merely a world of machines.

When an express train is rushing through the country at the rate of seventy miles an hour, it takes the application of enormous power to stop the engine. And this power must be skilfully applied, or in stopping the engine one may wreck the train. God is stopping the engine in such a way as to save the train. Let us not ask God to do the work of a madman. When the ship is on fire, there is one swift, sure way of putting the

fire out. Open the sea-cocks and sink the ship. She will not burn long under water. Send her to the bottom and you will have no further need of fighting fire. But if I had any interest in that ship, any friend on board, or any valuable goods, or even an important letter, I should raise an indignant protest against such a summary procedure. I should wish the ship to be brought to port, although in a damaged condition. She might be repaired and my values might be saved. There are moral values in humanity which God is unwilling to destroy. He will not sink the ship for the sake of putting out the fire.

Yes, God is stopping the war. He began to stop it before it commenced, ages before. War is an eddy on the stream of civilisation. I have seen some ugly and horrible things swirling about in an eddy on a stream; mire and scum and weeds and dead fish and the decaying carcasses of animals. The eddy in one part of its revolution was going against the stream, apparently conquering the stream. But watch it a little while, follow it a little way! Presently you find that the eddy has not reversed the current, but the current has dispersed the eddy. The current bears the eddy on its bosom for a time and then breaks it. War is horrible. No one can hate war half so much as those who see everything that is dear to them swept into its vortex. But war is the eddy, not the stream. God began to break and disperse the eddy of war when He first gave propulsion to the current of civilisation. *He doomed the eddy when he started the stream.*

God began to stop the war when He formed the heart of man ; when He created man in His own image ; when He made man for love, generosity, pity, mercy, happiness.

True, the current of human life has not been wholly determined by these divine impulses. Far from it. Yet it has been more controlled by them than by their opposites. One may affirm it strongly, even now in the midst of this unexampled conflict and in the face of all the diabolical things that are being done, that love is still the current and hate the eddy on its bosom. Savage emotions have been aroused. Fierceness, brutality and lust have had their swing. The enemy has sung his hymns of hate. He has gorged himself with murder and rapine. He has gloated over the slaughter of women and children. We, too, have known the burning of vengeful feelings. We have a better appetite for breakfast when the morning paper tells of Zeppelins brought down in flames, or masses of Germans mown down by our artillery fire. God have mercy on us for the savage feelings we have entertained ! We have even talked of reprisals in kind for the barbarities which have been perpetrated. It is a grim time, ugly, hateful, repulsive to all humane and gentle feeling. So much for the debit side of the account.

But look at the credit side ! Think of the fountains of generosity that have been unsealed, the tender sympathies that have been kindled, the fruitful thoughtfulnesses that have been stimulated, the self-sacrifices that have been evoked in behalf of those whom the war has bruised and

WHY GOD DOES NOT STOP THE WAR 17

broken ! They have been marvellous and magnificent. The cruelties, the savageries, the devilries, have been obtrusive enough and rampant enough, God knows. And yet they are but the small dust in the balance compared with the manifestation of the better things of the human heart which the war has called forth. We look too much upon the dark side of this war cloud. Every day and a hundred times a day God turns the bright side out for us to view, by causing us to witness deeds of unselfish and noble devotion. We are too fond of thrusting our arm into the sleeve of the darkness and pulling the blackness back into our faces. We dwell too much upon the physical horrors of the war, not enough upon its moral heroisms. We brood too much over its miseries, forgetful of its magnanimities. We deplore its cost, unmindful of its compensations. We gaze down into the dark depths of the swirling eddy without noting the onward surge of the stream. We see where the devil is in it, playing his hellish part while we are greatly blind to the presence of God upon the field. This war, by the profound protests which it evokes from the heart of humanity, is working out the death of war. We are making of this war a self-consuming monster, slowly nibbling itself to death. Yes, God began to stop the war when He made man to be man, when He made it impossible for him to be happy as a demon.

War arises out of man's perverted power of self-determination. It is a dangerous power. The Creator took risks when He bestowed it upon His creature, yet robbed of that power man is

18 WHY GOD DOES NOT STOP THE WAR

no more a man. Make it impossible for him to hate and to fight and you make it impossible for him to love or to pray.

Instead of asking why God does not stop the war we should better be asking why God does not stop sin. That is the deeper question, and should be the more urgent question. But men are not pressing that question now. Is it because we have grown indifferent to sin? Were it not for sin there would be no war. Why then does not God stretch forth His hand and stop all sin? It is conceivable that by some single stroke of power He could make it impossible for any one of us to think a sinful thought or do a sinful deed. Would not that make a better world? It would leave no world at all, no human world. To stop our freedom of action would be to stop everything. It would mean the end of man. God would no longer have men to deal with, but only certain millions of marionettes. As He pulled a string, so would we respond in mechanical compliance. Instead of being a Father dealing with His children, His foolish, wayward, wicked children, if you will, He would be a toy-maker trifling with His toys.

God hates sin, and He is working against it ceaselessly. He began to work against it before it was born. The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world was slain in the divine intent before the foundation of the world. Sin is an eddy on the current of that purpose which runs through the ages. God will break that eddy and disperse it, but not by arbitrary means. He will overcome sin by the manifestation of Himself and

the impartation of His truth and grace and power to the souls of men. That will take time. It will take heavy toll of human suffering. It cost Calvary. But it is worth all it costs, worth it to God and man.

Where is God? He is everywhere. In His Heaven and on His earth. He is in every effort man makes to achieve the good and in every law which makes him suffer for doing evil. Let no one doubt the active participation of God in the affairs of men! His dispensation of judgment is continuous. "Lightnings and voices and thunders" proceed from His throne, but spread before it is "a sea of glass like unto crystal." That sublime imagery of St. John is worthy of special attention in a time like this. It suggests to us that while single acts of divine judgment may issue from the throne in a way to bewilder and overwhelm the mind, God's outwrought purposes of judgment are pure transparency. They are done into crystal. We may not be able to understand and harmonise in thought the darting, scorching lightnings, the strange voices and the rolling thunders of God's daily providential government of the world, but where He presents a finished work it is over the vindication of His sovereignty. With as much of crystal as God has already spread before His throne for us to view we may well wait in patience the clearing up of all that is mysterious and perplexing in the events of the passing days. If it sometimes seems to us that judgment upon evil is long deferred, let us remember that the ages belong to God.

We need not wait until the cause is fully won

20 WHY GOD DOES NOT STOP THE WAR

to sing our doxologies and shout our hallelujahs. The choirs which St. John beheld chanting before the throne were singing their hymns of triumph while the war of the Lamb against the Beast was still in progress, indeed, while it was only well begun. They believed in the victoriousness of Truth and Love and sacrificial suffering. The war could have but one end—with the Lamb in the midst of the throne—triumph for the Lamb.

The Lamb in the midst of the throne means that the government of God is everywhere controlled and administered by the spirit of the Cross. Can a Lamb make war? Yes, its own sort of war. A Lamb can suffer and bleed and die; suffering, bleeding, dying for its cause it ultimately "out-wearies mortal hate."

Hence we have the triumph song of the Church and of redeemed humanity sung in advance of the actual victory. Ages of conflict must pass ere the Lamb subdues the Beast. The world must receive many a baptism of blood and tears ere the force of human animalism can be bound about the feet of Christ, but the end is assured. He shall have the dominion, everywhere. The holy cause will win against the big battalions.

The victory of the Lamb will not mean an impoverished world, but a world everywhere enriched and beautified with all fair and fruitful growths. There is a fountain in the Lamb's throne, from which "a river of water of life bright as crystal" flows forth to cleanse and refresh and fertilise the world. Everything liveth whereunto that river flows.

Christ's throne has a fountain in it. Cæsar's throne had a whirlpool in it. It was the seat of a maelstrom, sucking all things good and beautiful into itself that it might consume them in its insatiable maw. The whirlings of that maelstrom undermined the foundations of Cæsar's throne as they are undermining the Kaiser's throne to-day. Men know the difference now between a fountain and a whirlpool. When the whirlpool takes the place of the fountain in a throne, that throne is doomed. God is stopping war by the gradual undermining of every seat of iniquity and the pouring of His own truth and spirit into "the midst of the street" where men mingle to toil and strive and suffer. There it is nourishing a "tree of life" whose leaves shall be "for the healing of the nations."

And so assured of the final victory of righteousness we may raise our hallelujahs even now. We may sing our doxologies in the face of every hideous and hellish thing that lifts itself against God.

"Ring, bells in unreamed steeples,
The joy of unborn peoples!
Sound, trumpets far off blown,
Your triumph is my own.

"Parcel and part of all,
I keep the festival,
Fore-reach the good to be,
And share the victory.

"I feel the earth move sunward,
I join the great march onward,
And take, by faith, while living,
My freehold of thanksgiving."

II

THE CHALLENGE OF THE CRISIS

I BELIEVE that this dark war-time through which we are passing is one of superlative opportunity for the Christian Church. I believe the same thing will be true of the period to follow when the war is over. This is a testing time, as that will be. It is a time of infinite anguish. Have you heard the birds crying in the early morning as if in pain? I have never heard such sounds from them before. And sometimes the cattle in the fields make piteous moans. It seems as if "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." But by the pangs of this travailing a new age is coming to the birth, a new and better time for the Christian Church and for the Kingdom of beauty, grace and truth. The womb of the present is big with destiny.

It is too early yet to grasp the full spiritual significance of the events through which we are passing; too soon to envisage in its totality the opportunity which the crisis is creating. It has far-reaching vistas through which we may now but dimly peer. Yet some things have already been made plain.

For one thing—it is clear that

THE WAR HAS NOT DISCREDITED CHRISTIANITY

The contrary of this has been affirmed loudly and often ; but the affirmation cannot stand examination. Nothing can rightly be said to have failed where it has not been tried. It is the trial of Christianity that has been limited, not the genius and power of it that have failed. Where Christianity has been tried it has splendidly succeeded. It has stood every test that has been put upon it. I have yet to hear of a Christian soldier who did not find his Christianity sufficient to sustain his soul amid all the hazards and horrors of this war. Christian soldiers declare that not only has their religion not failed them, but that it has been intensified and enriched in them. It has become a more real and vital and potent thing with them. There—in billet and trench and dug-out and shell-hole ; there, by the guns and at the observation point ; there, in the dash across No Man's Land to the wire entanglements of the enemy in the face of hellish machine-gun fire ; there, in aeroplane and battleship and mine-sweeper ; there, in prison, camp and hospital and in the throes of death ;—*there* Christianity has been tried and has stood the test triumphantly. I will take the Christian soldiers' word for it.

I have yet to hear of a Christian father or mother, a Christian wife or sister who has found Christianity a failure during this war. They have suffered the loss of their chief—in many cases their only earthly treasure—yet they have gone on sweetly, lifting up their faces unto God and gaining fresh strength

24 THE CHALLENGE OF THE CRISIS

to minister unto others. Is that not a triumph of Christianity ?

THE WAR HAS NOT DISCREDITED THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Within the term "Church" I include every form of organised Christian life, such as the Salvation Army and the Young Men's Christian Association. It is only fair and right to do this. The Church has not done everything that she might have done or ought to have done, yet on the whole she has been admirably efficient. Certainly she has not been put to shame. Her works may be read and known of all men. There has been no new turning away from the Church since the war began. She has more than held her own even if there has been no notable return to her. The work she has done has won a new respect and affection for her in tens of thousands of homes formerly alienated from her life and hostile to her teaching.

THE WAR HAS NOT BEEN MAKING INFIDELS

The war has unmasked some infidels and revealed them to themselves and others ; but it has not been making new ones. There always have been people who were essentially infidel without realising it. The war has not created any new theological problems, though it has tremendously accentuated some very old ones. The outbreak of war and its raging through these years involve no different theological problem from the previous existence of sin, vice and crime. Sin is the root of war and

war is the fruit of sin. The problem is there, in the existence of evil in the human heart.

No, the war has not been making infidels. It has rather been making believers. It has been doing that among the soldiers as I know from first-hand experience with them. The number of men in the army who have for the first time in their lives definitely professed personal faith in Christ would reach a truly magnificent total. Over against that indisputable fact all war-made infidelity would be but as the small dust in the balance.

On the other hand—while the war has not discredited Christianity, nor discredited the Church, nor made the nation infidel—it has produced certain effects distinctly favourable to the Church in her propagation of the Gospel.

THE WAR HAS CREATED A WIDE-SPREAD, DEEP-BURNING MORAL INDIGNATION

Now that is a cleansing and ennobling thing. A fire goeth before *Him*. Such moral indignation as now burns in all the democratic countries of the world is a Forerunner for Messiah. Men do not lose their souls when they fight for a great cause, they find their souls. Repugnant as all war is, and revolting to many of our instincts, yet *this* war is not deadening but rather vitalising our fundamental moral impulses. Millions of men are in arms to-day for Conscience' sake. Never has so much enlightened conscience been put into any struggle as into this. It was con-

26 THE CHALLENGE OF THE CRISIS

science that put England into the war at the beginning and that has brought America in now. We have heard a good deal about "conscientious objectors," but the tag has been pinned to the wrong shoulders.

The "conscientious objectors" who really count for anything are trying to win the war for humanity. They object to predatory Prussian militarism. They object to the breaking of international faith and the violation of the common law of nations. They object to the rape of Belgium and the destruction of Serbia. They object to the slaughter of eight hundred thousand peaceful Armenians. They object to the wanton ravaging of fair lands and the needless destruction of priceless artistic treasures. They object to the sinking of peaceful passenger merchant ships crowded with helpless women and children. They object to the destruction of hospital ships, to the bombardment of undefended towns, to baby-killing, to white slavery and to world dominance by the mailed fist. Because they are conscientious objectors to these and other savageries and devilries, they are ready to lay down their lives in battle. The thinking of the Western world has been remoralised. Men who once lived for pleasure now fight for honour. Men who once strove for gold now pour out sacrificial blood. Men who once thought only of a career are now absorbed in a high mission. The bearing of this fact upon the moral life of the future will prove to be great and beneficent.

THE WAR HAS WROUGHT IN MANY DIRECTIONS
A TIMELY AND WHOLESOME DISILLUSIONMENT

It has broken down materialistic philosophy. It has blown a good many fads to the winds. For instance, what does Christian Science look like against the background of this war? Its worship of comfort and freedom from suffering, its denial of redemption by the shedding of blood, how false and despicable these things look now, to serious people! The limitations of culture have been exposed and that in a ghastly way. Whether you spell it with a German "K," or an English "C," matters little. In no land did art, science, literature and philosophy flourish more abundantly than in Germany during the last generation. Yet all the while hell was making ready to break up through the surface. Under all the boasted Kulture was the tiger's claw and the tiger's heart. Of what use is it to manicure a tiger's claw? It will rend you none the less savagely for that. To polish the horn of a bull may make it all the more dangerous when it comes to gore you. You do nothing for the health of a family, but rather plot its destruction, when you paint the handle of the pump and leave the dead dog in the well.

THE WAR HAS RE-EMPHASISED THE NEED AND
INTENSIFIED THE DESIRE TO REALISE THE
BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

In pre-war days we thumbed this phrase until we wore it smooth and thin. To many the idea of the Brotherhood of Man was purely Utopian.

28 THE CHALLENGE OF THE CRISIS

“East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.” But they have met, during this war, and clasped hands in a blood covenant. They have avowed identical ideals of life. It is a blessed miracle. The concerts of the world’s democracies which are now being daily held, the patient, earnest striving to harmonise and co-ordinate their efforts for the freedom, peace and security of mankind, inaugurates a new era of history. We know now, as Mr. Wilson reminded Russia recently, that divided we shall be destroyed. The French have a saying, or did have, that not only is England an island, but that each Englishman is an island. We can be insular no more. We have learned that fires kindled anywhere on earth may presently be burning at our own doors. For good or evil, the world is one and indivisible. The days in front of us are certain to witness a fraternising of the free peoples of the world to an extent hitherto unknown for the purpose of promoting the common weal of mankind. It is for the Church of God to sanction, hallow, guide and fructify this new movement towards one of her great ideals.

At the present moment the danger is that the movement should be secularised by the predominant activity and influence of international Socialists. These men are often lacking in religious convictions and spiritual ideals. They are obsessed with a sense of self-importance and superior wisdom. They are capable of doing good work for the life that now is, but not the highest work in view of the life that is to come. As a matter of

fact the Church in all her branches now holds and advocates all that is best in Socialism. What is claimed by the market-place orator in red tie is demanded no less strenuously by the Bishop in his ecclesiastical robes. The man in the pulpit and the man in the pew agree with the man in the street on the need of levelling up the social conditions and providing every man with the means of living not only a decent, but a rich, full life. But the Church goes further. She views the man in his totality and in his relations both to God and man, to time and to eternity. She has a magnificent opportunity now, and she must take the current as it serves or lose her venture. It is only when men acknowledge the Fatherhood of God, with all that that involves in the way of worship and of service, that they can truly realise the Brotherhood of Man.

THE WAR HAS BROUGHT ABOUT A BETTER UNDER-
STANDING, A FULLER SYMPATHY AND A LARGER
CO-OPERATION AMONG THE VARIOUS BRANCHES
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The chaplains serving at the front, as well as the soldiers, tell of a truly beautiful exemplification there of the spirit of Christian Unity. Baptists and High Anglican clergymen have worked together with the utmost cordiality, and Jewish Rabbis have made the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the dying sons of Rome. The Y.M.C.A. has furnished a common gathering ground and a common platform for the propagation of the Gospel.

Nor have the churches at home maintained their

30 THE CHALLENGE OF THE CRISIS

former aloofness and coolness towards each other. A United Missionary Convention has just been held in Leicester, in which Established and Free Church have borne an equal part, and in which they have grasped hands in sincerest fellowship. It is a sign of the times. The future must find us emphasising our agreements in essentials more and our differences regarding non-essentials less. There need be, there must be, no sacrifice of principle anywhere, but there must be a faithful winnowing of the chaff of opinion and prejudice from the wheat of conviction and principle. We can no more return to the *status quo ante* in the matter of church interrelations than we can in the matter of secular government or industrial methods. Here as elsewhere, united we stand, divided we fall.

THE WAR HAS PLOUGHED MULTITUDES OF HEARTS ANEW FOR THE SOWING OF THE GOSPEL SEED

Never before were there so many broken hearts in the world since time began. Never was there so much eager questioning regarding God and the life to come. Never was there so much moral earnestness or spiritual wistfulness. This means a mighty opportunity for the Church, and she must mightily bestir herself in order to turn it to the best advantage. These days and the days before us, when vast reconstructions must be effected, demand a prophet in every pulpit. The day of the priest has largely passed and the day of the prophet has come. The Church must look to her message, making sure it is *the* message needed

and deliver it in the unction and power of the Holy Ghost.

The preaching for to-day and for the day in front of us must lay special emphasis on Three Fundamental Truths. On

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The only men fit to preach now are the men who can see God on His throne and overhear what God is saying to the nations. Democracy is a great word now, but democracy cannot save the world. Only the coming of the Kingdom of God can do that. Unless above all democracies we exalt the Divine Autocracy, the world will "reel back into the beast" again. The Kingship of God must be no mere phrase or sentiment with us, but a daily source of martial orders for a militant Church. God is not a figure-head for His Church. He does not wait in His throne-room to sign the decisions and programmes which men would put into His hands. He is King to command, to rule, to marshal men to stern tasks and repentances and self-denials and consecrations and sacrifices.

After the Great Fire of London, Sir Christopher Wren was employed to make designs not only for rebuilding its fifty burnt churches, but also to prepare a scheme for laying out the whole city on a new plan, with a series of wide streets radiating from a central space. The scheme was approved by the Government, but private interests and personal prejudices arising from various ownerships of the ground stepped in and wrecked it. Any one who has had to thread his way through

32 THE CHALLENGE OF THE CRISIS

that labyrinth of streets called modern London will realise what a penalty the generations have paid for the selfishness and perversity of the men who wrecked that scheme. It would have been a vastly beneficent thing had the Government taken to itself the authority to realise the great architect's idea.

After the great fire of this war has cooled, and even before its ashes are cold, a great work of reconstruction must begin. It will be for the Church at home and abroad to build a fairer City of God than that over which the conflagration has passed. We shall build nothing worthy, we shall only perpetuate chaos, unless we find in God both the plan for reconstruction and the authority to put it into effect. Every imagination of the thoughts of our hearts must be brought into captivity to Him. Personal preferences and all "miserable aims that end with self" must be subjected to His all-wise and all-holy will as He reveals it unto us in Christ. The new time "song of the Lord" must begin "with trumpets," clear-blown before His royal chariot.

Emphasis must also be strongly laid upon

THE REDEMPTIVE POWER OF THE CROSS

We can preach the Cross now as we never did before. Scarcely anything was more common in pre-war days than to hear men, in Adult Schools and elsewhere, denounce the preaching of the Cross. It was jeered at as a "Gospel of the shambles." "I don't want anybody to die for me, and I don't need anybody to die for me," was

a sentiment one often heard avowed. We do not hear it now. The men who used to say it know now that they sleep in their beds at night and go about their work in the day because other men are dying for them every hour. Some of these men, many of them, have sons of their own reposing beneath little white crosses in French and Belgian graveyards, laid there after giving their lives for the redemption of human liberty. These men are bearing a cross in their own hearts now, and in their bearing of it will want to lean upon the Cross of Christ.

We must also put a new emphasis upon

THE DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY

We must preach as men who look into the opened heavens and feel the thrill and power of the life to come. There are so many new-made graves now, over which no mourner may shed a tear, so many broken hearts, that to give less than the fullest assurance of immortality and reunions beyond will be to offer stones in place of bread to famishing souls.

These great things it is our privilege to preach. The men who can burn for God in the pulpits of Christendom during the next ten years, need envy no angel in the skies.

“ We are living, we are dwelling
In a grand and awful time ;
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime.”

III

MAKING DEMOCRACY SAFE FOR THE WORLD

“THE world must be made safe for democracy” is the watchword of the hour. We owe this ringing word to President Woodrow Wilson. It strikes a new note in American policy and in world life. It instantly penetrated all the courts and chancelleries of the world, and is being echoed and re-echoed in all the parliaments and assemblages of men. For the United States it means the virtual renunciation of the Monroe doctrine. That was a doctrine of isolation. “In the wars of European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparations for our defence.” There have always been citizens of the United States who repudiated that policy. Since this war began millions of them had been chafing under its ignoble restraint. It was not chivalrous; it smacked of juvenile irresponsibility; it ignored the unity and solidarity of human interests; it had been outworn and outgrown; it

was unworthy of a great, free and powerful republic.

For two years and a half President Wilson paced the deck of the ship of state as she swung at anchor in the protected harbour of the Monroe doctrine ; but he paced it with unquiet heart. He knew, no man knew better, the debt America owed to mankind. He knew that no nation can be truly great until its Declaration of Independence carries as a corollary a declaration of interdependence. He was a lover of liberty. His book on *The New Freedom* was a work of bold idealism. It aimed to refine the metal of Liberty Bell and put a new tongue into it. In that book he uttered powerful protests against every form of oppression, whether autocratic, oligarchic or plutocratic. "I have never heard of any group of men in whose hands I am willing to lodge the liberties of America in trust."

But Mr. Wilson must have realised that while liberty is a great word, responsibility is a still greater word. High as is the privilege of being free, higher still is the privilege of achieving freedom for others who without us must be slaves. So the day came at last, at long last, when Mr. Wilson cut the cable and sent the good ship *Columbia* out to sea. Passionately had he yearned to keep his country out of the red vortex of war if it could be honourably done. But outraged honour shrieked against the foulness and criminality of predatory Prussianism until he could withhold his hand no longer. Then he was heard to say: "The day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave

her birth and happiness. . . . God helping her, she can do no other."

For two years and a half Mr. Wilson washed his hands in the soft waters of diplomacy. But the fibre of those hands did not deteriorate. When he found at length that traitors' hands were with him in the dish and that the waters had become poisoned, his hands flashed forth, and lo! they were hands of steel. It was felt at once that the ship of state was in command of a masterly man. Swiftly he bore her helm hard down and ran her into the firing line. Never did ship respond more gallantly to helmsman's hand than that good ship *Columbia* to the presidential touch. She flew to the mark like an avenging eagle.

The proclamation of neutrality at the beginning of the war was based upon the maxim that it takes two to make a quarrel. The declaration of war was based upon the fact that it does not take two to commit a crime. One had done that, and Mr. Wilson had found out who that one was. He discovered that the European war was not an international brawl; it was a life-and-death struggle between civilisation and barbarism, between law and criminality. He beheld a criminal nation fighting furiously and foully to overpower law and strangle truth and justice. It was a case of resisted arrest after the warrant for arrest had been issued by the supreme court of the universe. He realised then that a nation can be so right that it should be too proud *not* to fight.

We hail the entrance of America into the war with profound and reverent thanksgiving. It will

prove to be one of the most determining and beneficent events in the history of the world. It puts the moral issue beyond question or cavil. It smites the central European Powers dumb before the judgment seat of civilisation. It anticipates the ultimate judgment of history. It *is* that verdict.

The incoming of America marks the end of predatory militarism. It foredooms German junkerdom and Kaiserism. It means that Germany in common with all the world "must be made safe for democracy." It serves notice upon the German autocracy to quit. "A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honour steady to a common end." Those words bite deep. Their significance will be understood in Potsdam and Vienna.

Ranging herself with the Allies in this supreme conflict, America reasserts her own soul. Burning now upon the altar of sacrifice for a great cause, she sanctifies herself and "kindles such a light as shall never be put out." A new spirit now animates her marts, and a new splendour shines in her streets. Twice-born of a passion to be free, she is now born once more of a passion to make all men free. We should have fought on and on and on had America not come in. We should have won, too, please God. But the entrance of America will shorten the strife and put the issue beyond all peradventure. It will impart a steadier and more confident rhythm to the blows the Allies strike for freedom. It will enable

those nations over whom the night of captivity still glooms to keep their souls more steadfastly until the night is gone and the shadows flee away. It gives a new pulsation to the sense of blood brotherhood between America and England. It flushes the heart of France with unspeakable joy. The day that saw America come in was one of the great days of the Son of Man.

“The world must be made safe for democracy.” For that end we have been fighting now for three years, bleeding ourselves white and spending ourselves poor. Never for one moment have we contemplated laying down our arms until we had done our utmost to achieve that purpose.

But there is another sentiment and ideal needing to be expressed in a watchword to accompany that now ringing through the world; and it is this: *Democracy must be made safe for the world.*

Democracy is not as yet a safe thing in relation to the larger interests of mankind. Democracy carries dynamite in its pockets and disease germs in its hair. The day has not come, it will never come, for the deification of democracy. Demos is quite as capable of acting like a demon as like a deity. Democracy is still liable to hideous mistakes and even atrocious crimes. It is ever in danger of being overswept by thoughtless passion. Before democracy can be made a safe thing for the world, many changes must be effected in the constitution and temper of it. The world will be made safe for democracy long before democracy is made safe for the world. The latter is by far the more complex and difficult task. A war,

a campaign, a sudden revolution may make a tract of country safe for democracy; but there is no such short cut to the making of democracy safe for the growth of righteousness and brotherhood in the world. That demands an evolution, and evolutions are slow processes. Russia was made safe for democracy in a day; but it will be many a long day before the Russian democracy becomes a sober, self-restrained, self-disciplined and reliable force in the world's affairs. A lot of disinfectant will need to be put around in Russia before the germs of political and moral malaria are killed out.

The world was thrilled and the Western world enchanted by the news that Czardom had been overthrown. For a day or two we thought all would be well, and that Russia would swiftly bound to the forefront of all movements for human progress. We are fond of dwelling in a fools' paradise. But enchantment was swiftly followed by disillusionment. We presently learned that the foundations of law, order and justice in Russia were in danger of being broken up. And so we have seen counsellors rushing there from the ends of the earth frantically endeavouring to avert a catastrophe that would plunge that country into barbarism.

America has been safe for democracy for the last hundred and forty years. But who can say that the ideals of America are safe from her democracy? All the world knows about her "black" peril, her German-American peril, and her trust peril. Great Britain is essentially a democracy; but look at the crowds of degraded men and women

who gather to flout her ideals, curse her laws, mock her moralities and revile her religious faith ! There are great masses of the British democracy which threaten everything that good men hold dear or sacred. They threaten the home, the Church and the State.

No democracy can be a safe thing for the world's peace or the world's progress until it is sane, sober, enlightened and self-devoted to worthy ends of life. No democracy is safe that is led by wild men, corrupt men, ignorant men or self-seeking men. No democracy can be safe while any considerable portion of it is drunken, or while any considerable portion of it is bred from boy and girl marriage or from the course of free love. No democracy can be safe that is rotten either at the apex, or in the middle, or at the base.

Before democracy can be made safe the slum must be abolished. That cannot be done by act of parliament or the action of police commissions.

The slum can only be abolished by the abolition of the causes producing it. Any interference with slum life that does not go to the roots of the underlying causes will be futile. Nothing is gained by shovelling social sewage from one gutter to another. You do not overcome a cholera epidemic by widely distributing the germs.

To make democracy safe demands the stern restriction, many of us believe the total annihilation of the drink traffic. The alcoholic stain in the blood of the British people is responsible for more national evils than have yet been charged to its account, appalling as is the account that has been

rendered. There is not a slum in the world that has ever come into being or remained long in existence without the fostering aid of alcohol, or other noxious drug. The tap-root of the slum is the tap-room.

It is speaking in the most elementary terms of social science to say that democracy cannot be made safe without the provision of the living wage. If one is to become a good citizen he must be able to make a good living. He must have a comfortable home with plenty of good food, some leisure for the cultivation of his mind and heart and protection against want in his old age. The fact that all kinds of labour, except perhaps brain labour, are now more highly paid than before the war is no guarantee of the permanence of the living wage. That may become more and more a matter for legislation—certainly the matter of the minimum wage must be—but it must also be more and more a matter of educating the social conscience. Profit-sharing which is now quite general should be made universal. The buying of the services of a human being and paying a certain fixed weekly wage for it is essentially undemocratic. It is well enough as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It is false by defect. It does not recognise fully the fact of partnership between employer and employed or the mutuality of their interests. The universal adoption of profit-sharing would go far to make a contented proletariat. It would be a fitting exemplification of the brotherhood of man.

Another matter essential to the safety we are

considering is the limitation of private fortunes. It is a monstrous thing that a few men should hold the bulk of the nation's wealth in their own hands. It is perilous too in various ways. The power it confers for corrupt political influence can scarcely be estimated. A few big fortunes may dominate a great city in their own interests. They may buy up state legislatures and get laws passed that are an outrage upon common justice. How can the masses of honest hard-working people, pressed to find money for their rent, fuel and children's clothes, be expected to view this sort of thing without cherishing deep, angry and dangerous discontent? The injustice of it, the barbarism of it, the essential Prussianism of it is self-evident. The piling up of colossal fortunes is an incitement of democracy to anarchy. The weight of these concentrated millions constantly tends to break down and pulverise the very basis of law and order.

But apart from that, why should any man be encouraged to consider himself a superman simply because he has found out how to put his bucket under the spout and get it filled whilst others have to be content with such drops of the golden shower as fall upon their outstretched hands? Up to the present time the laws of all nations do give such encouragement. They tend to establish plutocracy and destroy democracy. One man drunk with the pride of vast wealth may do more harm than many whisky drunkards. The whole system that permits this thing is a negation of common justice and a denial of the rights of man.

The democracies of the world will have enormous works of reconstruction and equalisation to carry through in the days before us. If it has been defensible and right to take excess war-time profits for the use of the State in making the world safe for democracy, will it not be equally justifiable and necessary to limit private fortunes in the future in order to make democracy safe for the world ?

If democracy is to be made safe for the world, there must be speedy improvement in systems of education. The situation is not safe so long as large numbers of people through unavoidable ignorance are the handy tools of those who have had the advantages of education. We have muddled along thus far under such an ungodly condition of things, but the air is full of warnings that we must not presume to do it in the future. "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." It is showing its teeth in England now in fashion rather grim. And none too soon, either. *Every child born into the world has a right to such an education as will fit him to live in the world the best life of which he is capable.* He comes from God and this is God's world. Young life must be more broadly cultured than it has been heretofore among the masses.

The aim must be to raise the whole democracy to a real aristocracy, that is, to the best of which it is capable. A child that is capable of becoming an artist must not be doomed to be a factory hand. Lads capable of becoming skilled artisans are not to be driven into blind-alley occupations from which they will be plucked out a little later and

flung upon the industrial scrap-heap. Moreover, the contention for the living wage has little significance apart from the provision of such education and moral training as will enable the worker to use his wage well when he receives it.

If democracy is to be made safe for the world, the leaders of working men must train them in appreciation of their individual and collective responsibilities. Utter failure in this regard is the most deplorable feature of such organisations as the British Independent Labour Party. I have been hearing and reading the words of these leaders now for many years, but I cannot recall an instance when one of them pressed home upon working men any serious counsel regarding their responsibilities to the State. Their talk is everlastingly of "rights." They nurse grievances and stir up class strife. They have been doing it during this war vastly to the detriment of the country. In our international relations they have done what they could to "queer the pitch" for us.

A favourite practice of these men is to quote Jesus as the champion of the rights of man. And so He is; but in a far higher sense than they apprehend. Jesus is the champion of the rights of man because He is the champion of man. But man is more than a bundle of rights. He is a moral and spiritual being charged with responsibilities. Jesus was not indifferent to any man's domestic, social, economic or religious rights. He was a lover of liberty, the friend of the poor, the weak, the fallen. He would claim for the worker the right to the living wage. He who died for

man upon the Cross would not deny man's right to three nourishing meals a day and a comfortable bed at night, though He was often without a place to lay His head. But when Jesus talked to men, even the poorest and most unfortunate of men, He made them think far more of their responsibilities than their rights. No man ever went out from His presence pitying himself as a badly used person; he went out thinking how great a thing it was to be a son of God.

Jesus did indeed care for men's rights—more than anyone else ever did—but He sought to put man into possession of his supreme rights by making him indifferent to his lesser rights. He sought to lift man up into the enjoyment of his highest rights by making him faithful to his responsibilities. The Sermon on the Mount is nearly all about duty, not the other man's duty, but every man's duty, the working man's duty along with the rest. It goes straight at the man who is making loud outcry about his rights and bids him be still until he has a clearer conception of his duties. Jesus would not divide an inheritance between two claimants. He was capable of doing it and of determining the perfect equity of the case. He simply was not interested. And for this reason; both claimants were selfish men, each wishing to get an advantage of the other. They were looking at life from the wrong viewpoint. Jesus would rather give them a proper attitude to life than decide a concrete case between them. Given the right attitude to life, and to each other, the two claimants would make their

own division of the inheritance satisfactorily to both.

We are paying a fearful price in England to-day for over-insistence upon rights. A whole generation has been rocked in the cradle of selfishness. Patriotism has been honeycombed. Young men have been drilled in the idea of exploiting the State to their own advantage, instead of being taught to live for the State and be ready, if necessary, to die for it. We could learn a wholesome lesson from our enemies. While England was talking to her youth of their rights, Germany was impregnating hers with a sense of responsibility. It makes a mighty difference in war time which of these conceptions and convictions prevail throughout a nation. The whole teaching of Germany for forty years or more, in church, school and university, has tended to inculcate the sense of obligation to the State. It was overdone, grotesquely overdone. It was associated with a conception of the State which we repudiate. But it made for unity and efficiency. It made democracy safe for the purposes of Germany, such as they were. England erred in the opposite direction, greatly to her weakening. You cannot grow strong men on a daily diet of insistence upon rights ; the soul must draw strength from a consciousness of duty. Rights are props, duties are roots. Where the roots are strong, deep-set and active the tree will have little need of props.

If democracy is to be made safe for the world, the Church of Christ in all lands must redouble her efforts for the evangelisation of the people. Demo-

cracy must be Christianised before it will be safe. It will be a stupendous task with democracy swinging wide and loose from religion as it is to-day. The hardest part of the task will not be found in pagan lands, but among people who have renounced religion or ceased to think of it under the shadow of the Church in so-called Christian lands. Yet we need not despair. The very greatness of the task must stimulate us to new exertions, new boldness, new aggressiveness. When we learn to labour and to fight for Christ as the soldiers labour and fight for Country, the day of victory will not be far away. When the spirit of Christ becomes dominant among the nations then, and not till then, will democracy be made safe for the world.

IV

PLOUGHMAN'S PHILOSOPHY

THE work was evidently taking it out of him, for he was no longer young. Sweat was streaming down his face, making white gutters through the mud-stains, and there were blisters on his hands. He was not an ordinary farmer, but a gentleman-scholar now living in the country after many years of professional life in town. I found him enthusiastic in his new work and especially keen on it this year, because of the urgent call to the nation for increased food production. Mr. Prothero will have no more faithful ally in his endeavour to defeat the German submarine campaign by work on British corn-fields than my philosopher-farmer friend.

