

“THE MIND OF THE MASTER.”

THIS is a superficially attractive and a deeply disappointing book. It has such gift of phrase that one thinks it might easily have been a work of art, but it is not. And it has such flashes of insight that one looks to it for fresh and real teaching, but gets nothing of the sort. Let us linger for a moment with the style, meaning thereby the expression of thought, and not such slips as that by which in the first sentence of chapter viii. a verb is left without a nominative.

There is an unpleasant flavour of Renan, in his most sugary mood, in the expression which tells us about Jesus “in a moment of fine inspiration” (p. 117). Of course, if this expresses Dr. Watson’s settled opinion, it is not with the style that we must quarrel. But if he believes (as we gladly think he does) that the Spirit in His organic completeness “abode upon” Jesus, that the words which He spake were not His own, but as He heard He spoke; that as long as He was in the world He was the light of the world; that He whom God sent spoke the words of God because God gave not the Spirit unto Him by measure; that He was one with His discourse (Σὺ τίς εἶ; . . . Τὴν ἀρχὴν ὁ, τι καὶ λαλῶ ὑμῖν, John viii. 25), being Himself the Word, the Truth, and the true Light,—in that case, to speak of “moments of fine inspiration,” as if inspiration ebbed and flowed in the breast of Jesus, is not only nonsense, but very mischievous nonsense indeed. What is in question is not the κένωσις, but the efficient equipment of the Logos. It is our hope that such expressions (and we shall find many such) do not indicate erroneous doctrine, but only defective grasp on doctrine; that they are the utterance of a man of

letters moving about in the world unrecognised of theology, and that the handwriting is uncertain because the pen is in an unsteady grasp.

Here is a good specimen of theology unrecognised:— "When one says 'I believe' in the Nicene Creed, he means that he assents to the theological statement" (p. 152). He neither says nor means anything of the sort: what he declares is belief in the God of whom the formula is predicated, and he dwells on the formula only because it defines and clears his conception of the God whom he says that "I believe in." The belief which the Nicene Creed requires is exactly that "faith," with which Dr. Watson contrasts it. But one is greatly helped to disparage the creeds by ignoring their exact contents.

And here, again, is a curious specimen of unsteadiness of the pen. In one place we read that "a prophet has many things to say to his generation; one only is his message. Jesus treated every idea of the first order in the sphere of religion; His burden was Life" (p. 67). But again we are told that "every prophet of the first order has his own message, and it crystalises into a favourite idea. . . . With the Master, it was the Kingdom of God" (p. 319). How in the name of reason are these two assertions to be reconciled?

Here is another specimen of inadequate and evasive thinking. "Jesus never succeeded in public save once, when He was crucified: He never failed in private save once, with Pontius Pilate" (p. 110). As if Jesus had no private intercourse with Iscariot. But what is Dr. Watson's notion of success? If he means lasting and solid effect, then all the public words and works of Jesus, from the Sermon on the Mount to His defiance of the High Priest, are a success prodigious and eternal. If he means immediate and apparent success, then the Cross consummated the failure of the life of Jesus.

We do not want *mots* upon this grave subject, we want real helps to insight, and this is a *mot* which ceases to impose the moment we examine it, an epigram which attracts us only while we half think.

The Church, he says, “Jesus only mentions once” (p. 320). He is wrong (Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17 *bis*); but the fact that Jesus only twice named it thus is rather an evidence that He had some other name for it than the reverse. It increases the probability of what the author apparently denies, that the Church is the same as the Kingdom of God. “No natural reading of Church can include Plato; no natural reading of kingdom can exclude him. The effect of the two institutions upon the world is a contrast” (pp. 321, 322). But why does the author speak elsewhere of these two institutions as identical, “that unique society which He called the Kingdom of God, and we prefer to call the Church” (p. 14)? For him, by the way, that kingdom is “Utopia,” and the regeneration is “Utopia” also (pp. 58, 319).

Still confining ourselves to style, we fancy—but this may be only Anglican prejudice—that we detect a bathos in the following words: “When Traditionalism has the upper hand, it burns its opponents as Rome did John Huss, or annoys them as the Church of England did Robertson of Brighton” (p. 11).

