

experienced a glorious resurrection ; and the secret of its profound and permanent power lies in the pain and pathos of his life, which can never cease to move the heart of humanity.

JAMES STALKER.

### THE FORESIGHT OF FAITH.

THE difference between the eternal vision of God and the temporal outlook of man has been compared to one standing on a hill with the landscape in its length and breadth before him, and another crossing the plain in a swiftly moving train, on whom the landscape breaks part by part. This ingenious illustration, after it has served its purpose to show the relation of eternity and time, may be utilized to suggest that we also have an eternal kinship. We retain what we have seen after it has vanished ; we anticipate what has yet to be seen before it appears. It is the present which is not yet ours, since it is only being transferred to the exposed plate of experience—the past and the future are carried in our consciousness. One faculty of our mysterious nature records, as by an automatic register, the experiences of yesterday, so that not one deed, or word, or thought is lost—not one but can be reproduced by some commonplace spell, the crowing of a cock at early dawn, or the fragrance of dried rose-leaves in some old-fashioned drawing-room. Another pictures with minute prophetic power the experiences of to-morrow, so that the distant horizon is golden with inspiring illusions, or black with brooding anxieties. We are the slaves of memory and imagination, but in the conflict for the control of the soul imagination is easily victor. Hope rather than repentance is the instrument of salvation.

Imagination is the faculty which represents the future,

foresight is the quality which possesses it ; and foresight is one of the standards of character. Without foresight no one can claim to be of serious account—he may take lessons from an ant ; with it no one need despair of any achievement—he has outrun time. Foresight confers distinction on every effort of man, and raises it a degree. It elevates economy into providence ; it broadens business into enterprise ; with this addition politics become statesmanship, and literature prophecy. Life gains perspective and atmosphere ; it is reinforced by unseen hopes and rewards. The burden of the future becomes a balance in life, tempering the intoxication of joy with the cares of to-morrow, and softening the bitterness of sorrow with its compensations. Foresight, sending on its spies into the land of promise, returns to brace and cheer every power of the soul, and becomes the mother of all hardy and strenuous virtues, of self-restraint, and self-denial, of sacrifice and patience. He who seizes to-day may have pleasure ; he who grasps to-morrow shall have power.

An admirable work of modern art shows Jesus standing at the door of a carpenter's shop, and stretching himself after a long day's labour. The setting sun falling on His outspread arms makes the shadow of the cross, and carries terror into Mary's heart. The attitude of the body was typical of the attitude of the soul. Jesus grasped at the future, as He seemed also to carry with Him a mysterious past. Before Him extended the long distances of the Divine Will, and He arranged His life for Calvary. When a pious scholar came by night to discuss His new ideas, Jesus could not explain the Kingdom of God without a reference to His cross (St. John iii. 14). As He spake in the synagogue of Capernaum after the miracle of the loaves, His sacrifice rose before Him, and the bread of life became His Flesh and His Blood (St. John vi. 53). On the way to Jerusalem He drew His disciples aside, and, while the people passed in their

carelessness, Jesus described the tragedy that was at hand (St. Matt. xx. 18). The sight of certain foreign Jews, full of curiosity about this new Master, suggested to Him that throne from which He was to rule the world, and He saw across His Passion the victory of His Love (St. John xii. 23). In the upper room His vision had passed beyond the cross, and He commanded that the sacrament of His Body and Blood should be celebrated till His second advent (St. Luke xxii. 19). After His resurrection He gave the first earnest of the Holy Ghost, and anticipated the spread of the evangel throughout the world (Acts i. 8). With Jesus the present was ever eclipsed by the future, so that while the multitude would have made Him a King, He saw Himself forsaken on a cross; and while He was about to be crucified, He was promising to return for the judgment of the world. He set His face steadfastly, lifted above the ebb and flow of circumstances, because the Divine Will was ever revealing itself, peak above peak, to the ages of ages.

Possessed by the spirit of to-morrow, it was natural that our Master should labour to imbue His disciples with the same; but on a first reading His teaching presents a perplexing paradox. This Man, who was born amid the narrow circumstances of poverty, and acquainted with its exacting cares, belittles ordinary prudence to an audience of country folk, and gives counsels of perfection about an easy mind. With the scanty wages of Galilee, and the charge of little children, they were to allow to-morrow to take care of itself, and not even concern themselves about the bare necessities of life (St. Matt. vi. 25, 34). He saw His chosen disciples fling away their only means of livelihood with approval, and sent them forth on a mission as bare as the monks of St. Francis (St. Matt. x. 9, 10). If a young man won His love, He did not hesitate to demand the sacrifice of his possessions (St. Matt. xix. 21), and He pursued with bitter mocking rich men who doubled their investments (St. Luke

xii. 20). As for Himself, He was dependent on the charity of pious women (St. Luke viii. 3), and had to work a miracle to pay the temple tax (St. Matt. xvii. 27). He seems to justify the light heart of imprudence, and the recklessness of impulse, to condemn prudence as unbelief, and enterprise as crass foolishness.