“ I am speeding up my land this year. I am throwing it into the big offensive. I am going to make it fight and fight hard. I am going to make it sweat and bleed for England as the boys are doing at the front. I shall not stand for any shirking. See those nice soft beds over there where the tulips are coming up. I call them my pacifists and conscientious objectors. They have been accustomed to grow nothing but pretty, sweet-smelling things. I am going to make them

grow potatoes and beetroot. I love flowers as much as any man living, but flowers must make room for food at a time like this. I shall show no more favour to tulips now than to thistles. Last year tulips were flowers; this year they are weeds. I recall an old definition: a weed is a plant out of place. Those tulips are out of place now. I have had them before the tribunal. Wife and Mary agreed with me that they ought to go.

“About that matter of conscience. I always judge a conscience by the company it keeps. I think that is fair. When I find a conscience with intelligence on one side and courageous self-sacrifice on the other, I respect it; but if I find it consorting with ignorance, selfishness and callousness, I detest it. I would not give it room in a dog kennel.

“For the last two years I have been fighting the world, the flesh and the pacifists. Your typical pacifist is a born fighter. He will cheerfully chip pieces out of you if he can chip them out of your back. He is not fond of frontal attacks; they detain him too long from his devotions. The weapons of his warfare are not carnal; they are infernal. The pacifist does not believe in getting hurt. He is willing for any sacrifice to escape getting hurt—the sacrifice to be made by you. I have had a lot of letters from them, mostly anonymous, usually venomous and ending with—‘Yours, a humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus’; or, ‘One of the few who still believe in the Sermon on the Mount,’

"A pacifist chap came here the other day and wanted to hire with me; but I could not trust him to plant potatoes. I was afraid he would sterilise them, gouging the eyes out of them with his thumb as he put them into the ground, as those German prisoners did over by Derby. A pacifist could not consistently put good seed into the ground this spring; it would be helping to win the war. Your pacifist is consistent or nothing. I dare say Satan has a certain sort of consistency about him, too. But let that pass."

As I walked beside him, his plough struck a hidden rock and he was flung violently against the plough handles. He got a nasty jolt and a bad blow. It winded him for a minute, and I am sure it bruised him. But he made light of it. A primrose was growing near and he plucked it and stuck it in his cap.

"That's all in the game," he said. "One can't plough a decent furrow anywhere in this old world without an occasional jolt. I have had some hard plough-prods before to-day. Sometimes they sent a sickening shock into my soul. I got one the day I learned that Mary could never be well again. I got another when they refused me that appointment to the headmastership. I was qualified for it and in succession to it and had been promised it; so I counted on it. There was underhanded work about that. They sank a snag in the path of my plough. Yes, I have seen blood on the handles of my plough more than once. However, I am glad I kept on ploughing. Thank God, a plough-

man who has vision of the coming harvest, even if he carries a pain in his heart, may still drive his furrow with a song upon his lips."

"Yes," I added, "and with a primrose in his cap."

I ventured the remark that ploughing subjected one to severe limitations; it tied his feet to a narrow track.

"Well, that is so. A ploughman must sacrifice something of his freedom of movement. He must stick to his plough-handles and follow them. That is because the ploughman is a specialist. All specialisation demands concentration and all concentration involves renunciation, which is the essence of sacrifice. That is why many a young fellow finds it irksome to make choice of a definite life-work. Not that he is lazy, or without interests or ambitions. It is rather that he has so many interests and they appear to be in conflict. He has so many tastes and appreciations, his nature responds to life on so many sides that he shrinks from cramping himself into any line of work that must narrow the range of his activities. He does not like the look of the narrow furrow and shies away from it. The better balanced one is, the more symmetrically he is moulded, the more responsive his nature is, the greater the sacrifice he must make in choosing a special line of work."

He was silent for a moment, and then putting his hand on my shoulder, he said, slowly and reverently: "Padre, may we not believe that the very symmetry of our Lord's manhood, the splendid

totality of His personality, with the perfection of His attunement to the universe, enhanced the magnitude of the sacrifice He made and gave edge to the sorrows that He bore in choosing His life-work?"

Presently he resumed. "But the specialist is indispensable. He cuts open the sod. He makes the furrow; he pioneers and others follow on his track.

"One ought not to worry about the narrowness of a furrow. It has other dimensions. It has length and depth. One might say that it has height as well, since it holds commerce with the skies. It is in vital touch with things both deep and high."

Even whilst he was speaking the truth of it all was manifest to me. Fresh earth-scents were wafting up from his new-made furrow and busy little creatures were swarming there to work for mellowness of soil, showing that new avenues of life had been opened up; and sunlight was pouring in to fill it with quickening warmth.

"We were speaking of narrow tracks. The furrow is narrow in its formation, but it is exceedingly broad in its function. That furrow there will soon have a place in the firing line. It may be fighting both on sea and land. It will be rolling back the Huns. And so it will have a world-wide and age-long mission. It will bear its part in the achievement of human liberty. Its work will never perish. It will go on and grow from more to more in the lives of people yet unborn—through centuries of peaceful and progressive life.

Put your ear to that furrow and listen ! I often do that. Sometimes I hear a bugle blast, as of trumpets blowing *réveillé* to the dawn. Sometimes I hear sweet chiming bells, bells of jubilation rung in celebration of the advent of a glorious peace. Narrow, did we say ? Yes. But decidedly, No."

Whilst enjoying a pipe under a tree he continued :
" Many people object to plough-work because it is so slow. Now, when you do things superficially you may do them swiftly ; when you cut deep you must be content to go slow. The plough is a slow coach compared with a lawn-mower. It has to be on account of the road it travels. When you have only to clip the tops of tender grasses you may gallop over the ground with your cutting machine. There is slight resistance and little danger of doing damage. There is still less friction with a motor-car on a good English road. You can dash along, forty miles an hour, if the law allows. But it is different with the plough. It has more serious work to do, and it meets with more obstructions. When the plough is working it is buried shoulder deep, and must cleave its passage slowly through the thick opposing clay. All the more honour to the plough ! Every clod that curls away from its aggressive shoulder to roll quietly into its appointed place represents a decisive victory for the plough. I respect its serious deep-going ways. I often feel like taking off my hat to my plough.

" One ought to remember that all the most beauti-

ful and fruitful work in the world is done slowly. It is that way with a parent's work. He may teach his child to do some clever tricks in the course of an afternoon, but it may take years of hard ploughing to teach him kindness and truthfulness. Manners are more readily fashioned than morals. The vice of this age is impatience with slow methods. We are cursed with cramming tutors, superficial evangelists and time-serving politicians. The impatience which turns away from the deep appeal to reason and the long appeal to time is the bar sinister across the pathway of social and political reform.

“Speaking of politics, do you know the political complexion of the plough? The plough is a radical, a red radical. It is all for penetration, incision and upheaval. It overturns things. It is a revolutionist. It exposes the underneathness of things to the air and the light. It seeks to make all things new by giving them sensitive exposure to the play of vital forces.

“I have heard many a sneer at radicalism in my time, more than I shall hear again. We are all radicals in England now. Look at Balfour, Curzon, Carson and Lord Derby! All radicals. The war has done it. The war has overturned everything. And none too soon. We had grown soggy with content. We were steeped in the stupor of material prosperity. I speak of the so-called upper classes. The war has changed all that. Why, the very face of the country is being changed this year. More ploughed land. We have leaned

too much to parks and pastures. We were obsessed with the worship of neatness and primness. We wanted to see everything clipped and trimmed to the nicety of a hair. But God intended this country to grow much more food than it has ever done. We have had too many sign-boards warning people to 'Keep off the grass.' The only place where I have patience with them is in a cemetery. I respect the little boards one sees there with their courteous request, 'Please protect the grass margins.' In a place consecrated to the dead they seem to be in order. But not elsewhere.

"Look where you will to-day, you will see the glint of the ploughshare. The plough is at work on the field of education. Fisher is overturning things there. We are going to extend the school-leaving age to ensure that the youngsters shall get the clods of their minds well opened up before they go into the baking, encrusting life of the factories. By stinting our ploughing in the schools, we have been stunting the minds of the children.

"The war has driven the plough into our business methods as well. It is ripping up old trodden paths, scrapping old machinery and adjusting everything to the demands of a new time. It has compelled men to penetrate to the essence of their business and quicken it by the ministry of upheaval.

"In politics, also, the plough is doing a wonderful work. It has nearly obliterated the old party lines. Tories who would have hung Lloyd George mast-high three years ago are now his strongest supporters. Look at the new Franchise Bill,

introduced and fathered by Walter Long, of all men! Long is the embodiment of the country squirearchy, a tribe of people who were supposed to be incapable of learning a new political lesson; yet he is a good Liberal now.

“I wonder how it will be with the Churches, Padre. What do you think? Will the plough find its way through them? I know a lot of preachers who need to be intellectually ploughed. Not a fresh conviction have they admitted to their minds for a quarter of a century. They have their little stock of theological notions packed snugly down into their precious pates; above these the turf is primly laid. Some of them would flee from the sting of a new idea as from the bite of a scorpion. They resent the onset and shock of any disturbing plough. They are the despair of all who hope for human progress. Hide-bound obscurantists, protecting the grass-plots of their minds in the name of traditional orthodoxy, they are doing the work of the old Pharisees over again. The Pharisees who made sepulchres of their minds, filling them with dead traditions, sealing them and pronouncing over them the Temple hush, they were the despair of Jesus in His day. They crucified Jesus as a heretic.

“If you cannot get fruitful theology apart from the plough, still less can you get vital religion. And this is a still more important matter. Eucken is a Hun, I know, but he has written some true things. That book of his on *The Truth of Religion* was worth reading. In that book he said: ‘Spiritual life is a progressive autonomy of

inwardness.' Some phrase that, as our American friends might remark. He lightens it up a bit when he adds: 'If there exists no cosmic inwardness . . . the inner life visibly loses its root, its energy and its truth.' He lightens it up still more by saying: 'Religion has proved itself indispensable for the gaining of an inner conception of life, for drawing to one's self and vivifying what hitherto had appeared as a mere environment. It has unlocked man to himself, and it has unlocked the over-world to him. But it is only through experiences, shocks, transformations, that this can come to be.'

"Now I believe I can put all that and a bit more into some such simple sentence as this: You cannot get religion, Jesus Christ's religion, into your life, without having a plough run through your soul.

"You remember, Padre, how Jesus was always for getting at the underneathness of the human condition. His words were plough-thrusts, turning up all the crusty, musty old things of Judaism to Heaven's sweet light and air. And, Padre, let us never forget, His Cross is a plough. It cuts us to the quick. It ploughs us into contrition, into repentance, into prayer. By the way of these steaming furrows of the soul comes the Kingdom of God."

I felt that he had given me enough to think about for a day or two, and made a move to leave him. But he detained me.

"Padre, I want you to be a good, honest ploughman. The trouble with too many of your calling

is that they dislike hard, rough work. I put it plainly to you ; one crying sin of the ministry is laziness. A ploughman must not be lazy. I am constitutionally lazy myself, but when the land calls to me as piteously as it has been calling of late I conquer the temptation to take things easy. I am out here many a morning amid the brooding mists. I have ploughed through spring and autumn days when the east wind cut my cheeks with its driven hail and stung my fingers with the venom of its cold ; when the steam from the nostrils of my horses floated in clouds around me and congealed on hair and beard. I have ploughed when it was hot and sultry, as to-day, and my garments were soaked in sweat. I have ploughed through some tough soils and some rocky soils and some sour soils. Often would the ground look black and smell rank when I first turned it over, and I could see ugly slugs crawling in it. But it was all in the day's work, and when the evening came and I homeward took my weary way I always found a welcome waiting me that was better than I had earned."

"Thank you, Friend Ploughman ! I shall try to remember your suggestions. But where I am ploughing the outlook is sometimes dreary and the harvest seems remote."

"Just a word as to that, Padre. A good ploughman must be a convinced and invincible optimist. He must know how to wait in hope. He must be able to do a whole season's ploughing and then view the naked fields, their brown monotony unrelieved by a single spear of green—and not lose

heart. With nothing around him but damp, reeking mould away to the sky-line, he must be able to behold the waving of the harvest that shall be.

“We have every reason to be optimists, for this is God’s world, and kindly, fertilising skies brood over it. We have but to shape and sow the furrow well, and sun and shower will bring the harvest. Where the ploughshare does its quickening work things dead and useless will be gradually buried out of sight, whilst always something fresh and fair and wholesome will be starting into life.”

V

OLD TREES AND YOUNG BLOSSOMS

MY SONGSTERS

THERE are birds of brighter feather,
Singing songs in livelier strain
Than robin ; he's built for weather.
My robin will sing in the rain.

Sweet is the lilt of the linnnet,
When all the chill mists have gone ;
But my lark's aloft the minute
He feels the first thrill of the dawn.

He sings thro' the bloody battle
Where we deal out death to the Huns,
Unsilenced by smoke, or rattle,
Or roar of reverberate guns.

I keep my heart-door wide open
To robin and linnnet and lark ;
But I hail my brightest hope when
My nightingale sings in the dark.

Thank God for the heart'ning message
Of songsters that sing thro' the rain,
The roar and the dark, with presage
Of peace—after vict'ry—again !

It is a sweet and pleasant place—this old apple orchard—on this glittering day of June. The last time I came here was in January, and what I see around me now looks like a new creation. Then these scraggy old trees were scarcely worth a look. Their trunks were rough and gnarled and crooked ;

they were overgrown with moss and fungus. There was dead wood about them, even rotten wood. Amongst the branches there was litter of abandoned birds' nests. These features still remain, no doubt, but I scarcely notice them now, since such new and wonderful features have been added. In January these trees were creaking, sighing, moaning; now they are making music soft and sweet. Then they stood like spectres grim and grey rattling their icy fingers in the blast; now, decked with snowy blossoms, and with ten thousand emerald banners unfolded to the breeze, they present a veritable apocalypse of beauty.

I have questioned these old trees about this change. I have wanted to know what magicians have been at work here since my last visit; what armies of artisans and artists have been employed to effect this transformation. The answer that I get is one that stirs my heart and excites me with a strange new hope. These old trees tell me that no man has touched them since I last was here. They say to me: It is the spirit that quickeneth. God breathed upon us the breath of His springtime, and lo! in breathing thus, He hath shed forth this which you see and hear.

I think I have an inkling of what these old trees mean. For one thing—they are talking about

YOUR OLD SOUL AND MINE

There have been days in our lives when everything within us was cold and dead, dark and dreary. There was no brightness in the mind, no gladness in the heart. No songs bubbled in the throat and

no smiles blossomed on the lips. There was no sheen on brow, no sap in soul. And then a spirit of life breathed on us. Perhaps it came with some potent word dropped into the heart to quicken it. Perhaps it was the visit of a dear friend that brought it, or the home-coming of some loved member of the family. Or it may have been the sudden birth of a fresh life-interest brought about by the shock of some new challenge to our powers. It was but a breath, but it was enough; at once our winter was changed to spring; the flowers appeared on the earth and the time of the singing of birds had come. Had one been with us on that other day and again on this, he must now exclaim: Behold a new creation!

What a wonderfully suggestive phrase that is: "The law of the spirit of life"! Whenever that gets working in you there is bound to be a new creation. And it is just that that millions of us need. Not new surroundings, not new conditions, not new laws on the statute books of the country, but a new spirit breathed into us—the law of the spirit of life promulgated in our hearts.

There are those who say that man existed once in a form that might be termed the almost-man. Then one day a spirit breathed upon him and he became a living soul—a man complete. I know nothing of those old doings, but I do know that many a day when I was an almost-man, almost but not quite, God breathed upon me and I became a man forthwith. When that breath comes one gets a new soul, and he gets a new heaven and a new earth for his new soul to dwell in.

But these old trees, with their far-flung branches bowing and beckoning to all world-horizons, whisper to me of other things than your old soul and mine. They whisper to me of

THE NEW IMPERIALISM

It is nearly three years now since a quickening breath passed over that far-spreading old tree which we call the British Empire. At the call of the great cause a new spirit, springing up like a sudden gale, swept over the Motherland, the colonies and the dominions. It was a spirit ardent and serious, resolute and joyous. It was as active and potent in Vancouver, Adelaide and Cape Town as in London, Liverpool and Glasgow. With an equal enthusiasm for British honour it shook the tents on Valcartier and on Salisbury Plain. This new spirit has quickened the life of the Empire to its profoundest depths and to its finest filaments. The knowledge that the Empire was committed to a life-and-death struggle for the liberties and sanctities of humanity touched the sons of Britain everywhere to vaster issues of the soul. It became in them a high afflatus. The results have been beyond all anticipation. It has emphasised afresh the unity and solidarity of the Empire and defined anew its mission to world life. It has brought into action a force to emancipate multitudes of men from self-absorption. It has disclosed an unsuspected ability for gaining a new point of view. It has revealed a sublime capacity for self-sacrifice. The Empire tree bourgeons to-day with buds and blossoms.

The tree is very old. There is still dead wood about the trunk of it—perhaps some rotten wood. Bits of old moss still cling to it. But the roots were ever living and active and deep-struck into the wealthy soil of a glorious past. It needed but a new breath of life to make it blossom to the beautiful. To-day it stands a-snow with bloom. And the blossoms are now setting into fruit that will gladden the world in the days to come.

And now a voice is speaking to me of

THE NEW ERINISM

What days these are ! Dramatic events rush past us like telegraph poles upon a journey by fast express. Our soldiers have just fought and won the battle of Messines Ridge. Irish regiments were prominent in the mighty struggle. It was the strongest and most glorious fighting day Ireland has known. Shoulder to shoulder stood Nationalists and Ulstermen in solid comradeship. Thousands of them have mingled their blood on that stricken field.

Along with this comes the news that Major "Willie" Redmond, that gallant soldier and chivalrous man, has died of wounds received in that battle, his body being borne away in an Ulster ambulance. Time and again he had returned from the field to plead from his seat in the House of Commons that Irishmen of the North and South who knew how to die together in war should hereafter learn to live together in peace. These things are certain harbingers of a new day for the Emerald Isle.

I do not claim to understand the Irish people. There are old disputes, old rancours amongst them. Some of them hate each other and many of them hate England. But they are bearing a great part in this war for the Empire. What the proposed convention may result in no man may foretell. But Ireland is not now entirely absorbed in her own affairs. She has heard the wider call.

Ireland, that of old, through six centuries of missionary zeal sent saints and scholars, bards and cunning artificers to refine and enrich the life of Europe, has of late been showing that the broad spirit of humanity which was her ancient glory can still rise within her superior to all local disputes and party passions. The spirit that repelled the Danish invasion at Clontarf is once more engaged in breaking the power of "the mailed fist" that would stun humanity into submission to its brutal dictates. "It is not hereditary with us to submit," cried Brian Boru. And Brian Boru is alive again in Michael O'Leary, V.C.

Ireland is an old tree with the remnants of old, old feuds in it. Expert arborators will be needed to untwist its tangled branches, and scrape the fungi from its trunk, and remove the worms from its roots. But the tree has come to blossom time, and it is worthy of skilful and sympathetic treatment.

There is no time when more harm can be done in an orchard than in blossom time. When the blossoms are out a heavy frost or a storm of sleet may ruin them and bring to nought all hope of fruitage for the year. I have heard of peach-

66 OLD TREES AND YOUNG BLOSSOMS

growers in Ontario kindling fires in their orchards when there were signs of a frost that might blight the blooms. I have heard of them carrying braziers of live coals here and there among the trees all through the night in order to raise the threatening temperature. The man with the brazier is needed in Ireland now.

As I tarry here in this old orchard a breeze springs up from the West, and now the trees are whispering to me of

THE NEW AMERICANISM

For nearly a century and a half a nation-tree had been growing over there in the soil of the New World with a rapidity that provoked the wonder of mankind. Tall and stout and broad it grew until it covered the most richly dowered portion of a mighty continent. As the years went by millions of fugitives from hard and hopeless old-world conditions sought dwelling-places amid its branches and there regaled themselves upon the rich fruits of liberty and individual opportunity. At its outplanting the roots were soaked in sacrificial blood. In the course of time a whirlwind smote the tree, threatening it with disaster. Then, in response to the call of the dusky slave, the great tree rallied itself upon its rootage which it once more cemented in precious blood. When that storm had passed, though the tree was sadly gashed and scarred, it continued to grow apace, compacting fibre in its trunk, extending its branches far and wide. It became a great rich tree, bedollared

beyond the dreams of avarice. Yet something of its former beauty had disappeared. It seemed now to know no springtimes as of old. The wooing breath of idealism had died down amid its branches. For blossoms it brandished bank-notes. When suddenly a Great Cause was born across the seas—involving the liberties and sanctities of hundreds of millions of human beings—there was no clear response from the heart of Columbia. That Great Cause was “God’s new Messiah,” calling to the liberty-loving nations of the world, “offering each the bloom or blight.” It seemed as if Columbia, chilled at heart, would choose the “blight.” The word went forth that Americans were to “think neutrally.” And so the great tree stood lonely, grim and ice-bound.

But all the while the sap was surging up from its ancient roots and branches here and there were feeling the fire of a coming flower. A great voice out of the past was ever calling :

“Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against
our land ?”

And now, behold ! the springtime has come again and the blossoms are out once more !

These old, old trees with their young, young blossoms speak to me of

THE EVER EFFLORESCENT CHRIST

In this old orchard ancient and modern history run into one another ; for the life of the young

68 OLD TREES AND YOUNG BLOSSOMS

blossom is in the old tree, and the life of the old tree is in the young blossom. They are one in a mystery and fellowship of life. Could you divide between them, you would destroy the blossoms and despoil the tree. Something impressively old and something sweetly new meet and blend in the sanctuary of the apple-blossom's heart.

And it is even thus with that Tree of Life which God planted in Palestine in the olden days. Christ is ancient history. I am not concerned to deny that He pays some penalty for antiquity. It may be that certain accretions attached to the story of His earthly life in far-off days have never been stripped away. But if Christ is ancient history, He is modern history too. He is the Ancient of Days and yet the blossoms on His boughs are the sweet children of To-day. There is nothing in the world so new or fresh or half so sweet as these. This surge of His spirit into my soul, causing it to thrill and to put forth blossoms of hope—there is nothing more recent than this. It is newer than my last-formed wish or my latest prayer.

VI

CONSCIENCE

FEW words are more loosely used in common speech than the word Conscience. Probably all will agree that Conscience is concerned in some way with the rightness or wrongness of conduct. But in what way is it concerned? Does Conscience decide upon the merit or demerits of a case? Is it a judge and a divider over us to say this is right, that is wrong; this is true, that is false; this is duty, that is sin? I do not think that is the function of Conscience. It is rather the function of the intellect. We determine moral qualities by the use of the same faculty—though not the same use of the faculty—which enables us to appreciate other qualities. In judging that it is right for me to do this thing and wrong for me to do that thing I employ the same faculty that enables me to cast up a column of figures, or appreciate a line of poetry, or grasp the significance of a page of history. I am using my brain for it. If my brain is weak, my intellect will be feeble and my understanding defective. In that case I am unlikely to get at the truth, either as it relates to a column of figures or my duty to my country.

Many a man claims credit for a powerful Conscience urging him in some peculiar direction when

the true explanation of his conduct is to be found in the fact that he is a person of low mentality. I know a man who will never wear either collar or necktie. Now if he should tell me that he declines to wear such things because he is more comfortable without them, I am prepared to admit a certain reasonableness in his position. He ought to know whether collar and necktie detract from his physical comfort or not. It is his own neck, and he can claim the right to consider its comfort as well as its safety. But he declares to me that it is Conscience which dictates the non-use of these articles of wearing apparel. His Conscience tells him that he must not be conformed to the world, and he considers the wearing of collar and tie a species of worldly conformity. Well, that lets another light in on the situation. Now I know that the man is a solemn ass. His brain is scarcely working at all. If it did work it would tell him that he must not wear hat, coat, shoes, or any other sort of garment such as men of the world around him wear. The secret of the man's peculiar conduct lies in the feebleness of his intellect. He is a Conscientious Objector to doing what he believes to be wrong. Yes. But he is all muddled up regarding what is right and wrong. His trouble is not too much Conscience, but too little common sense.

And here we come upon the distinctive function of Conscience. Conscience is that sense of oughtness which commands us to do what we believe to be right and to refrain from doing what we believe to be wrong.

As the word indicates, Con-science is "a knowing

together with." It is the soul recognising duty in conjunction with what is presented to it as rightness, truth, goodness or wisdom. What the intellect presents as rightness Conscience immediately interprets as oughtness. Hence it is a special sort of knowing. It is a knowing that is also a feeling, an intuition, an impression, an urge, an imperative.

Conscience is not so much a separate faculty, then, as an attitude to life. It is the man moralising on the material he has to deal with. The material may be poor stuff, as we have seen. But Conscience may work as vigorously on poor material as on good. It may be as stiff, stern, immovable, in holding to a fallacy as in standing by the truth. Conscience is the soul under the stress of the sense of obligation : or, if you will, the sense of obligation that stresses the soul.

The question is continually asked

IS CONSCIENCE A SAFE GUIDE ?

Now the very form of the question indicates confusion of thought. Conscience is not really a guide at all. Conscience is a commander. Conscience commands where reason or un-reason guides. Intellect says : This is the way ; Conscience says : Walk ye in it ! The commander of a battalion stands in authority over his men. He gives them their orders. He tells them where to go and what to do. But he issues his orders in view of reports received through the reconnaissance department. In forming his decisions and framing his orders he is entirely dependent upon the work of his observation officers. Staff-work is dependent

upon scout-work when it comes to actual fighting. If the scouting aeroplanes or the forward observers and signallers misinform the commander he sends his men forth upon fruitless or ruinous undertakings. Everything goes wrong, tragically wrong, it may be, when the intelligence department goes wrong.

It is even thus in the realm of personal moral conduct. Here the intellect serves as the reconnaissance department. It does the observation work and conveys the result to Conscience. If it does its work badly then the man's whole being must pay the penalty. Conscience will be working in the dark; working upon false information instead of true; and so working to sad, perhaps terrible, consequences. A man may be entirely conscientious and yet conscientiously wrong, misguided by his faulty perception and his mistaken judgment.

A classic instance of a man being conscientiously wrong, with bitter consequences to himself and frightful consequences to others, is furnished by the Apostle Paul.

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prison . . . and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them."

This is one of the saddest confessions recorded in the Bible. To his dying day Paul never ceased to scourge himself with the memory of those "desperate and hideous years,"

“ Saints, did I say ? with your remembered faces,
Dear men and women, whom I sought and slew !
Ah when we mingle in the heavenly places
How will I weep to Stephen and to you !

“ Oh the regret, the struggle and the failing !
Oh the days desolate and useless years !
Vows in the night, so fierce and unavailing !
Stings of my shame and passion of my tears ! ”

Yes, it is a terrible charge Paul brings against himself ; but it is not a charge of having done anything against Conscience. He could always say : “ I have lived in all good Conscience before God unto this day.” He had been conscientious all the way through, but conscientiously wrong ! Tragically wrong ! Ruinously wrong !

The charge Paul brings against himself is that of ignorance. He wanted to do right, but he actually did wrong, because he knew no better. Of course, back of his misunderstanding of Christ was a mass of Jewish prejudice. But there was also a jealous concern for the honour of Jehovah. It seemed blasphemy that worship should be offered unto Jesus of Nazareth. And yet, with all his religious intelligence and fervour he was wrong—more wrong even than Pontius Pilate in his judgment of Jesus. And that put his action wrong.

How did he get right ? By the accession of new light to his mind, the light that broke upon him on the Damascus road. When he found that Jesus was alive and speaking to him from His heavenly seat, then he knew that all his persecuting career had been a ghastly misadventure. He had been the victim of erroneous ideas ; a conscientious man, conscientiously wrong.

Did his Conscience guide him? No; his Conscience commanded him; it lashed him forward on a course that ran counter to many of his instincts, for he was never a bloodthirsty man. His Conscience commanded where his intellect acted as guide. And that guide was blind, with reference to Jesus Christ. It is a pitiful yet an instructive story. He who became the chiefest apostle of Christ was once a Conscientious Objector to Christ. That radical and glorious change shows what a fresh burst of light may do. It also reminds us that if what we consider the light in us be really darkness, how great that darkness is.

The question now arises

SHOULD CONSCIENCE ALWAYS BE OBEYED?

Yes. The consequences of obeying Conscience when it is unenlightened or misinformed are likely to be deplorable, and they may be disastrous. But the consequences of disobeying Conscience, even under such circumstances, are certain to be yet more deplorable and more disastrous. In obeying a misguided Conscience a man may fall into a pit and take others with him. That is bad, bad enough. But to disobey Conscience, to stifle it, to flout it, is to go into hell. It means the break-up or the break-down of the basis of all morality.

The Hindu mother who cast her babe into the Ganges verily thinking with herself that she ought to make such an offering to the river god, paid dearly for her deed. She loved her child. Maternal instinct kicked against the goad of Conscience. But the more powerfully her maternal feelings

asserted themselves the more imperative became her Conscience. Just because her child was dear to her, so very dear, she must devote it to the deity. The disappearance of her precious babe beneath the stream left her with a broken heart and a desolated home. Still, having done what she believed she ought to do, she retained some moral values in her soul, some spiritual possibilities in her life. Had she overthrown Conscience she would have snapped the mainspring of moral action. By obeying Conscience she broke her heart. By disobeying Conscience she would have wrecked her soul.

In one aspect of the case the Balaklava Charge of the Light Brigade was a horrible affair. It involved a serious loss in trained men and horses. The men who returned from that onset "into the mouth of hell" were but a pitiable fragment of the noble company who had dashed forward at the word of command. It was a ghastly sacrifice made at the instance of a miserable mistake. "Some one had blundered"; and as a consequence a splendid body of troops was "shattered and sundered," yet in another aspect of the case that charge was one of the most glorious undertakings in the annals of the British army. It was a wonderful triumph of discipline, a thrilling display of unquestioning, heroic obedience to authority. Had the Brigade refused to charge it would have put a blot upon the escutcheon of our military history that could never be wiped off. As it was it covered our army with undying glory. It manifested while at the same time it heightened the moral of the British and allied forces.

The one thing that could have been more disastrous than the charge would have been the refusal to make it. Much was sacrificed in that charge, but more was saved; discipline, honour, great tradition and a standard of obedience for all time to come. Obedience to Conscience may sometimes mean a Balaklava Charge in which much that is fair must be stricken down and much that is precious be slain. Yet in the general interests of the soul, Conscience must be obeyed. Whatever it may cost to obey, in the long run it will cost more to disobey. Disobedience to Conscience costs a man his soul. It is the insanity of existence, the apostasy of being.

This leads us directly into the heart of another much-debated problem.

CAN WE RIGHTLY CLAIM PROTECTION FROM
PENALTY ON THE PLEA OF OBEYING OUR
CONSCIENCE?

One hears no end of "highfalutin" talk in favour of such protection. A man's Conscience, we are told, should not be subject to interference from any outside authority. The essence of liberty, it is asserted, consists in each man being allowed to do what his Conscience dictates without let, hindrance or hurt. If in war time, even such a war time as this, a man declares that he cannot conscientiously fight, cannot conscientiously do anything that will help those of his fellow-citizens who are fighting, cannot do any form of national service whether it be making munitions or planting potatoes, he should be permitted to go his way

unhindered and untroubled. It is even suggested that he is a person deserving of special respect, one to whom we should all be taking off our hats. Conscience, it is claimed, is above all human law, is answerable only to God, and must therefore be granted exemption from all penalising statutes.

But this position ignores certain important facts and far-reaching principles. It ignores the principle of collective interest and collective responsibility, based upon the fact that "we are members one of another." It ignores the right and the duty of society to protect itself against crime. If a man may be conscientiously wrong he may conscientiously commit crime. Insane people do. They commit suicide and murder, "verily thinking with" themselves that they ought so to do. Conscience may continue its sway after reason has been dethroned. But we restrain lunatics, as far as possible, from doing these things. We put them into strait-jackets and under the care of warders. There is not such a great difference between the insanity under which a man conceives it to be his duty to strangle his wife and behead his children and that type of thinking which tells a man he must not restrain a would-be murderer by the use of force.

The conscientious lunatic is an extreme case, I admit, but it is a frequent case to be dealt with. We do not hang a lunatic for any act he may do, however outrageous it may be. But we deprive him of his liberty.

Take the case of those—and there have been millions of them—who are the victims of super-

stitution. The Hindu mother figures here again, and the Hindu widow. British law prohibits child-sacrifice in India. It abolished the suttee. It is a punishable crime now for a mother to cast her child into the Ganges or for a widow to immolate herself upon the funeral pile of her husband. Has Britain done right in enacting and enforcing such laws? The question answers itself in the affirmative. But it means the punishing of a person for a conscientious act.

The principle of collectivism reaches far. It involves mutual responsibilities between the individual and the corporate body, and it may necessitate division between them. My hand has certain rights in relation to my body. It has a right to receive blood from the heart, and guidance from the eye and brain. When climbing a steep rough bank it has a right to the strenuous assistance of the feet and of every nerve and muscle in the body. Yet my hand may become so offensive, so dangerous, that the only sensible and right thing left to do is to cut it off and cast it from me. And so when conscientious behaviour assumes an aggravated, diseased, dangerous form, the only thing for it is excision from the body politic. It is not a pleasant thing to imprison conscientious people on Dartmoor, or banish them to a convict's lonely isle, but it may become the right and necessary thing to do.

To claim exemption from punishment for those who conscientiously make themselves a peril to the State is not to act intelligently in the interests of Conscience. At the bottom it is interference

with Conscience, rather than non-interference. It tends to deprive Conscience of its proper scope and moral value. Let Conscience be its own reward! The virility of Conscience can only be maintained, the sanctity of its dictates can only be guarded when it takes the consequences of its action. To come in between the action of Conscience and the unpleasant consequences it entails in relation to society is to soften, weaken and corrupt it. Let Conscience win its spurs on life's red stricken fields! Let it suffer and bleed! Let it bear its cross! Thus will it ultimately come to its throne.

One has only to look about him with observing eyes to-day to see multitudes of people in whom—as a consequence of the stress, the sorrow, the suffering resulting from the war—Conscience for the first time is doing its proper work. Before the war these people were bound by petty prejudices, hindered by paltry fears, restrained from heroic action by miserable pedantries, conventions and trivialities. Now they have burst these bonds and cast off these weights. They walk now with sprightlier step and work with surer aim. Great sorrows have swallowed up all little fears and little purposes. They are living in a larger, freer, manlier way. Contact with the great realities of life has given them a new understanding of the essence of religion. They have found goodness and God in unexpected places and unsuspected guises. The result of enduring hardness has been to give to Conscience a new enlightenment, a new awakening, a new emancipation, a new enthronement.

ment. I think there must be millions of us who have shared in that experience.

Conscience, then, can be cultured and trained. Conscience may be stimulated by love and by pity and by righteous indignation. It is not a fixed, invariable quantity in the life. Whatever tones up the soul and threads it with the sinews of strength accentuates the commanding power of Conscience.

Profound and serious consideration should be given to

THE INTERACTIONS OF CONSCIENCE IN RELATION TO THE INTELLECT AND THE AFFECTIONS

The action of the Conscience may be viewed by the intellect and should be constantly overlooked and scrutinised to see that there is no shirking, no dodging or hedging. And Conscience should also lay its imperatives upon the intellect demanding that it should do its work to the best of its ability. Conscience should enter into the forming of opinion, for this is of the nature of an act, a mental act. To form opinions lightly, making little or no effort to get at the truth, and then to hold those opinions stubbornly, is nothing less than moral perversity. A man has a right to his opinion when he has carefully and conscientiously formed it and not before. When we dislike a man or a method we are apt to form snap judgments regarding them. Prejudice, eccentricity, envy, malice may all enter into the forming of opinion if Conscience does not keep guard against them. We have a moral responsibility for our opinions before we have a right to them. When, for instance, a British

politician declares : Never did England arm her sons and ask them to give her their lives for a less good cause than this, referring to the cause represented by this war, he may be expressing his personal opinion ; but it is not an opinion which he has a right to hold. He holds it perversely and wickedly. Plain, indubitable, massive facts condemn it. History shrieks out against it. He put no Conscience into the forming of that opinion and his right to it must be denied.

Conscience should also be trained to bear its part in dictating what we ought to love. It is a common fault to claim the affections away from the dominance of moral imperatives. It is a fallacy responsible for much corruption and unhappiness in the lives of men. Because it is the function of Conscience so supremely to command the soul, no effort should be spared to make it competent for its high task. It is not to be coddled or shielded. It is not to be excused duty here and there and given long leave of absence. It must stand ever to its post and through constant fearless exercise grow strong for its great mission.