Alas for the martyr who was burned! And alas for that other martyr who was “annoyed,” if not by the Church of England (which was otherwise engaged), at least by some elderly folk in Brighton!

Again, what is to be said of the good taste or decency of such an utterance as this: “Spiritual statistics are unknown in the Gospels; they came in with St. Peter in the pardonable intoxication of success: they have since grown to be a mania” (p. 110)? Poor St. Peter! Are we then to suppose that his head was turned on the day when he was

baptized with the Holy Ghost,—that it was he who reckoned the three thousand (perhaps while preaching), and in a fit of conceit informed St. Luke of the fine result of his great sermon? And yet we seem to remember earlier statistics, and that his Master, as an incentive to faith, reminded the Twelve of the five thousand and the four thousand; of how many loaves fed them, and how many baskets full they gathered up.

We pass from the style to the substance of this book. What kind of teaching does it contain? We have hinted pretty broadly already our suspicion that the writer has not laid a firm grasp on any theory of the facts. And the reader will find it easier to believe this when he is shown, in one or two flagrant examples, with what sort of grasp on the narrative itself has Dr. Watson undertaken to expound, for us, the Mind of the Master.

Take then the following narrative, for a certain abruptness in which we are not accountable, but only for the italics. "‘If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.’ Of course, I am willing, said Jesus, *and referred the man back to his inalienable human rights*" (p. 94). Unfortunately, this reference back is not produced, and indeed nothing of the kind ever happened. What we read is that Jesus said "I will" (and added, as a result of His own volition), "be thou clean," but, as to inalienable human rights, in the Mind of the Master man was a debtor who might be sold into slavery, a prodigal without hope except from his father's mercy.

One is half ashamed to say where he suspects that Dr. Watson got this strange theory and stranger story. There is a dim resemblance to it in the answer of Jesus, not given to a sufferer asking for his own cleansing, but to an agonized father whose child the disciples could not cure. He did on that occasion say that all things were possible,—not to humanity, by virtue of its inherent rights,

but to faith. He said it, not because the suppliant was ignorant of the rights of humanity, but because he was distrustful of the Good Physician. "If Thou canst do anything," said the man. "If thou canst," said Jesus, "all things are possible to him that believeth." And we are well informed, by many passages, that the faith which He required was not confidence in one's inalienable rights; it was reliance upon the ability and heart of a benefactor. His question was, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" The great faith of the Canaanite was not proved by reliance on the inalienable rights of humanity, but by accepting a place with the dogs under the table.

Here is another specimen of the same inaccuracy: "When He said, 'Believe in Me,' 'Carry My Cross,' was He not calling men to fulfil His gospel?" (pp. 19, 20). But Jesus never said to any man, "Carry My Cross," and perhaps no one ever claimed to do so until now. Certainly the inspired writers attached such a sacredness to the Cross of Jesus, that, despite the example of their Master, they never ventured to describe their own sufferings by the name of a cross at all.¹ And yet St. Paul spoke of filling up what was left over of the suffering of his Master, and Jesus spoke of drinking from His cup, and being baptized with His baptism. But of sharing His Cross, never. That He bade His disciples to take up some cross is attested by two passages in each of the Synoptic Gospels, one of which, however (Mark x. 21), is unquestionably spurious. Not one of the remaining five considers that the phrase τὸν σταυρὸν guards sufficiently well against the misinterpretation τὸν σταυρὸν μου. In four of them it is τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, and in the other, still more emphatically, it is τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ.

¹ Gal. ii. 20: "I have been crucified with Christ," has no bearing on the matter in hand, which would require the present tense: I am, by daily suffering, in the process of being crucified.

I do not stop to ask now what the meaning of this significant fact may be: it is enough to point out that for Dr. Watson's assertion (the foundation of a most important argument)—the assertion, namely, that Jesus said, "Carry My Cross"—there is no justification whatsoever. He guarded Himself well against any such misunderstanding (Matt. x. 38, xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix. 23, xiv. 27).