Parallel with this depreciation of foresight, runs an endless exhortation to its practice. The Kingdom of God as the Chief Good is to be the first object in life (St. Matt. vi. 33); it is the pearl of great price which one ought to secure as the best of all his possessions (St. Matt. xiii. 46). It was wisdom to humble oneself as a little child, because the child-character stood highest in the coming State (St. Matt. xviii. 4); and better to take the lowest room at the feast of life, since the lowest would be the highest in the end (St. Luke xiv. 7-11). If one did sell all he had for Christ's sake, he would have treasure in heaven (St. Matt. xix. 21); and they who abandoned their best in His service, had the promise of a hundred-fold return (St. Matt. xix. 29). It was shrewder to labour for the Living Bread than for the meat that perisheth, because it would endure (St. John vi. 27); and to place one's capital in heaven rather than on earth, because of the moth and rust which corrupt, and the thieves which break through and steal (St. Matt. vi. 19). Lazarus, with his good things on the other side, has the advantage over Dives with his brief while of purple and fine linen (St. Luke xvi. 18-31); and as a mere matter of profit and loss, he that saves his soul is wiser than he who gains a world (St. Mark viii. 36). Jesus amazes us twice, first by casting the principle of prudence out of common life and making no provision for the future; and second, by introducing the principle of prudence into the sphere of religion, and making the rewards of the Kingdom of heaven a subject of calculation.

Let us remember that one of Jesus' most convincing

characteristics was a certain soundness of mind, which kept Him continually in contact with fact and life. He accepted creation before proceeding to regeneration, and preferred to utilize human nature rather than quarrel with it. Foresight is an instinct which is atrophied in criminals and wastrels, which flourishes in workers and rulers. It may be cultivated either within the sphere of the seen or the unseen, and as a matter of fact has seldom been adopted by faith. With two worlds before His eye, Jesus proposed to shift the *venue* of this influential motive from this world unto that which is to come, and sought to accomplish the change by starving foresight, when expended upon the material, and fostering it when devoted to the spiritual. As it is evidently out of the question that one can make the best of both worlds—ye cannot serve God and mammon, as our Master said in His conclusive way—Jesus desired that His disciples should concentrate themselves upon the world which remaineth.

Jesus embodied His comparative view of material and spiritual foresight in a parable which has a double distinction. The Unjust Steward is the only parable of Jesus which gives for one instant a shock of moral offence to the reader; it is also the only one which illustrates the action of the principle of foresight on two different ethical levels. It is quite allowable for us to be surprised that Jesus should choose a case of deliberate and clever fraud for a parable; it is scarcely pardonable that any intelligent person should suppose that Jesus approved or condoned the fraud. One is indeed struck by Jesus' felicity in selecting a set of circumstances which will so certainly excite intellectual curiosity, and so perfectly bring out His point. Within the briefest space the place of foresight in human action is defined, while its lower application is skilfully depreciated, and its higher power fully enforced. It is Jesus' most incisive deliverance on worldliness, and other-worldliness.

The parable is a palimpsest whose surface presents a story in commercial life, so ignoble and uninviting that it does not deserve record, and contains beneath half-hidden, half revealed, a gospel of Jesus. But this palimpsest has a peculiarity of its own, because the upper legend is not an obliteration of the lower truth, but rather its introduction—the envelope which holds the message. One ought not to erase the legend before he has mastered it, because in that case he will miss the key to the interpretation of the truth. This indolent and luxurious steward, without conscience or manliness, is the lowest type of a man of this world. The unexpected discovery of his embezzlement, and his threatened dismissal from office, are the sudden changes which affect the ease and comfort of the present life. His vivid anticipations of the hardness of life for a poor and disgraced man show how selfishness can be served by imagination. And the fellow's fraudulent device is an example of insurance against coming risks, and of adaptation to new circumstances. Jesus did not choose an honourable merchant because He required the dismissal for His parable, and He desired to invest sheer worldliness with a dash of contempt. This was a petty rascal—a mere fox of a man—but he saved himself, according to his lights, by foresight.