Remembering how liable we are to err in thought and how prone we are to stray in heart, what can we conclude but this ? The supreme function of Conscience is to bring the intellect, the heart, and the will to the feet of Christ. Surrendered fully to Christ, we learn what is right, come to love what is right and are enabled to do what is right. Let Conscience bind us with her chains about the feet of Christ and be herself bound there, and we may make of life a triumph and a glory.

VII

COURAGE

COURAGE is an element in every form of moral excellence, a pre-requisite to every sort of fine efficiency. It is like the corpuscles in the blood which give health and vigour to the whole body, manifesting themselves in every kind of human activity. It finds its genesis deep down amidst the spiritual roots of life, but makes its revelation throughout the entire tree of life even to the tenderest tips of its topmost boughs. Courage is the child of great parents and the parent of great children. Born of a noble ancestry it begets a noble progeny. Courage is not a physical quality, but a moral quality. It is not an affair of the nerves (fearlessness may be), but of the mind and heart and will of a man. Courage is not the absence of fear, but the refusal to yield to fear. The courageous man is not he who can always carry to his task a heart that never flutters and a hand that never trembles, but he who can conquer the tremors of mind and body by the high passion of the soul. There is the oft-quoted instance of Henry of Navarre, who when he first went into battle at the siege of Cahors, found his body

trembling like a leaf in a gale. The men about him looked for a miserable collapse, but instead of that they heard him saying: "Vile carcass, thou tremblest, but thou wouldst tremble ten times more if thou knewest where I purpose taking thee this day." With that he rushed in front of his soldiers and his axe was the first to strike the gates. That was courage, a man's indomitable spirit leaping into the seat of the charioteer, holding the reins over trembling flesh and shrinking nerves and driving them forward whither they would not otherwise go. From his courage one man may borrow strength to do what another of equal or greater talents but of unheroic heart would find impossible.

Indifference to consequences is no sign of courage. No man has a right to "damn the consequences." It is criminal needlessly to imperil great interests. Recklessness is a vulgar thing, a callous thing, a wicked thing.

Into all true courage the element of conscience must enter greatly. No man can be really courageous in a course of known wrong. He may be stubborn, bold, brazen or defiant in it, but these qualities are only poor and shabby masqueraders in the name of courage. They are not bravery, but bravado. It may call for a certain hardness to be defiant in evil, but it is foolhardiness.

No man can be truly courageous in an undertaking that has no purpose or possibility of usefulness in it. For a man to shoot through the whirlpool rapids of Niagara in a barrel can do no one any good. The deed is without justification. Its

motive is sordid. It is prompted by greed and the love of vain display. True, it requires venturesomeness and a certain sort of pluck to do the thing, but the act is a misdirection and degradation of qualities which properly prompted and directed would go to constitute a good courage. It is courage cracked in the making and spoiled for the high uses of the soul. For a deed of genuine courage one must hear in his soul the call of a worthy cause.

Above all the influences that go to breed courage in the hearts of men the incitements and assurances of religion stand supreme. Personal ambition may spur men on into perilous enterprises and to deeds of daring; love of adventure, greed of gold, passion for revenge may instigate the bold and hazardous endeavour, but none of these can lift the soul to the sublimer heights of heroism. They cannot engage a man's entire being. They must work apart from conscience and spiritual ideals. In course of time they spend themselves. "They have their day and cease to be." But the compulsions of religious experience and conviction engage the entire personality. They are permanent and progressive. Instead of depleting the moral forces of one's life they enhance them, constantly increasing the capacity for courage by feeding the soul upon great ideas, great motives and great aims. Religion, the Christian religion, may make the life one long course of training in the culture of heroism.

This is a noble vocation. It has the advantage of being one that will never be over-crowded. Across it the years can draw no dead line. You

will not be "too old at forty" nor at eighty for promotion in this calling. You may make progress in it to the end of your days, and your last fight may be your best. With the passing of the years there will come to you increasing contempt for things that are mean and degrading, things that will leave your soul defeated and dishonoured when the day is done; there will come to you increasing defiance of things that strut before you in a threatening attitude, but have no power to harm the steadfast soul; and there will come to you a growing passion for what is true and beautiful and good. Put yourself in training for heroism by submitting your soul to God, and you will find that advancing age does not make it harder for you to be brave. The consummate flower of your courage may come to blossom at life's close.

It may be said that every religion inspires its own order of courage and produces its own type of hero. But the purer a religion is, the more spiritual and humane and philanthropic it is, the more exalted is the heroism it begets. Superstitions breed fanaticisms that send men forth on long and fruitless pilgrimages, or prompt them to ghastly self-mutilations. But a religion which is devotion to an all-wise, all-holy and all-loving God sends its followers forth upon the noblest quests and inspires them with the purest self-devotement.

There was Livingstone, "with the rainbows of evangelical hope bound round his soul and lighting all the horizon of his life, plunging again and again into darkest Africa to be scorched with heat, parched with thirst, burned with fevers, reduced

to a skeleton by starvation, and at last to die alone on his knees in a miserable hut," all for the sake of the vision his soul had seen of a regenerated continent. We sometimes speak of a courage that is born of despair. Courage is never born of despair. Courage may persist even through despair, as in the case of men who know they are vanquished in their fight but yet fight on. Such was the courage of Captain Scott and his companions who perished amid Antarctic snows, refusing to swallow the tabloids that would have brought relief from the last tortures of their dreadful situation. Their courage conquered their despair; it was not born of despair. It was born of bright hopes, nourished upon great beliefs and brought to maturity by discipline in obedience to duty.

Christianity is the great inspirer of courage because it is the great nourisher of love. The history of the world is ablaze with the splendour of deeds done at the bidding of love's sweet impulse. The heroisms of common life which keep no diaries, write no bulletins, publish no advance announcements of programme, and leave no written memoranda of their doings, go far to make the glory of the world. They are the heroisms of sacrificial love. No crowds applaud these heroes, no medals reach them from millionaires or monarchs, but they redeem the life of humanity from sordidness and make a track of light like the mild radiance of the Milky Way. Love's way is always a courageous way. Because the love of God shed abroad in the heart sanctifies and enriches all love it imparts a

courage that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

The field for the display of courage is as wide as human experience. There is no day which does not demand it. If it takes courage to fly in the air ; if it is needed for expeditions into polar seas ; if it is called for by the stroke of calamity ; if it is summoned to special manifestation in a time of world-shaking war, it has also a large place to fill amid the common duties of the common day. It takes courage to maintain discipline and devotion in the home amid the trials and perplexities of family life. It takes courage to be ever faithful to your task at desk or bench or counter. It takes courage to be truthful, to be honest, to be patient. At one moment courage may be needed for speech and at the next moment it may be needed for silence. It may take courage to grant a request to-day and equal courage to refuse a request to-morrow. It may need courage to accept an invitation or to decline one ; to make a gift or withhold one. It is needed in hours of work, and, since many a man meets his fiercest temptations in his periods of relaxation, it is greatly needed in hours of leisure. Over the whole expanse of experience courage is called to play its part. It takes much courage to live and it may take some courage to die.

Having in view the special conditions under which we are living now at the close of the third year of war, one would emphasise the need of courage in the following directions.

THE NEED OF COURAGEOUS INDUSTRY

It takes courage for men and women to work as hard and as many hours a day as the situation now demands. We are terribly short-handed here at home, with five millions or more of men taken away from life's usual tasks. If by some sudden catastrophe they had been taken from us in a time of profound and universal peace the burden upon those who were left would have been heavy. But the output demanded from the working force of England to-day is vastly greater than in a time of peace. We must turn out more stuff from our factories, grow more food in our fields, make more clothing, write more letters, send more parcels, nurse more sick, tend more wounded, visit more dying, bury more dead.

I am not of those who believe England is growing weary of the war in the sense that any great number of our people are willing to forego the achievement of the ends for which we are fighting in order that some sort of peace may come. But millions of us are growing very weary *in* the war and all that it entails of stress for mind and heart and body. To keep at it and still at it when the brain is weary and the head dizzy and the heart is sick, calls for a determination born of courage. In hours of weariness and weakness we have need to fortify ourselves by loving memories of those who are fighting for us and strong reminders of the cause at stake.

We have need to exercise

COURAGEOUS ECONOMY

For many people it is doubtless easier to practise economy in war time than in peace. Economy is more in the fashion now among the well-to-do than it was three years ago. It takes courage to go against the stream of custom. When all his neighbours were buying motor-cars and he had just money enough to manage one for himself, it took some courage for a man to resist the motor-buying urge. Perhaps he had to think how Jones would flash by him, head in air; or how his wife and children would feel themselves to be out of the swim. It takes no courage not to buy a motor now. It is not the fashion to indulge in such a luxury; petrol is scarce, and there are legal restrictions upon joy riding.

To discuss and denounce the high price of meat and to boast that you were having two meatless days a week would have been considered wretched form among the wealthy three years ago. It is the other way about now; it is the top of the fashion.

On the other hand, the so-called working classes are indulging an orgy of money-spending. They never had so much money in their lives before, perhaps not half so much. But what a pity that they are giving way to wild extravagance! One realises what a treat it is for them to have full purses and what a thrilling sensation it must be to command commodities impossible to them before. We remember, too, that the fashion amongst them now incites to extravagance. But they will not

always have the inflated incomes of war time. It is to be hoped they will never return to the old scale of wages, but there is certain to be some ebb of the present flowing tide of prosperity. To be forming habits of extravagance and self-indulgence now is to court economic disaster in the days to come. Few matters need to be more constantly pressed upon the working people now than the necessity for courageous economy whilst the times are good.

There is need of

COURAGEOUS SACRIFICE

In such a solemn hour as this, when the liberties and sanctities of humanity are threatened, it ought not to be necessary to dwell upon this matter. With the war in the state that it is, the Allies still so far from final victory, one would think the spirit of sacrifice had become universal amongst our people. But the facts are against that supposition. There are still people amongst us who have been having a fat time during the war. They have had no members of their families in danger and they have been growing rich. The sad fact is that some of these people have also been growing hard, grasping, querulous, instead of tender, generous, sacrificial.

In many a family the first son comes of military age this year. One knows of instances where the parents of these lads spoke grandiloquently about the heroisms and glorious deaths of their neighbours' sons two years ago, but are now leaving no

stone unturned to keep their own sons out of the army. "Oh, but I couldn't live if my boy should be killed," said a lady of wealth to me not long ago. "Is it necessary that you should live?" I asked. "It is our privilege to die, and there is no shame in it, when we have no longer strength to live." I tried to show her that death was a minor matter compared with some other things. But there was no concession on her part. If her son was taken from her and sent to the front she would never enter another place of worship or offer another prayer to God. She did not realise that having lost all capacity for sacrifice she was already dead even while she seemed to live. Happily such cases as this are rare.

The time calls for sacrifice, and there is no middle ground to-day between heroism and poltroonery. When a child is in danger of being killed by a runaway horse, he who leaps to its rescue at risk of life or limb is rightly accounted a hero; he who stands by and makes no effort to save is rightly accounted a coward.

We have need of

COURAGEOUS PATIENCE

The war drags slowly and our hopes are repeatedly deferred. Blunders are made in every governmental department and on every battle front. If there is such a thing as luck we have had little of it in this war. It will take another eighteen months for America to reach the top of her fighting

strength. In the meantime air raids continue the slaughter of women and children. Unwarned and unprotected, our citizens are smitten to death as they go about their peaceful tasks. The hope of the Hun is to shake the nerve of the nation by repeated blows at the heart of the Empire. We have need of patience, heroic patience.

We have need of patience in dealing with the complex and pressing problems of the time. There are so many knots to be untied and so many dropped stitches to be picked up! Every citizen who can contribute a helpful idea or perform a useful task must be willing to do it and wait patiently the result. It is a happy fact that on the whole the British people are "sound in patience." We may not be brilliant, we may not be clever, but we do know how to hold on and wait. We intend to win this war, but win or lose we shall go on with it to the end of our resources. We are still in the mood to say, "to the last ounce of our strength, to the last farthing of our money, to the last drop of our blood"! Better we should all perish than be defeated in this war. "War is hell," but there are degrees even to hell. Defeat in this war would be nether hell. Let us have patience to be faithful! Let us believe in the ultimate fruitfulness of faithfulness! It would be worth while if, coming undishonoured to the close of life, we could have pronounced over us the words of Stevenson's happy warrior falling on his chosen battle-field: "There—out of the sun and the dust and the ecstasy—there goes another faithful

failure !” But if we are faithful we shall not fail. Best of all, God will not fail to establish righteousness and judgment in the earth.

We have need of

COURAGEOUS CHEERFULNESS

Perhaps the highest type of courage demanded of us now is the courage to be cheerful when our hearts are breaking a hundred times a day and our souls are bleeding before the iron curtain of silence that has shut down between us and many who have passed away. But it is a “heavenly race” we have to run and it becomes us to “put a cheerful courage on.” Cheerfulness is needed now in pulpit and pew, in parliament and press, on the platform and in the home. Optimism is a duty. Optimism does not consist in closing our eyes to the dark and dreadful features of the situation. Optimism consists in seeing God. The optimist sees all that the pessimist sees, and as vividly as he; but he sees more, much more. He beholds the eternal throne.

We may be cheerful even while we think of the brilliant careers which the war has cut off. Ah, how we had hoped to follow those careers and to rejoice in the splendour of their onward march when our own day of work was done! But they have been broken short off. Is there compensation? Yes; *instead of achieving a career they have fulfilled a divine mission.* That is even better. And so, let God be praised!

" All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist ;
Not its semblance but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor
power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,
When eternity confirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,

The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,

Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;

Enough that He heard it once ; we shall hear it by and by."

VIII

WORLD-BEAUTY AND SOUL-BLOOM

ALL life, whether it be found in plant or animal, in man or angel, springs from a single source, and that source is God. One power, and that a divine power, sows life in sea and soil and soul. The energy that sprouts the seed in the sod and forms the bud upon the plant is identical with that which brings the moral life of man to perfection and clothes the human spirit with the beauty of holiness. The stir in the bulb of the lily by which it breaks its bed and emerges into light, the stir in the brain of the child by which it comes to consciousness and knowledge of the world around it, the stir in the heart of the penitent by which he breaks from the bondage of sin and finds the favour of God, are all due to the propulsions of God's own life.

In the earliest chapters of Genesis world-beauty and soul-bloom are represented as different manifestations of the activity of the self-same spirit. In the Genesis story there is a striking parallel between the beginning of life in nature and in the moral being of man. Before the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, "the earth was waste and void." No flower bloomed, no

bird sang until the weltering waste was over-brooded by the Spirit of God. It was the same with man at a later period. He, too, was waste and void until the Spirit imparted the vital spiritual spark. It was when the Lord God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" that the light of reason and of conscience leaped up within the hitherto dark temple of his body "and man became a living soul."

The implications of this truth are of infinite scope and consequence. It is the ultimate basis for any satisfactory theory of the world. It makes possible the conception of a uni-verse. It gives coherency to nature, significance to human history, consistency to science, relevancy to art. It guarantees a Divine Providence overruling all things and provides the ground for a religion of faith and joy and hope. It is only as we have one God, who is the God of all creation, that we can have any place in our thought for a truly providential government of the world. It is at this point that the theory of H. G. Wells breaks down. His God is not the God of all creation. He is something far less than that. He is *of* the creation, not in any sense behind it or above it. Of the "veiled being" behind the universe we can know nothing, we are allowed to think nothing. According to Mr. Wells, when the veiled being behind finished off his or its work, it was as though he put the lid of the sky on and shut himself out. There is a pagan tribe in Central Africa which holds the same notion. How poor, how pitifully poor a substitute is the Wells' deity—growing up here in the world

and struggling for supremacy—for the Christian God, the God who rules all things because He made all things, who both exercises the control of His universe and enjoys the full freedom of it! The only sort of God that can satisfy the human mind and heart, enabling man to “see” things “through,” is one to whom we may ascribe all life—production and advancement, from the growth of seeds in the earth to the establishment of righteousness in the world and the perfecting of praise in the heavens. Knocked against this fact the Wells’ theory is shattered to its base.

The conception of God with which we are dealing here has an immediate relation to

PRAYER

In its broader sense prayer includes all the activities and attitudes of the human soul by which it seeks a direct contact with God in order that it may be cleansed, healed, quickened, strengthened and perfected by Him. In prayer the soul appeals to God as the earth appeals to the sun. Why should it be thought any more strange that man should need the impact of God’s Spirit upon him for the flowering of his life than that the earth should need the miracle of the spring-time in order to bring forth her fruits? “Can man produce a spring-time by artificial means? Can he send through nature by means of furnace-fires or steam pipes the thrill of life which bids the kingdom of plants leap into being and beauty? No! He may cultivate his little beds of flowers under glass and give to winter a taste of greenery. But what a trivial thing is

that compared with those results which are wrought around us by the breath of spring ! Who can send the currents of heat through the hearts of the hills, push out upon the dogwoods their great white blossoms, sprinkle the meadows with violets and daisies, trail the sweet arbutus along fields and skirts of woods, and fill the air over sunny slopes with the fragrance of blossoming vines ? Man may make a hot-house, but God alone can make a spring."

So it is with the human soul. There are no purely human forces that can clothe it with the beauty of holiness. Science may do much in adjusting us to nature ; art is of high value for the cultivation of taste and the refinement of feeling ; literature is a potent agent in the enlargement and enrichment of thought ; cultivated society exerts a wholesome influence in sweetening manners and checking back the grosser forms of selfishness ; but none of these things can penetrate the soul with regenerative force and make it blossom with spiritual loveliness. Only direct and personal intercourse with God can do that. It is as true of human hearts as of England's fields and gardens ; man may make a hot-house, but only God can make a spring.

Our theme relates itself directly, also, to the matter of

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A verse from the prophet Isaiah is illuminating in this connection. "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things

that are sown in it to spring forth ; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." In the first case the prophet notes the progress from seed to bud ; in the other, from righteousness to praise. Each movement indicates a complete line of development. In each case the progress is a gradual one. Nature does not spring at a bound from snowbanks to rosebuds. Even in lands where the succession of the seasons is most clearly marked, no man can name the hour when winter ends and spring begins. More than once have I seen spring at the front and winter at the rear of my Canadian home. The lawn with the southern exposure was already bright with greening grass while the brown earth at the back lay shivering under pools of snow-water.

And I have found a like condition in my soul. That, too, has its southern exposures bathed in the warm bright light of God. And there some spiritual growths appear as though to assure me that spring has come. But my soul has also its shadowed places over which the "winds from unsunned spaces blown" nip down the struggling growths. These areas of shadow and of chill seem to defy and mock my hope. And yet as surely as I know in later March that the whole continent is moving towards the miracle of spring, so surely do I know that my whole being is moving towards a fairer and more fruitful time. We need not be discouraged when the spiritual growth is slow. Sin binds the soul in stronger chains than ice-bands bind the earth. But those bands are to be broken,

one by one. From seed to bud, from bud to flower, from flower to fruit—that is the order. In the realm of spiritual graces righteousness is the bud, praise the incense from the full-blown flower.

Let us have great respect for the silent seasons of the soul! They are the growing seasons. We never hear a bud burst. We are never wakened of a morning by any tumult of blossoming roses. Yet the force which unfolds the flower is the same as that which split Mount Pelee, exploded Vesuvius and laid the cities of San Francisco and Kingston in ruins. Force may be boisterous when it works destructively; when it works constructively it is mainly noiseless. Occasionally in a forest one is startled by the mighty crash of some gigantic tree that falls shrieking to its doom. But forest-building is a silent process. It startles no bird in its nest, no beast in its lair. The work by which the royal oaks and lordly pines are lifted towards the skies is done in stillness unbroken and profound.

Nor is the vital process different within the realm of grace. It is true that religious conversions are sometimes attended by boisterous emotional disturbances. There are natures over which the Spirit of God must pass as a whirlwind, or which He must shake as the earthquake shakes the mountain. But that is in order to open the soil for the reception of the seed. Once the seed is in, it grows in silence. In the case of child-conversion we need look for no violent emotional outbursts. There are no rocks to be blasted out. The choking thorn is not there yet. The soil is open and re-

ceptive. In the child-soul the reign of the Spirit may announce itself as silently as the dawn and as sweetly as the blushing of a rose.

Note how our theme associates itself with the encouragement of religious

HOPE

When we think of the fullness of life that is manifested in nature, the vast and luxuriant forest growths, the valleys filled with corn, the prairies billowy with wheat, the mountains clothed with pastures; when we remember that all over the world the earth is flushed with life, spring after spring, for centuries and millenniums without a failure, we get an impressive reminder of the infinite fullness of life in Him who is the source of all. With this fact before our eyes we must believe that He will grant to us in a spiritual way the life abundant.

Will God satisfy the moss and starve the man? Shall the sparrow be fed and the soul be famished? Will He clothe the grass in splendour and leave the spirit of man in nakedness? Will He deck the lily in loveliness and weave no purple and fine linen of righteousness for the being made in His own image? It is preposterous to maintain the grim suspicion.

So this is our encouragement to persevere in the conflict against sin and in the enterprise of character building. We shall be able to finish. The life forces at our command are sufficient to guarantee an expected end. This universe is packed with holy spiritual energies. No sin can permanently

hold us in its grasp if God's life is working in our souls.

From my study window I have looked each day through a long winter upon a tree to which the dead leaves clung with stubborn grip. Autumn gales could not shake them off; drenching rains could not wash them off; pelting hailstorms could not beat them off; winter blizzards could not wrench them off. But the spring-time came and the sap began to flow within the tree; then new buds swelled and pushed them off. They fell before the conquering touch of life. The expulsive power of a quickened vitality stripped the tatters from the tree converting it into a bower of bewitching greenery. As old leaves cling to a tree so do old sinful habits cling to the soul. Rags of a dead past tatter it. Winds of doctrine cannot shake them off; rains of sorrow cannot wash them off; hailstorms of affliction cannot pelt them off. But the spirit of life in Christ Jesus surging up within the soul can crowd them off. The swelling buds of that righteousness which is through faith in Christ may push the tatters from the soul, clothe it in beauty and steep it in fragrance.

I have seen few natural phenomena more wonderful than the "reversible falls" at St. John, N.B. Take your stand on the suspension bridge at one hour of the day and you behold a succession of mighty rapids where the St. John river having run a noble course of four hundred and fifty miles tumbles tumultuously towards the sea. Look again six hours later and the falls have disappeared. Where before you heard the mighty thundering of

plunging waters now all is silence. Where before the waters were dashing downwards to the harbour they are now racing swiftly in the opposite direction. So vast is the flood of waters pouring upwards through the gorge that there is even somewhat of a fall as they fling themselves upon the upper stream. * What has happened? The tide has come in—the mighty Bay of Fundy tide—forcing four fathoms depth of sea-water through the gorge and reversing all the downward flow.

So in our human life there are forces tending downwards. The current of our life with the forces of bad ancestry in it, the forces of bad habit, the forces of bad association flowing in to accentuate its course, appears at times to be bearing us swiftly to the abyss. But let the flood-gates of the soul be lifted up for the tide of the Christ life to flow in and all the current will be reversed. The set of the soul will be turned towards God and righteousness and truth. Upon that new life-stream we may launch the argosies of hope even as upon the flood tide of the Fundy bay ships are floated to the wharves above the falls.

The truth with which we are dealing here is one that associates itself most helpfully with the thought of

THE LIFE TO COME

It assures me that the soul may pass uninjured and unhindered through that experience we call death. In our cemeteries we often see an exuberance of floral life. Grass grows green and lilies bloom upon the graves of our loved dead.

Trees bend over them white with blossoms and flushed to their tips with abundant life. Will God give life to tree and flower and even wayside weed and deny it to those whom we "have loved long since and lost awhile"? Nay! Every grass-blade and every flower in God's acre sings to me of immortality.

One day in Westminster Abbey I saw a wreath of roses lying fresh and sweet upon the slab beneath which reposes the dust of Robert Browning. On the ribbon which bound the wreath were written the words: "Never say of me that I am dead." They were the words of the great poet himself affirming his belief in the progress of the soul towards a fuller life beyond the grave.

You may bury the body where you will, in lonely country churchyard or in stately abbey, but you have not quenched the spirit life. If buds of righteousness were in the soul and seeds of song within the heart, the buds will unfold in righteousness elsewhere and anthems spring to birth from those seeds of song. We shall live again, and the life to come shall witness the culmination of God's work.

"The wilding families—
 Windflower, violet, may—
 They rise from the long, long dark
 To the ecstasy of day.
 We of the hedgerows of Time,
 We, too, shall divide the sod,
 Emerge to the light and blossom
 With our hearts held up to God."

[A few paragraphs in this chapter have been adapted from a former book of mine entitled *Concerning the Christ.*]

IX

PULPIT DYNAMICS

It is frequently predicted that the pulpit is destined at no very distant date to be superseded by the press. I do not share in this belief. I will admit that the press has already surpassed the pulpit in the matter of getting itself before the public. Very many more people read newspapers now than listen to sermons, and doubtless it will continue to be so. All the people who hear sermons read newspapers and then—all the rest. I am not disposed to deny that good newspapers are more valuable than poor sermons. But all newspapers are not good and some sermons are not poor.

The indisputable fact, however, is that the press commands a wider field than the pulpit can hope to do. It utters itself more frequently, and it appeals to a vaster complex of human tastes, desires and impulses. One and the same newspaper may give you the description of a prize fight, the results of a horse race, the story of a murder trial or a divorce court suit, the details of an air raid, the latest stock quotations, the report of a debate in the House of Commons, the freshest news from the front, a poem on Spring, an article by Bernard Shaw and a

sermon by Billy Sunday. The pulpit has no such repertoire as that to draw upon. The pulpit must specialise on certain definite interests and make its appeal to certain selected tastes and impulses. It is therefore hopelessly outclassed as a rival of the press for popularity.

But it is one thing for the pulpit to be surpassed in this way by the press and another thing for it to be superseded by the press. The pulpit has its own field and its own mission. In its own field and for its own purposes nothing else can be substituted for it. I have a high appreciation of the public services which one may render in the sphere of journalism. Never have I realised so fully the need and the value of good, wise, strong, vision-giving men in journalism as during this war. We all owe to them a debt that can never be discharged. They have steadied the heart of the nation. They have given it light and leading. In the days before us their opportunity for service will not grow less but greater. And yet they cannot do the preacher's work. They will not expect or attempt to do it.

Viewing the matter for the moment from the lowest ground, there is one prop that can never be knocked away from the pulpit—the superior charm of the spoken over the written word. No printed page can ever be what the human voice is in its varied tones and its power to stir the depths of the human spirit. You cannot photograph a soul; you cannot paint the heat of flames; you cannot write the melody of a lark song; you cannot print the perfume of a violet. No more can

you transmit through ink and paper the marvellous power resident in human speech and presence. It is an essence too fine, too subtle, too elusive for that. There will always be room for the orator and a demand for him while the world stands.

But passing from this to higher ground : the very restrictions which are imposed upon the pulpit and the very limitations inherent in its *raison d'être* assure its permanency. The pulpit retains its influence when it sticks to its proper job. When it wanders afield, adopting the aims and methods of the press or the picture-house, it fails, as it deserves to do. The pulpit will hold its own when it knows its own and is content with its own. The range of the pulpit may not be as wide as that of the press, but its mission is more urgent and more vital. The pulpit can reach down very low and lift up very high. It is set to do the thing that of all conceivable things most needs to be done.

The business of the preacher is to be a transmitter of spiritual energies. He is a specialist in the deeper things of the human heart and spirit. He is sent to meet the crises of life as they arise in the spiritual experiences of men. The function of the pulpit is to bring refreshment, impulse, persuasion to the souls of the hearers. Dragged men, strained men, anxious men, stolid men (and women), when they put themselves in the way of a sermon, do it in order to be won from a worldly to a heavenly atmosphere, to find uplift, to have the load shaken off and get wing, to be fascinated to

higher things, to feel a breath of spring upon their winter, to be impelled towards nobler living. If the pulpit can do any of these things it will vindicate and maintain itself with those who care for the higher and better things of life.

As a matter of fact, one part of the mission of the pulpit is to counteract the influence of the press. I am not thinking now of the "yellow" or the "reptile" press; I am thinking of that dispersion, that scatteration of thought which the press inevitably induces. The pulpit is for the concentration of thought upon the first things, the things that are most worth while.

Real preaching, effective preaching, compelling preaching is just about the most difficult thing in the world to do. It is impossible to any but dynamic personalities. It calls for a mighty impact of one man's mind upon the minds of others, of one man's heart upon the hearts of others, of one man's will upon the wills of others. If anything will "take it out" of a man, it is real live preaching.

Sermonising is a simple and easy and cool matter compared with preaching. Not but what sermonising is downright hard work. Make no mistake about that! You must put sweat of brain and sweat of soul into it if it is to count for anything. I wonder if any other man in the kingdom does as much strong, vivid writing as the man who makes three good sermons a week. Can any newspaper editor (except Claudius Clear) match him for intellectual output, or any lawyer or college

professor ? I doubt it. Not many men write three good sermons a week, but some do. They are mighty toilers. And yet sermonising is not such exhausting work as preaching. The minister as sermoniser is an artificer ; his study is a workshop, his desk an anvil on which he hammers out a sword and whets it to an edge. The minister as preacher is a warrior who grasps the sword and rushes to a battlefield to fight and win a cause. The minister as sermoniser is an apothecary compounding a healing balm ; as preacher he is the physician applying the balm to a sufferer's wound. As sermoniser one is a constructor of life-belts, while as preacher he is a coast-guardsman plunging into the surging sea in response to a signal of distress. As sermoniser the minister is a carpenter building a ladder ; as preacher he is a fireman projecting the ladder against a burning building and mounting it to rescue imperilled lives. In preaching there is onset and shock and the forth-putting of victorious energy. Sermonising is a form of mechanics ; preaching is entirely a matter of dynamics.

I like the cymbal clash of those brave lines of Kingsley's which echo the knight-errantry of his own crusading ministry. They summon the preacher to his proper task.

“ Gather you, gather you, angels of God,
Chivalry, justice and truth,
Come, for the earth is grown cursed and old,
Come down and renew us her youth !
Freedom, self-sacrifice, mercy and love,
Haste to the battle-field ; stoop from above
To the day of the Lord at hand.

“Gather you, gather you, hounds of hell,
Famine and plague and war,
Idleness, bigotry, cant and misrule,
Gather and—fall in the snare.
Hirelings and mammonites, pedants and knaves,
Crawl to the battle-field; sneak to your graves,
In the day of the Lord at hand.

“Who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold,
While the Lord of all ages is here?
True hearts will leap up at the trumpet of God,
And those who can suffer can dare.
Each past age of gold was an iron age too,
And the meanest of saints may find stern work to do
In the day of the Lord at hand.”

The pulpit is no place for lisping weaklings. It is no place for cowards or sluggards. It is not a cosy-corner where one may stroke with soft fingers the velvet side of life. It is not an observatory from which to watch the stars. It is a hot place in the firing line. It is a battle of the strong to which the preacher is called. Unless he is attracted by the heroic element in the situation one had better turn aside from it.

I realise that the theme which I stated at the head of this chapter, “Pulpit Dynamics,” is an exceedingly broad one. The elements that go to make a dynamic personality are more numerous than I can deal with here. Some of them are beyond my experience and understanding. They include such things as good health, native intellectual power, educational equipment, voice-power, magnetism, sympathy, sincerity, self-control, good taste and common sense. To deal with these one would need to write a fair-sized book instead of a chapter for a book. From this point on I shall

therefore restrict myself to one phase of the theme, viz :

CONVICTION AS AN ELEMENT IN PREACHING POWER

I use the word "conviction" in the sense of soul-certainty plus soul-passion. Conviction is that sort of soul-certainty which puts urgency into the heart and threads the will with the sinews of strength. Conviction is more than opinion. One may have opinions upon matters regarding which he is wholly indifferent. I am of the opinion that the curtains at the windows across the street are green, but I do not care whether they are or not. They would suit me just as well if they were red or white or blue. I am not fussy about the shade of window curtains in my neighbour's house. I am of opinion that my postman's name is Jones, but I shall not be roused to opposition if you aver that it is Smith. They are equally good names. What I am concerned about is that I shall get my mail promptly. Given that, a postman by any name would be satisfactory to me.

But my convictions get at me in a different way, a deeper way, a more moving way. They relate to matters that I deem of vital moment. Opinions are superficial things. They spread themselves horizontally through the light and yielding topsoil of the mind. Convictions root deep. They strike down vertically into the subsoil of the soul and lay strong grip upon the elemental emotions.

In certain parts of Ontario the wheat fields are protected by wooden walls composed of the upturned roots of monarch pines. With mighty

stumps of trunk for pedestals, and with great prongs branching aloft like the antlers of a stag, these old, weather-beaten remnants of the primeval forest make an effective bulwark for a field of grain. On one occasion I observed an immense boulder, which must have weighed a ton or more, resting between the interclasping roots of one of these up-turned stumps. The tree in its growth, perhaps centuries before, had encountered that rock and woven about it a close, tough network of fibre, gripping it so tightly, hugging it so closely, that the wrench of the powerful machine which tore it from the soil could not break its clasp. In some such way do our convictions work. Conviction means the soul of a man taking grip of an idea, a fact, a truth, a principle, wrapping about it the very roots of his being and thus incorporating it into himself. Where a grip like that is taken, where intellect and conscience and sympathy and will are woven in a subtle nexus around some matter of vital moment, you have the guarantee of permanent resisting and achieving power.

No man has a right to preach opinions. I do not think he *can* really *preach* them. They do not lend themselves to real preaching. But he has no right to try. Convictions are the only things worth preaching. If a man has not gripped and hugged to his heart and been warmed by the doctrine he proclaims, he had better not proclaim it. He is wasting his time and the time of his hearers. An audience knows intuitively whether the preacher is himself gripped by and trembling in the grasp of the thing which he is saying. If it does not

mightily concern him it will not interest them. It is more profitable to disagree with a preacher than to fall asleep under him. "Why do you listen to that man's preaching? You do not believe his doctrines." "No, but he does, and that is the great thing. I believe in him."

Mr. Emerson in a lecture to divinity students once said: "Whenever the pulpit is usurped by a formalist, then is the worshipper defrauded and disconsolate. We shrink as soon as the prayers begin, which do not uplift but smite and offend us. I once heard a preacher who sorely tempted me to say that I would go to church no more. A snow-storm was falling around us. The snowstorm was real, the preacher merely spectral. The eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him and then out of the window behind him into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain, if, indeed, he had ever lived. We were none the wiser for it."

Tennyson's "Northern Farmer" detected the same lack of reality in his parson, though he referred to it in somewhat different terms. The Northern Farmer was a more submissive man than Emerson. He believed it was an all-wise though vastly mysterious providence that had consigned him to the dreary inanities and vacuities of that pulpit drone.

"An' I hallus coom'd to's choorch afoor my Sally wur dead,
An' 'eard um a bummin awaay loike a buzzrd-clock ower my
'ead,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a mean'd, but I thowt a 'ad summat
to saay,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to a' said an' I coom'd awaay."

Ploughman as well as philosopher will know whether the man in the pulpit is the usurper of holy functions or whether he reigns there by the divine right of spiritual conviction, and compelling sense of obligation.

Where there is an overmastering conviction in the soul of the preacher it will give his preaching the quality of *directness*. The pulpit is too often oblique in its utterances when it should be right-angular. "Hitch your wagon to a star" has a certain stirring sound about it, but it is not good advice for a young preacher. If his wagon is that sermon in the morocco case he had better hitch it to something terrestrial. Let him hitch it to the working man who sits before him wearied with anxiety and care and pull him up into the light and peace of God. He is no "star" as yet, but he may shine in a glory surpassing all the stars when God's word to him has achieved its full intent. If the preacher regards his pulpit as a starting-point for aerial navigation, if it is his ambition to soar over the heads of his congregation while they look up in rapt admiration of the flight, then let him pick out his star and sail for it. Any old star will do for that, Venus, or Mars, or even a mid-summer moon. But if he cares for the souls of the people, in Heaven's name let him preach *to* the people. He surely will if he really cares.

Conviction imparts to preaching the necessary quality of *penetration*. It was a fortunate circumstance for Israel that young David knew where to gather the smooth stones for his sling, but it was vastly more important that he knew

how to discharge a stone from that sling and send it crashing through Goliath's skull. The preacher has his giants to slay. He must go against thick-skulled ignorance, brazen-chested selfishness, panoplied prejudice, and steely indifference. If there is not behind his words the propelling power of conviction his missile will fall short. In the olden days the archer shot his arrows from a bow the length of his own body. Placing one end of the bow upon the ground he stepped upon it; then grasping the other end with one hand and twanging the bowstring with the other, he sped the shaft. Even so the measure of the preacher's strength is the measure of his personality. To be a dynamic personality his soul must be strung with the bowstring of conviction. Discharged from such a soul, words like arrows will fly forth to sink themselves deep in the mark.