And yet how much is presently built upon this gratuitous, reiterated blunder. "Jesus did not describe His Cross as a satisfaction to God, else He had scarcely asked His disciples to share it" (p. 120); "Jesus nowhere commanded that one cling to His Cross: He everywhere commanded that one carry His Cross" (p. 128). It is of the Cross, thus misunderstood, that we read, not without pain, "the action of the Cross on sin is as simple in its higher sphere as the reduction of fever by antipyrine" (pp. 121, 122). But perhaps he is not the best physician, for body or soul, who professes to find no mystery in the action of remedy upon disease. At all events we repeat that Jesus does not utter anywhere the precept, said to be "everywhere," upon which all this is based. Now, just as you cannot botanize by trampling down the flower beds, so it is of little use to theorize boldly about facts which one is walking over instead of carefully observing,—unless indeed one accepts the wonderful dictum, which explains so much of this book, that "we have an intuition of Jesus. *He is not a subject of study*, He is a revelation to the soul: that or nothing" (p. 50). As if a revelation from God were not to be studied. As if the prophets did not search and inquire diligently.

But this reminds us that, in the language of this book, the prophets are discoverers. "Their chief discovery was the character of God—when the Hebrew conscience . . . lifted the veil from the Eternal, and conceived Jehovah as the impersonation of Righteousness" (p. 113). In another passage we are told how they achieved this exploit; Jewish

piety "imagined" the austere holiness of God, it "added" His tenderness; the saints "infused the idea with passion," they "assigned" to Him human emotions; they "are unapproachable in their familiarity" (pp. 255, 256).

And, of course, since it is they who have done all this, we are quite as much indebted to them as Dr. Watson says, who tells us that they laid the world under a priceless obligation. But we have been accustomed to think that it was a more awful Hand than theirs which, while they covered their eyes, "lifted the veil from the Eternal."

Again, "His disciples were to use no kind of force, neither tradition, *nor miracles*, nor the sword, nor money. They were to live as He lived" (p. 57). Does this really mean that He worked no miracles, and that He did not say, "If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin?" Does it mean that He did not bid them, "heal the sick, cast out devils," nor say, "These signs shall follow them that believe," nor again, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto My Father"? If not this, does it mean anything?

In another passage, the resurrection of Jesus is hopelessly confused with the immortality of His spirit.

"Was this Life something that could be quenched by death or that death could touch? Granted that they scourged and crucified Jesus' body, that it died and was buried. Could Jesus, who gave the Sermon on the Mount and the discourse in the upper room, who satisfied St. John and loosed St. Mary Magdalene from her sin, and who remains the unapproachable ideal of perfection, be annihilated by a few nails and the thrust of a Roman spear? If the lowest form of energy, however it may be transformed or degraded, be still conserved in some shape and place, can any one believe that the Author of Life in this world was extinguished on a Roman cross? The certainty of Jesus' resurrection does not rest in the last issue on His

isolated appearances during the forty days; it rests on His Life for thirty-three years. His Life was beyond the reach of death; it was Ageless Life" (pp. 82, 83).

But this is not the doctrine of any resurrection at all. In every shape in which that doctrine is not explained away, it affirms the redress of death which has occurred, not the impossibility that it ever should occur. When the Church of Christ professes her faith in His resurrection, she means the resurrection of His Body, which was so far from being "beyond the reach of death" that, as she affirms, "it was crucified, dead, and buried." When Jesus Himself predicted the future suffering of the Son of Man, He did not say that He was "beyond the reach of death"; He said exactly the reverse, "They shall kill Him, and the third day He shall rise again." And the citadel of the faith will be surrendered when the Church accepts this new gospel that it was impossible for Christ to share our death, and so make us partakers of His immortality, instead of the old gospel, "that He tasted death for every man," that He hath been raised from out of the dead, "the firstfruit of them that slept." "We are baptized into His death," said Paul; "He is alive because He could not die," says Dr. Watson.