The under writing on the parchment corresponds with the upper, save for one or two significant blanks, and is a translation of the same story into another language. This self-indulgent steward is replaced by the disciple of Jesus with his cross. Death will release him from this inhospitable life and restore him to his home. Yet his imagination has never realized what shall be the splendour of his spiritual environment. And he is not striving with all his might so to till the opportunities of this life that he shall reap their harvest in the life which is to come. That shallow trickster will sell his conscience to secure a roof above his head for a brief space; but Jesus' disciple will not bestir

himself to make certain of everlasting habitations. It was to Jesus quite astonishing either that any one should take much thought what might befall him in this world which passeth away, or that any one should be indifferent to the infinite attraction of the world which abideth. The parable is a eulogium on foresight, and a plea that its whole force should be used to secure the "everlasting habitations." It is Jesus' argument for "other-worldliness."

It may be frankly admitted that a very coarse and sordid interpretation can be put on this argument, and the conduct of the unjust steward be repeated with aggravation on the spiritual side of things. The parable does lend itself to that material Theology whether of Rome or Geneva, which teaches that Heaven can be literally bought. Whether the price be the merits of Jesus or the merits of saints, the sufferings of Jesus or the alms of penitents, does not matter, since in either case the principle is the same and is clearly unreasonable. Heaven is a spiritual state and its settlement on any person, either on account of a payment in blood or money is an absurdity. His introduction into this new environment without respect to his fitness would be an outrage. This is too literal a rendering of the steward's book-keeping; too flagrant a contradiction of the whole spirit of Jesus' teaching. Jesus' blood will give white robes which are the dress of Heaven: the faithful use of riches will produce character which is the passport to Heaven. One can imagine how the penitent thief might become suddenly fit for Paradise, because he did homage to goodness—when goodness was obscured by the shame and weakness of the cross. One cannot imagine Ananias obtaining entrance by the unwilling gift of all he possessed, or by an act of mercenary faith. Foresight will win Heaven, but it is not the foresight of a mercantile speculation.

One remembers at the same time that certain persons in the Gospels did use their earthly possessions after such

a wise and gracious fashion that they proved themselves not unworthy to have a place in the Kingdom of Heaven, either in this world or the next. The Magi who brought their gifts to the Holy Child; the faithful women who made a home for God's Son; St. Matthew, and such as he, who left all to follow Him; Zaccheus, who in honour of His coming gave half of his goods to the poor; Joseph, who obtained Christ's body from Pilate and laid it in his own garden tomb were good stewards. These men did make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and changed their gold and silver into eternal riches. They did not make their sacrifices for ends of gain, but for love's sake. Keeping the one commandment of Love, they had kept all the others, and had a right to enter in by the gate into the City. This little handful saw farther than all their generation, for in the things of the Spirit foresight is not the cunning calculation of chances, it is rather the sacrifice of everything for Christ. There are two passages which go well together in the Gospels: one is "Then took Mary a pound of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus"; and the other, "In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you."

According to the mind of Jesus, the foresight which prepares one for the future life is a certain attitude of soul. No person, it may be assumed, would refuse the reversion of a blessed future, with its high hopes of the freedom of holiness and the unfettered service of the Divine Will, but many persons are not minded to subordinate its unseen excellence to the solid possession of the present. They have made themselves so absolutely at home among the principles and rewards of a material world that they would be out of place amid the very different conditions and occupations of a spiritual world. It is this unfitness that will deny them a habitation. Certain persons, on the other hand, are determined that



the physical shall not fling its "tangling veil" so close around their hearts as to blind them to the glory of the Unseen, and are prepared to use the things which are seen as the stepping-stone to the things which are eternal. They store within their souls these intangible treasures of goodness, which are wrested from the experiences of sacrifice as pearls from the dark caverns of the deep. With such gold they purchase their home in the Land of Promise. Their fitness will ensure their habitation.

"He who flagged not in the earthly strife,  
From strength to strength advancing only he,  
His soul well knit, and all his battles won,  
Mounts and that hardly to eternal life."

Jesus approved the man who lived under the power of the Unseen, who was guided by a resolute, strenuous faith, who was determined not to lose the future. He had no hope of easy-going, thoughtless, improvident persons—the pauper class—in the spiritual world: from them he expected no great endeavours: for them he prophesied nothing but disasters. The man who had forethought built his house on the rock: the man who had none built his on the sand. The rock-house stood, the sand-house fell. The servant who played the fool because his master delayed his coming was cast out: had he persevered unto the end, he would have been accepted. It was the catastrophe of short-sightedness: he ought to have kept his master's coming before his eyes. Five virgins are resolved that they will on no account miss the marriage, and make their arrangements at a cost of thought. Five have other things to think about besides the marriage, and do not burden themselves with preparations. Five enter in because for them the Kingdom of God was first: five remain outside because for them it was an ordinary matter. The wise virgins were of the same temper as Jesus Himself, and so they were His friends.