Here, too, we come upon the secret of true pulpit *courageousness*. Whatever weakens a man's convictions saps his courage. We speak of the necessity of having the courage of our convictions. Most men, probably all men, *have* the courage of their convictions. The real trouble is that so few men have any convictions to make them courageous. When Martin Luther said that to Leipsic he would go if it rained Duke Georges nine days running, it was not a blustering belligerence that spoke, but a conscience enthroned upon conviction.

But when the preacher's mind has grown stale and his heart weary and his will slack, is there any means by which he may hope to be roused and restored to victorious power again? Yes; by

drinking the cup of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have read that in sidereal photography they use a gelatine plate which is capable of long exposure. It can lie beneath the stars for hours, and lying thus, the shyest traits of the most distant stars fasten themselves in accurate pictures upon the plate. So we may hold ourselves in steady and long openness towards Christ until He is seen by us to be the pre-eminent and luminous focus of the divine revealing and becomes for us the object of the most passionate love-loyalty. That love-loyalty will gird the soul with power. It is the nether spring of all effective pulpit dynamics.

X

THE FITNESS OF THINGS

FITNESS is one half of life. It is the other half as well. It is the secret of success, of happiness, and of goodness. The "fit" man is the eligible man. He, and he only, is wanted for work or warfare on land or sea or in the air. Unfitness, when it becomes total and absolute, consigns us to the scrap-heap. Beggary, disease, sin, misery and death are all phases of unfitness. Health, efficiency, righteousness and gladness are forms and expressions of fitness. Virtue, vigour and victory are all within its gift.

In every realm of human endeavour prosperity eventually works out according to a scale of fitness. The freaky thing that we call "luck" may sometimes seem to mock at fitness and to cast its pearls at the feet of the unfit; but on the whole the luckless are the feckless, the unfortunate are the unfit. Whatever superstitions we may hold regarding luck, or whatever view we may take of fate, we know full well it is no use waiting for the one or tamely surrendering to the other. The thing to do is to make ourselves fit. When we are fit we can stand up to fate. Then can we

"Sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round,
On which the fate of gods and men is wound."

The most casual survey of the fields of life brings this fact home to us. The efficient farmer is the man who knows how to do the fitting thing by the land; how to fit soil to seed, culture to crop, harvest to market. The prosperous merchant is the one who knows how to stock his shelves with goods that fit the public need. Thus it runs everywhere. When your house-builder disregards the fitness of things you pay for it with smoke down your chimney, din at your windows and rain through your roof. When your tailor makes a misfit by an inch you pay for it with a pinched shoulder or an aching arm-pit. If it is your shoemaker who is the guilty party you suffer the agonies of burning bunion and biting corn. If it is your dentist who goes wrong you suffer the consequences in impeded speech and disfigured face. It is a still more serious matter for you when your physician or surgeon lacks a sense of the fitness of things. These gentlemen, presumably, have no wish to poison or mutilate you, yet unless the diagnosis fits the symptoms and the prescription is adapted to the malady you may pay for it with loss of limb or life.

Looking still further afield you find that the painter, the sculptor, the poet, the musician, the historian, the preacher, the statesman are all creatures of the sense of fitness. They have the fitting touch, or stroke, or word, or tone, or view, or message, or programme of legislation. Science and art, truth and beauty, health and happiness, manners and morals, civilisation and religion, all consist in the faculty of conforming to an ideal of fitness.

There is no full accounting for the possession or the lack of this faculty among the sons of men ; nor can we accurately apportion praise and blame concerning it. It often appears in the least likely places, while conspicuous by its absence from scenes where it might be expected to hold sway. It may dwell in the scullery and ignore the drawing-room. It may turn in at the gate-house and pass by the great-house. You may stumble upon it in a tram-car and search in vain for it in a first-class railway carriage. You may meet it in the vestibule and miss it in the deacons' vestry. You may find it married to some back pew and absolutely divorced from the pulpit. Good taste, seemliness, appropriateness, timeliness, delightsomeness break forth upon us unawares, or perversely hide themselves from view though we seek them diligently and with tears. We all know the friend with the ever-fitting word and deed. He is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. He adds another hue unto the violet. And we know the brother who can always be depended upon to say the wrong word and do the inappropriate thing. After he has come our way there are no violets. He is not a cruel person either, merely a clumsy person. You must always be patient with clumsiness and ready to forgive it, though it despoil your flower-bed, smash your china or break your heart.

At a time like this one thinks of several directions in which a fuller exercise of the sense of fitness would serve the ends of relief, comfort and security.

It would be a fitting thing to pay decent living salaries to the teachers in our English board schools.

At the present moment they are miserably and disgracefully under-paid. There is not a worse fitting garment than this in the wardrobe of the State. As it is to-day, the people to whom we entrust the intellectual and moral training of a large portion of our English youth receive a smaller remuneration than girl tram-conductors or their sisters in hosiery and munition works. Could anything be more unfitting than to pay more for the collecting of tram-fares and the making of stockings than for the enlightenment of mind and the moulding of character? It is doubtless a matter of urgency that we should have shells wherewith to blow out the brains of our enemies; but it is a matter of no less urgency that we have teachers to quicken the brains of our children. To put the latter on a lower stipend than the former is not merely grotesque, it is dangerous folly.

There would appear to be a lot of rank materialism at the basis of that arrangement. The thing cannot stand the light nor meet the needs of the hour. Each child is now peculiarly precious to the State. Before the war we were exporting man power and woman power. We are now running short of these. Before the war we could point to a multitude of richly gifted, well-trained, excellently equipped young men who gave promise of large service to the State. They have perished in this war by tens of thousands. Unless we lay hold of this generation of children, the children of the working man, and make them wiser, stronger, more efficient than their fathers were, there is nothing before the nation but swift decline. The matter

cannot brook delay. An ignorant democracy is a dangerous democracy. When we have overthrown the ancient autocracies and entrenched tyrannies which now make the world unsafe for liberty, we shall need to make liberty safe for the efficiency, purity and peace of the world. On that long, hard road the schoolmaster must be one of the foremost leaders. How can we expect him to give a capable and enthusiastic leading if he has not money enough to pay his way decently and hold his head up like a man ?

It would be a fitting thing to have done with all strikes and stoppages of work until the war is won.

The industrial strike may be entirely justifiable under certain conditions in peace time ; but it is little short of treason to "down tools" on aeroplane construction when we have not sufficient air craft to defend London against hostile raids and to properly support the work of our infantry at the front. Yet remembering the doctrines that have been dinned into the ears of working men before and during the war it is not surprising that this thing has been done, vastly to the peril of the nation and to the direct encouragement of a Prussian triumph. We have a group of labour leaders here, a small group, fortunately, who by their own obstructive political tactics, by their studied silences, by their insinuations and innuendoes have abetted rather than restrained the dangerous tendencies of war-time strikes.

Unfortunately, they have been able to find support for their mischievous behaviour in the

utterances of a few ultra-radical but influential ministers of religion. They could quote from circulars sent broadcast over the country by pulpit pamphleteers foolish words to the effect that the supreme duty of the hour was to safeguard in war time every privilege that had been won by labour during preceding years of peace.

The position is politically and morally indefensible. It is easy to accuse one another of essential Prussianism in our course of action. A very rich Quaker accused me of that because I supported the war. He claimed that I was helping to fasten militarism upon England. It seemed the obvious thing for me to retort that there might be an element of Prussianism in the amassing of great fortunes in the hands of a few men, remembering the dictating and oftentimes oppressive power of wealth. I think I broke evenly with my critic, to say the least. And when I think about this matter of the stoppage of work for the higher wage, when the wage is already high, I seem to detect a subtle element of Prussianism here. The theory is, Strike for your personal interests when you have the nation at your mercy. It smells of Potsdam.

As to the Christian quality of the thing—well, I have not so learned the gospel. Christianity teaches us that great responsibilities may sometimes swallow up all thought of rights. At least that was the view of St. Paul. He was ever waiving his rights in view of his responsibilities. He declared that the seemly thing to do. He drilled his converts and his followers also in the

same principle. He was more concerned that Onesimus should do his duty as a Christian than that he should receive his freedom at the hands of Philemon.

It would be a fitting thing at this time to proclaim the laws of Christ and to press the claims of religion with the force and fervency born of a consciousness of world-crisis.

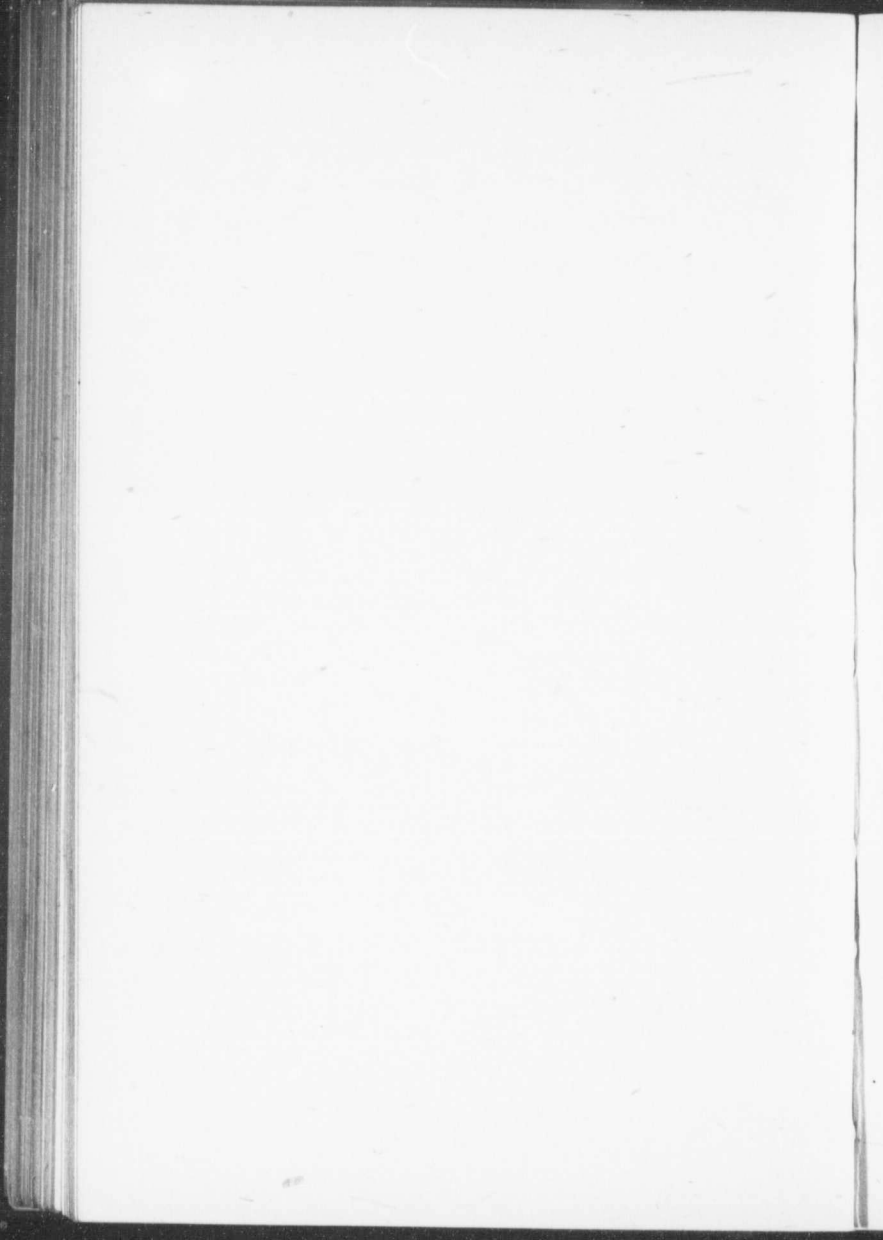
The end of the war will not put an end to our troubles. It will mark the beginning of a lot of new ones. It will leave the world sore and bleeding. It will leave in many hearts bitterness, rancour, hatred and despair. Talk of reconstructions! Who or what can reconstruct these broken and empoisoned lives? Who or what but Christ and His gospel? If races are to dwell in amity side by side or intermixed in the same State, they must learn to do so, not from the theories of the political economist, nor from the dictates of self-interest, but from the gospel which teaches that they are all one in Christ. The Christian gospel is the one sure solvent of racial prejudice, as it is the one cure for a broken heart.

It is "in Christ" that the world must come to the realisation of brotherhood. Any doctrine of community of interest which does not flow from the well-head of the gospel will run itself into a feeble trickle in the souls of men. After all, man was made for something more than to "live and let live." He was made for love. He was made for religion. Nothing but the deep and ultimate things of God can permanently satisfy his nature or lead him to his proper destiny. In a wider and

deeper sense than has yet been preached Christ is
"the Desire of all nations."

"And when He comes into the world gone wrong,
He will rebuild her beauty with a song.
To every heart He will its own dream be :
One moon has many phantoms in the sea.
Out of the North the horns will cry to men :
'Balder the Beautiful has come again !'
The flutes of Greece will whisper from the dead :
'Apollo has unveiled his sunbright head !'
The stones of Thebes and Memphis will find voice :
'Osiris comes ; O tribes of Time rejoice !'
And social architects who build the State,
Serving the dream at citadel and gate,
Will hail Him coming through the labour hum,
And glad quick cries will go from man to man :
Lo, He has come, our Christ, the Artisan—
The King who loved the lilies, He has come !"

PART II



I

THE CALL OF THE DEEP

I AM back from a four weeks' holiday by the sea. I love the sea, the sights of it, the sounds of it, the smells of it. The sea is a maker of men—a vast reservoir of health for body, mind and soul.

During these weeks of residence by the sea I have been hearing, not for the first time, but more distinctly and impressively than ever before—the Call of the Deep.

I have heard it calling to myriads of little springs hidden far away in the hearts of woodlands ; calling to the eager brooks just issuing from the springs ; calling to countless rivers flowing swift or sluggish through lonely woods, by towns and hamlets and past clattering mills ; calling, now soft and low as a lover calling to his bride, now loudly and imperiously as a commander calling to his soldiers : calling, night and day, in varied tones, to all the waters of the world to come to it, flow into it, and find in it their destiny and home.

I seemed also to hear the answer of those waters to the calling of the deep. It was borne to me in the tinkle and drip of many a well-remembered spring, in the laughter of brooks which I had known, in the murmurs of smooth-flowing rivers

and the thunders of leaping cataracts. Smitten with a passion for the deep, they were responding in clear antiphonal to the summons of the sea.

I thought of one spring from which I used to drink and in whose cool waters I had often bathed my face. It was born a thousand miles away from the ocean. It first breaks into light under an old elm-tree in a quiet meadow. One would think it might be content to live its life out in this pleasant and peaceful place. Why need it roam abroad to lose its serenity amid the confusions of the world and risk contamination at the hands of men? Let it abide here where it was born amid bright ferns and grasses and with nothing to disturb its sweet tranquillity. No sounds will intrude upon it here beyond the lowing of gentle kine, the shouts of playing children and the songs of birds. But the little spring will pay no heed to my philosophy. It laughs my appeal to scorn. Even as I bend to put my lips to it I behold it smitten with the wander-lust. A rill of its transparent water is already making its furtive way off through the meadow. It is a born traveller, this little spring, and it has started on its long journey. Presently its rills unite in a brook which hurries with them to the river. That river flows into Lake Ontario. After much mingling and tossing of waters in that mighty basin there is another sea-ward surge, and lo! the majestic St. Lawrence breaks forth on its way to the Atlantic.

The little spring would not listen to me. It was wise in that. It had heard the call of the deep and knew it must obey. Every limpid impulse of

its heart responded to that call urging it away on the great adventure. The spring seemed to know that it was the child of the sea and belonged to the sea, and so it rushed away into the arms of the sea.

And even so we belong to God—to that infinite and eternal life that surges in His heart. He is ever calling us unto Him. By all things in nature beautiful, wonderful, or grand, by the love and trust of little children, by life's tasks and trials and tears, by the testimonies of saints and the confessions of sinners, by the falseness of the world and the faithfulness of Christ, God utters His myriad-voiced call to the human soul to come to Him and find in Him its strength, its joy, its life, its everlasting home.

To every smallest, most-hidden life that call goes forth. It penetrates the remotest solitudes of the mind, the duskiest retreats of the heart's obscurity and the thickest jungles of the soul's sin. Ever it calls men forth into fellowship with the Father's life and love. As the deep of ocean calls to the deep of earth, so the deep of God calls to the deep of man.

Let us listen to this call in its

FOUR MAJOR TONES

There is the deep of God's Truth calling to the deep of man's Mind.

Much has been said about our search for truth. That is one side of the story; the other side of it is that truth is ever seeking us. Since ever the

first apple fell to ground the law of gravitation had been seeking a human mind capable of grasping it. Every rain-drop that pattered on man's head since the first shower fell sought to beat into it this truth. Steam-engines have been blowing their whistles, telephones have been ringing their bells, phonographs have been screaming out their records, since Adam first walked in Eden. The difficulty has been to get someone like a Watts or an Edison to hear. Truth has never been shy or secretive. She walks abroad by day and by night and in conspicuous garb, calling loudly all the while. But we men are deaf and blind.

It is a great day in the mind's life when it wakes to the call of truth. It is a great day in your boy's life when he first turns from toys to books, from things to thoughts. That unwonted quiet in the room above! I wonder what it means. Has he fallen asleep in his play? Presently the secret comes out: "Such a ripping story, Dad!" Ah! So he has started on that long, long trail to find out truth! Started, do I say? He started long ago. He is seven years old. He is a biggish bit on the way now. He is much further on than I had realised. He must keep on going, too, for ever and ever. It makes me feel serious to look at that youngster—viewing him now as an endless quester. Will he find the great sea of truth and revel in its fullness? Yes. When he finds, or rather is found of Him, who was able to say: I am the Truth. But he will never have done exploring that fullness. Until the mind finds Christ it is a seeker after truth; thenceforward it is a seeker into truth. In the one

case it is the rivulet searching for the sea; in the other case it is the rivulet sharing the fullness of the sea.

There is the deep of God's Love calling ever to the deep of man's Heart.

The call of Love Divine comes to human hearts through human hearts. To be the medium through which God's call of love is transmitted to the heart of the child is the pontifical privilege of parenthood. It is a great day in a parent's experience when the child gives its first clear sign of awakened affection. It is a great day for the child as well. I have often wondered how early in their career the children do really begin to love. I am quite certain that they are conjugating the verb "to love," in some high style of their own long before they can pronounce the word upon their lips. They start early on the road of love, and it leads them far.

The heart in its progress towards the deep of Love—what a sight that is! And what a study! All the world knows about that. It forms a great part of our wonderful, tragic human story.

Some day you find your young student dawdling over his book. This is a new phase. It is unlike the lad. He drums with his fingers and has a far-away look in his eyes. Perhaps he is irritable and distraught. You fear he is falling ill. You are merely his father and consequently a stupid creature. His mother puts you right. She knows. She tells you it is the old story. The boy is falling in love. Deep is calling unto deep.

A boy has a right to fall in love. It would be

sad if he did not fall in love, perhaps several times. A boy can run rings round a man in the matter of falling in love. There is no more beautiful or holy thing in the world than a young lad's love, except it be a young maiden's love. There is little, I suspect, to choose between them. But in any case, let the lad love! He was made for that. He will do it anyway, whether he has your permission or not.

Yet no heart can ever be permanently satisfied unless through human love it hears the call of Love Divine. When the river flows into the lake it is wonderfully expanded by the experience. But the river must not be content to lie for ever in the bosom of the lake. It must flow on through the lake and into the sea. Else it grows stagnant and foul. So with any human love to which we give ourselves; if it holds us back from God it will deaden and defile us, becoming itself deadened and defiled. However richly one may be blessed with the love of mother, sister, wife or child, still the heart must seek that profounder depth, that broader expanse and that mightier surge of love awaiting it in the fellowship of God.

"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

There is the deep of God's Purpose calling to the deep of man's Sorrows.

It is a serious thing for one to be deaf to the call that comes to him through joy, but it is a tragic

thing to miss the message that comes through sorrow. I was unfaithful to many joys in my early life; I pray God that I may not be unfaithful to the sorrows of these later years. That unfaithfulness, I fear, would cost me my soul.

It is a pathetic thing when man or woman gets past middle life without any experience of heart-break. They have a neglected look, as though they had been ignored in the curriculum of life.

I do not wish to coddle my sorrows, but I am bound to respect them for what they have done for me. Having lived with them so long, I know not how I should do without them. I am sure I should have to live in a smaller way. I should be like one who had lost a big part of his income. I should be compelled to retrench in thought and aim and expectation. Having become used to wealth it would be hard to go back to poverty. Sorrow has brought me a nobler estate than I had before. I look out upon broader horizons now. I wear a better habit of mind. I drink a purer and more sparkling wine.

God has wonderful things to do with broken hearts; I have found that out. All the highest spiritual services demand the qualification of "A broken and a contrite heart." There is a broken heart in the midst of the Throne.

Here is a hitherto unpublished story of the King. It was told by a wounded soldier in a London hospital.

"Have you ever seen the King?" "Yes, a few times, at some distance." "Did you ever see him

cry?" "No." "Well, I did; I saw him cry yesterday. He was visiting this ward and he spoke to each of us very kindly. See that chap there, two beds away? He has no legs and only a part of one arm. When the King came to him he looked most serious and pitiful. 'How old are you, my son?' he asked. 'Eighteen, Your Majesty!' 'Oh my God!' groaned the King; and then he burst into tears."

I was glad to hear that story. I have always honoured my king, but I love him now. I love him for those tears. They become him better than the jewels of his crown. They qualify him for kingship. He would not be fit to rule this stricken realm to-day did his own heart not break with the sorrows of his people. He would not be capable for his high tasks were his eyes unacquainted with tears. He has received a coronation and a consecration by the bedsides of his broken soldier heroes more splendid than what he received in Westminster Abbey.

Never before, since time began, were there so many broken hearts as there are in the world to-day. There will be still more to-morrow. Each night the stars come out they look down on a multitude of hearts fresh broken. And the God who shepherds the stars and heals the broken in heart calls to all these sons and daughters of sorrow to rise to the majesty of submissive sacrifice and selfless service. These should be great days in the realm of the spirit. They are great days.

There is the deep of God's Eternity calling to the deep of man's Yearning for Immortality.

I do not think of death now as I formerly did. It used to be always associated in my thought with weakness, weariness, spent force. Now that so many thousands of our boys in their splendid vigour have leaped at a bound through the gates of death I take a different view. They have not suffered death, they have *achieved* death. They have accomplished their exodus. I think of death now as a form of birth—a birth into a better, brighter life. Once the gates of death were draped in darkness to my thought; now they are clothed with light. They are not iron gates any more, but gates of pearl. — Since so many shining ones have passed through them, waving exultant hands, they have lost all terror for me. I think I shall go quietly, as I hope swiftly and joyously, when those gates swing apart for me.

We shall not be long in finding those whom we “have loved long since and lost awhile.” Of that I am certain. God will bring them with Him as He comes to welcome us at the gates of the other life.

II

LADS AND THEIR DADS

"My boys are all grown up, but I have every one of them on my hands still," said Neighbour. I thought I detected a note of complaint in his voice.

"Do you expect to get them off your hands?" I enquired. "Do you want to?" He appeared somewhat puzzled at that and looked slightly offended. There was more in the questions than he seemed to grasp. But I hope he pondered them.

Fathers and sons are on each other's hands for ever and ever. They are bound together in the bundle of life inextricably. They can never get rid of one another, in this or any other world. No time, no distance, no developments, no estrangements, no changes of any sort can ever wholly sunder them. They are knit together in a nexus that can never be cut.

Fatherhood, once it is taken on, can never be cast off. When it comes to you it comes to stay. It is an office that cannot be resigned; a throne that cannot be abdicated. Its joys and sorrows, its pains and pleasures, its privileges and responsibilities inhere henceforth in the deepest fibres of your being. Once the elements of life become so mixed in you as to constitute fatherhood, it is

impossible to break up the combination. There is no crucible in which they can be dissolved, no alembic in which they may be separated.

Fatherhood is a regeneration. It makes all things new. Nothing else can befall a man at once so potent, so radical, so branding. Fatherhood is a disruptive, revolutionary and constructive force in a man's being. Having become a father you can never be again what you were before. Your life is likely to be a bigger and better thing—something broader, deeper, richer. In any case it is bound to be different. You are yourself, yet not your former self. A new leaven works in the meal. The elements of your life have now a different fusion, and a different flux. You are, so to speak, a multiple creature now. You are a self with semi-selves about you. They mirror you, sometimes at strange angles. They show you up in vivid, and it may be, disconcerting lights. You cannot now withdraw yourself into yourself as you used to do. You cannot pull down the blinds any more to hide yourself. Your privacy is gone. You may regret it, but you cannot change it. In former days you could dwell within stone walls. Missiles hurled at you might rattle harmlessly against the masonry. It is different now. Anyone may hurt you through your children. There are more windows to your house than there used to be. As a matter of fact, you live in a glass house now.

No—a father never gets his children off his hands. He would be no less foolish than wicked to attempt it. Ask a father where he lives, and if he gives a true answer he will name not only his

own address, but the addresses of all his children as well. He may eat, sleep and work in Leicester ; but, likely as not, he *lives* in Leicester, in Boston, in Los Angeles, and "Somewhere in France."

On the other hand, children can never cast off their parents. They may settle in distant lands and never send a message home through long dreary years. They may roam around the world under assumed names, no man guessing their identity. But they do not get rid of their parents by such methods any more than an ostrich shakes off its pursuer by hiding its head in the sand. Children are haunted and hounded by their parents to the end of their days. They are inhabited by them. A grown man cannot eat his breakfast of a morning, to enjoy it, without the consent of both his parents, whether they are near or distant, alive or dead. He cannot walk down a street without their co-operation. At every tack and turn all through his life a man is drawing upon the bounty of those who gave him birth.

Talk about being tied to mother's apron-strings ! Those particular strings can never be untied. Almighty God wove those strings and worked in the knots. He defies any power in the universe to undo them. Try to cut them, you find them steel. Try to burn them, they turn to asbestos. Children carry their parents with them wherever they go. They *are* their parents—their parents blended together in mysterious, perhaps unfortunate, but certainly inextricable and inexorable ways.

This is a serious thing to reflect upon. There can be nothing more serious than this.

Now, if you are never to get your lads off your hands, it becomes you to keep your hands clean and warm and vital and capable. In other words, what you want your lads to become, in manners and mind, in character and conduct, that you must strive to be yourself. Otherwise your lads will deem you a fraud, and they won't be far wrong in their judgment.

Your boy breathes the spirit of your life into his soul day by day, hour by hour, as surely as he breathes air into his lungs. Do you think you can make a gentleman of him by giving him lectures on deportment? Dismiss the notion! You can do more for your boy by one hour, even by one critical minute, of splendid living than by months of lecturing. If you want your lad to be careful about the company he keeps, be careful about the company you keep. Do you want him exemplary in his habits, be exemplary in yours. Do you want him to govern his temper, then govern your own! Do you meet an exhibition of vile temper on his part by an exhibition of viler temper on your own part? That is beastly. Plain beastly. I am not a strong advocate of corporal punishment, but I think you should get the strap for that. Administer your own life well and you will be doing the biggest and best thing possible for the training of your lad.

Four things a lad has a right to expect from his dad. They constitute his birthright. They are the very bread of his soul. One of these is

TRUTH

If you lie to your boy or practise deceit upon him

you will pay dearly for it. What is worse *he* will pay dearly for it. There is scarcely a worse wickedness than for a father to deceive his son. It is almost past forgiveness. It violates one of the primal sanctities of life. The two human beings in the world who most need perfect truth between them are a lad and his dad. Better lie to your wife than to your boy. If you lie to her and she finds you out it will probably break her heart. But then, dying of a broken heart your wife will go to heaven. If your boy discovers you to be a liar it may corrupt his character and be a means of sending him to hell.

Your boy will not readily conclude that you are a liar. To start with, he is mightily prejudiced in your favour. You are a little deity to him in his early days. Given half a chance he will always think of his father as the finest man in the world. It would be horrible were it otherwise. Yes, you may do a lot of lying to your boy before he suspects you. This early child confidence is one of the most beautiful things in the world, quite as beautiful in its way as parental love. If you want to do something particularly devilish—abuse that confidence. If you want to make yourself a criminal, you may save yourself the trouble of committing technical theft or murder. Steal your boy's trust from him. Kill his confidence in you. The law cannot take hold of you for that. Your town may still make you an alderman, or your constituency send you to parliament. But you will lose one of the most precious things in life. You will be a very poor man.

Another thing a lad has a right to expect from his dad is

JUSTICE

Scrupulous, beautiful justice is your boy's birth-right. It is notorious that children are infinitely sensitive to an injustice or what they consider an injustice. A lad, a proper lad, will take the cane without wincing when he knows it is deserved, but he will cry his heart out over a slight rebuke or a small punishment when he knows it is unmerited. He will remember it for years, perhaps a lifetime.

No court in the realm should be able to administer such beautiful justice as a father does in his home. The father should be able to hold the scales of justice in a more sensitive hand than any ermined judge in the world. The fountain of justice in a nation's life is not the parliament that makes its laws, nor yet the judiciary that administers them; it is the home whose daily life exemplifies the principle of equity.

Your lad will find it hard to forgive you for unjustly judging him, and you will have no right to be forgiven until you have repented in dust and ashes and begged his forgiveness. I have known simpletons who considered it beneath their dignity to ask forgiveness of their children; and others who feared it might be bad for the children. Stuff and nonsense! To get forgiveness from your child when you have wronged him is the next sweetest thing to getting forgiveness from your God. I know by experience. Once when I had harshly and wrongly judged a child of mine, I begged to be

forgiven. Never shall I forget how in an instant a pair of arms went round my neck, and whilst kisses were rained upon my lips a choking voice cried: "Oh, Daddy, don't! Please, Daddy, don't. It's all right, Daddy dear!" In that moment I experienced a sacrament.

One has missed a good deal who has never known what it means to get forgiveness from his child. There may be a few parents in the world who never need to get it. I think they must be very few. Not many of them have come my way. Be sure to seek this blessed forgiveness when you have been at fault! But take pains not to need it! Take great pains to be wholly just to your children! Leave no sense of injustice to rankle in their hearts lest it breed some deadly distemper.

The lad has a right to his dad's

LOVE

"He is sure to receive that," you say. "That may be taken for granted." Scarcely. The love may be in the father's heart and yet not get transmitted to the consciousness of the child. A father may become too much absorbed in business, or in books, or in writing sermons, or in pleasure, to give his boy the full evidence and assurance of his affection. Moreover, a parent's love needs to be overhauled occasionally to make certain that it is of the proper strain. There are often strange admixtures in love. If you love your child mainly for the enjoyment you get from loving him, what is that but a refined form of self-indulgence? I have known men who were inebriated in the love

of their children, but they did not love them well or wisely.

Of course a father's love should be a manly love—not a womanly love. A lad does not want his dad to treat him exactly as his mother does. That would be unwholesome. Sex counts for something even between parents and children. It is a bad job when the boy lacks either the influence of femininity or masculinity in his home life. It is a great pity when he has a mother and a half, and only half a dad.

You know about those "after tears" that a child will shed in his mother's lap. He tumbled in play and knocked his knee. He wanted very much to cry. He was just puckering his face to do it when his brother, or was it his sister, said: "Buck up, Bobbie! Don't let them see you cry!" He limped home, his face pale and quivering, like a young hero. But the moment he sighted his mother he ran to her, hid his face in her lap and burst into tears. He would scarcely do that with his dad, if his dad was of the right sort. He would put his shoulders back, throw up his head, beat down his inclination to tears, and proudly exhibiting his wound, would say: "Look at that, Dad, and I never cried a drop."

A lad expects to find virility and masculinity in his father's love. In the nursery he wants his father to play bear with him, or be his jiji, or somersault him, or bounce ball with him. A little later he will want his dad to beat him at tennis or take his middle stump at cricket. He will want him to swim and row and fish with him. Always he will want to feel his father's strength, his capable

and capacious manhood. Old men, especially if they are old in spirit, should not beget children. There should be a law against it, even if these old men should be millionaires.

Lads and their dads should be the best pals in the world. When they are not boon companions something is radically wrong. If my lads did not want to be with me and did not enjoy my company, I should want to drown myself. At the same time I should feel it a calamity if they never wanted to be away from me and in the companionship of other boys. They need that too. I have occasionally experienced some pangs of jealousy in seeing my lads so much taken up with other lads. But I tried to quit that early. I was a boy myself once.

The great thing here is for the parent to *maintain touch* with the child. On a recent afternoon I crossed the Victoria Park in a heavy storm. It was lashed by a cold rain driven before a strong east wind. I had never seen so many sheep on the park before. There were hundreds of them—black-nosed, long-woolled, mother-sheep, each with her progeny by her side. The lambs were sturdy little chaps, for it was late in May. And this was the beautiful thing I noticed, that in each case parent and child stood in touch with one another. The parent was not trying to shield her progeny from the storm. Such an attempt would have been futile. Lamb and dam each took its share of the pelting rain. But they stood side by side, close together and *in touch*. Each lamb held its shoulder pressed against its mother's side so that it could feel the warmth of her body. And I observed

that the lambs looked as comfortable and contented as the dams. So should it be with humans and their children. You cannot shield your boy from the storms of life. Many a cold rain must lash and drench him. You cannot keep him indoors all the time, nor can you be everlastingly holding an umbrella over his head. You would make yourself and him ridiculous by attempting it. He must take his share of rain ; but let him take it in touch with you and he will take it manfully.

Above all, a lad has a right to receive from his dad a right feeling for

God

There is no human being in the world from whom a boy will learn of God so readily and gladly as from his own father. The father should be both priest and prophet to his boy, indoctrinating and evangelising him by his own joyous walk with God. His father's God is more, and more real to a boy than his Sunday-school teacher's God or his minister's God. It is the father's privilege to give his boy a great and beautiful God to love and worship and obey. From the warmth and glow of his own fatherhood he may lift the heart of his boy into a consciousness of the Fatherhood of God. When lads get God from their dads the day of mourning will be ended for the Church. The Church can then become what she has never been as yet, a great happy fellowship in divine worship and human service. One will not need to say to his neighbour, Know ye the Lord, but all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest.

III

HOME

"THERE'S no place like home." Certainly not. Home is more than a place. At the foot of this street there is a noble house standing in spacious grounds. It is not a home, since no one lives there. The place is "for sale." By that token, also, I know it is not a home. No man ever sells his home, at least, not until he is willing to sell his soul and the souls of his family. He may sell the property which he has hitherto utilised in the daily process of his home-making, but there are essential elements of his home which he will not, nay, can not sell. He takes them with him when he moves. On the advertisement boards of properties for sale one often reads the words: "An ideal home." Well, one does not look for refined sentiment in the announcements of real estate agents. They have no intention of wounding any one's delicate susceptibilities, but their handling of the word "home" rather tends to rub off its bloom. What they mean, of course, is that any one who has money enough to buy the property they offer may establish an ideal home there.

But there is a big element of uncertainty about

that. The thing remains to be proved. It will depend altogether upon what sort of folk they are who buy the place and move into it whether they establish a home there or not. What the furniture vans unload there will not decide the matter, nor will it be determined by the work of gardeners, grooms, cooks and housemaids. Whether or not a home is to be established there depends upon the spiritual qualities which the new occupants carry across the threshold in their own souls. It is all a question of how the hearts of these people will beat towards each other, how their lives will act and react upon one another. Instead of being transformed into a home, that noble place at the foot of the street may easily become a bit of hell.

No adequate definition of home has ever yet been given, nor ever will be given. One might as well try to define Love or Mother or God. Whilst you are drawing your line here and your line there, something breaks through and slips away. Home is too great a thing to be defined. The elements which constitute it are too spiritual, too subtle, too complex, and too constantly in flux, to admit of complete definition. There is nothing concerning which we have surer knowledge, but it is knowledge that comes by intuition and experience and has slight dependence upon logical processes of thought. One can instantly detect a lack or a flaw in a home, but he detects it by the intuitive rather than the perceptive faculty. Conscious of the greatness of this theme, yet daring to write upon it because I am in love with it, I shall try to set forth what

seem to me to constitute the essential elements of home.