In reliance upon this strange confusion of ideas, he relinquishes, at least for the homely Christian, not only the real doctrine of the resurrection of the Body of Jesus, but also, quite formally, the evidence by which it is established. "How can one be certain that Jesus is with God? It is a question of the last importance. There are four lines of proof. The first is to cite reliable evidence that Jesus rose from Joseph's tomb—this is for a lawyer. The second is historical—the existence of the Christian Church—this is for a scholar. The third is mystical—the experience of Christians—this is for a saint. The fourth is ethical—the nature of Jesus' life—this is for every one.

The last is the most akin to the mind of Jesus, who was accustomed to insist upon the self-evidencing power of His life. He is alive because He could not die. 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'" (p. 81). But if the only evidence (except for lawyers, scholars, and saints) only proves the impossibility that Christ should die, it certainly follows that there is no evidence for the life of that which actually died.

Again, "Jesus cast His whole doctrine of sin into the drama of the Prodigal Son. . . . The parable moves between the two poles of ideal and real human life—home, where the sons of God live in moral harmony with their Father, which is liberty; and exile, where they live in riotous disobedience, which is license. He fixes on His representative sinners," etc. (p. 102). This reading of the parable entirely overlooks the fact that the son who remained at home was quite out of harmony with his father; of all the plenty of that mansion he never really enjoyed a kid, and his secret friends were those with whom he could not there make merry.

In the same connection, and still as a part of the teaching of Jesus, he tells us that "each man carried his heaven in his heart—'the kingdom is within you'; or his hell in a gnawing remorse and heat of lust, 'where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched'" (p. 103). One may not deny that the germs of heaven and hell are even now within the saint and the sinner. But it is quite certain that our Lord never used these words "heaven" and "hell" of the present time. "The kingdom of heaven" does not mean heaven; hell is a place where, after death, the rich man lifted up his eyes, and into which the sinner, with hands and eyes which misled him, is finally "cast."

When we read that Jesus "had moods" and "sometimes lost heart" (p. 240), that He "rested His own Sonship on community of character" (p. 262), and not His

community of character upon His Sonship; and that He "pursued with bitter mocking" those of whom He disapproved, we are forced to ask whether the theology of Dr. Watson is really represented by these passages, or by others which seem to contradict them; and, it must be added, we are again reminded very painfully of M. Renan. And what is the meaning of the sinister phrase, "Jesus assumed existence [in another world] for all, but existence on this low plane of death was not worth His consideration. *Jesus was not an authority on existence*" (p. 72). What it seems to mean is that Jesus did not believe in the annihilation of the wicked, but that His opinion does not greatly matter.

In a study of the Mind of the Master one looks for some light upon the two symbolical actions which He bequeathed to His Church. And, as usual, Dr. Watson finds them very simple indeed, as a skater thinks the water shallow into which he does not plunge. "Each was perfect in its simplicity, a beautiful poem" (p. 333). Yes, but what are these poems about? "One was Baptism, where the candidate for God's kingdom disappeared into water and appeared again with a new name. This meant that he had died to self and risen a new creature, the child of the divine will" (*ibid.*). The incessant doctrine of Scripture is that "We are baptized into Christ's death, . . . buried with Christ in baptism," but here we have, perhaps for the first time in the long history of the church, a formal statement and explanation of the rite, in which Christ—not to say the death of Christ—is never mentioned.

"The other was the Lord's Supper, where Jesus' disciple eats bread and drinks wine in remembrance of His death. This meant that he had entered into the spirit of his Master, and given himself to the service of the world" (*ibid.*). Not a word here about any Divine gift ("the Bread which I will give") nor about human recipiency,

dependence, being fed. In a previous passage the author has examined Christ's discourse upon Himself as the Bread of Life, with the same resolute ignoring of its true meaning. "Community" is substituted for dependence (pp. 76, 77). But, really, it is useless to ask whether the commandment, "Take, eat," means that we "enter into" something, or that something enters into us.

Looking back over the ground which we have traversed, one is struck most of all by a single dominant characteristic. The prophets are discoverers of truth rather than recipients of a revelation. To be made whole is an inalienable human right. The Cross of Christ is no more than a cross which we can share, and expiation is no more than reconciliation. Baptism is only being baptized into a death of our own, and can be explained without mentioning Jesus at all. The Lord's Supper is a pledge, not of Christ given to us, but of ourselves given to the world. It is a supper without Bread.

