

from age to age. And where does the higher criticism stay my thoughts? how does it give the lie to the great arguments and proofs on which I rest? I had them before I even knew what "higher criticism" meant. I have them now that I know what the higher critic has to say. Whatever he may do with details, he does not touch my faith in Christ. Sometimes, in facing the questions raised by criticism, as in facing the questions of philosophy, or of one's own mind, one may be baffled and perplexed; but surely the very perplexity works out God's purpose in throwing us back on Christ Himself, and we say, to quote the words of the old hymn in a somewhat different sense from that intended by the writer:

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find."

G. S. STREATFELD.

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

THE twofold description of Jesus which occurs at the close of the book of Revelation (xxii. 16) is probably Messianic in both of its features:

*I am the scion and the offspring of David,
The bright star of the morning.*

The first part of the former title has been already used by the prophet in another connexion (v. 5). An Isaianic reminiscence and category, it denotes the legitimacy of Christ's position as the true Messiah—an anti-Jewish idea which underlies all the book. Jesus is the real Messiah, the authentic heir of Israel's hopes and history. His own people know this now, and the Jews will know it to their shame and sorrow at the end (i. 7). The Davidic descent of Jesus from the tribe of Judah was a tenet to which certain Christian circles in the first century attached keen importance, and the prophet John twice reproduces it in his

conception of Christ's personality. Jesus to him was, in one aspect which had been hallowed by Jewish associations of the Messiah, the shoot or sapling thrown out by the main stem. It is possible, that in the first passage at any rate, some allusion may be intended to the contrast (suggested by the original) between the weak, mean origin and the irresistible courageous career. But in both descriptions it is to be noted that Christ's Davidic descent as the Messiah is connected with his authority in revelation; as the legitimate Messiah he unfolds God's redeeming purpose for mankind, and by his victorious inauguration of that purpose he possess the right and power of unbaring the truth of his own person to the churches.

The second clause of the title, which adds prospect to retrospect, is less obvious. Jesus the historic scion is intelligible; Jesus the heavenly star seems a less apt and congruous description. But as the Dawn (*ἀνατολή*, Luke i. 78) was already a Messianic symbol, it was natural that the Day-Star should be similarly employed by a poetic and imaginative mind. The glory of the high priest Simon ben Onias had been compared (Ecclus. vii. 6) to the morning-star (*ἀστήρ ἑωθινός*) in the midst of a cloud; in Test. XII. Patriarch. (Levi 18) it is said of the Messianic high priest, *ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον αὐτοῦ ἐν οὐρανῷ ὡς βασιλεύς (-εως?) φωτίζων φῶς γνώσεως* (see Enoch xxxviii. 2); and Ps. cx. 3 is rendered in the Septuagint *ἐκγαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐξεγέννησά σε*. To these Messianic suggestions of this phrase in the Apocalypse of John, an Egyptian anticipation falls to be added—one of several which indicate that the writer and his circle may have been familiar with the widespread and ancient terminology of one Egyptian eschatological lore. In Egyptian hymn (see Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge's edition of *The Book of the Dead*, 1898: *The Translation*, p. cxliii.) the dead King Pepi, it is said, "goeth forth into heaven among the stars which never perish (*or*, diminish), and his guide the

Morning-Star leadeth him to Sekhet-Hetep [the fields of peace], and he seateth himself there upon his iron throne [cf. Rev. iii. 21] . . . and his sceptre he hath with him." Such are some possible sources of this figurative expression. But the very circumstances of the local churches must have lent it special force. In the northern districts of Asia Minor, as Pliny remarks, it was the habit of Christians to meet before daybreak for their first act of worship. Accustomed to step out of their meeting-place into the cold, grey dawn, lit only by the solitary morning star, how readily would they understand this symbol of their Lord as the one sure hope and promise of the good time to come in this world and in the next. Wherever a Christian went, Christ's light would be over him; whatever happened to him on either side of death, nothing could hinder Christ's light and care from reaching him. Such was their profound and simple apprehension of his person. To wait for their Lord was, in a deeper sense than the psalmist knew, to watch for the morning.