KINSHIP

Home, in the true and full sense of the word, can only be built upon the basis of the Family. No other aggregation of individuals, however kindly disposed they may be towards each other, however mutually congenial they may be, however united they may be in aim and purpose, can build a home. That only is home where you dwell with your own folk. By courtesy the term is applied to various institutions whose members are unrelated by the family bond. We have nursing homes, convalescent homes, aged ladies' homes, homes of rest, rescue homes, and such like. But at best these institutions are only partial substitutes for home. They may be delightfully administered, the inmates of them may dwell together in peace and unity, yet some of the sweetest elements of home are sadly lacking there.

Under certain circumstances any one of these may be the next best thing to home, but it is not that sacred thing. Home may be approximated, but it cannot be duplicated. Home is built upon the marriage bond and the blood bond. It comes to fullest and finest flower where these two bonds are interwoven. A young married couple may set up a home by themselves which seems to them a little paradise, yet it is not an ideal home until the children come. They put the final and finishing touch to the life of home. The birth of children

completes the joy of wedlock, touches it to its tenderest grace and crowns it with its noblest satisfactions. Husband and wife bear a new and more sacred relation to each other after they have become co-partners in bringing progeny into the world. They have new incentives to love and loyalty, to patience and unselfishness and thoughtfulness. A world of new mutual interests is added to them, containing new sources of joy and hope and fear, with new challenges to all that is noblest in their natures.

It is in the nurture and training of children that home fulfills its highest function. This was its original *raison d'être*. One would not forget how beautiful is the home life of many a married couple to whom the blessing of parenthood has been denied. Yet it inevitably lacks something of the breadth and depth, the movement and colour, the thrill and rapture of the homes in which little children play and where they grow to manhood and womanhood. In some vague way even the most affectionate and devoted of childless couples must realise their incompleteness.

Children complete the organism of home. They round out its system. They vitalise and beautify it. Their relations to their parents in confidence, dependence, love and obedience weave new and bright strands into the pattern. Their relations to each other add still other strands. The children are the real wealth of the home. They give it a new outlook and a new sanctification. They bring the very heavens bending down to it in a hitherto undreamed-of glory.

WORK

This may seem a strange and incongruous word to be set down here. Work—Home—are they not in antithesis to one another? We are accustomed to say that a man's home is the sacred refuge to which he repairs when his work is done. A man goes home to rest, not to work. The tendency is to dissociate the thought of home from the idea of work. But that is an unfortunate tendency and an evil tendency. For that very reason I make haste not only to associate work with home, but to identify work as one of the integral elements of home.

Dissociate home from work and you dissociate it from life. Work is a larger interest and comes nearer being an ultimate end than rest. If we are real men and women we do not work in order that we may rest, but we rest in order that we may work. If, therefore, home is to fulfil its function as the chief minister to life, it must constantly and vitally relate itself to work. It must encourage the love of work in all its members and seek to qualify each for doing his best possible work.

No man is capable of doing his best work who has not a good home at the back of him. But it is equally true and no less worthy of consideration that no man can keep the best sort of a home at the back of him who is not doing some good work in the world. This is frequently forgotten and often with tragic consequences.

One of the beneficent results already achieved by this terrible war is the new interest in work

which it has created in thousands of homes which formerly were haunts of idleness. They had been infected and rendered unwholesome by the miasmata of ease, self-indulgence and pleasure-seeking. The clamant call for work of every sort, the urgent demand for the forth-putting of the full man-power and woman-power of the nation has swept through these homes like a cool, tonic wind from snow-clad hills. They are better homes and happier homes because of it, even though in many instances they are homes of mourning for the dead. Young women who were merely hanging around waiting for husbands to turn up, whose most serious conversation got no further than the last tennis match, or the last flirtation, or the last play at the theatre, are now absorbed in eager, earnest, helpful work.

We have discovered latent capacities in our British young women of the well-to-do classes, capacities for self-denial and self-devotion of which we had not dreamed before. The call to work has wrought a regeneration in them. And the reaction of this upon home life has been swift and splendid. One notes, in multitudes of instances, a new restfulness, a tenderer grace, and a sweeter peace in the homes from which these young women go forth in the early morning to long days of tasking work and to which they return at night tired but thankful, serious yet joyous.

Let us hope that we have learned the lesson once for all, that we can only have wholesome homes when each member of the family participates, according to individual ability, in some form of

useful work. If a single member of the family is indulged in idleness, that one becomes a spot of moral infection. Around that one the foundations of home begin to crumble.

This matter has far-reaching implications. It involves the training of young children to early usefulness. I know of a Kindergarten school where the "nurses" of the children call to take them home at noon. That may be all well enough, for the children are young. But when these devoted "nurses" began putting the wraps and footgear on the children as though they were so many infants, the wise teachers promptly forbade it. "No, the children are well able to dress themselves, and they need to do it." I have a suspicion that the embargo was not quite to the taste of some of the parents. Not, necessarily, that all the parents of these children had been fussed by nurses in their own childhood, but they want their children to bear the hall-marks of aristocratic training. One mark is supposed to be the number of things the child is unable to do for herself. It is like that other ancient hall-mark of prosperity—the number of people you can afford to be rude to. There is as much sense in the one thing as in the other.

Children are often stunted in their natures by being persistently ignored as factors in life's work. It is a particularly bad sort of procrastination that regards them as merely so many bundles of possibility of future usefulness. We should remember that millions die in childhood. Their only experience of life in this world is a child's experience. They must know in childhood the satisfying sense

of usefulness, or never know it at all. We rob them of something of their proper heritage when we deny them this. They can be useful in a thousand ways without undue burdens being imposed upon them. It makes children happy to realise that they are contributing to the joy and comfort of the family life by doing something that needs to be done.

As a matter of fact, children often out-run their parents in this desire. The boy will be imitating his father at work and the girl her mother, long before there is any real capacity for doing the things their parents do. Here it is not merely the imitative instinct that is active, or the hero-worship that makes the boy desire to be "like father," but a natural craving to "do something." It is the thirst for effectiveness finding expression. There is also a rudimentary social impulse in the thing. The child, in a real sense, is wanting to find his place in the social organism and to bear his part in it. He is already looking for a job and a sphere of usefulness. Wise educationists recognise and make much of this.

The principle with which we are dealing also involves the necessity of continuing work after retirement from business. So long as a man has any capacity for work left in him he must exercise it if he is to preserve his manhood and conserve the deepest satisfactions of his home life. Amongst the happiest men we know are elderly men who have given up money-making and taken to various other kinds of work. Amongst the most miserable men we know are elderly men who have given up

money-making to do—nothing. They make the people around them miserable, too.

Beyond question, one of the mightiest elements in home is its unique relation to life in the matter of work. If it fails to equip its members for taking an effective and joyous part in the world's work it fails utterly. All its physical comforts, its artistic delights, its loving fellowships, its sacred confidences are to be toned and tuned to the note of work, or they tend to softness, weakness and ultimate disappointment. Home should, indeed, provide the truest conditions of rest for weary brains and bodies—the well-earned rest of earnest workers. Then it is like a peaceful river, deep and strong in its flow, bearing us onward to our final home. But where it is the lurking place of idleness it becomes a spot of dull stagnation breeding disease and death.

PLAY

Of late years the civilised world has witnessed a revival of interest in play. Formerly it was tolerated, now it is cultivated. School, church and municipality vie with one another in these days to provide play-grounds, play-times and playthings. We are afraid of "no play" lest it should make Jack not only a dull boy but a bad boy. Criminals have no taste for play. They will do anything but that. They will dig, they will mow grass. They will pick oakum. They will solve puzzles. They will make ingenious and useless curios. They will read, write, sing, pray, weep and get religion. But one thing they will not do. They will not

play. They do not know how to play. If they ever did know they have forgotten the art.

In a proper home each member of the family will be encouraged to play and means will be devised by which all the members may sometimes, at least, be able to play together. Play is not a parenthesis in life, but an essential element in its completeness. The meaning of life would be obscured if play were banished. In play life finds expression, vindication and recreation.

In my early school-days play-time was termed the "recess." It was a stupid and degrading misnomer. Our play-time was as different from a recess as day is from night or life from death. A recession is a moving back, a retreat, a retrogression. You witness a recess when you watch an ebbing tide, or a setting sun, or a dying man. But when half a hundred youngsters rush pell-mell out of a school-room into the open air for twenty minutes' play they seem entirely unconscious of anything like temporary retirement from the business of living. They give no hint of failing forces or fading glories. They are in for a season of vivid, joyous, intensified living. Teachers now term play-time "the recreation hour." That is infinitely better. If play is recreation, then it is something to be viewed with respect, almost with reverence. What recreates has something divine about it.

And this is why a home must make provision for play as faithfully as it does for meals. Do not sneer at the old demand for "bread and games!" There was sense in it. Bread and games belong in

the same category. They are both recreative of the human personality. Children have a right to both of them in due proportion. Not that one can distinguish sharply here between children and grown-ups. Play is as much a necessity for parents as for children. No life can long continue to be sweet, wholesome, radiant and capable after it has ceased to play. Britishers are fonder of play than Germans are. They are better sportsmen. By that token we may know that they will win this war. It will always be true that we win or lose our Waterloos on playing-fields of one sort or another.

If your child does not indulge in play, real play, you should be concerned about him and consult a specialist. But perhaps you have never encouraged him to play. You may have taken it for granted that being a child he would inevitably get all the play that was good for him. The argument is faulty. A child's play needs the parent's oversight, encouragement and guidance quite as much as his work does, and in many cases it may need it more. It is a sad state of things when a child is brilliant at work and a duffer at play. The brilliancy is likely to be short-lived. Sometimes the child's play is sacrificed to the parent's rest. It is distressing that this should ever be necessary, as it often doubtless is. The conditions which make it necessary constitute one of our gravest social problems.

It is no easy matter to draw the dividing line between work and play. They often shade into one another; how often depends upon your state

of health your growth in grace. What is one's work may be another's play and vice versa. You have known times when it seemed a good deal like work to walk the last blocks of your homeward way. But that dancing fairy who went to meet you made another matter of it. She knew nothing but the freshness and the joy of life. With you the business of walking meant nothing more than a slow and laborious means of progression towards a certain point in space.

But when she joined you the situation underwent a wondrous change. Your old feet had been beating out "Home, sweet home" in a minor key and to a retarded tempo. Her feet translated it into dance music with infinite variations. Every muscle of her improvised a melody. Her toes tapped out lyric notes. Musical themes were suggested by the cart on the roadside, the cat on the fence, the bird on the tree-bough and the colours in the sky. There were dartings to and fro, twinklings of sun-browned legs, gyrations, loiterings, out-runnings and pullings on your arm. There were questionings and news-tellings, exclamations, jets of laughter, outcries of joy. She too was going home. That serious purpose was lurking somewhere in her sub-consciousness. But the great thing at that moment was that she was going home *with you*. Even if she had been going on an errand by herself she would put the poetry of movement into it, but she would not behave like that. There is less fun in doing errands by yourself than there is in waltzing up the street with Daddy.

These two elements must always be present in true play—social intercourse and fun.

If there is no fun in a thing there is no play in it. And unless there is another person enjoying the fun with you, there is no play. One boy tossing two balls in the air may get amusement from the exercise. But one boy with two balls cannot play. For play you must have two boys, and they will only need one ball. It is the other boy who completes the possibility of a game. Children need *play-mates* more than they do *play-things*. When you send your child into the nursery or the garden with instructions to "amuse" himself, remember what you are doing. You are sending him to a poorer and a duller thing than play. A person may amuse himself with mechanical toys; he cannot play with them. He can only play with other persons. Of course, if the child personifies the things you have given him, if he makes soldiers of them, or even horses, he may approximate play in his handling of them. But it is only whilst his imagination peoples the place that it retains a charm for him. When he can no longer conjure up the presence of other living creatures he wearies of his toys. He looks out of the window and sighs. He wants to know if Bobby can't come over.

The play-value of a game depends upon the range of activities it stimulates and the amount of social impact it involves. Golf is no doubt an excellent form of exercise for middle-aged and elderly people; but it is not as good a game as cricket. Cricket, in turn, must yield the palm to Rugby. As we grow old we are forced to content ourselves with

the quieter and gentler forms of play, but we must never stop playing altogether. When you stop playing it is time to die. As a matter of fact, if you have stopped playing you are dead. It is of no use to argue against that statement or to deny it.

God be thanked, there are forms of pure play in which we may indulge to our latest breath. I have a friend who has been an invalid and almost a cripple all her life. She has been bed-ridden for many a long year. She is well over eighty. She has a brilliant mind and a beautiful soul. She takes a deep and serious interest in the world's life. And she is as playful as a kitten. It is a never-failing charm of hers. She is fond of an intellectual tilting match. She rides at you with uplifted lance, and if you are not entirely on your guard she will un-horse you to the music of pealing laughter. The play of thought, the play of humour, the play of words, the play of mirth—these are among God's choicest gifts.

I have another friend who is dying slowly—too slowly—it seems to me. His pain is great and constant. His body is but a shadow of what it used to be. But the man—the sportsman—is all there. When I go to see him there is a play of smiles about his lips, a playful twinkle in his eyes, while all his words are bright and brave. He jokes about his appearance and his increasing disabilities. He speaks submissively about the life he is leaving and sweetly about the life he is going to. He is playing the game. He is not going to be bowled out. He will carry his bat through till the Umpire calls "time." Balls of darkness are

hurled at his wicket. He puts them all to the boundary. Some of the best playing a man does in this world is on his death-bed.

Let us play !

Play to win ! To win what ? The game ? Yes. But what do you mean by the game ? The top score ? The supremacy over those who are playing against you ? There is a lot more in "the game" than that. Play to get the most out of your hand, out of your boat, out of your bat ! The people on the other side may have the advantage of the wind, of the pitch, of the trumps. But what does that matter ? You may play as good a game as they, or even better, without making the biggest score. You may win the game though you lose the match. Play to win ! To win a cheerful mood, a serene patience, a good night's rest ! Play to win a generous feeling for your rivals, and to win a full respect and confidence from them. Play to be a good loser ! A flushed winner has lost the game as compared with a cheerful, happy loser. Play to win a clear brain, an equitable temper, a quiet heart ! Play to give pleasure to others ! To divert minds that are dwelling upon sorrow, and to rest minds that are worn with toil ! Play to win—the life that now is and the life that is to come !

IV

HOME

(Continued)

THE creation of an ideal home demands the interweaving of these seven strands : Kinship, Work, Play, Law, Liberty, Love, Religion.

Home is a realm in which there is an undisputed reign of

LAW

It is an ordered world, regulated and disciplined under authority. It is the microcosm of the ideal state, the adumbration of the Kingdom of God. The law of the home is older than any parliament ; it is not subject to repeal by any assembly ; it is above interference from any court ; it is more sacred and binding than the proclamation of any earthly sovereign. There are no imperatives so absolute as those of home. No other commands are so compelling ; no other prohibitions so inhibitory. The law of home holds the primacy over all the enactments of mankind.

Lawlessness works the swift and utter destruction of home. It sweeps away its undermost foundation. When the home is established on recognised law it is as a house founded upon a rock. Let the rains

descend and the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon that house! It will not fall. But apart from law the home is set on shifting sand. Its chaotic base will crumble under shock, bringing the edifice down into hideous ruin. Where the home is not under the reign of law it ceases to be a home and becomes a hovel, a herding place of miserable contestation.

There is *the conjugal law for the control of husband and wife*. This law is not written fully on any statute book in the world. It is written in the constitution of the human race. The recognition of this law marks one of the final stages of man's evolution. It is a sign of his superiority over the brute creation. The attempts which are being made in many directions to loosen the rigidity of the marriage bond are allurements to society to step backwards and downwards. Whatever tends to weaken reverence for the sanctity of marriage strikes a death blow at the home. Where the marriage bond is no more than a mutual compact entered into for the sake of temporary convenience and comfort it can provide no proper basis for home-building. Under such an arrangement its dominant impulse is egoistic, whereas the true home-making impulse must always be altruistic. Home is not an institution intended to provide the conditions for pleasant self-indulgence. The divine intention regarding home is the promotion of human happiness and well-being through joyous self-devotion. In every true marriage there is an element of sacrifice on the part of each of the contracting parties. There can be no deep, lasting,

satisfying fellowship between man and woman where the spirit of sacrifice is wanting. Their contacts will be superficial, their peace precarious, their pleasures unsubstantial.

The imperatives of conjugal law are mutual affection and respect. Their sway is gracious yet supremely regal. Where their enactments are ignored or slighted marriage is a soulless matter. It is a mockery and a misery. Instead of being what it was designed to be, a large and sweet enfranchisement of the soul, it becomes a hateful bondage. The dictating power of custom, the restraining influence of public opinion may serve for a time to keep the bond outwardly inviolate, but if the conjugal law is not written in the heart as by the finger of God the bond is no more than a rope of sand. Then the relation that was meant to be a constant sacrament becomes a constant sacrilege.

At the recent marriage of Miss Lloyd George, Dr. Clifford read an address from which I quote a paragraph.

“Marriage is meant for happiness; but as nothing in our human life is meant for happiness alone, so it is with marriage. It is meant for much more than joy—for the education of the heart and mind; the training of the conscience and the will; the liberation of the forces of love and devotion, faith and service to mankind; for the discipline of character; for the establishment and diffusion of righteousness; for the extension of the kingdom of truth and beauty, righteousness and goodwill.”

These words constitute a discriminating and

suggestive commentary of the strictness and sanctity of the conjugal law.

Also, for a proper home, you must have the recognition of *parental law*. Unless the parents' writ runs throughout the realm of home you have anarchy rushing headlong to bedlam. Children have a right to the restfulness and joy of being governed, governed wisely and firmly by their parents. I rather like "the governor" as a pet name for father. It is respectful, even complimentary. The use of the term bespeaks a proper filial feeling. That is what a father ought to be—"the governor." But what about the governess? Who is she? We should never have allowed that term to be applied to a hired servant. The governess in the home should be the mother.

It is bad for the characters of children when they are not under law in the home, and it is equally bad for their physical health. Many a child is regularly under a physician's care, swallowing his medicines and following some faddy dietary when all he needs in order to be well is a father with the wisdom and strength to control him. A boy can make himself ill before breakfast by half an hour of contention with his parents. When it is an open question with a child whether he will be able by pleadings, arguments and tantrums to wear down the will of the parents into submission to his whim, the aforesaid pleadings, arguments and tantrums will be forthcoming vastly to the detriment of the child's health. The matter should be settled for him in thirty seconds, so that he may go his way in quietness and confidence. A good father

is a good boss. We all need a master, and in our inmost hearts we all want a master, however strenuously we may affirm the contrary. It is good for us to be under authority. It simplifies life and dignifies it too. The Kingdom of Heaven is an autocracy.

In an ideal home there is also *the law of brotherhood and sisterhood*. One of the most beautiful things in the world is the life-long loyalty to this law exemplified in many families. But there are sad exceptions to this. Are not the exceptions due to the fact that in childhood the law that should govern brotherly and sisterly relations was never clearly enunciated or interpreted? The child's fraternal instinct will go a good way towards discovering the law, but it will rarely go the whole way. He needs the help of his parents here. They must help him see the hideousness of selfishness. They must show him that it is perfidy and treason. The spirit of good comradeship and good sportsmanship must be cultivated among the children of the family. All through their lives they should constitute a pack that no power in the world can disperse.

But if home is a realm of Law it is supremely and uniquely the realm of

LIBERTY

It is the realm of liberty *because* it is the realm of law. It is only when you are well under law that you can enjoy the fullest liberty. The planet that obeys the laws of its orbit has the freedom of

a vast track in the heavens. If it breaks away from this control it runs amok and goes bumping into other worlds to their destruction and its own. The train that keeps to the rails may run its course in safety. Leaving the rails it crashes to its doom. It is whilst they obey the law of the rudder that "the stately ships go on to their haven under the hill." Released from control they become be-draggled wrecks on rock or reef, on shoal or sand-bar.

The established laws of home make it a place of noble liberty. Life then moves forward without friction. Each member of the family keeping to his orbit swings on his way without fear of collision. Home life under established law has all the poetry of motion that you see in a fancy drill. At any moment it may go on parade with movements of precision. By day or by night, at work or at play, in sickness or in health, in joy or in sorrow, in prosperity or in adversity, its members know their parts and play them as if to music.

The world knows nothing else to compare with the liberty of home. They are doubtless kindly and agreeable souls who advertise their boarding-house as "a home away from home." But they cannot really fulfil the contract. Even if they could have all their guests in training together for a twelve-month the thing could not be managed. In a boarding house you are at best a bloom in a bouquet of cut flowers ; in your own home you are a living plant in its native soil.

Home is set to a different key from any other institution. The whole of a real home is owned

jointly and severally by each member of the family. In a home each is for all and all for each. It is the consummate society of the gloriously free.

LOVE

Home is the elect kingdom of love. It is in the home that love is mostly bred, nurtured, trained and exercised. Love springs up in the home like willows by the watercourses. It grows from year to year and in old age is full of sap and green. It is love that makes of home such a realm of peace and restfulness and joy. The atmosphere which love creates disperses life's glooms and dissolves its fears. The most satisfying love in the world is that which exists between husbands and wives when they are ideally mated. The most unselfish love is that of parents for their children. The most trustful and worshipful love is that of children for their parents. I have heard it affirmed that the most loyal love in the world is that of a sister for a sister. Where love is pure and strong there can scarcely be any degrees in its loyalty; yet certain it is, the world has nothing more beautiful to show than sisterly affection at its best. Because home is the fountain of the purest, deepest love, it is the institution to be protected and hallowed before all others.

The note one misses most in social eugenics is the function of love in life. It is almost entirely ignored. We must all agree upon the desirability of raising the physical and intellectual standard of the race, yet there is something to be desired

beyond the sound mind in the sound body. One can recall many instances of fine human animals who have used their powers to convert this world into a hell. Highly strung nervous systems with tendencies to tuberculosis are unquestionably a drawback to human progress. Yet there are whole families of that type which, because of their high moral and spiritual qualities, are able to make a splendid contribution to the world's life and the world's work. Not everything can be done on the methods of the stud farm.

We are facing a time, we are already in the midst of a time of social reconstruction. A strong movement is afoot for broadening the basis of divorce in the interest of a higher birth-rate. Educational machinery is being overhauled with a view to improvement. New realms of activity and usefulness are opening up to women. The war has compelled us to put a new value upon competency and efficiency and range of power. These may all be interpreted as signs of progress. But we shall entirely miss the real mark if we forget the function of love in life. The spring of love is the home; that must be guarded at any cost.

It seems to me that nothing can be more mischievous than those books—there are far too many of them—written in a spirit of bitterness and aiming to stimulate that most disastrous of all class antagonisms—the antagonism between women and men. What can come of this but evil in various forms? It tends to kill romance and to take all the mystery and beauty out of life. It strikes at the

foundation of home. It is fashionable nowadays to talk of marriage as a contract between a man and a woman. Of course it is that. But it is much more than that; at least, it should be. It is that contract inspired and fulfilled by mysterious but mighty spiritual impulses.

Violin-music is the result of a wedding between bow and fiddle-strings. But what sort of a wedding? I have had neighbours who could effect a union of bow and fiddle and keep it up indefinitely, but heaven knows the result was something else than music, in the other house and in my own soul. But I have heard Kubelik play. When he wedded bow to fiddle he was doing more than carrying out a contract. He was listening to the deep and subtle and mysterious harmonies of the universe. He was yielding himself to a passion he could not define and devoting himself to an ideal he did not create. He was pouring into his wedding service all the tender dreams and mystic longings and sacred aspirations of his soul. And that is what a man does when he weds at the command of love. I am not explaining the sanctity of marriage; I am not solving the wonder or the mystery of it. I am simply pointing out that there is in a true marriage of the heart certain elements for which the contract theory leaves no room.

My last word here regarding home must be a brief reference to

RELIGION

Faith in God, reverence for God, worship of God, obedience to God, service for God, these constitute

the crystal dome of home, through which the light of heaven shines in. Religion is at once the secret of home's deepest joys and the guardian of its highest sanctities. The religion of the home should be simple, tender and all pervasive like an atmosphere. Where it is austere, rigid, formal, it may become a source of discouragement and alienation.

The primal unity of the home should be its unity in God. Where that unity is established and maintained the home can challenge all change and defy all disaster. There rests the Heavenly Dove. There Heaven itself is mirrored and fore-tasted.

V

THE SPACIOUS LIFE

WE are told of an ingenious and diabolical form of torture inflicted by an Eastern tyrant upon the unfortunates who fell under his displeasure. He would shut them up in a revolving chamber, which, as it revolved, grew ever narrower, until within the contracting walls of stone the miserable victim was crushed to death. The story suggests a frequent fact of daily life. In many instances life is subjected to continuous contraction. The world, as it were, closes in upon the soul, until within the convergence of stony inevitabilities the soul is crushed into darkness and despair.

The forces which may contract the chamber of life are manifold. There is

THE TYRANNY OF TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCE

In youth the world seems a spacious place. We defy all walls, scorning them as gauzy films. Then fancy ranges free ; ambition soars ; hope, on strong wing, flies fast and far. With heart care-free, and spirit unsubdued, youth glories in the amplitude of its domain. Life seems a realm of magnificent distances and splendid possibilities. Horizons are wide and the intervening spaces away to the skyline seem to invite our exploration and possession.

But soon the tyranny of time and circumstance begins to wear away this sense of spaciousness. The revolving years have a trick of shutting us, and often early, into petty rounds of routine work. They load us with responsibilities, shadow us with sorrows. Multiplied infirmities cripple our faculties and waste our strength. Thus the world shrinks about us and hardens as it shrinks. Existence becomes dull and narrow until the soul is threatened with suffocation. Stevenson felt something of this when he wrote: "There are not many Dr. Johnsons to set forth on their first romantic journey at sixty-four. If we wish to scale Mont Blanc, to go down in a diving dress or up in a balloon, we must be about it while we are still young. It will not do to delay until we are clogged with prudence, and limping with rheumatism and people begin to ask: What does gravity out of bed? Youth is the time to go flashing from one end of the world to the other, both in mind and body; to try the manners of other nations; to hear the chimes at midnight; to see sun-rise in town and country; to be converted at a revival."

How many of us, since this war broke out, have felt our middle-agedness like the pressure of contracting walls of stone upon our spirits! The boys could go and fight the Huns; we have had to stay at home and plod on in the old ways. The beautiful boys, who had every right to live, who had capacity for joyous and effective living, whom the world needed to have live, they have gone, many of them to return no more. Most men of fifty have deserved death; but those boys deserved to

live. Few experiences could be more maddening to a father than to see one after another of his boys march into the firing line, play his heroic part, and make the supreme sacrifice, while he, because of his years, was compelled to stand back and view the scene from afar. Oh, the bitterness of that ! Shut up within the imprisoning chamber of your fifty years, gnashing your teeth upon stone dust ! Dreaming at night that you are in the trenches with them and waking in the morning to find awaiting you the telegram that puts out the sun and stars ! God only knows how many men have flung themselves with passionate lament against their wall of stone since this war began.

Still more fatally contracting than the tyranny of time is

THE INDULGENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF SELFISHNESS

The man who makes himself the centre around which his thoughts and activities revolve, eventually reduces his world to a pitifully small place. Such revolutions of the mind bring the walls of life grinding in upon each other. If your world is only such a miserable bit of space as you can measure with your outstretched arm and clutching hand—if it is no more than a circle described from a greedy heart as its centre with the length of a selfish reach for its radius—then it is but a poor, shrunken, blighted little travesty of a world. There is no room in such an enclosure for broad sympathies to dwell. There is no room for large and active friendships. There is no place for an altar or a cross ; and a life without its altar and

cross is a life without spaciousness or splendour. That heat expands and cold contracts is nowhere more true than with reference to the effect of the human spirit upon the world it lives in.

Men doom themselves to dwell in a diminishing world by

THE INDULGENCE OF SINFUL PASSION

The very walls of the universe become contracting stone to close in upon and crush the man who gives himself up to lust, gluttony, drunkenness, or dishonesty. The police court records tell us anew every morning how swiftly and surely the boundaries draw in around the forger, the thief, the libertine, the drunkard. Yet they do not tell us a millionth part of the sad story. You must read it in blanched, blank, despairing faces of people in the street who are conscious that the penalty-paying days have come. You must overhear what multitudes of men who have lost their purity, their honour and their self-control say to themselves when they are alone at night, or when they wake at three in the morning. They mocked at moralities and flung off the restraints of conscience, thinking to achieve a wider range of liberty, only to find themselves at length their own dark jail.

And yet the bright opposite of all this may be experienced. It is possible for us as the days go by to find ourselves living in

AN EXPANDING RATHER THAN A CONTRACTING WORLD

If some realms of activity must inevitably be

closed to us by the passage of the years, other realms of no less desirable activity may swing open. On the whole, the area over which we live in later life may be broader than any that the former days have known.

It seems to me that the secret of this happy consummation lies in

THE SOUL'S STEADY VISIONING OF GOD

More and more I have come to realise that Outlook is the great determining thing in life. What seest thou? is a deep, far-reaching question. The Germans have a characteristic saying: Man is what man eats. They live up to their maxim, in peace and war. Let us rather say: Man is what man sees. The things you train your mind to look upon and strain your soul to visualise are the things which will determine the sort of person you are to be and the sort of world you are to live in. Your spiritual frontage decides it all. When you are staying at a hydro for a week-end you are willing to pay something extra for a room with the better view. The view pays for itself when it gives you a noble amphitheatre of hills to look upon in place of a rusty tin roof. It is worth the price to you even whilst you are shaving in the morning. I recall a time when I engaged a room in a New Orleans hotel, induced by a letter from the proprietor saying that he could give me one with "a southern exposure." That sounded well and I engaged the room forthwith. It had the southern exposure all right—a southern exposure

that gave uninterrupted view of a filthy back yard, cluttered with a hen-coop, a dog-kennel and a pigsty.

It is well to see your room if you can before you engage it. When Daniel took his house in Babylon he took care that it had windows that faced westward. In other words, he had regard to the spiritual frontage of his life. He would be looking "towards Jerusalem," in order that he might be always remembering Jehovah and keeping clear before his soul the ideals for which Mount Zion stood. That enabled him to see things fairer than Babylon's hanging gardens. It pushed the walls of Babylon apart and enabled Daniel to make daily visits to Judea. It made him a citizen of the world and gave him vital touch with the life of all time.

It is the constant inlook of the soul that narrows the world around one. It dooms the soul to grow stale and sickly in close confinement. But outlook—outlook upon God, that makes all things ours.

Three vast and grand expansions are wrought for the soul that beholds God by faith.

THE EXPANSION OF CONSCIOUS CHILDSHIP TOWARDS GOD

To know yourself as a child of God gives you entrance into rooms where others dare not, cannot tread. You pay your shilling to be shown over a nobleman's castle along with a party of sight-seers; but you are not admitted to all the rooms. Here and there cords are stretched across the hall-

ways and behind them doors are locked. Presently you are turned out to make way for another batch of tourists. If the nobleman is in residence your shilling is of no avail. You will not be admitted beyond the gates. But if you were a son of the house everything would open to you as if by magic.

And so one may be at home with God and at home in God's world if the spirit of adoption is in him whereby he can cry, Abba, Father ! The world is ever a broad free place to the soul that walks with God. For then the hills of difficulty become God's exalted highways ; valleys of weeping become places of springs ; barren wildernesses rejoice and blossom like the rose. All the rooms in God's house are open to his children ; the library of truth, the banqueting room of love, the stairway of prayer, the picture gallery of hope. And this means, indeed, a spacious life.

There is the expansion of life which comes through

SERVICE FOR AND WITH GOD

This sets life in large, even illimitable relations. Its privileges then become imperial. Service is either one of the noblest or the meanest of words. Where it is rendered by compulsion or merely for the wage it brings, service is a narrowing and degrading thing. It is slavery. But where it is rendered at the impulse of love and for ends beyond one's self service becomes a royal thing, yea, a divine thing. There is nothing one should covet more among " the things that are excellent " than

the privilege and power of such service. Service of this sort is more than work ; it is work baptised, anointed and consecrated to high ends. There is no drudgery in the life of the man who is consecrated to God. Drudgery does not inhere in the type of work a man does, but in the spirit which he brings to it.

Drudgery is the dark deposit of a stagnant soul. It can have no place in a man's life when his spirit is one of swift-flashing obedience to God. All the walls which tyrannous circumstances may build about such a man are by that spirit turned to crystal through which the sunshine of God's face floods in. Through the spirit of consecration what once seemed a "trivial round" may come to appear as a rotation in harmony with the majestic movements of the heavens. What had been hated as a *rut* comes to be revered as an *orbit* in which the soul revolves around its sun and goes shining and singing on its way. It is one of the high arts of life to learn how to transform the rut into an orbit.

So here the door of liberty swings open to such of us as have felt the narrowing tyranny of prohibitive years. We may not do the things in the war that our boys are doing. But we may find in our own appointed sphere the moral and spiritual equivalent of the battle-field. And it is our duty to find it. We shall not be worthy of our sons if we do not go to our own tasks with a devotion, an abandon, a passion for conquest and a surge of courage in our hearts equal to theirs. In the hospital, among the bereaved, ministering to the

suffering, the anguished, the fearful, we too may bear our heroic part. There is as wide a field of service in helping to sustain the soul of the nation during war time as in protecting its coasts. The clear brain, the valorous heart, the disciplined and dauntless will are needed for teaching, guiding and inspiring men at home no less than in capturing the trenches of the enemy. We may say, indeed, that many of his deadliest trenches are here in the ways of men who shirk and profiteer and give themselves to self-indulgence. So, after all, our middle-agedness does not keep us from the war for the great cause of freedom, but commits us to it body, soul and spirit.

The supreme expansion of life is that which comes through

THE ASSURANCE OF IMMORTALITY

This sets our feet in a place of limitless immensity. With Eternity flung open to us and that Eternity all filled with the light of God, the walls of time melt away and the realm of the soul becomes boundless and sublime. When Eternity is set in the heart life gets an onwardness like that of an ocean tide thundering to the flood. We become children of the morning. Our sails swell with an ever-freshening breeze. New vistas open out before us as we journey on with Jesus and the skies lift above us as He waves His pierced hand.

VI

THE SPIRIT OF BURNING

THE most frequent Biblical symbol for God is Fire. The flame which visited Abraham's sacrifice meant God. The fire which burned in Horeb's unwasted bush was God. The pillar of fire which led Israel through the wilderness was the pledge of the presence of God. The fire which fell at Carmel betokened the descent of God. The chariots and horses of fire which Elisha saw at Jordan signified the enveloping and up-lifting power of God. The perpetual flame upon the altar of burnt offering represented the eternal life and light of God.

In the New Testament the symbol reappears. John the Baptist, confessing the coldness and negativeness of his own ministry compared with the more vital and penetrating work of the Messiah, declared: "I, indeed, baptise with water, but He shall baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Christ associated Himself with this conception when He cried: "I am come to cast fire on the earth. Oh, that it were already kindled." Something of that fire He kindled with the burning words He uttered—flame-words that still ignite the souls of men. More of that fire He cast forth from the Cross where the blood ran from His heart, as it

were, in drops of liquid flame. At Pentecost the fire burst into tongues of flame. It swept through the souls of one hundred and twenty waiting disciples, and flashing forth from them set three thousand lives alight in a single day. Thus with unique and startling manifestations, the Spirit of Burning passed, as the spirit of the Incarnate Christ, into the Christian Church.

All the history of the Christian Church from that day to this, which has been worth the writing or the reading, has been the story of that heavenly flame. The lives of saints who have shone and conquered have been its manifestation points. But for that fire every holy impulse would perish from the earth.

The Spirit of Burning is the secret of

PURITY

Fire is the supreme cleanser. The Great Fire of London is not now regarded as a catastrophe, but rather as a beneficent visitation. It burned out the Plague. It cleansed the city of pestilence. Had an army of sanitarians sprayed those plague-infected dwellings with showers of deodorisers, had the streets been washed with rivers of disinfectants, the work of cleansing could not have been so thoroughly effected. The fire did a perfect work. And if the plague of impurity is to be eradicated from the City of Mansoul—from the steaming attics of its imaginations, the reeking basements of its desires, the dark alleys of its purposes—it must be burned out by the fire of God.

That is the one effective detergent. That alone will search out and cauterise the sin-infected areas. Where evil passions burn within us they can only be slain by other fires born from above. In this warfare flame must devour flame. On the Western prairies men fight fire with fire. Threatened by an on-sweeping sea of flame they apply a lighted match to the dry grass at their feet. The new fire runs to meet the old and to stay it in its course. After some such fashion must we overcome the incendiaryisms of sin. We must meet them with a flame caught out of the heart of Christ, a flame that kindles a passion for righteousness before which all hostile fires die down.