A noble pattern, lofty teaching, and kindling of ardour by a great Leader—these we find. But the imparting from heaven of what we never could acquire, even when shown to us, the receiving into ourselves of a new humanity,—this is quite neglected, even where it is not inferentially denied. Christ is continually the Master; but the Saviour has disappeared. And yet, when one called Him a good Master, He refused to accept the adjective divorced from a more awful noun. When another confessed Him to be sent from God as a Teacher, He declared that instruction was nothing—"ye must be born again."

It is only with this deficiency noted and borne in mind, that one can examine aright the proposal in defence of which Dr. Watson puts forth all his power. That proposal is that we should withdraw the creeds of Christendom, and replace them by the Sermon on the Mount, which he is pleased to call a creed.

"Among all the creeds of Christendom, the only one which has the authority of Christ Himself is the Sermon on the Mount." "Imagine a body of Christians who should take their stand on the Sermon of Jesus, and conceive their creed on His lines." (This, by the way, assumes that the "Sermon" furnishes the lines on which Jesus would have constructed a creed.) "Who would refuse to sign this creed? They would come from the east and the west, and the north and the south, to its call" (pp. 15-21).

One would wrong Dr. Watson by assuming hereupon that he really wishes to brush aside as unimportant the Divinity of Jesus, the fact that He suffered (not to say that He redeemed us), possibly human immortality, and certainly the very existence of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, he argues rightly that a unique position is claimed by Jesus when He "makes a most unqualified demand on the loyalty of His disciples, and believes that the attraction of His person will sustain their obedience" (p. 184). And it would be ungenerous to question the frankness of his allusions to the Divinity of Christ, although we think that his language is at times calculated to compromise that doctrine gravely.

But the question is not about any one's beliefs: it is about the effect of certain proposals. And we are quite sure that a Church with no creed but the Sermon on the Mount, and flooded, as he anticipates, by great multitudes whom such "liberty of thought" would attract, would neither bear witness to any definite doctrines, nor hold together for six months.

The futility of the proposal may indeed be proved out of his own mouth. "What one thinks to-day he will do to-morrow, and the first equipment for living is a creed" (p. 249).

Is then the Sermon on the Mount the adequate equip-

ment for Christian living? Does it convey the new motive power? "Before Jesus could utilize this love" of His disciples "He had to create it, and this was not accomplished either by His example or His teaching" (p. 189). It follows that it was not created by the Sermon on the Mount. It follows that the contents of that Sermon are not an adequate equipment for Christian living. But this is what, by his own showing, a creed must be. What, then, is the necessary supplement? "Give Me a Cross whereon to die," said Jesus, "and I will make thereof a throne from which to rule the world." . . . Jesus' imagination was powerfully affected . . . by the magnetic attraction of the Cross when He cried, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (p. 190).

Quite so. And this is the reason why the Cross and its triumphant issue are the substance of the model creed given us by the great Apostle with remarkable formality, "I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved." Well, what is it? Not a system of ethics; but the impelling force by which ethics may overcome sloth and self-indulgence and contempt of other men: "that Christ died for our sins, and that He was buried, and that He hath been raised" (1 Cor. xv. 1-3).

(We note in passing that St. Paul did not expect men to be saved by regarding the death of Jesus as "impossible.")

To make good the supreme claim of this so-called creed (which is yet a sermon), it is urged that "the teaching of Jesus must have a solitary value and authority" (p. 26). "Ought we to read St. Paul in the light of Jesus, or Jesus in the light of St. Paul? It is difficult to see how any one can hesitate in his reply, who believes either in the divinity of Jesus' person or in the divinity of His teaching" (p. 39).

These are brave words, but yet we venture to hesitate in our reply; or rather we reply, without hesitation, in the contrary direction from Dr. Watson. Jesus ought not to be the commentator on St. Paul, but St. Paul on Jesus: it is a high testimony to His supreme rank that inspired commentators, both before His incarnation and after His ascension, "spake of Him," and in the light of these we are surely meant to read Him.