“Other-worldliness” has been the subject of much satire in our materialistic day, and has been condemned for its enervating and crippling influence on life. It is right, therefore, to remind oneself that “Other-worldliness” has two forms and that both are not open to such charges. One school of piety has always held that the choice preparation for the Eternal World is seclusion and devotion, and when the Second Advent was confidently expected, in the middle ages, society was disorganized and life arrested in Europe. Western Christendom was caught in a spasm of repentance, and even irreligious people were shaken; some entered sacred houses; some hid themselves in caves; some set out for Palestine to meet the Lord. The fruits of that brief emotion remain unto this day in stately buildings and ecclesiastical donations. Yet about that very time some one conceived a very lovely parable that also remaineth. How a godly monk prayed and fasted and longed to see Christ. How one day a light began to shine in his lonely cell, and he waited for the visible revelation of his loved Lord; how at that very moment his summons came to feed the poor at the convent gate; how he obeyed the call and gave out the loaves of bread and returned in sorrow, for he was sure that he had missed the condescension of the Lord; and how Christ was waiting for him, and said, “Hadst thou refused thy duty, I had left; since thou wast faithful, I tarried to bless thee.” Two complementary chapters in “Other-worldliness.”

Charles V. of Spain was the greatest personage in the history of his day—the heir of four royal lines, ruler of Spain, the Netherlands, Austria and Naples, for whom Cortes had also conquered the New World. He led huge armies, gained great victories, conducted momentous affairs, lived amid critical events. In his day the Ottoman was beaten back from the frontiers of Europe and the Christian

Church was divided. It was in this wide place Charles lived, amid these stirring circumstances he moved; yet he was ever thinking of the end, and had resolved, with Isabella, his loved Queen, to retire at a certain time into a holy place and wait for Christ. The Master came for her before the day arrived, but Charles abdicated his throne and divested himself of power amid general sorrow and admiration, and gave his last days to the practice of religion in the Monastery of Yuste. Contrast with this cloistered piety the scene in the American Senate-house during the Revolution, when at mid-day a great darkness fell and no man could see his brother's face. Even these stout Puritans were for the moment dismayed. Voices cried, "It is the Day of Judgment," and there was some confusion. Then one of the Fathers rose and said, "Whether it be the Judgment Day or no, I know not, but this I know, that it is God's Will we save our country, and we shall be judged accordingly. I move that the candles be lit and that we go on with our business." Two schools of "Other-worldliness," and very different. With the Catholic foresight spelt devotion—with the Puritan, duty.

It is an ungenerous task to compare these types of piety, and one ought to be grateful for each in its place. The Master is not likely to despise that delicate and reverent feeling which would wait for His coming in a secret place and meet Him in prayer. Nor is it to be thought that He will set any store by the mechanical performance of loveless service and exalt Judas with his bag above Mary with her spikenard. Jesus has wrought a beautiful harmony, for in one of His parables He has taken the most mystical form of "Other-worldliness"—that which watches for His Second Advent, and has laid on His waiting servant the most homely task—to give to the household their meat in due season. With one touch of grace He has made duty a synonym for piety, and has reconciled the inner and

outer life. He has vindicated the "Other-worldliness" of the Gospels, for He has made the foresight of the Kingdom of God, in its loftiest ambition as well as its minutest calculation, identical with the unsparing and self-forgetful service of man.

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PROFESSOR F. BLASS ON THE TWO EDITIONS  
OF ACTS.<sup>1</sup>

ONE of the most important contributions to the textual criticism and the interpretation of *Acts* that have appeared in this century is the new edition by the veteran Greek scholar, Dr. F. Blass, of Halle. Dr. Blass leads a conservative reaction in Germany. He accepts the Lucan authorship and the unity of *Acts* unhesitatingly; and occasionally makes rather discontented allusions to the "critical views" on this subject. But he is not disposed to worship the "Eastern Text" (what we may call the "Approved Text") of *Acts*, and to reject the "Western Text" wherever it varies, according to the general (though happily not the universal) opinion of modern scholars. He considers that the Eastern and the Western Text are both original, both written by Luke himself; and his views on this point are probably the feature of his book that will attract most attention. They had been stated already in an article in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 1894, p. 86 f., and are here repeated in a fuller form. In at least one detail the book improves on the view stated in the article. In the article he held that the text of Codex Bezae, in XIV. 2, "the *archisynagogoi* of the Jews and the rulers of the synagogue" resulted from a union of two different readings; but

<sup>1</sup> *Acta Apostolorum sive Lucae ad Theophilum Liber alter*: editio philologica, etc., auctore Friderico Blass, Göttingen, 1895.