Also, the Spirit of Burning is the secret of

RADIANCY

Christian men are to be the light of the world. They can only shine as they burn. It is not by reflecting the moral splendours of the Master as from a polished surface that we can hope to illuminate the world. Our shining is to be no mere glancing of sunbeams from bits of tin or tinsel; it must be from a flaming torch borne in the heart. The only reliable radiancy is that of Love's burning lamp raying forth its light through an enveloping crystal of purity. The light must be within us and of us. We all know of faces that can lighten up when a bright thought strikes them or bright-faced people gather round them saying pleasant things. That is better than everlastingly wearing the "cold repulsive brow of

gloom." But these faces bring no such benediction as those others on which the sun never seems to set. There are not a great host of them in the world, but there are some.

Perhaps I need not say that I am not referring to those unfortunate folk who are afflicted with the perpetual smile. They are to be pitied, and the people who have to do with them are to be more pitied. The ineffaceable smile affects me in the same way as a bad scar. It is of the nature of a scar I verily believe—a scar on the soul. I have met several men disfigured by that smile and one or two women. The thing is always tiresome, sometimes sickening and occasionally positively affrighting. For "one may smile and smile" and be something other than a radiant saint. But the genuine article—the face that is radiant from fires of love burning in the heart and kind thoughts cherished in the mind—that is a more effective argument for the existence of God than all the "logicals" combined.

The Spirit of Burning is the secret of

POWER

All force is flame-born. Energy is the progeny of fire. "The spirit quickeneth" is said to be the phrase most frequently occurring upon the lips of Sir Douglas Haig. He knows the worth of railways and of transport columns. He knows the full value of guns and shells. He appreciates the importance of well-dug trenches and of ironclads and aeroplanes. He seeks for his armies the best

bone and blood and muscle in the Empire. He sets great store by organisation and strategy. He is fully alive to the part which money must play in The Great Adventure. Yet his chief reliance is upon the morale, the *élan*, the *empressement* of his men. And it is even so with our Great Commander of the soul. His dictum is: "Ye shall have power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

The Church of to-day is in no little danger from

FEVER MISTAKEN FOR FERVOUR

There is what we may term the official fever, often burning up a minister and a whole diaconate in consuming anxiousness for a prosperous and imposing organisation, for great congregations, buoyant revenues and expanding memberships. These things are by no means to be despised, but they are not the first things to be sought. Hysterics over statistics are symptomatic of fever rather than of fervour. I have read somewhere in an old book of an ancient king who provoked the divine displeasure by his craze for numbering the people. For a punishment he was given choice between three years' famine, three months' flight before his enemies, and three days' pestilence. The Church of to-day is less favoured than that ancient king. She pays the threefold penalty of famine, flight and sickness.

There is also the popular fever for excitement, entertainment and sensational political propaganda in the House of God. It has become epidemic in our time. Shall we secularise the

Church in order to popularise her? We shall paralyse her if we do. Churches that permit themselves to be made into lecture bureaus, or committees on Social Reform, or handy machines for third-rate demagogues to serve themselves with, will find themselves dragged at the heels of wild horses instead of sitting on thrones of power.

FIRE IN THE SERMON

The fire will be there when the living Christ is there. It is not enough that Christ be the theme of the preaching. He must be the creative, animating spirit of it. He must be in the preaching as its very breath and pulse. The sermon should be a garment worn and warmed and irradiated by Him. Christ will wear our homespun and shine through it as He did through His raiment on Mount Tabor, making it white and glistening, if it is the best we have and we lay it at His feet. Upon His shoulders it will become a more potent thing than any oration woven of fine-twined logic and made stiff with literary gems, but in which Christ is not incarnated. It is when the pulpit is set on fire that the House of God is filled with warmth and light and the people endued with conquering power.

Has the Church in any age been pure, it is because the fire has cleansed her. Has she been radiant, it is because that light has transfigured her. Has she been victorious, it is because the Spirit of Burning has made her mighty. The barriers she has overcome have not been battered

down, but burned away. She has flung her holy fire against them and they have melted in fervent heat.

Do we fear that fire? Is it too hot for us?

We need not fear it. It will burn in the bush and the bush be unconsumed. That fire leaves no blackened ruins in its track. Where there is submissive faith, there is an altar which may dare invite the heavenly flame. There is the moral asbestos which can receive the fire and in it redden and glow and shine and give forth a gracious heat upon a cold dark world.

VII

POETS AND PREACHERS

POETS and preachers have much in common with each other. While the ends they aim at are not identical they are related closely enough to demand mutual recognition. Both are seeking to penetrate below the surface of things, to reach to the reality beneath the appearance, the substance behind the shadow. Both seek to image forth the truth which lies at the heart of the universe, to disclose those superior facts of being and those larger relations of life which constitute the music and the wonder of the world.

The poet apprehends the truth chiefly on its æsthetic side, whilst the preacher views it mainly on its moral side. The poet shows men what they are to love, whilst the preacher addresses them regarding what they ought to do. Yet these lines are by no means parallel to one another; they converge, run into one another and get themselves inextricably interlaced. What men are taught to love goes far to determine what they may be induced to do. The love of truth as the beautiful and the reverence of truth as the good are wedded in the sanctuary of the spiritual mind. Hence it

is that the functions of poet and preacher have so frequently been united in a single person.

They were often thus united in the ancient Hebrew prophets, who embodied their messages in lofty poetic form. All the great orations and sermons of the Bible are steeped in poetic feeling: the valedictory of Moses, the addresses of Isaiah, Hosea and Micah, the disquisitions in the book of Job, the defence of Stephen, Paul's address on Mar's Hill, and the Sermon on the Mount. If the preacher moves men with reason as his fulcrum, he must use feeling as his lever. He cannot hope to win his way into the city of Mansoul by means of hard, cold logic. He must kindle the imagination, enlist the sympathies and captivate the affections of the hearer. This can only be done by enveloping him with a passion born of insight and of love, which is the very essence of the poetic quality. It may fairly be claimed, therefore, that poetic temperament and poetic culture are necessary elements in the highest type of preacher. Without these one can hardly hope to deal effectively with the finer and subtler emotions of the human soul.

The poet may greatly help the preacher in the formation of his literary style.

The study of poetry cultivates the taste for metaphor and trains the preacher in the use of arresting picture-words. The poet never speaks in colourless or abstract terms. When he does, he ceases to be a poet. The poet instinctively grasps the concrete image and restores the original pictorial power of language. He seeks not merely

the enlightening word, but the kindling word, the word with ignition in it. Facility in the use of metaphor gives brightness, vivacity, picturesqueness and penetration to the preacher's style.

An instructive example of what the poet may do for the preacher in this respect is seen in the case of the late Dr. Alexander Maclaren of Manchester. He was an exemplary pulpit stylist. He spoke and he wrote poetic prose. His sermons were never overloaded with poetic quotations. There was rarely more than a flashing line or an occasional golden phrase of borrowed splendour; but his whole style was quick with the poet's feeling, glowing with imagery and sparkling with metaphor to its finest extremities. That was largely the secret of his continuous pulpit charm. Men always loved to hear and read his sermons because the flowers never ceased to bloom or the birds to sing in the garden of his mind. It is the picturesqueness of his style that strikes one as its out-standing distinction. You get it in the statement of his theme. You find it in the divisions of his sermon. It meets and quickens you all along the line of the development and application. Always the concrete image; ever the kindling phrase.

A still more notable instance of a style moulded upon that of the poets is to be found in the sermons of that peerless preacher, Phillips Brooks. Open a volume of his sermons at random and you will come upon passages that have in them the lilt of a song and the haunting power of massive poetry.

With this thought in my mind I have just taken

from the shelf a volume entitled *Sermons for the Church Year*. The book opens at the middle, and here I find a sermon for Fifth Sunday in Lent. Not a very promising theme, at least, not to me. The text is: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." I run over the introduction. As always, he starts from a concrete idea and proceeds to something universal in its bearing. Phillips Brooks will launch his boat on any little creek, but after a few powerful strokes he rounds a headland and is out upon the great wide sea. Most preachers are content to row up and down the creek. But here he goes, this bold safe spiritual navigator! He has announced this theme: "The relation between success and the failures which precede it." Now note the poet-preacher!

"What have the failures to do with the success? Evidently there are two possible ideas regarding their relationship. One idea would make the failures and the success to be quite separate from each other. It would suppose that a man went on failing and failing and failing for a long time, until at last his circumstances changed and everything was altered. Some lucky accident sent the wind round the other way, and then the ship, which had been struggling in the face of the gale and losing ground all the time, was caught by the new breeze and carried on triumphantly into its port. The other idea believes that the success which shows itself at last cannot possibly be the sudden thing which it appears to be. It must have been present,

gradually working itself out underneath the failures, all the time. The failures must have been borne upon its bosom, and even in some degree created by the local and temporary reactions of the same force which made the great success.

“There is a verse in one of the subtlest and truest of the English poets of our time which expresses so perfectly this second idea . . . that I quote it to you at once. He draws his figure from the ocean, with its waves and its tide :

‘For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.’

You see the picture which is in those words—a stretch of sea-shore beach, with the waves breaking in upon it, but every wave a failure ; every wave bursting with a little petulant hiss upon the shore, and falling back disappointed into the great body of the sea behind it ; every wave a failure, but all the while the great sea itself, far out beyond the sea-shore waves, lifted with a mighty movement and rolling itself irresistibly upon the shore.

“The noisy waves are failures, but the great silent tide is a success. The waves are borne upon the bosom of the tide ; they share its motion ; nay, the failure of each of them is in some degree a reaction of the tide’s motion as it is cast back from the beach. But all the time the tide is succeeding while the waves are failing. The failures are carried on the bosom of a success which is present underneath them all the time.”

And so on. Now, who would not give a kingdom to be able to write like that? I submit that the prose of the preacher here is more poetic than the poetry of the poet. And yet Brooks evidently got his suggestion from Clough. Such a treatment of a great human theme as we have in the above is one to live in the mind and in the heart for ever. It defies oblivion. It is something to return to you and lift you in every time of depression. It is something to give you fresh hope after every failure. A prosaic preacher might have stated the same essential truth in terms that would scarcely prick the scarf-skin of the mind. But that association of the thought with the ocean waves and tide makes it absolutely unforgettable. It makes it "a thing of beauty" and "a joy for ever."

But the chiefest help which the poet can render to the preacher is in the direction of *Spiritual Culture*.

The great poets exercise an inspirational ministry upon the preacher. They tone up his inner life. They freshen his feelings, vivify his imagination and clarify his vision of truth. In doing these things they enrich his sermonic resources and increase his persuasive power.

What I am about to write may seem absurd to men of the broadest intellectual culture, yet I put it down for what it is worth. The poets who have done most for me in the way of spiritual culture are Wordsworth, Tennyson and Whittier. There are greater names than any of these in the poetic literature of our language. In the universality of his genius, Shakespeare, of course, towers above

them all. But just for that reason he fails to be, in any special sense, the preacher's poet. Shakespeare is the poet of all men who seek for intellectual breadth and culture. His value to the preacher is ethical rather than religious. Shakespeare appears to be blind and deaf to the deep things of God. He secularises at the same time that he stimulates the mind. He helps us rather to bear our part as clever men of the world than to discharge our functions as servants of God.

Why not mention Milton amongst the first of the poets who may inspire the preacher? His disqualification is the very opposite to that of Shakespeare's. Milton does, indeed, behold the deep and high things of God; but the barrier is that Milton's thought does not travel on life's common way. It is too lofty, too remote, too theological and transcendental for the man who is seeking swift warm inspirations for his pulpit work.

And there is Browning: many of us owe a great debt to him for his sturdy Christian optimism and his high moral impulses. But the help he gives is rather as philosopher than as poet. Much of what he wrote was splendid and lofty eloquence without being poetry. I consider Browning's "Saul" and Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" the two most splendid and moving poems in the English language. But both these writers had a trick of trailing their thoughts through masses of unfamiliar verbiage. When I am compelled to consult the dictionary twice to every line I read, I conclude that what I am reading is not poetry, at least not to me. To me there is a dis-

tinct difference between reading poetry written in my own tongue and the translation of a foreign language.

The position I am taking, in brief, is this: while every true poet has his place and value for mental or emotional culture, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Whittier, by virtue of their deep religious insight and sympathy, may be regarded, as in a special sense, the preacher's poets. With them inspiration borders upon revelation and feeling frequently passes into worship.

VIII

POETS AND PREACHERS

(Continued)

IN the case of Wordsworth, the subjects of his thought and the richness of his spirituality are the qualities which render his work of unique value to the preacher. The spirituality of Wordsworth's mind appears both in his attitude towards man and nature. With him man and nature are both manifestations of God. Wordsworth thinks of man as spirit made flesh in the image of God, not as flesh associated with spirit. Wordsworth spiritualises everything he touches. He preaches the divine import, the religious worth of common work-a-day existence,—lowly duties, daily trials, simple joys. "Wordsworth is the poet of humanity; he teaches reverence for our universal nature; he breaks down the fictitious barriers between human hearts." Is this not one of the first and greatest things a preacher needs to have done for him?

"He was the first," writes Stopford Brooke, "who poured around the dalesmen's cottages and the wandering life of the pedlar and the unheard-of struggles of the country and mountain-folk, the consecration and the poet's dream. He was the

first who isolated life after life in tender, homely narrative and made us feel that God was with simple men and women, that this same equal heart beat in the palace and in the hamlet hidden in the hills." For the justification of this eulogy one has only to read such poems as "Michael," "The Brothers," "Alice Fell," "The Leech-gatherers," "Matthew," "Lucy," and "Simon Lee."

But Wordsworth's master vision is of God in Nature. He views nature as living and divine. He thinks of God not as a spirit who holds Himself aloof from matter in absolute transcendence, but as an infinite being "in whom the skirts of personality melt and merge into the infinitude of nature." God fills nature with His life, delights in its beauty and is ever renewing His ancient creative rapture. At every moment He is putting His personality into everything in the universe, expressing Himself equally in the smile of the landscape and the terror of the thunder. Nature's God is as truly within nature as above nature. "It is a self-revelation of God, the symbol through which the sovereign mind holds speech with man. Even the clod of earth which crumbles beneath our feet ceases to be mere dirt, and becomes instinct with silent life and significance. Not Horeb's burning bush alone, but every common bush is aflame with God."

The value of this conception to the preacher we can scarcely rate too highly. It is a gospel of spiritual reality. Through this conception Wordsworth breathed into religious thought an

elemental largeness which the creeds of Christendom had failed to wholly compass. His teaching has been pronounced pantheistic, and it certainly possesses elements akin to pantheism. Every doctrine of the Divine Immanence which is at all adequate has something in common with pantheism. But it is none the worse for that. So also does every true doctrine of the Divine Transcendence have in it something akin to deism. The doctrines of Transcendence and Immanence are the two hemispheres which make the globe of truth regarding God's relation to the universe. We can only follow them with safety when they are conjoined. Wordsworth but restores Divine Immanency to its rightful place in life and thought beside Divine Transcendency. Eighteenth-century deism had divorced it from that place.

In Wordsworth's poetry, "earth enhalloved by a consecration from the poet's dream and thrilling with spirituality like a sea-shell with ocean's music, becomes visibly the Temple of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity." Through Wordsworth as interpreter, nature preaches God to the preacher as truly as do the psalmists and the prophets.

Tennyson was doubly endowed for inspirational service. Richest on the artistic side, he was also gifted with a deeply reverent and sensitive religious nature. He constantly touched upon the deeper problems of life. No preacher of his time grappled more earnestly than he the new problems which science had created for faith. No theologian of

his day did more than he for the relief of religious doubt. No pulpit in Christendom rang truer to the great realities of the spirit life, the high claims of conscience and of Christ, of duty and of love, than did the harp of Tennyson. Through all his days he was a stainless knight of the Cross. He climbed the altar-stairs to that high place from which he officiated as the poet-priest of truth and beauty by rising upon the stepping-stones of his own vanquished doubts and sorrows. With the growth of his work he was never less the artist, but ever more and more the prophet of the inner life.

Tennyson's theistic faith was unconquerable. "Take away my belief in the self-conscious personality of God, and you take away the backbone of the world." He recognised the existence of God not only from the evidence of the external world which to his mind was "the vision of Him who reigns," but also from the cravings of the human heart.

"If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice, 'believe no more,'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the godless deep:

"A warmth within the heart would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, 'I have felt.'"

Against the conclusions of materialistic science Tennyson uttered a powerful and indignant protest. Man's course was not from dust to dust, but from God to God. He found within the human

soul the evidence that "We are not wholly vain, magnetic mockeries."

"Not only cunning casts in clay :
Let science prove we are, and then,
What matters science unto men,
At least to me ? I would not stay.

"Let him, the wiser man, who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape !
But I was born to other things."

That was the poet looking backward. But he looks forward also, and is undismayed.

"My own dim life should teach me this
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core
And dust and ashes all that is."

The tonic effect of such noble and sane utterances upon one's faith is beyond computation.

Tennyson is of unique value in opening for the preacher rich mines of homiletical material. "In Memoriam," with its record of the shattering and rebuilding of a moral world in a man's soul, is a veritable cave of diamonds. It broods in a fructifying way over the mysteries of life and death, of providence and of immortality. In this great poem Tennyson searches the religious consciousness to its very depths, quickens it and sensitises it to the influences of the revelation of God in Christ. "Idylls of the King" are equally rich in sermonic suggestion. Here we have the scenery and action of chivalry beautified with the ideal of the Christian spirit. It is an epic of the

spiritual life, "shadowing sense at war with soul." In "Guinevere" alone one has found suggestions for a course of sermons. It deals in a dramatic way with such themes as these: the contagiousness of sin; the disintegrating effects of moral evil upon the unity of social life; the degrading effect of lowered ideals; the tormenting sting of accusing conscience; the persistent thirst for righteousness in the souls of fallen men and women; the sacrificialness of holy love; the redemptive power of forgiveness.

In "Idylls of the King"

"The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory."

Over this scenery the poet blows his bugle and sets "the wild echoes flying." These bugle notes are calls to the chivalry of the Christian life. They summon us to the chivalry of fearless spiritual Service. "Follow the deer? Follow the Christ! Else, wherefore born?" They summon us to the chivalry of Virtue, which the poet regards as something to be won through struggle and suffering.

"He scarce is knight, yea, but half-man, nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirred by any foolish heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness."

These bugle notes summon us to the chivalry of trustful Love. It takes a truly chivalrous spirit to live above suspiciousness and jealousy. Perhaps it calls for more real heroism to slay these dragons

than to win in any other fight. But they must be slain, or life becomes a scene of devastation. Better far be sinned against a thousand times than to let the dark shadow of jealousy fall between us and those we love. In that shadow the power to see clearly is lost, vision is distorted and all peace is at an end.

“ O purblind race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very hour
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,
By taking true for false, or false for true ;
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
That other, where we see as we are seen ! ”

The topmost of these bugle notes is that which summons us to the chivalry of Forgiveness. The forgiving of Guinevere was incomparably the noblest deed of chivalry which Tennyson recorded. It was the knightliest, the kingliest, the divinest deed of all.

“ Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives : Do thou for thine own soul the rest.”

To esteem retaliation, revenge, reprisal, as of equal nobility with forgiveness, grace and mercy is the supreme sacrilege. Revenge is but the slime of the pit in which a degraded spirit crawls and rends. Forgiveness is a great white throne to which the magnanimous soul ascends to wide and splendid sovereignty.

Such were the notes blown on the bugle of this great Christian poet. Their

“ Echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.”

Among the American poets there is none of greater serviceableness to the minister than John G. Whittier. He was at once the poet of freedom, the prophet of labour and the apostle of world peace; yet he was pre-eminently a singer of the Christian faith.

Whittier's work for freedom is in danger of being forgotten. Whittier and William Lloyd Garrison were the two most powerful agents in rousing sentiment and forming conviction against slavery in America. They were the miners and sappers who dug into the rock of prejudice and self-interest that underlay and upbore the iniquitous system.

They lifted up their voices like trumpets when pulpits were silent. They published without financial reward and at great cost to themselves a literature that showed how slavery was damned in the heart of God. They were the self-sacrificing precursors of the political movement which brought about abolition. They reaped but the reward of conscience and the partial appreciation of humanity.

There can be no doubt as to where Whittier would be found in relation to this war were he alive to-day. His poem "Thy Will be Done" is so appropriate to the present crisis and so completely in accord with America's recent action that it might have been written on the day following President Wilson's address to Congress.

" We see not, know not, all our way
Is night,—with Thee alone is day :
From out the torrent's troubled drift,
Above the storm our prayers we lift,
Thy will be done.

"Tho' dim as yet in tint and line,
We trace Thy picture's wise design,
And thank Thee that our age supplies
Its dark relief of sacrifice.
Thy will be done.

" And if, in our unworthiness,
Thy sacrificial wine we press ;
If from Thy ordeal's heated bars
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,
Thy will be done.

" If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath vicarious power,
And blest by Thee, our present pain
Be Liberty's eternal gain,
Thy will be done."

In similar strain spoke Woodrow Wilson. " God helping her, she can do no other."

Though Whittier's writings in behalf of abolition were a contributory cause to the civil war, yet that war was an infinite distress to him. He felt that the slaves should have been liberated without bloodshed. His poems of war time have all an undertone of deep sadness, but also a note of hopefulness in them. He believed that in the very experience of war men would prepare for stable and enduring peace.

" A little while the world may run
Its old mad way, with needle gun
And iron-clad, but truth at last, shall reign.
The cradle-song of Christ was never sung in vain."

Whittier viewed with joy the prospect of a time when England and America would be so closely bound together as to guarantee the world's peace.

The *rapprochement* between the two countries indicated by the laying of the first Atlantic cable called from him a notable poem.

"Throb on, strong pulse of thunder, beat,
From answering beach to beach!
Fuse nations in thy kindly heat
And melt the chains of each.

"Weave on, swift shuttle of the Lord,
Beneath the deep so far,
The bridal robe of earth's accord,
The funeral shroud of war."

When we turn to the poems which Whittier himself classed as religious, we find a spirit breathing through them of deep humility and trustfulness. His soul is like that of a little child.

"I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

"Yet in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed with storm and flood,
To one fixed hope my spirit clings,
I know that God is good.

"And so beside the Silent Sea,
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their froned palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

The poems of Whittier abound in triumphant

assertions of the reality of the spiritual world. Take, for instance, this from "The Meeting."

" So sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence
That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries.
The sphere of the supernal powers
Impinges on this world of ours.
The low and dark horizon lifts,
To light the scenic terror shifts;
The breath of a diviner air
Blows down the answer of a prayer."

It seems strange to find among the Quakers, whose assemblies are not enlivened by song, one contributing so many verses to the worship-songs of the Church at large. Whittier's hymns were not written with a view to their use in public worship, as were those of Watts and the Wesleys, but they bubbled up like springs in the midst of his writings on promiscuous themes. This gives them qualities of freshness, sweetness and spontaneity scarcely to be found elsewhere.

Where can a hymn for the aged be found so real, so tender, so truly humble as his?

" When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown.

" Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay ;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be Thou my strength and stay.

" Be with me when all else is from me drifting,
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

"I have but Thee, my Father! Let Thy spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.

"Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.

"Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
And flows for ever through heaven's green expansions
The river of Thy peace.

"There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long."

IX

CLIMAX IN THE COMMONPLACE

I HAVE been reading a sermon by a great preacher on the story of Christ washing the disciples' feet. After getting beyond the introduction I found the sermon helpful. But the introduction seemed to me to strike a false note. It referred to the narrative as ending upon "an astounding anti-climax." It spoke of "an amazing sequence of things." Dwelling first upon the exalted consciousness of Christ in "knowing that he came from God and went to God," it put over against this the menial nature of the task to which this consciousness immediately impelled Him: "He girded himself . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet."

There is no anti-climax here. The story in its setting is perfectly simple, natural and progressive. Whoever reads the Gospel of St. John continuously up to this point must be well prepared for some such deed as this. He will have in mind the interview with the woman of Samaria, and with the cripple at the pool of Bethesda. He will have read of the healing of the man born blind, and he will be remembering the words of the Good Shepherd. He will be thinking of the tears that Jesus shed

at Bethany. And so he will be looking for timely, kindly, gracious, God-like things unto the end.

When he comes upon this story in the course of the longer narrative he will say at once: Yes, this is just like the Blessed Lord. He knew that He came from God and was going unto God, therefore He continued without intermission to do God-like things on the Godward way.

For truly this was a God-like deed. It is not beneath the dignity of the Heavenly Father to wash men's feet. God washes men's feet every time He sends His rains upon the earth, and He wipes them as with a towel whenever He makes His sun-warmed winds to blow. It is God who keeps the world fresh and clean for men, and it is God who keeps men fresh and clean in the world. Cleanliness *is* Godliness.

Jesus washed the disciples' feet as a means of washing their hearts. There was divinity in the deed because there was spirituality in the purpose. It was a comparatively insignificant matter that, at the moment, the feet of those twelve men should be cleansed from dust; but it was a matter of high importance that their hearts should be cleansed from pride. The spiritual purpose which prompted the deed made it the administration of a sacrament.

George MacDonald once said: "I came from God and I am going unto God, and I am determined there shall be no gaps in the middle of my life." To keep the gaps out of life one must keep the sense of God in the life—from beginning to end. Our view of the whence and whither of life largely

determines what we shall make of it. Had Jesus declined the opportunity for service which the condition of the disciples in the upper room presented, it would have meant a gap in His life. He prevented the gap by His remembrance of God. "Knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands," He applied those hands to the use of towel and basin and water in a ministry of cleansing and refreshment. These humble instruments of a servant's outfit were among the "all things" committed unto Him, and He would not disdain them. In the light of this fact the deed shines with a peculiar splendour. Instead of the incident disclosing an anti-climax it leads up to a genuine climax—a climax in the consecration of the commonplace.

When Jesus brought to bear upon the disciples in the upper room the fact that what He was doing then He was doing in the name of God, and for the sake of His fellowship with God, He plunged their souls into a cleansing bath. In those tense, solemn moments He was washing them from the dust of materialism—washing, not their feet only, but their "hands" and their "heads." He was making them "clean every whit." Thought and deed and way were all receiving Holy Baptism. He came from God and was going unto God, and He would take them with Him whither He went. He would have no gaps in the middle of His life, nor any gaps in their lives either.

So here we come upon *the secret of a beautiful, happy and serviceable life*. It is to live moment

by moment in the realisation of the fact that you came from God and are going unto God.

I sometimes think that nature gives us hints of this high truth; that the beautiful and incorruptible things of nature *are* beautiful and incorruptible because in them there is some dim sense of coming from God and going unto God again.

My garden roses seem to speak of this to me. Each rose is bent upon living its life without any gaps in the middle of it. In the morning I find it scenting the cool air. In the sultry noon it is still pouring forth its perfume. All through the night it continues to exhale its fragrance. In storm and calm, through light and dark, it carries forward its gracious ministry without cessation. It does not worry about being "born to blush unseen, or waste its sweetness on the desert air." It has its work, and it goes on with it simply, sweetly, uninterruptedly, until it breathes its life back into the hand of God from whence it came. My rose is ever whispering to me: "I came from God and I am going unto God, and I am determined there shall be no gaps in the middle of my life." In its service it sanctifies itself.

The dew-drop, clinging to the petal of the rose, glistening there in the morning sun, how stainless and translucent it is! A flawless liquid pearl! As I bend to it, it seems to say: "I am here but for an hour on an errand from the skies. I came down on the wing of an evening shadow, and presently I shall be upborne on a sunbeam's wing. Whilst I am here I must keep myself unsullied. I baptise the rose for God, and then I hie me home

to God again. I am determined there shall be no gaps in the middle of my life." The dew-drop bears the same message when it speaks from the lowliest place of service, even where it stoops to wash the feet of a wayside weed. It is ever a stainless minister, glassing the heavens in its crystal globe, because its orbit is "From God . . . unto God."

Or think of the sunbeam ! It flashes down from heaven as a thing of splendour. During all its residence and work in this dark world it retains its purity. The sunbeam is incorruptible. It can consort with unclean things, by way of ministration, and remain unsullied. It can touch pitch and not be defiled. It can penetrate the decaying mass of the garbage heap and contract no stain. It can lie for whole long summer days on dead and decomposing things, still keeping itself sweet and pure. It can make its bed for a million years deep down in the dark mine, in the very heart of the black coal, yet when released flash forth in bright aspiring flame, seeking its home in the sun again as pure as when it first descended. It came from God and it goes to God, and it is determined to have no gaps in the middle of its life.

When we do things at the impulse of our Godward relationships we do them well. We are not to be side-tracked in the doing of them. Then the commonest task becomes divinely wooing. In stooping lowest we are conscious of being most like God. The very towel wherewith we gird ourselves to cleanse a soiled soul or refresh a weary life becomes a bit of royal purple.

In this consciousness of a divine origin and destiny we may find *the power that enables repentance.*

Our strongest revulsion against sin springs from the conviction that it is making a gap in the middle of our life and keeping us from God. This is the Master's teaching regarding the Prodigal Son. He was tormented in that "far country" by a fourfold pang: the pang of what might have been, the pang of what used to be, the pang of what ought to be, and the pang of what yet might be. His sense of degradation and his redemption from degradation both sprang from his awakened consciousness of the slighted dignity of his true relationships. Hence his soliloquy: This existence, this hunger and loneliness, these rags and swine, are not good enough for my father's son. They are not good enough for me. Foolish and faithless though I have been, weak and wayward and wicked, still I belong to a better life than this. I am here a living libel on my father. By my memory of my father, by my reverence for him and my hope in him, I renounce this life! I'm going back home! I will arise and go unto my father! I came forth from him and I'm going back to him! I am determined to close for ever this gap in the middle of my life. I'm going home! And he arose and went. Thus the son that had been "lost" was "found," and he who had been "dead" was made alive again.

In stamping this parable upon the mind and heart of humanity Jesus appeals to all the prodigals of time, to all the wastrels of the world, entreating

them to rally themselves upon the fact of God and to get them home to Him.

Then there are *the gaps which sorrow makes*. These may be prevented or healed by the consciousness that life is a pilgrimage "From God . . . unto God."

Professor J. R. Green, in his *History of the English People*, writing of the conversion of Northumbria to the Christian faith, tells how the wise men there gathered to deliberate upon the new doctrine which Paulinus brought. "To finer minds its charm lay in the light it threw on the darkness which encompassed men's lives, the darkness of the future as of the past." He relates how an Ealdorman declared: "So seems the life of man, O King, as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in wintertide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door, tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then, flying forth from the other, vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries the life of man for a moment in our sight; but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let us follow it."

Jesus tells us "certainly of these." He assures us that our course is not from darkness unto darkness, nor from dust to dust, but "From God . . . unto God." If it were not so He would have told us. And this assurance enables us to bear the light affliction which is but for a moment in

214 CLIMAX IN THE COMMONPLACE

comparison with the weight of glory that shall be wrought out for us in the endless life. The sorrow that would sag life down, ruin its rhythm and break its continuity, is lifted and borne courageously. Grief loses its power to make gaps in life. The cross no longer crushes. We can bear the heaviest cross when we bear it along the road that leads "From God . . . unto God."

PART III



I

“LIKE AS A FATHER”

WHEN I first attended the ministry of the Reverend Robert Donald his preaching was a tribulation. I could not have listened to him but for the fact that I knew the man in private life and admired his character as heartily as I detested his theology. He preached like a demon and lived like an angel. His was an unusual case of inconsistency. You more often find it the other way about. In the pulpit he was as hard as nails and as narrow and sharp as a razor's edge. Outside the pulpit he was genial, sympathetic, tolerant and always finely courageous. In his college days he played a good game at Rugby. He rescued two children from drowning in the spring of the great freshet at the hazard of his own life. He left college once for seven weeks to nurse a useless half-wit in the neighbourhood through an attack of diphtheria. Because I knew of these and other things I determined to “sit under” him at any cost.

The cost was considerable to one of my temperament. With Donald a sermon seemed to be an instrument cunningly devised for wounding and slaughter. He knocked his congregation about with sledge-hammer blows. If at any time he was

below par in vigour his preaching was none the less afflictive, for then he would abandon the bludgeon and resort to the fly-blister which he zealously applied to the most sensitive parts of your spiritual anatomy. Now I abhor irritations. I do not believe God sanctions them, even though there are such things as mosquitoes and stinging nettles in the world. Mosquitoes and stinging nettles have other functions than to irritate us humans. I despise intentional irritations anywhere—in the home, in the social circle and most of all in the House of God. One can bear being knocked bang down by an honest blow between the eyes, but one loathes being nagged and nibbled. Donald had a genius for nibbling. He could beat Joffre at that game.

The Article in Donald's creed which most profoundly influenced his preaching was that of the Total Depravity of Man. I have ever regarded that as a stupid doctrine. If a man really believed it he could not honour his own father, revere his own mother, or love his own wife. I do not deny the fact or the seriousness of sin; but that sin reduces all men and women to utter moral worthlessness and putrefaction, I do deny. While no man is half as good as he ought to be, few men are altogether as bad as they might be. All children and most grown-ups are capable of descending to lower depths than they have yet attained. If you start with total depravity you leave no room for degeneration. Donald declared that we were all totally depraved. He did not really believe it at heart, but the microbe of the notion was in his

brain. It became active in him and put a frenzy upon him whenever he began to preach.

One might think Donald was addressing a congregation of confirmed criminals. He preached a series of sermons on the Decalogue in which he found us all guilty of having broken, in one way or another, every one of the ten commandments. I could see how he was going to have me down with reference to most of them, but I determined to hold out against conviction as a thief. Donald managed that little matter to his own satisfaction with consummate ease. I had procrastinated, and "procrastination is the thief of time." After that what did it matter if I had never stolen sheep?

I saw Donald's private Bible once. On the fly-leaf of it he had written: Always aim to deepen in your hearers the sense of guilt. I hope he was less successful along that line with other hearers than he was with me, since at the close of his discourses I often felt as though I were a mixture in equal parts of Cain, Ananias, and Judas Iscariot. Hardly a fitting frame of mind in which to leave the House of God!

The root of friend Donald's difficulty lay in his faulty conception of God. You must believe in a good God if you are to preach good news. I once told Donald that he knew no more about the Gospel than a mole knows about the Aurora Borealis. It was an impertinence, I confess. He bore me no malice for it, though he looked pained. But there was truth in what I said. You cannot bring Good News—that is to say, news good *enough*

for beaten, broken men and women, except you come to them out of the sanctuary of the good God's heart. To preach a great religion you must preach a beautiful God.

Donald preached the "ations" and the "omnis." He told us a vast deal about our personal "states," about "dispensations," about "schemes" and "processes" of salvation, about "first things" and "last things" and "intermediate" things—but precious little about the Blessed God Himself. It takes a lot of "ations" and "omnis" to make a Christian.

I have a certain sympathy with Mr. H. G. Wells in his attempt to find a proper God for men. Wells has been unfortunate in the direction of his search and in the results of it. I wonder if he has been reading any of Donald's old sermons. That would account for his desire to find an entirely new sort of God. Mr. Wells is evidently serious. I think he is over-serious. His seriousness would be the better for a dash of humour to it. That would save it from being owlsh. After all, a man must be something of a humorist to be a good theologian. The sense of humour enables a man to recognise the grotesque. Mr. Wells is often grotesque without knowing it. He has on his hands now a wee godlet absurdly inferior to the God of Isaiah and St. John. The Wells' deity is impotent for the affairs of men. It does not enable "Britling" to see it even half way through. But I have some sympathy with Wells, remembering that I listened to Donald in the old days.

I spoke to my friend Merton about Donald's

preaching, expressing myself somewhat forcibly. I declared that I was weary of being shot at and stabbed and slashed from that pulpit. I was sick of being punctured and pustulated. I should soon be compelled to make a change. Merton said something that mystified me. "Donald will come all right presently. Be patient for a little and you will see a wonderful change pass over his preaching." I tried to get at the reason for this prediction, but Merton would not disclose it. He merely looked at me in a whimsical sort of way. I soon discovered that my friend Merton was a wizard.

For the change did come—speedily and gloriously. In a few weeks from that time Donald's first child was born. He had ever been a lover of children and was in ecstasy over this event.

"A girl!" he cried. "A beautiful little daughter! And the very image of her mother! Think of that! It's a blessed fortune! I feel richer than if I had inherited a million pounds. There's a fine little woman for you wrapped up in that baby gear! There isn't a blemish on her. She looks like something just dropped down from heaven. Man, alive, it's a wonderful thing to be a father. I never thought it could be like this."

Donald had arranged for a month's holiday to synchronise with this domestic *dénouement*. It was to be a month in paradise. But it turned out vastly different. The child shrieked with pain day and night. At the end of the month she weighed less than when she was born. She was a piteous sight, with sunken eyes and yellow skin

stretched over the bones. They did not think she could live.