Now it is a safe assertion that they all insist twenty times upon His suffering and ascension for once that they allude to His preaching.

Nay, Dr. Watson is himself our best evidence that it is no disrespect to Jesus to read Him in the light of the common instinct of all Christendom, which is not thinking of the Mount of the Sermon when it sings of the "green hill far away." "Whatever is said by St. Paul or St. John, by Augustine or Clement, so far as it conforms to type, may be assigned to Jesus, so that while He said little, if one goes by volume of speech, and wrote nothing, He has been speaking in every after age where any disciple has thought according to His mind. So it was right to say that Jesus gave the Evangel with His own lips,—right also to say that the Evangel has been continued by Him through other lips unto this present" (pp. 29, 30). Right also, we must urge, to find no disrespect to Jesus in valuing those truths which they "could not bear" while He was with them, but which He taught when the Spirit led them into all truth. Was St. Paul disrespectful to Jesus when he was "ever the reverent student and faithful expositor of the mind of Jesus declared to him by heaven and by the inner light"? (pp. 38, 39). How then can our employment of his revelation be a slight put upon his Master?

But even if we granted that our faith must rest upon words spoken by the lips of Jesus upon earth, Dr. Watson tells us that even of subjects which He treated on the

Mount, He “only concluded His treatment before His arrest in the garden” (p. 160), and He insists that St. Paul’s treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is “not to be compared with the promise of the Comforter given in the upper room” (p. 33). Granted, but it follows that this doctrine at least in the Nicene Creed need not be surrendered by way of respect to the words of our Lord Himself. It is absent however from the Sermon on the Mount.

Dr. Watson urges that although “certainly Jesus did expound and amplify the principles of His first deliverance, there is no evidence that He altered the constitution of His kingdom, either by imposing fresh conditions or omitting the old” (p. 19). But He surely said, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in yourselves.” “The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him may have eternal life.” The time is definitely marked out for us when “Jesus began” to teach the doctrine of His suffering and death (Matt. xvi. 21), and if (which at least is surely “thinkable”)—if the actions of Jesus were as great as His words, and if His supreme action was His exodus which He accomplished at Jerusalem, then it follows by a necessary consequence that the real import of His appearance among men could only be explained by His removal.

In truth there is no conflict whatever between the Sermon and these later sayings. They tell how life must be kindled; the Sermon tells in what directions it must exert its energies. The former is the very essence, the differentiating quality of our religion. Least of all should it be ignored by one who allows himself to say that “it is open to debate whether Jesus said anything absolutely new, save when He taught the individual to call God Father” (p. 50), and who is therefore reduced by the exigency of his position

to emaciate the creed of Christendom (as he would have it) until it has no more distinction than this: "Originality is not an addition to knowledge, it is only a new arrangement of colour" (p. 51).

If this is indeed all, one pities the apologists of the next century. And yet, perhaps, if this be all, their inevitable defeat need not concern us or them very sorely.

G. A. DERRY AND RAPHOE.

CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TO HIS OWN DEATH.

III.

THE ministry in Jerusalem is the supreme moment in the history of Jesus, and we have therefore to inquire whether it reveals, and, if so, in what degree it defines, His idea as to His death. We must keep clearly in view the positive features in the situation: He comes to the Holy City, the heart of the religion, the home of the temple, the throne of the priesthood, the one place where sacrifices acceptable to God could be offered. He was under no illusion as to the fate that there awaited Him: the prophet could not perish out of Jerusalem.¹ Hither He came speaking and acting consciously as the Christ, with everything He was to do and suffer stamped by Him and for Himself with a distinct Messianic character. What now was the idea as to His work and fortunes as the Messiah which governed His consciousness? Let us attempt to discover it by an analysis of His words and acts.

I.

A. We begin with the triumphal entry. It can hardly be regarded as an accidental or even spontaneous outburst of popular enthusiasm. The Synoptists were agreed in

¹ Luke xiii. 33.