Those were weeks of infinite anguish for friend Donald. It was heartbreaking to see him pacing his study with that tiny bit of writhing agony in his arms. We often watched his shadow on the blinds at night and listened to the weary, monotonous cries of the child. How he crooned over her! "Sweetheart, dear little Sweetheart, can Daddy do nothing for you? Daddy would be so glad to bear the pain. Oh, my dear little daughter! Oh, my God, why can't you give me the pain and let my precious darling rest!" When the awful spasms came he bowed his head and tears rolled down his cheeks. The child was quieter with him than with any one else. Her exceeding weakness seemed to cry out for his great strength. So the weary pacing went on. During those weeks Donald scarcely slept.

On the first Sunday of his return to his pulpit a great congregation faced him—a sympathetic, expectant throng. Donald was much fined down and his face was very pale. But there was a new light in his eyes and a wonderful new note in his voice—a plaintive, subduing note. One detected it in the reading of the opening hymn. For his scripture lesson he took the One Hundred and Third Psalm. The prayer that followed was exquisite in its tenderness.

No one who was present that morning ever forgot the sermon that followed. It was on the words: "Like as a Father pitieth his children." At the

beginning of it Donald's hands twitched nervously and his breathing seemed impeded. But his voice was like a caress. We felt that he was about to draw aside a curtain and bring us face to face with God. And, verily, he did that self-same thing.

"Pity," he said, "is one of the manifestations of love. Love is like the ocean tides which twice a day pour their mighty floods upon these iron-bound shores. The tides conform to the contour of the coast-line, rushing in to fill every creek and indentation, every bay and river-mouth with the fullness of the sea. Even so the love of God adapts itself to our human needs. It searches out our wants and answers them. It finds our emptiness and fills it. Towards the hard impenitent heart it advances in the form of warning and entreaty; to the penitent heart it brings forgiveness and peace; to the stranded heart it brings a lifting energy. But—oh, my people—God's love as manifested towards the frail and suffering—*that* is God's *pity*.

"How can I speak to you of what is in my heart to-day? Yet speak of it I must. 'Like as a father pitieth his children!' I have been learning what that means since I last stood here. I have learned something of what God is like. God is infinite compassion. God will do for every human soul all that perfect love can do with its resources, and He will keep on doing it for ever and ever. For we are all His children—His frail children. God will not cast off any one of us in this or any other world. He will not cease to work upon us while there is a moan left in our hearts or the

slightest spark of anything within us that may possibly be kindled into spiritual life. He will bear us in His arms after all beauty has vanished from our souls. He is our Father. I know now what fatherhood means, if only in a poor creature like myself. How wonderful, how glorious must it be in God!

"I have not borne a bit of moaning humanity in my arms these last four weeks without getting a little insight into the heart of God. I swear to you, He will be loving us and seeking to help us all through Eternity. I have learned something of what pity means through the cries of that frail child who derived her life from me. What would I not do for her! What would I not give or suffer to see her free from pain! To see her sweetly sleep at night! To see flesh form upon her bones and health light up her eyes and smiles break forth like blossoms on her lips! *I am her father.* She looks at me sometimes as if she knew it. But will she ever know? Shall I ever hear her call me Father?

"Yes, this is God! The infinitely pitiful love! He burns for our recognition of Him. He yearns to see in us health of soul, strength and beauty of character, joyousness and fruitfulness of life."

And then he begged us to forgive him for his former style of preaching. With bowed head he told of his deep sorrow and shame at the remembrance of it. "Forgive me, my people! I have begged forgiveness of God and I now crave it from you. I have been an unfaithful steward and a blind leader. Have patience with me and I will repay you all. From this time forward I shall be

preaching the Fatherhood of God. That is the base of the whole pyramid of Christian truth. What is not becoming to perfect fatherhood is not good enough for God and is not true. To us henceforth let there be one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father! The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of the Father. The throne of the universe is the throne of the Father. When you think of God think 'Father!' When you pray, say 'Father!' Let it be 'Father' with us all the way till we get home to the Father's house!"

When it was over Merton came to me with swimming eyes and whispered: "A little child shall lead them."

II

A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

GRANNY BELDEN was the uncrowned Queen of Belder's Island. The inhabitants of the island, numbering about a hundred and fifty souls, were all related to her either by marriage or descent. She and her husband, Alexander, settled on the island early in their married life and built the first house there. They had thirteen children—seven strapping sons and six sonsy daughters. In course of time these all married and reared fresh broods of Beldens. The younger generations were Beldens in essence even when they went by the names of Wambolt, Bushen, Green and Power. Over them all Granny reigned supreme. The rough, strong men deferred to her as to a being of superior order—which in fact she was. More wonderful was the fact that their wives submitted to her supremacy without a murmur. The youngsters stood in awe of her while they adored her. When I knew her she was eighty years of age, "sound in wind and limb" and ready for as much hard work as any woman on the island.

I first saw Granny on the evening of my arrival at the island to teach school. This was made the occasion of a meeting with the school trustees in

John Belden's ample kitchen. I had expected to be questioned and advised by them regarding school matters. But there was nothing of that. They talked about the shipping of their fish to Halifax and the prices they were likely to get. They discussed the proportions and probable sailing qualities of the new schooner just launched by "Billy Oxner in on de main." They laid bets on the race to be contested the next week between the swiftest of the "three-stand whalers" of the island and those of the main shore. In the course of the evening they asked me, most solemnly, if I had ever seen anything "worse nor" myself. I discovered presently that they meant had I ever seen a ghost.

This board of education was a vigorous body of men. They were bluff, good-hearted fellows, wonderful men at reaping the harvest of the deep.

They smoked incredibly short and black clay pipes and smoked them incessantly. You should know that the short pipe has its distinctive excellencies. For one thing, it is handy. You can carry it in your vest pocket or in the band of your hat. The short pipe ministers both to luxury and economy. At one and the same instant you can draw smoke into your mouth through the stem and inhale the incense of the bowl by way of the nostrils. In a phrase of the late Reverend Robert Hall, these islanders "understood the uses of an orifice."

Shortly after the members of the educational board had assembled, Sarah Belden set out upon the table the following articles: a bowl of moist

brown sugar, a tumbler, a tea-spoon and a huge bottle of Jamaica rum. This proceeding appeared to pass unnoticed by the guests. Not an eye glanced towards the table. True, Pat Power gave a plaintive little cough. The chief effect, however, of Sarah's operation was a sudden silence. A solemn hush fell upon the assembly. Several minutes were impressively ticked off by the clock before John Belden arose and invited his guests to "likker up."

"Well, I 'low I will; yes, I 'low I will," said each man as he shuffled to the table. They all used the one spoon and the one glass. The ritual employed was unique. Each man (always with a bored look on his face) would pour out a third of a tumbler of rum; then dipping a spoonful of sugar and flinging it to the back of his throat he would "chase" it with the fiery liquid, which he swallowed at a gulp. Three drinks around was the traditional limit for an ordinary evening. Of course, if there had been a funeral during the day, respect for the departed demanded an extra glass. At a wedding you were supposed to give hospitality to a still larger amount. A certain exception was made in the case of Pat Power. He was the only Irishman on the island and had "bad lungs." It was tacitly agreed among them that Pat should never be rationed.

At this time the island was copiously supplied with rum. A month earlier the s.s. *Cedar Grove* went ashore on Ironbound and became a total wreck. She was loaded with rum, and many casks of it found their way to Belden's Island. Pat

Power had opportunity that winter to give his cough continuous treatment; but it proved a stubborn malady. It was not improved when I left in the spring. I suspect it lasted him his lifetime.

It was about nine o'clock when Granny appeared. She burst into the room somewhat boisterously, clad in a short linsey-woolsey skirt and a man's coat. Her face was the rarest bit of wrinkled parchment. I learned later to read the writing on it—much to my edification. The pen of love had been inscribing it throughout long, strenuous years, and of late the finger of God had stroked it in a marvellous way. With me it was a case of love at first sight. I had heard that she was a Tartar, but I had also heard that she was "the finest woman on Ironbound."

"So you be the new teacher, be you"—shooting me a look that made my back-bone tingle.

"Yes, and you are Granny, I believe. They tell me you are Granny to every one on the island. I hope you will be Granny to me, as well."

"You want a lot, young man, but we'll see; yes, I 'low we will."

"Have you got a mother, young man?"

"Yes, the best in the world."

"Ever been away from home before?"

"Not for long."

"Has he had his rum?" she inquired, turning to John Belden.

"No! He wouldn't take it; it's there for him if he wants it." Then, with something like a sneer, "I 'low he's too proud to drink with we."

"Proud, is he? That's bad. We don't want no rotten pride on this island, and we ain't goin' to have none, nuther. If he shows any stinkin' pride around here I'll seen larn him manners."

She was looking at me in a way that made me feel like a pane of window glass.

"Come here, young man," she commanded. "Will you drink a glass of grog with me?"

At the moment I was not certain of her line, but I had suspicions. Her whole attitude was one of strong determination. She stood with her feet braced well apart and her hands clasped behind her back; but I thought I detected a wistful look in her eyes.

"I am asking you, young man, if you will drink a glass of grog with me."

I bowed to her and said: "Mrs. Belden, you know what I have come to this island for, and I am sure you know what is best for me to do. I shall drink rum with you as much and as often as you wish. But I shall drink with no one else, and what rum I drink you shall pour for me with your own hand."

Her face flushed till it looked like a rosy winter apple. She breathed quick and hard.

Then a startling thing occurred. Like a fury she turned to the table and in an instant its contents were wrecked. Seizing the rum bottle she dashed it on the hearth and shattered it. In quick succession followed drinking glass and sugar bowl to the same doom.

"To hell with it all!" she cried. "If I had my way with it I'd pour every last drop of rum

into hell to feed the flames of the pit. That's where it belongs. Rum makes hell everywhere—in men's lives and women's hearts. Rum is nothing but distilled damnation."

Then turning to the members of the school board she shook her fist at them and shouted :

"You jackdaws ! Don't none of youse dast ask him to drink rum again ! Don't youse *dast* ! Do youse hear me ? John Belden, Frank Belden, Pat Power, Amos Wambolt, Tom Green ? Do youse hear what I say ? You sons o' sea-sarpints, you ! If any of youse ever dast ask him to drink rum again, I'll whale the hide offum yer ! I'll lam the livers outern yer ! Shiver my timbers, if I don't stop this tarnation nonsense before I'm much older ! This island's goin' to the devil. I wish the *Cedar Grove* had sunk in mid ocean. And listen ! Youse be mighty kind and perlite to this young man ! He's come here to larn youse and your childer. If youse come any of your gum games with him youse'll have me to answer to."

With that she wheeled and left the room.

"Eels and allspice !" said Frank Belden. "Isn't she a holy terror !" "Yes, I 'low she is," said Wambolt. "I 'low she is. She's a bigger terror nor ever since she got religion."

"Aisy, there, lads, aisy !" put in Pat. "Remember what she's been through ! Three grandsons drowned on Hog Back shoals, all because they would go racing in that sou'-east gale when they was drunk from Annie Tumblin's weddin' ! Don't forget about poor Davey, aither, and his three years in clink for takin' what didn't belong

to him! He'd never a done it in his sober senses. He was blind drunk. The black disgrace of it is atin' her heart out. And there's other things to remember, too. She's right, Begorra! She always is right. This island ought to be cleared of the rum. I wish to God I'd never seen a drop of it. I'd knock it off now, only my cough is so bad. I only take it for medicine, anyhow. Youse know that all right good enough. But why don't youse lads quit for your mother's sake? She ain't *my* mother, though I reckon I love her as much as any of youse."

Pat put his head in his hands and began to weep. "Poor Pat!" said Sarah softly.

"Indade it is poor Pat," he replied. "Poor enough. I can't carry much rum and I can't do without it. This cough will be the ruin of me. It's the worst cough ever heard on the island. It's makin' a drunkard of me. I 'spose I'll drink rum now till I die. Like enough I'll die drunk some day and go to hell. Indade, it is poor Pat." Then he staggered to the door and staggered home.

The next morning when I was starting out for school I found Granny waiting for me.

"Teacher, just a word! Best have it right now. Have you got a sweetheart?" "Not yet." "Then don't you do no sweetheartin' on this island! There's some ruther good-lookin' gals here, but don't you have nuthin' to do with them, moren to be perlite. I don't mean nuthin' agin the gals. They're not bad gals, but they don't know nuthin'. Don't you let them make free with you! I'm

thinkin' of your mother and of other things, too. And, say, Teacher, don't you call me Mrs. Belden no more. Call me Granny."

After Christmas, to my vast astonishment, Granny joined the school. Her great ambition was to learn to read the Bible.

"I shan't never be able to do the big words, but perhaps I may be able to read what Jesus said. And I want to read for myself about His dyin' on the Cross."

I proposed to give her tuition at home, but she insisted on coming to school. "The childer will be as still as mice and work like beavers, when I'm there," she said. I found that to be true. I wished to have an easy-chair brought in, but she would not hear of it. "No, I'll take things as they are!" So she came each forenoon and sat on the back form, whence she could overlook the situation.

I have never know anything to equal the rapidity of her progress. Her mind was as receptive as that of a child and her memory was faultless. I said something of this to her, and she made answer that if God could give her the heart of a child why not the mind of a child as well.

"I am like those labourers who went into the vineyard at the 'leventh hour. The Master made up a lot of lost time to them. P'r'aps He's doin' that with me. I came in awful late, long past the 'leventh hour. It was more nor half-past 'leven when I came in; I think it must have been about quarter to twelve. I should not have dast to come

in at all, only I saw His blessed face, and it looked so kind. And He said: Go daughter, your vineyard's been waiting long.

"You see, this island's my bit of vineyard. There's a lot of blight on it, mostly my fault. I must try to get the blight off fur's I can. If I had put my foot down when I'd orter, fifty year ago, there'd be no rum here now. But I was blind. Alexander allus liked his glass and I saw no harm in it. It warmed him up when he came in cold and wet from the fishin'. I sometimes took a glass with him myself, but not often. When my boys grew up they took it. And now it's in the blood and burning hot. Poor Pat Power! Did they tell you about my darlins what was drowned? And Warfield has an idiot boy, you know. The rum did that. I've got my work cut out for me, all right good enough. But, oh, I'm such a miserable sinner yet!"

"Which of the Apostles do you think I have the warmest feelin' for?" she once inquired of me.

"How can I tell, Granny? Perhaps, John. He was a most lovable man."

"You should be able to guess bettern that," she retorted. "No, it's the one that had my up-settin' sin and conquered it. Oh, my Redeemer! I wonder if I shall ever conquer mine!"

At another time it was:

"Teacher, do you think it's true that Simon Peter keeps the gate of Heaven?"

"Likely as not, Granny! Why do you ask?"

"You know well enough. It would be such a

comfort to me to think that Simon Peter kept the gate, I should be feared to go up to it if any one else was there. But Simon Peter would let me in. He would say: Come on, Granny Belden! I've been waitin' fur you. I know how it's been with you. I did even worse nor you. I both swored and lied and about the Blessed Lord Hissself. He forgave me and He's forgiven you. Come on, Granny, don't be feared! I'll take you where you can see the Great White Throne, and never a bad word will you remember after that. Teacher, I've dreamed of that hundreds of times. Do you think he'll really be there?"

"Simon Peter will be there all right, Granny. God will look out for that. You will meet the man you most want to meet—at Heaven's Gate."

III

GRANNY'S FIRST COMMUNION

GRANNY'S besetting sin was known all over Iron-bound—though I doubt if any one thought the worse of her on account of it. She was addicted to periodical tantrums of temper during which she was invariably overborne by a propensity to use profane language. On specially provocative occasions she would vault clear away from the common ways of profanity and her oaths would take on a truly epic quality. In this direction she was nothing less than a genius. There was notable originality in all her speech, and it extended to this particular branch of it. She was not a borrower in this field, but a creator. The islanders took a sort of pride in her proficiency, though to Granny, after her conversion, it was a cause of deep shame and sorrow. "I should have been born dumb," she said. "At least the Lord might have made me a stammerer; that would have been some help."

Granny dated her conversion from certain religious services which she had attended at Stogler's Cove some six months before my coming to the island. Since then her great desire had been to partake of the Holy Communion, but her sense of deep unworthiness had hitherto prevented her.

"I must have a white month, first," she affirmed.

"What do you mean by 'a white month'?"

"A month without any bad words. I must get my tongue cleaned up a bit. Until I have had a month free from oaths I shall not dare to put the elements of the Blessed Sacrament into my mouth."

I considered this a mistake and urged her to renounce the vow. But she was adamant on the point. "When I get my white month I'll go, but not before. When the time comes, if it ever does, you shall row me in to the Cove in the skiff."

It was a tremendous task she had set herself, for there were many irritations in her life, and the habit had its roots in blood and bone. Several times she almost completed her period of self-imposed probation only to be overwhelmed at the end in disaster and distress.

"I can usually tell when the spells are comin' on, and I do pray for victory, but I get worsted every time. It is some encouragement that each month now I stand the devil off a little longer than the month before. But last month I had a three days' battle and lost it in the end. Satan got a big swear lodged in my throat. I ett nuthin' but dry bread thinkin' to get rid of it that way, but there it stuck. At last it came out, when I saw George Crabbe mixin' paint in my oil can. Oh, it was awful, that swear! Long and black and wrigglin' like a snake! It frit me no end. And there's more where that came from. I wish I could git all them devil's varmints hatched at once, or better still, smashed in the egg. It's weary waitin' and strivin'."

Granny looked forward with high hope to February. "It's the shortest month and will give me the best chance."

Towards the end of the month I had the honour of an invitation to take supper with her. It had been an unsullied month thus far, and she had no premonitions of an approaching "spell." She had roasted a fine fowl for our feast and set it out upon the table in readiness for my arrival. When all was in order Granny retired to her room for a brief season of prayer and meditation. When she emerged therefrom she beheld a blighted supper table. In a corner of the room Pluto, the big Newfoundland dog, was piously licking his chops over the last remnants of the devoted bird. The sight of it was fire flung into a powder magazine. Instantly her wrath exploded and the inevitable occurred. The oaths came fast and furious. As I opened the door I beheld her whirling round like a tee-to-tum. What I heard cannot bear remembering, still less repeating. It seemed to me I could smell brimstone and see blue flames playing round her head.

"Go back, Teacher, go back! Leave me alone! I can't look you in the face to-night!" Then she dropped to her knees. "Oh, I'm a lost soul! I'm damned to all eternity! Go away and leave me for a lost soul! I shall never take the Holy Communion. Oh, my Blessed Lord!"

But March brought glorious victory. Not once was she even tempted to an oath. She had got her White Month. The communion service was to be held on an evening early in April. Late in

the afternoon we made ready for departure. It was a day of bright sun and dancing sea. Granny was in a delicious frame of mind, her sweet face reflecting her thankful and happy spirit. As she took her seat in the stern of the skiff she was softly singing :

“ Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast.”

It would take an hour and a half to row to the Cove, and I looked for an interesting time.

“ Simon Peter, that cussin chap, turned out to be a fine man after all, didn't he, Teacher ?

“ I used to think he had a lot of cheek to be the first to go to Jesus that mornin' by the lake. But I know better now. He needed to be first. He had his black sin to be forgiven. And Jesus wanted him to be first. That's always His style—the neediest first, the one with the heaviest and hungriest heart.

“ Powerful man, that Simon Peter ! It takes some pullin' to land a wet net even when it's empty. But that net had twelve dozen and nine number one herrin' in it. Much as my Alexander could do to land that lot, in his best days ! But Peter had a look into the Master's face before he laid hold of the net. I reckon he felt as strong as an ox after he had that look.

“ When Peter was a young man he must have been like my lad Martin—a fightin' man. He was always up to some mischief, I'll be bound. No one could control him. I wonder if him and John ever had any bouts with each other when they was

lads by the lake! There was some hot ginger in both of 'em.

"Fine to think what chums them two was all their lives! They stuck to each other like burrs. Even after Peter got his promotion he wasn't willin' to leave John behind. When he asked what John was to do it was because he wanted John to go along with him. He was a bit skeered to take up his new work without John to support him. Jesus didn't tell him just then what his plan for John was. Peter must be willin' to go alone. We must all be willin' to go alone. I've been wantin' Alexander to come with me into this new life. Many's the time I've prayed for it. We been together so many years, and never a cloud betwixt us! What a joy and strength it would be if only he was comin' along with me to the Communion to-day! But I must be willin' to go alone. P'r'aps God will give him to me in this new life yet. He did let Peter have John after all, till Peter got well started in his work. They worked hand in hand for years after Jesus went away."

I told her the legend of Peter's death and how he is reputed to have said: "I am not worthy to be crucified in like manner to my Lord; crucify me head downward!" Granny started at that as though she had been stabbed. Presently I saw tears trickling down her cheeks. After a time of silence she said softly: "It was because he remembered the dreadful oaths. I know just how he felt. Poor Peter!" Her head dropped and then I knew she was in prayer.

The boat made slow progress during this tender

talk, and I now felt it to be time to settle to the oars in good earnest. The bay was brisk with a freshening breeze and the skiff bounded merrily forward.

“Steady, Teacher, steady! There’s a bit of chop on now! Don’t wet my communion frock!”

For a time I heeded her warning, though once the skiff shipped some water and Granny moved uneasily. Then there came a careless moment—a fateful moment it proved to be—when the bow of the skiff drove slap into the crest of a saucy wave and instantly a bucketful of cold salt water smote dear Granny Belden full in the face and poured down into her lap.

It is grievous to relate what then occurred. The flood-gates of Granny’s vocabulary were suddenly uplifted and the black stream boiled forth. It was a spate of oaths, pronouncing malediction upon all creation, including my sorrowful self. I drew the oars into the skiff and waited, groaning in spirit. It was some little time ere Granny realised what had happened; then a look of agony came into her face as of one about to die. For a moment or two I was in terror lest she should die right there. She shook as if with ague and her face went ashen grey.

“Turn the boat and row me back! Turn the boat, I tell you! Row me back to the island for a lost soul! Take me home and let me die! I ain’t fit to live another minute. I’m lost now all right good enough! Lost for ever and ever! I shall never see the Master’s Blessed Face! I’m a lost soul! Oh, Great Father in Heaven!”

It was the most fearful situation I had ever faced, and I felt unable to cope with it. It seemed to me that I had committed a heinous crime and that the blood of Granny's soul would be on my hands. So I lifted up my own heart in prayer. Then I rowed the skiff into a little bay where the water was smooth, and there we sat in silence for a time.

At length she said: "Ain't you goin' to take me home? Don't you see I'm a lost soul?"

"Granny Belden, if you make me take you home before you go to the Communion, you will make an infidel of me. I shall be a bad man all my life. And it will be your fault. I shall never believe in prayer again. I shall not believe in God any more. Then I shall be a lost soul, too. If you don't get the victory over Satan here and now, then I must believe that Satan is stronger than the Saviour."

This stung her to the quick. "No, no! Don't you dast so say that. Don't you *dast*! The Saviour is stronger nor all the devils. It's me that's so weak and wicked. I make room for the devil in my heart. He's in me now, this minute, big as a woodchuck."

I said all the comforting things I could think of; how the bad words did not come from her heart, but only from her tongue; that it was a matter of nerves working involuntarily; that the Lord would generously remember all her strivings and good desires and intentions; that in any case He would readily forgive her, seeing how penitent she was.

All the time she sat with her head bowed. At

length she sat upright, and I could see that she had once more nailed her colours to the mast.

"You are a good lad," she said. "I don't want the old devil to get you." "Then send him packing," I replied. The colour surged into her face. "I will!" she shouted. "I know how to do it, I've just thought of it. I'll smite him with the Cross." And then, not conscious of any impropriety in her speech (if indeed there was any), Granny cried: "Avast, there, Evil One! Begone! Off to hell with you where you belong! The Lord Jesus has redeemed my soul. I'm clinging to His Cross. You can't get me here. Away, black devil to the pit!"

"Hallelujah, amen!" I shouted. "Has he gone, Teacher?" "Yes. He's off to his own place, and now you must go to yours. We shall be just in time."

She shook her clothing and readjusted it while I put the skiff to the landing-stage.

"But my white month goes for nuthin' now. I've forfeited it. It's all black smear from this. And I did so want to take it along with me as a trophy for my Lord."

"You are doing better than that, Granny; you are going freshly cleansed. You are taking with you the most precious offering in the world—a broken and a contrite heart."

"No doubt that's true, Teacher. I should have been a proud old woman had I gone trailin' that white month after me by its cord of three white days. I should have been lookin' at them instead of into my dear Lord's face. But really, they were

not white at all. I was deceivin' myself. They were all stained and spotted with many sorts of sins. Now I can go singin' :

' Nuthin' in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.'"

As I brought the skiff to the landing-stage I noticed that the tide was in, full and fresh and strong. All the black, sticky, malodorous mud-banks were covered over. The boats that had been stranded were now swinging free. On the wharf the boys were letting down their lines to gather the largess that the tide had brought.

It was even thus with Granny Belden. An affluent tide of the grace of God had flooded all the shoals of her soul. A lifting tide had liberated her stranded heart. An enriching tide had brought new wealth to her life.

At the service which followed, Granny trod in the steps of Simon Peter. She was the first whom the minister called to the communion rail. I sat where I could see her face, and I beheld it as the face of an angel.

IV

JOE

FEW human beings have made a worse first impression upon me than Joe did; and few have left in my heart a warmer glow of admiration and gratitude.

My first meeting with Joe was in the heart of a lonely Canadian forest. I had seen no human face for three days and two nights. It was in deep December when all the lakes were held in mighty grip of frost and the snow was lying thick. Dick had gone on a three days' cruise in search of unclaimed timber limits and I was hoping for his return before nightfall. It was nearing dusk, that weird hour in winter woods when all nature seems to shudder before the coming darkness and upon which the night falls swift. Supper was in preparation. The log camp was all in order and a glorious fire was roaring up the chimney. While absorbed in my culinary operations I was startled by a low growl at the camp door. Swinging around I beheld a wild and fearsome-looking creature, bearing some remote resemblance to a man. One might have taken him, however, for an animated totem pole. He was of vast height, the most

of which he carried in his legs. He was the shape of a wooden clothes' pin.

He was a sight to strike terror into the heart of any lad, especially of one situated as I was then. His bullet-shaped head was surmounted by a villainous-looking dog-skin cap through whose apertures straggled long whisps of rusty yellow hair. The dark-brown freckles which peppered his red face gave him the appearance of one recently dismissed from a ward in an isolation hospital. He wore a greasy black leather jacket and a pair of corduroy trousers. His feet were enshconed in untanned cow-hide moccasins with the hairy side out. He carried a short-barrelled rifle and at his feet followed a murderous-looking white dog with fiery red eyes.

I gazed at the apparition for a moment in dumb amazement. Then to my horror it slowly stretched asunder an enormous pair of jaws. The muscles of the face around it worked convulsively. Not a sound did it utter for some time, until at length in a high, squeaky falsetto it cried: "Good evening, Baby Brown-Eyes! Supper, please! Supper for poor hungry Joe and his little dog!"

"Who are you?" I asked, and I was conscious of a nervous tremor in my tone.

"Who am I? I'm Joe, that's who I am. Have you never heard of me?" All the while he was scowling ferociously and fingering the trigger of his gun. The sounds he emitted were infernal. He had evidently swallowed a phonograph whose records were made in bedlam. The dog had now

assumed a threatening attitude and was sniffing and growling at my feet.

I was quaking inwardly, but determined to put on a bold front. "Call your dog off or I'll brain him," I cried.

"You couldn't do that, Baby, you really couldn't. He ain't got no brains, he ain't. He's like me; just like his master; he's all heart."

"Well, then, I'll kick his heart out."

"No, no, Baby, don't say that! I'm afraid you couldn't do it. And if you did you'd be sorry ever after. You see, he's my best friend."

While saying this he shouldered his way into the camp.

"Smells good," he said, as he deposited his rifle in a corner. "What's this?" as he lifted the lid of a pot.

"Partridges."

"How many?"

"Two."

"Got any more?"

"Three, outside."

"Put 'em all in! I'm mighty hungry, and so is Tige."

As I entered with the birds he asked:

"Where's Dick?"

"Timber hunting, but I am looking for him back any minute."

"When did he go?"

"Tuesday morning." It was then Thursday evening.

"Do you mean to tell me you have been here all alone since then?"

“Yes.”

“Then I say Dick’s a beast.”

“But I’ve been quite all right. I don’t get nervous in the bush.”

“Umph! Any kind of an accident might happen. You might be taken ill and he find you dead when he came back. Dick’s a beast, and I’ll tell him so when he comes in.” And he did. He put the fear of God into his heart in proper style. But I am getting ahead of my story.

When Joe had taken off his moccasins and washed he said: “Now, Baby, I’ll do the rest. Sit down and read that letter!” He handed me a letter from my mother. I learned before the night was out that he had walked fifteen miles out of his way to bring it to me.

We ate in silence, for the man was famished. Joe and Tige between them devoured three birds and other things in proportion. When the meal was finished Joe looked at me with laughter-lighted eyes (I had noted that they were blue and wondrous beautiful—his one redeeming feature), and said: “I can sing a bit. Would you like me to sing for you?” I replied in the affirmative. “I like hymn tunes best,” he said. The mystery about the man was growing deeper. “Shall I sing Onward Christian Soldier, or Abide with me?” “The second one,” I said, and burst into laughter. Joe made a leap for me and caught me in his arms. “I’m afraid I scared you a bit, Baby, but I reckoned your mother’s boy would stand the test all right. I’m mighty glad to abide right here to-night.”

Then he began to sing :

“ Abide with me : fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens : Lord, with me abide :
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.”

It was the most glorious voice I had ever heard—a rich, clear, full baritone—a voice that now melted and now thrilled the soul. I am not sure that since that day I have heard a voice of superior sweetness or power. He sang the hymn through, but long before he had finished I was lying on my face to hide the tears I found it impossible to restrain.

“ What are you doing here ? ” I cried, as soon as I was fit to face him. “ Why are you knocking about the bush like this, when you might be making thousands and swaying great multitudes of people ? Why are you wasting yourself here when you have a voice like that ? ”

“ I’ll tell you the story, Baby. Yes, I could have had a career as a singer. But it was not to be. It’s like this. When I was a lad about your age I ran away from home. I had been brought up on a rough farm in North Caledonia. My people were poor and the work was hard. Father was not a good manager and we never seemed to get on. The life was hateful to me, for there was a wild strain in my blood. So I ran away from home and worked my way in a vessel as far as Boston. I beat around there for some time, getting odd jobs of work, but nothing steady and nothing with much money to it. I was lonely and homesick. People that I wanted to mix with wouldn’t

look at me, and people who would mix with me Satan wouldn't look at. I got thinking a great deal about my mother and how she would be grieving for me. One evening when I was feeling extra miserable I went into a place called Tremont Temple. There was a big crowd of people and a man was speaking to them. He was talking about a lad who had left his home and got down to his uppers in a strange land. You know the story. Well, before he had finished I determined to do two things: to get home to my Heavenly Father and home to my human mother. When the speaker had concluded, one after another of the people got up and said something about God and Home. They all seemed to be talking straight at me. Now and then some one would raise a hymn and the others would join in. I knew a good few hymns and always liked to sing them. At length there came a considerable pause, and during the silence I began to sing:

'Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.'

"I think a few people joined in the first lines, but they dropped out one after another, and before I got to the end of the second verse I was singing alone. But it didn't trouble me. Something seemed to be lifting me out of myself. I was like a bird singing on a bough, for my heart was very glad. I had got home to God and I was going home to mother.

“When I had finished, a gentleman slipped into the seat next me and laid his hand on my shoulder. I found out afterward that his name was Ford. He was a fine gentleman and had a most kind face. In a moment or two the meeting was over. Then Mr. Ford slipped his arm through mine and led me to a little room behind the platform. Here we were joined by another man who proved to be the minister of the church. They whispered together for a little while in a corner of the room, and then Mr. Ford came to me and said: ‘Young man, where are you staying?’ When I told him he asked, ‘Can you not come home with me and spend the night? I want a talk with you.’

“I went home with him. He told me that he was interested in church music; that he was looking for young fellows with the right sort of voice to be trained for male quartettes. He would find all the money needed to get my voice trained and guarantee me a good position with a handsome salary later on. I thanked him and told him if he had been one day sooner I would have accepted his offer; but it was too late then. I was going home as soon as I could get there. He wanted to write to mother and ask her permission for me to stay. But, no! I was going home. Nothing could tempt me away from that. Next morning he told me he was sorry I was going, but perhaps I was doing right. Any way, he hoped God would bless me and guide me. He gave me twenty dollars to take me home. I shall never forget the welcome that mother gave me and father, too. Father died a few weeks after that, and it became

my duty to stay on and take care of mother. She lived for twenty years, bless her, and then it was too late for me to begin a public singer's life. So that is why I'm here."

"But you have wasted your life," I said. "It seems a pity."

"No. Don't say that! Life is more than the use of one talent in a particular way. And I have saved my soul. I haven't even wasted my talent. I sing to God. My voice is the best thing I have, I give it to Him. He should always have the best."

"Do you sing in churches then, or at concerts?"

"Not often. I sing to the men in the logging camps, but I mostly sing as the birds do, when there is none but God to hear. They do not waste their voices when they sing here in this lonely forest and round these quiet lakes. God hears them—and He hears me."

Next day I went with Joe and Dick on a moose drive. They stationed themselves at the tip of a tongue of land running between Lakes Pessquess and Peskawa, sending me up to the head of Pessquess to zigzag down the strip and beat out any big game that might be there. It began to snow while I was working up the ice, and before I got to the head of the lake, a distance of four miles, it was a blinding blizzard. I should have returned without attempting to beat out the game, for I had no compass with me and was not prepared for emergencies. However, I struck in, but never found the other lake. In a short time I realised that I was lost. All sense of direction was gone.

I knew it was useless to try to proceed, for I should only travel in a circle. The only thing to be done was to keep myself from freezing—for it grew bitterly cold—and wait for the signalling guns, which I strained my ears to hear. It was almost dark before I heard them, and they were then far away. Fortunately I had been saved from panic. As soon as the first faint sound of the guns was heard I started in their direction. In about half an hour I met Joe and Dick. Dick was angry with me, and was on the point of striking me when Joe seized him by the coat collar and shook him as a terrier would shake a rat. Then he threw his arms around me and hugged me. We were seven miles from camp then and the going was tremendously heavy.

For several miles Joe half dragged, half carried me, but at length he lifted me bodily upon his back and never put me down until we reached the door of the camp. All through that night the storm raged mightily. Once when I wakened from a dream in which I was being strangled by a bear, I found Joe with both arms around me, looking down into my face with streaming eyes and saying fervently: "Thank God! Thank the good Almighty God!"

Joe had been too modest in what he said to me about his singing to the men in the logging camps. I learned presently that he was their chief source of inspiration during the long months of their immersion in the bush. They looked for his coming with eagerness. He was as an angel of light to them. All over the vast Tobiotic country

he trudged on his snow-shoes to sing gladness and hope into their hearts. "Singing Joe" they called him. He sang nothing cheap or vulgar. Sometimes he would give them a tender song of Love or Home, but mostly he sang the great Christian hymns. He sang many of these rough, strong men into the sweetness of the Christian faith. He could scarcely have done a greater work had he "starred" through the cities of America.

Sometime during the year 1910 I received a marked copy of a Canadian paper containing the following :

A WELL-MERITED RECOGNITION

The banquet of the Western Counties Lumbermen's Association held at the Royal Hotel last evening when Mr. Joseph Rawson was so signally honoured was the most brilliant affair in the history of this town. The President, Mr. Richard Allen, presided, being supported on his right by Bishop Clayton and Mr. Rawson and on his left by the Honourable A. H. Adams, Minister of Crown Lands, and Judge Robertson. At the conclusion of the feast Bishop Clayton proposed the health of Mr. Rawson. In the course of his remarks he said that few men in the Western Peninsula were better known than Mr. Rawson and no man was better loved. Mr. Rawson was gifted by nature with a voice which might have given him a place among the greatest singers of the world. That glorious voice he had employed to cheer the dreary lives of residents in the scattered backwoods'

settlements and to bring uplift to the humble toilers in the lonely lumber camps of the Tobiatic. He could not imagine a more gracious or self-denying life than the one their friend had lived. Members of the Association had assured him that the influence of Mr. Rawson in promoting good feeling between the employers and the men and in stimulating the morale of the workers had been invaluable. He was honoured by being associated with the occasion.

The Honourable A. H. Adams referred to the work which Mr. Rawson had done as a voluntary fire-ranger over the crown lands of the Province, which was highly appreciated by his department of the Government. They did not know all that Mr. Rawson had done in this direction, but they had no doubt the Province was millions of dollars richer to-day than it would have been but for the watchfulness of their guest and his heroic work in protecting the timber lands from devastation. He had been a pioneer in this work and had trained the Tobiatic lumbermen to habits of carefulness regarding fires in the forest. By an Order in Council passed the day before it had been decided to ask Mr. Rawson to accept a pension of two hundred dollars a year for the remainder of his life. This was not to be regarded as in any sense a gift. It was but a tiny fractional part of the debt which the country owed him, a debt it could never repay.

The most effective speech of the evening, except that of Mr. Rawson himself, was made by the President. There was no formality about it. He

addressed himself directly to the guest. "Joe Rawson," he said, "I have a bit of paper in my hand which I am instructed to pass on to you. Just before doing that, let me say that while all the men here owe much to you I owe you more than any of them. I owe you a whole lot for a thundering good shaking you gave me some twenty-five years ago on Pessquess Lake. While you were shaking me that day I heard something drop. It was a lump of cussedness you shook out of me. I think you also shook a little sense into me. My brain has seemed to work differently ever since that time. And I say, Joe, if you ever find me doing a mean thing again as long as I live I hope you'll shake me just as hard as you did that day on Pessquess. That is all I want to say except this. I have pleasure in presenting this cheque for twenty-five hundred dollars from the Western Counties Lumbermen's Association to the best man and truest gentleman I have ever known, bar none; to my esteemed friend, Singing Joe of the Tobiatic."

When Mr. Rawson got to his feet the cheering was loud and long. He was deeply affected. The perspiration was pouring down his face and dripping from his chin. It was some time before he could find his voice. At length he said: "Gentlemen, one of three things has happened; either you are all stark crazy, mad as March hares, every man Jack of you—or—I am in a gorgeous dream and can't wake up—or—I have died and gone to Heaven. This can't be Heaven, exactly, for they don't need any pensions there and have no use for

bank cheques. And I don't think I'm dreaming, for though I've had some lovely dreams in my life, I've never had one like this. I couldn't have a dream like this. I'm glad I never did have one bearing the remotest resemblance to it. The only conclusion left to me is that you are all lunatics. But you are such a lovely lot of lunatics and sane on all subjects except this one, that I am going to treat you as normal human beings.

"Gentlemen, I have done nothing at all to deserve this. I have had big pay for my bit of work as I went along. I love the woods. They are like a vast cathedral to me, and I have been free to roam them for many years. I love the woodsmen. They have treated me always like a king. And to sing to them has been the greatest joy of my life. I have been a very happy man.

"I cannot tell you how proud I am over the honour you have done me. I feel like a peacock with three tails. But I don't know what to do with all this money. I really have no need for it. But perhaps I may find some way to use it so that it will do a bit of good.

"Gentleman, my old heart is trying to jump out of my ribs to thank you, and yet I am not saying any proper word of thanks. God knows I do feel grateful at the same time that I feel a great fool."

He was about to add something more when suddenly two stalwarts seized him, lifted him shoulder high and carried him three times round the table, while the company roared out: "For he's a jolly good fellow."

My experience with Joe Rawson and what I

have learned about him from others has taught me not to make snap judgments on my fellow men, but to look beneath rough exteriors and strange manners for the real man beneath—the heart of gold within.

V

TAKING THE MESSINES RIDGE

I have the consent of the writer of the following article to include it in this book on condition that his name be not disclosed.

BEFORE THE BATTLE

THE attack was to be at daybreak. I was told off to go forward in the wake of the infantry to observe the fire of our guns, after the barrage should pass beyond the crest of the ridge. About one o'clock, under the walls of a battered farm, the signallers, a dozen or more of them, met me, and by the light of a flashing torch I examined their equipment. As we stood there in the darkness, bodies of attacking troops passed by in long straggling files: out of the night, the sound of voices; footsteps across the moat bridge; a momentary view of shadowy forms, and then the enveloping roar again. The boom of the heavies behind and the crack of the field guns on every side did not seem louder than on previous nights, for the enemy was not to know that the attack was at hand.

When satisfied that all were present and prepared we moved off across the fields to the head of a communication trench. Thirty minutes' zigzag walking brought us to the place where we had

decided to await the tide of battle. My party deposited themselves in a well-protected trench running parallel to the front line, and I then pushed forward a hundred yards to battalion headquarters. Descending into a deep dug-out, I came upon the Colonel chatting with the Adjutant. There appeared to be nothing unusual afoot, except that the group of officers sitting at the table and reclining on the beds looked rather pale and tired. I was soon engaged in a subdued conversation with the signalling officer, who had just returned from leave to Paris.

As three o'clock approached, we ascended the slippery stairs into the open air. The trench world was beginning to take shape in the dull grey of the morning. The air seemed sweet and cool after the sojourn in the close and gloomy subterranean depths; we sniffed it eagerly. About me I beheld the trenches full of our soldiers waiting the signal to attack. The objective was as yet invisible. The men seemed unconcerned: some were dosing on the grassy slopes of old trenches; some were prone on the trench boards; others were talking and jesting after the inimitable fashion of the Irish "tommy"; while a few, bent on an early breakfast, were heating water over a hastily improvised fire and opening tins of bully beef. The officers, however, were beginning anxiously to scan the sky and consult their wrist watches. A Captain came hurrying along looking for a Lewis gun and its bearers, who had probably tucked themselves away somewhere, oblivious of the approach of the fateful hour.

The sky was overcast, hiding the moon and obscuring the faint foregleams of a dawn that would fain break through. As zero hour approached the night firing of our guns gradually died away. This unusual silence on our part seemed to worry the enemy, for he began to send up white lights over no-man's-land, and rockets of red and golden rain. Presently we heard the loud whirr of an aeroplane close above us, but could not tell if it were friendly or hostile, for the tops of the tall decapitated trees on our right were barely visible. Then silence again, broken only by the occasional crump of a German burst or the startling rattle of a machine gun. Not a sound proceeded from our lines except the shuffling of the men around us who had begun to rouse themselves.

After a time the signalling officer and I moved nearer the sand-bagged wall and peered over, resting our elbows on the top. Glancing at his wrist watch he said: "It must be nearly time."

"Yes, but believe me, there will be no doubt about it, for several tons of H.E. will assert themselves over yonder," I replied, nodding in the direction of the enemy's lines.

Hardly had I spoken the words when a series of tremendous explosions rent the air. The earth quivered like jelly and we were shaken away from the wall. A line of volcanic fountains of earth and smoke disappeared into the mist to right and left. For several minutes the ground rose and fell like a sea in storm. Showers of earth were falling upon us and murmurs of amazement were heard, for none of us had ever seen the like of this

before. In a trench behind I heard some one say :
" Poor old Fritz ! "

As the last detonation sent the Hun line skyward our artillery opened with a mighty crash, every gun hurling its shell into the fortified ridge in front. The din was deafening and through the dull grey behind us leaped forth a wall of flame. Presently the first wave of our storming infantry crept over the top and disappeared.

THE BATTLE

Slowly and deliberately, with bayonets fixed and bombs ready at hand, they climbed the wall of the first-line trench, dropped over into no-man's-land and began to pick a careful way through shell-hole, mine-crater and wire-entanglement. Scores of field guns rained out their shrapnel just in front, forming a long line of bursts over the enemy's forward positions. Further back the heavies, with their terrific high explosive, sent clouds of many-coloured dust from ruined villages, while in the distance their shells fell with destructive effect upon the enemy's line of batteries.

Before our troops reached the ramparts across the green of no-man's-land, the barrage crept forward upon the hostile support trenches. It was not difficult to clear the enemy front line, for those who had not been buried by the earth-shattering upheaval of the mines were either struck down by our barrage or terrified into surrender.

Each advance was carefully timed and laboriously rehearsed. Infantry movements were perfectly synchronised with the barrage which went forward

like a knowing thing, our soldiers in its wake. From line to line the irresistible waves of men and metal swept all before them like a tidal bore. As each goal was reached it was cleared of the enemy, consolidated, and a fresh wave would sweep past it to the next. For each new objective, new troops pushed forward from our line. Everything was carried out almost exactly as prearranged.

Here and there our men were held up by a machine gun that had escaped our fire; but in every case it was soon silenced, sometimes with the aid of a friendly tank. There seemed to be a great number of these enormous armoured bugs crawling up the slope. One felt as though he had suddenly been put back into the mesozoic age, with these reptilian monsters lurching and lunging and lashing about. I saw one of them stuck in a shell-hole, and it lay panting there like a living thing. Thin blue puffs of smoke coming up from underneath our aeroplanes betokened an activity that kept the air clear of hostile machines, blinded the German army and kept it fighting in the dark. Our air craft bore a great part both as bearers of information and, with their machine guns, destroying the enemy's trench garrisons.

As the morning wore on our troops gained the crest of Messines Ridge and began to sweep down the opposite slope. Our gunners kept up a steady fire, a tremendous and exhausting task with the sun blazing down upon them in scorching heat. The batteries of the enemy, while they dropped many rounds within our lines, were unable to carry out anything like organised fire.

When my party began to ascend the slope we met many prisoners coming down. They were wretched-looking creatures, as was to be expected of any human beings living for many hours in such a hell. The most of them had surrendered promptly when our soldiers reached them, yet there had been no lack of bravery on their part. They had clung stubbornly to their positions till every hope of successful resistance had disappeared. Though I saw corpses lying about in many places there were no such mounds of dead as had characterised the battle-fields of the Somme. In the Messines fight our mine explosions and artillery work had mostly inflicted death and effected burial at a single stroke. There were few pleasant faces in the herds of captured Huns; morose and sullen they gazed with gaping curiosity at everything they saw. One could not help but pity them; though no doubt they were glad to be able to say: "*Nach am Leben.*"

When I reached the crest of the hill the foremost of our attacking troops were well beyond it, for the line of our curtain fire fell through the village of Oosterveene. There we stood and watched the barrage creep forward till it remained in a stationary line some distance beyond the village. It was the day's last objective. Within a surprisingly short time, under the protection of this wall of falling shell, the British infantry dug a line of trenches to which they held until our guns moved forward to advanced positions. From that time the ridge was lost to Germany.

Like explorers in a new-found land we began to

ferret about in the abandoned habitations of the enemy. Many of their dugouts, which often went down to a surprising depth, were still accessible. While investigating one such fortified cave dwelling I came upon what seemed to be a party of the enemy. It was an awkward and momentarily perplexing situation. Instead of advancing boldly and single-handed demanding their capitulation, I began to look around for some of our Tommies to lend a hand in bagging the lot. It was an ugly-looking gang I had discovered, and a little help in the management of them would not come amiss. Before moving very far, however, I was stopped by one of these Huns inquiring in the language of Southern Ireland if I would have a cigar. They were a party of our own infantry who had crowned themselves with German woolly caps and were regaling themselves upon the fruits of conquest. "Bags o' grub here, sorr," one informed me, and I stayed to drink a bottle of soda-water, which I found cool and refreshing.

We stayed on the ridge with our eyes fixed on the battle-front till the sun went down. The artillery duel continued all day without cessation, but the real battle was over. Though the extent of ground redeemed would represent no great space upon the map, we felt it was the beginning of the end for Germany. We had beaten them, beaten them handsomely at their own game and by their own selected and perfected method of waging war. They had set out to batter their way through to world conquest by the force of big guns. We had battered one of their strongest positions into pulp.

As the sunset fires died in the west, Mont Kemmel disappeared from view and the shadows closed in upon us. In the sinking of the sun that day we saw the setting of the sun of German dominion in Europe. As the red glow faded from the western sky, so the blood-red menace of Prussianism would die away. As the night fell upon the shell-swept fields and blasted villages, bringing coolness and balm and oblivion, so would blessed peace once more descend upon a stricken world. We knew that liberty would live. There would be space again for quietness and rest and happy golden dreams.

AFTER THE BATTLE

We pushed on feverishly with roads, guns, dumps and the various accoutrements of an army. The Y.M.C.A. and the Red Cross speedily established themselves over the ridge. Quickly we built up a new front, but how different from the old one! We had come into a desert, a waste howling wilderness. There was not a remnant of vegetation on what once had been rich flowering fields. The engines of war had churned a beautiful countryside into black desolation. Two or more years ago the agriculturist gave place to the diggers of trenches. To-day all are gone except the ruins of concrete shelters and the battered skeletons of gun emplacements. One wonders that men could exist under artillery fire capable of working such devastation.

If one does not take the road it is a very wearisome undertaking to walk from our old front line

to the new, climbing over mounds of thrown-up earth, descending into enormous shell holes and yawning craters. One is either caught in the barbed strands of rusted wire or buried under bricks precipitated by an unlucky loosening of a supporting bit of masonry. Were you looking for the village church you would find it, if perchance you were fortunate enough to come upon the old bell lying on its side and semi-submerged in the crumbled remains of the sacred building.

There is a place ironically called a wood. Dusty blasted trunks are all that now deface the landscape. It stands on a bit of rising ground, and silhouetted against a sunset sky it looks like the broken edge of a German tooth-edged bayonet. A filthy dark-brown liquid lies at the bottom of some of the shell holes, while the more recent ones are strewn with the abandoned equipment of the hastily retreating enemy. Here and there bits of riveting tell you of former trenches. The stench of putrefying flesh suggests what many a heap of earth conceals. The birds refuse to make their nests there, and only rats infest it.

It is possible to picture the former state of this wood of death, for many such little woods lie tucked away in Belgium. It was pervaded with the sweet scent of the honeysuckle. Birds builded their nests in the branches of its trees, reared their young and sang their happy songs. Rabbits frisked amidst a wealth of dainty fern. A little rivulet purred through the cool and shadowy places between banks of flowering bluebell. But in the presence of the desolation that now reigns in

268 TAKING THE MESSINES RIDGE

these once picturesque and quiet haunts it is painful to recall their recent beauty.

In this wilderness one seems cut off from the glory of the summer. Under the hot sun they labour on. The infantry tramp to their trenches with heavy feet across the waste. The gunners are blinded by the dust that is whirled about by the hot blast of departing shells. Hundreds of labour parties sweat upon the roads which, as soon as made, are traversed by a continual stream of traffic. What do these men know of June? For them it is but a rumour.

" Thus may a captive in some fortress grim
From casual speech betwixt his warders learn
That June on her triumphant purpose goes
Through arched and bannered woodlands; while for him
She is a legend emptied of concern,
And idle is the rumour of the rose."

In the grim reality of the present these men march on amidst a reign of death. One does not say to them, Are you worthy of the glorious things you work and fight for—the security and freedom of all peoples? Their daily life of difficulty and danger speaks for them. With all their imperfections and uncouthness, verily they are worthy men, worthy to be remembered by a grateful world.

VI

SECOND LIEUTENANTS

THEY are the very flower of the Army. This is largely a Second Lieutenants' war. Therein lies much of the glory and the agony of the time. They are mostly boys ; fresh, fair, beautiful boys. Yet, what men they are ! So strong, calm, modest, capable, and utterly contemptuous of death ! Yesterday they were school lads rollicking on the green and romping in the home ; to-day they are engaged in the most tremendous and terrible tasks that can fall to human beings. The way they fight, the way they die, it is superb. To me they are an awesome mystery. How has it come about that so early in their lives they can do these supreme things in such splendid style ?

Whose sons are they ? Ah, I know whose sons they are. They are sons of God. They are afire with God. They may not know it, but it must be so. In the space of one brief hour they laid down childhood and took up manhood. A miracle was wrought upon them overnight. God breathed upon them as they slept, and when they rose next morning, lo, old things had passed away and all things had been made new. There has been

nothing more wonderful, nothing more thrilling in the history of the world than this. Stars fell in showers from our sky the night of that transformation; but other stars were kindled, large and lustrous. We live under a new constellation now.

Second Lieutenants make, relatively, the greatest sacrifices in this war. They are mown down like grass; they are knocked over like nine-pins. I have great respect and admiration for the private soldier; I have no less respect for generals, colonels, majors, captains; but, in the main, the man I want to get next to, the man I salute with the greatest alacrity and finest courtesy, is the Second Lieutenant. He is the glittering tip of the nation's sword, the penetrating point of the projectile. I know, the tip of the sword is controlled from the hilt, and projectiles must have big guns behind them. But the hilt remains in the hand after the tip has been broken off and the guns may be hauled into safety after the projectile has been blown into fragments and buried. Second Lieutenants dare all the dangers, run all the risks, pay all the penalties. Superior officers are more or less held back from danger zones. As they ascend in rank they gradually retire further toward the rear. They are too valuable to be constantly risked in the firing line or in the dash across no-man's-land. They have other work to do. But the Second Lieutenant is always there. The woe of it all is, he so often, so very often, stays there.

In this chapter I desire to pay a humble tribute to a few of the Second Lieutenants I have known.

ALAN

He was the best athlete of his time at "Wyggie." He was captain of the school, and its most dominating personality. He was the ablest cricketer, playing well up to County form. He was the backbone of the football team. In addition to this he was a brilliant student, winning distinctions and prizes and taking a valuable scholarship in mathematics at Oxford. I am informed that the thoroughness of his work has not been excelled.

The gentleness of Alan's ways, his modest, manly bearing made him a prime favourite with every one. Best of all, he was a devoted Christian, wielding a strong, winsome influence over his schoolfellows. He was not ashamed to own his Lord or to defend His cause. He was upright, sincere, reverent, free from cant and sentimentalism. It was Alan's purpose to devote his life to the advancement of medical science, and the path of opportunity that stretched before him looked wide and smooth.

He fell in the carnage at the Hohenzollern Redoubt. His death was not instantaneous, but preceded by some hours of agony from terrible wounds. His bearing in the hospital was no less gallant than his conduct on the battlefield. Never a murmur, scarcely a sigh. "It's all right. Even if I could recover I should have no limbs. It's better so. Tell them not to grieve!"

WILF

Dear little Wilf! Not so very little either, towards the last, for he had grown tall, though slight.

He was never a strong boy, and could not do much in the games at school. He had the rose-leaf skin and delicate complexion of a girl. His nature was almost girlish, though far from being effeminate. Wilf seemed all sweetness, kindness and gentleness. He was unusually pure-minded and big-hearted. One might have thought he would have been among the last to enlist. He was among the first. He joined the army long before his age required it of him. To our surprise he took to soldiering like a duck to water. He developed the power of command, he who had always seemed to lean on others. On the eve of his going into the army he put on the uniform of Christ; he was baptised and joined the Church.

Wilf was a hero-worshipper. His hero friend was bigger, stronger, and a little older than he. It was beautiful to see them together, playing like two puppies. They loved to share things with each other—a bed, a meal, a shilling, a holiday. Their temperaments and tastes chimed together like mellow music. They had some ripping times. After he knew that his friend was not coming back Wilf said: "I think I may have been a little timid up to now, but now I don't mind what comes so long as I can have a go at them." One hated to see him go and said so. But his answer was: "I am keen to go. I feel it is time now for me to go. I have had good training, and there is a lot to be done out there."

He had been but three weeks at the front when the message came, "wounded and missing." He went over the top in the charge at Vimy Ridge in

July 1916, the charge that failed. Nothing more was heard of him for nine months. Then word came that his body had been identified close up to the wire entanglements of the enemy. There, alone, he had breathed out his gentle life. Bravo, Wilf!

BERNARD

A young Canadian, a little older than some other Second Lieutenants, yet as boyish-looking as the most of them. He was twenty-six. In Canada he had enjoyed the best educational advantages, and was a University graduate. "Bun" had intended to give his life to literature. His writings had already appeared in many leading magazines. He was the poet in arms. A small volume of his poems will soon be published, and I predict for them a wide and appreciative reading.

We thought that Bernard was far too weak in body to endure the hard rough work of a soldier's life. But he would never hear of that. He was one of those keen-tempered souls that know how to conquer by sheer power of will. He erected his spirit above his body and lashed his body forward.

Here, again, was a personality all gentleness and sweetness facing the grim and bitter work of war; but he swung away to it blithe and debonair. Word comes that in the thickest dangers he was the coolest of the cool. Funk holes had no attractions for him, and if German shells had any terrors for him no one guessed it. It was a German shell that cut him off. An instantaneous, glorious death whilst nobly doing his duty. His captain writes "there was a suggestion of a smile on his

face when they brought him in." He served long enough to win in an extraordinary degree the love of all with whom he was associated.

I had a bright letter from him shortly before the end, enclosing the following fruit of his pen. It is not one of his strongest or most finished poems, but as it has the flavour of him I take the liberty of inserting it here.

AN INTERLUDE

April, 1917

" April snow a gleam in the stubble,
Melting to brown on the new-ploughed fields,
April sunshine and swift cloud-shadows
Racing to spy what the season yields
Over the hills and far away :
Heigh ! and ho ! for an April day !
Hoofs on the highroad: *Ride-tr-r-ot !*
Spring's in the wind, and war's forgot,
As we go riding through Picardy.

" Up by a wood where a brown hawk hovers,
Down through a village with white-washed walls,
A wooden bridge, and a mill-wheel turning,
And a little stream that spouts and brawls
Into the valley and far away :
Heigh ! and ho ! for an April day !
Children and old men turn to stare
At the clattering horsemen from *Angleterre*,
As we go riding through Picardy.

On by the unkempt hedges budding,
On by the Château gates flung wide,
Where is the man that should trim the garden ?
Where are the youths of this countryside ?—
Over the hills and far away,
At war, red war, this April day.
So for a moment we pay our debt
To the cause on which our faith is set,
As we go riding through Picardy.

“ Then the hiss of the spurting gravel,
Then the tang of the wind on the face,
Then the splash of the hoof-deep puddle,—
Spirit of April setting the pace,
Over the hills and far away :
Heigh ! and ho ! for an April day !
Heigh ! for a ringing *Ride-tr-r-ot !*
Ho ! of war we’ve never a thought,
As we go riding through Picardy.”

CHARLIE

He was an airman, and he died in the air, soaring “ through tracts unknown ” to common mortals. On a cloudless summer day, high up in the blue, where his machine looked like a little bird, he shed his body and continued his flight on the pinions of his soul. That seems the proper style of passing for these incomparable lads who from the moment they “ get their wings ” fight like a select company of angels. There is a super-hero for you, he who fights the hosts of “ spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places.” It is fitting that he should accomplish his exodus up there in the azure, close to the sun and near the gates of pearl. Of all the glorious deaths which human beings can die there is none to equal this.

The fighting code of the air service appears to call for adventures more daring and hopeless than any that are encouraged or even permitted on land or sea. A thousand times since this war began have our airmen flown to battle and to certain death with an abandon that outshines the Bala-klava Charge. When Charlie’s machine flashed into the fight it was one against ten. Single-handed, without the material support or moral

encouragement of any supporting squadron, alone between the silent heavens and the waiting earth, he fought the baby-killing Bosches. It was a good fight he fought, sending two of the enemy aeroplanes crashing to destruction. When his body was found it was seen to be riddled with machine-gun bullets.

In his home church Charlie had taught a class of eight lads near his own age. All enlisted as they came of military age. Only two of them are left to-day.

"A fine lad," they used to say of Charlie, "but painfully shy and a little slow. He would be the better for a bit more ginger in him. He will never set the Thames on fire."

How little we know what is in a boy! Charlie set the very heavens on fire. Of the two hostile aeroplanes that he brought down, one fell blazing into the Thames.

Almighty God! We thank Thee for these gallant, these wonderful sons of Thine. They are Thine and ours. May it please Thee in Thy mercy to grant us victory and peace ere they are all taken from us. Above all, help us to say, Thy will be done! Amen.

VII

SINCE THE BOY WENT HOME

HE was always a sunny lad. A lyric gladness rang through his days. He was full of infectious laughter. The talk of him was sparkling and enlivening. The smile of him was like glinting sunlight. Life's chills and shadows seemed to pass him by. They can never touch him now. They tell me that he went with a smile on his lips. That was his fitting style.

He loved bright things and he made things bright about him. There was always something merry a-move when The Boy came round. People in tram-cars and railway trains would hush their conversation to listen to his jovial chat. He thawed the frost out of many a soul that only came within the outer rim of his influence. He was Knight of the Order of the Shining Life.

Like child, like youth. On his third birthday a relative gave him a gorgeous crimson tie. It mightily appealed to The Boy, and he insisted on wearing it to church. The mother of him suggested another of more sober hue. But The Boy argued that he "ought to please Jesus," and Jesus wanted him to wear that particular tie. When asked his reason for so saying, he replied: "Jesus

bids us shine, doesn't He?" And he did shine. Always. Everywhere.

I remember the shining face he used to bring with him on his return from those cycling trips he made for the purpose of securing rubbings of old brasses in parish churches. That was a great hobby of his. A-wheel he would go, day after day in holiday times, alone, or with a companion and in all weathers. He made pals of vicars and vergers. More than one good old country clergyman went down on knees cracking with rheumatism to help him clean the brass and ply the heel-ball. He would pick up bits of lore from them, and I know he always left a warm glow in their hearts. There was but one old churl of a vicar who would not permit him to touch his precious brass. The heart of The Boy was set upon that rubbing. He had read of it in his "Suffling" and regarded it as a special "scoop." He cycled over a hundred miles that day in pouring rain, hoping to get it. He returned drenched to the skin and empty-handed. Amid roars of laughter he told of his encounter with the old curmudgeon and how he had employed his best blandishments in vain. The recital was given as he rolled about in a steaming bath, snorting and blowing like a porpoise. I was angry and bitter over his disappointment, but he only laughed and said: "Never mind, Dad! A jolly fine road and all kinds of wild-flowers in the woods!"

He was not a brilliant student—a duffer at maths.—but he was a great School Boy. He had an eager mind and a high intelligence. He was far too discursive to write what could be con-

sidered a good examination paper. Yet I doubt if any other lad got more benefit from his school life, and I know there was no more popular boy amongst the whole six hundred. His masters set great store by him because of what he was. His teacher in maths. got very angry with me because I showed some disappointment over his backwardness in that subject. "What the blazes does that matter?" he cried. "If I had a boy like that, I would be the proudest man in England. I would not swap him for any lad of my acquaintance. He is not a genius, but he is something better. He is a Great-heart, a true sportsman and a Christian gentleman. He is a great power in this school."

Of course the boys adored him for his hearty ways and his chivalrous spirit. He played all the games. Few played them better and none enjoyed them more. And so he played the game of life. He sent up a good score, though the Umpire called "time" upon him and cut his innings short.

I only knew The Boy to tell one lie in his life, He told it at the recruiting station on the morning of August fifth, nineteen hundred and fourteen. He told it blithely—the same heroic lie that many another brave young lad told for the honour of this Land of Hope and Glory.

Some blinking, hair-splitting moralist will be after me for saying that—but let him come on! I have The Boy's Bible here beside me as I write. On the fly-leaf above his name, which I had put there, I find these words in his own hand.

PRAYER

"Lord give me grace
To put myself in others' place."

That was the key-note of his life. That is why he said what he did at the recruiting station.

On the evening of the day war was declared he asked permission to enlist. "You are under age, Boy, by a year and a half." "Yes, but not under strength, Dad, and England will need every soldier she can get. I feel that I ought to go."

I knew how strong he was. Many a time that summer he had hoisted me upon his back and raced round the garden with me as though I had been a bag of feathers. He was built like that young oak, now growing tall and straight and sturdy from the acorn he planted. My bit of garden was not big enough to give it proper scope, so I had it transplanted to the ampler grounds of a friend. It is doing well in its new environment, that young oak; it is full of life. It grows apace. And all these things are true of The Boy since The Great Gardener transplanted him.

The recruiting office was closed for the night when he got down. We told him it would be all the better for him to sleep on the proposition and see how it looked to him in the morning. "Right-o," he answered; "but it will look just the same. I am sure of that."

I wondered if he *would* sleep after the excitement. That was stupid of me. He slept gloriously. I know, for I went into his room several times that night to look at him. He was my baby boy, you see, youngest of four. A fine picture he made as he lay there in the moonlit room breathing rhythmically with his head upon his upstretched brawny arm. That *was* a night.

And how his face did shine when he came home next noon with his soldier's outfit! When it was donned he clicked his heels and saluted. "Ha!" he cried; "I'm a full private now! I'm a blooming Tommy! Geewhittaker! Hooray!"

"You will soon be an officer," I said. "Not till after I have served at the front, Dad. When I know the work and have had experience on the field, so that I can look after my men properly, then I shall be proud to take up a commission if they think me worthy. But now, here's for learning the work of a soldier!"

He handled his rifle affectionately and explored its mechanism. "I must keep her shining, Dad. Wonder how many Germans she will bring me in!" That from The Boy, who would never hurt a fly!

It was a rough lot he enlisted with, and at first they rather objected to his presence amongst them. They wanted to know who his "guvner" was, and when they learned it they slanged him because he had not gone in for a commission. "We don't want no Stoneygate swanks in this squad." They shouldered him a bit, stole some of his kit, and flung obscenity at him. They called him "Algy" on the first day. The second day they dubbed him "the jook." The third day he was "the Clown Plince." After the third day they asked him what he wanted to be called. "Billee," he said. And Billee it was to the end.

It came about like this. On the second day a foul-mouthed chap found his flow of language suddenly stopped by a pair of boxing gloves The Boy flung in his face. "Put them on and let me

see if there is any other part of your anatomy you can use besides your dirty mouth." One round settled it. Biff! biff! biff! and foul-mouth sank limply to the ground, weakly murmuring: "Nuff! I've got enuff!"

"You're a corker wiv yer dooks, ain't yer? Ginger ain't no goof wiv the mits, but wait till Joe gits at yer, he'll fix yer." The Boy had no quarrel with Joe. Next day he simply asked him if he was looking for a chance to fight, and if so he need wait no longer. This second "go" was slightly more prolonged than the first, but ended in similar fashion. Thereafter The Boy was the pet and pride of the company. For three days they swore at him, then for nine months they swore by him. They do still for that matter, the few, the very few of them that are left.

"I'll take care of him, sir," said an old reservist at Luton.

"Garn wiv yer! 'E'll take care of hissself and of you too," was the retort he got. "Hi hallus gives 'im a little hextra," piped the bleary-eyed old cook. "'E's young and 'e needs it." "Aw, stow it! Ow much hextra does 'e give you?"

We dined that evening at the George Hotel. The Boy had done a twenty-two mile route march that day and was hollow to the toes. The waiter had received instructions to serve the young soldier with special helpings. When, for the third course, something like half a chicken appeared upon his plate, a dignified old gentleman in evening clothes sitting opposite wanted to know if he felt "equal to all that." "My dear sir, I feel vastly superior

to it." Later, when the old gentleman declined apple tart, he apologised by saying: "I'm not so young as you, my friend."

Instantly the query was flashed at him: "Are you really and truly my friend?"

"Sure I am."

"Then will you please give your order for apple tart and see what becomes of it?"

"Lord, what an old ass I am! Waiter! Waiter! Apple tart, please, and a jolly good lot of it. I'm dying for apple tart, I am."

Promptly at nine the waiter tapped The Boy upon the shoulder. He rose at once. "Meet you outside, Dad. No Tommies allowed in here after nine." The old gentleman rose and offered his hand. "God bless you, lad! I thank you for the pleasure you have given me."

The last time I saw The Boy was at Bishop's Stortford, the day before he left for the front. He was billeted, along with a score of others, upon the premises of a little tailor named Harry. The Boy slept on the cutting table in a tiny upper room. Considerable breakage had been done by the lads downstairs, and Harry was feeling rather blue about it. But The Boy put him on the sunny side. He made out an itemised bill of damages and then went down to collect it. It was a surging crowd he faced, and they were hot with the excitement of preparation for departure.

Mounting a table, The Boy called out: "Come on now, lads, cash up for Harry!" This was met by shouts of protest and cries of "Chuck 'im aht! Turn the 'ose on 'im!"

"Come on, I say! Don't be silly asses! It's a quid and six bob I want from this distinguished squad of brave defenders of British honour."

"Daylight robbery," they cried. "Come on, I say, plank down your dough!" This was greeted with: "Who was your lady friend last night?"

"Look here, boys, I've got no time to fool with you. My governor's upstairs (as a matter of fact he was *on* the stairs), and I want to go out with him. Ginger, I'll take half a crown from you. You smashed two chairs."

"You're a bloomin' bloodsucker, you are! But take your rotten 'arf crown!"

The money began to trickle slowly in. "You are slower than cold molasses! You move like toads whipped through tar. Get a rustle on! Joe, you broke the big jug. Eighteen pence, please." Joe tossed in a two-shilling piece. "Have the change?" "Naw! Keep it to buy wax for yer mustache."

Presently he had the required amount. Then he said: "What's the matter with making it five bob more as a little present to Harry? He's been good to us." They gave that, as well, and The Boy added half a crown. Then he came tearing up the stairs to pour his takings on Harry's table.

"Fine lads, Dad. They would have given twice as much if I had asked it. They like their bit of fun."

When I asked him that evening if he ever had a bad quarter of an hour thinking about what might happen, he looked surprised and pained. "Why, Dad, I couldn't be a soldier if it was like

that. No, I have nothing to fear. I'll do my best and leave the rest." Then, very tenderly: "Dad dear, I feel that God is always with me, and that I am going where He wants me to be. I'm very happy."

"May I shake hands with you, sir?" said a crippled soldier not long since. "I've often wanted to speak to you because I knew your son. He was the finest soldier I ever knew. He was always looking for the hardest work and the most dangerous places. He never seemed to tire and he never seemed to rest. And always in the primest spirits. He'd give you anything, he would. He got more parcels than all the rest of our squad put together, but they was as much ours as hisen. He was always thinking about us and taking care of us. Said his prayers, too, wherever he was, though he didn't fling any pious talk at us. I want you to know, sir, that he made a different man of me from what I was, as he did of many others, them as is left and them as has gone West.

"I helped to bury him, I did, under Kimmel Mountain. The guns of the Canadians play over his grave. It is good to think that his own fellow-countrymen keep watch over him. Even now I can hardly feel as he's dead."

"He is not dead," I said. "He is very much alive."

Well, this is the second anniversary of the day. The Boy completed his work. He has been in that other life long enough now to know his way about. I am sure he makes himself at home there.

Why do I believe in that other life? For one thing, *because I want to believe in it.* I am happier and stronger for believing in it. I believe in believing. I am built that way. I am determined to believe all the great, big, beautiful things I can believe. What is a man's soul given him for if not to believe with? I know of men who aim to be daring in their doubts. I prefer to be daring in my beliefs.

I believe in that other life because I am The Boy's Dad. Having loved as I have loved it would be intolerable for me not to believe that I shall meet him again. It would be maddening. To me, Love is both a demand for the other life and an assurance of it. Materialism would be hell to a love like mine. If I believed that The Boy was done and ended with, I should never care to look at another flower, nor hear another bird sing, nor kiss another baby, nor lift my hand to another task.

Weak argument, do you say? No argument at all, if you like. Arguments are almost never convincing. Experiences are. I have done a bit of arguing in my time and may do so again, but I doubt if I have ever convinced a single human being of anything by argument in all my life, and I doubt if I ever shall. Certainly I am not disposed to argue this matter. With that sun-born thing in my heart, I shall not bandy words about it.

The Boy has plenty of old companions with him now. Five members of his cricket team have joined him. He was the first to go, but they followed thick and fast. Some of them gave their

hearts to God because of what they saw in the life of The Boy.

I cannot imagine what they do over there, but they do well. I was always happy about him when he strode away with his friends, and I am happy about him now.

Kindly meaning people sometimes say to me: "So you lost a boy in the war?" But *I have not lost him*. It would take something far stronger than death and far worse than death to rob me of him. There are such things in the world, as you doubtless know. No, I can never lose him now.

"Hard luck," they say, "that it should have happened on the eve of his home-coming to take his commission." I feel it sometimes that way myself. But then I remember that he got a higher commission. He did not suffer. It was all over in an instant. I know where his grave is, though I have not seen it yet. I have a little daisy from it growing in the garden here.

The Boy has not communicated with me since he went home. He used to write nearly every day. He would write from his billet and from the trenches and from wayside resting-places. His letters and post-cards are all here in the drawer beside me. The last was written a few hours before he got his call. Some day I shall arrange them in chronological order—but not just yet.

I am not worrying about the fact that he no longer corresponds with me. It is no fault of his. He has not forgotten. I am not quite certain that

I really want him to correspond with me from that Wonderland to which he has gone. It might not be best for me in relation to the bit of work I have still to do. I know he would not try to sneak a message through to me if it was contrary to regulations. Assuredly I do not want to hear from him through any of those clairvoyant people. It would be a sacrilege to have them butting in. When he can speak to me face to face, I shall be glad. I can wait for that.

Meanwhile, I ask God to give The Boy my love. If there is any information regarding us that would make him happier, I ask God to impart it to him. I cannot speak to him now, but God can. Also, in the meanwhile, I feel The Boy's warm love about me. The soul of him seems present with me. Ever the surge of his spirit is round me like A Lifting Tide.

THE END