It is this primarily eschatological sense of the term which dominates the earlier promise in the message addressed to the Christians of Thyatira :

*As for him who conquers and keeps my works until the end...
I will grant him the star of the morning.*

According to the characteristically loose usage of the term *give* in the Apocalypse as in Ezekiel, staunch adherence to the faith and principles of Christ is to be rewarded by the enjoyment (not, the possession) of that Messianic age which is to dawn upon the faithful after the dark night of their afflictions. To be "granted the morning-star" means that a man will not miss the light of eternal life. The star, as a natural Semitic symbol of divinity and immortality, is employed thus figuratively to denote the daybreak of bliss which visits the faithful followers of Jesus, and the general idea corresponds to that reflected in several passages of the

Ignatian epistles: e.g. (speaking of his martyrdom, *Rom.* ii. 2) *it is good to set (δύναμι) from the world unto God, that I may rise (ἀνατείνω) unto him, or (ibid. vi. 2) suffer me to receive the pure light, for I shall be a man (i.e. mature and complete) when I have arrived thither.* In both passages of Revelation, therefore, it is obvious that the "morning-star" stands similarly for an eschatological symbol of immortality; in the second it is definitely connected with the personality of Jesus himself, to bring out the personal aspect of what has been already defined in the context as a historic revelation, or to suggest that Jesus was conscious of having fulfilled the past and of having authority to determine the future of his people.

But while each of the two phrases has its native significance, the point of the description seems to lie in their combination.¹ Rays, from above and from below, fall upon the character of Jesus and reveal it in two complementary aspects, filling out a definition of what he lives to be for his people and of how he lives to succour and to satisfy them.

Jesus the scion or sapling is Jesus the star. The distinctive note of Christianity is that man's relation to God, as well as God's revelation to man, is mediated through Christ. The prophet John urges this at the very outset of his book, and insists on it throughout. *He made us a realm of priests to his God and Father: the revelation of Jesus Christ which God granted him to show his servants: lo, the scion of David has conquered, so that he can open the book: they conquered their accuser by the blood of the Lamb: and so forth.* This final relation between man and God is not in the air. It is no vague pantheism or intangible idea, no reproduction of a pale, barren, noble relationship. Perfect

¹ It is remarkable that ἀνατολή should be used in the LXX. for the Messianic "branch" in Jer. xxiii. 5, Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12. Can this double usage of the word, in reference to a plant sprouting and to a star rising, underlie the combination of imagery in Rev. xxii. 16. With Rev. xxii. 15 and 16 compare the description of ἑωσφόρος in Job xxxviii. 12-15 as an ethical power.

without being abstract, ideal without being visionary, definite without being limited, historical without being nationalistic, the Christian faith is rooted in the soil of human history. Such is the implication of this prophet's imagery. We have to do, it is suggested or rather claimed, with a divine process which takes concrete form. The redeeming purpose of God in Christ is introduced through the facts and feelings of human existence, and through these it continues to be worked out. This among other traits differentiates it from the rarefied and esoteric varieties of most contemporary cults. Amid our days and ways the divine Redeemer appeared; so pleads the prophet John. And although in the book of Revelation the exigencies of subject and method do not lead to any particular emphasis upon the historical aspect of Jesus, there is no trace here, any more than throughout the rest of the New Testament writings, that any sense of incongruity was felt in the manifestation of the divine life amid man's discipline and experience.

I am the bright star of the morning. These words, as has been already pointed out, have a Messianic significance which primarily referred to the next world; they denote Jesus as the pledge of immortality and the assurance of eternal life with all its warmth and light. But their aim is more than eschatological here. This is a revelation of Jesus *for the churches*, with meaning and value for the present experience of the faithful. It assures them that there is always a morning for faith. These Asiatic Christians had good cause to be depressed by the appearance of things inside and outside the church; the intrusion of error and immorality and indifference among members of their congregations was accompanied by the overbearing force of the Imperial authority with a demand for worship of the Emperor which cut at the very roots of Christianity. Yet how bravely their prophet turns them to the shining fact of Christ! The keynote of the book is that the rela-

tion and revelation of Jesus to the world forbids despair, that his personality and position justify Christians in cherishing great expectations, that the patience of the saints is a matter of faith, and that faith depends upon the experience of what Jesus is and has done for men; to lose heart means that one is losing faith, fearing that the force and brilliance of Christianity have spent themselves. Such is the implicit message of this book. Towards the close of the first century, when new and threatening developments were rising in the relation of the State to the church and of Hellenic thought to belief, there was evidently a temptation to see little upon the horizon but the signs of a grey, sombre evening or the last radiance of an Oriental cult which had run its course and was now to rank with the swarming, ephemeral varieties of contemporary religion.¹ One distinctive aim of the book of Revelation is to rally faith in the permanent and pre-eminent value of Jesus to the world. *God and the Lamb* shine down upon its pages, and it is only familiarity which dulls the modern mind to the magnificent faith involved in that collocation. Belonging to our world as its Redeemer and ideal, in vital connexion with the facts and feelings of human life, Jesus assures faith that God's Spirit is to advance and expand within this world; with the relationship of Christ to men in view, no one can reasonably doubt God's increasing purpose or fail to find encouragement in the thought that more is yet to stream into the world through God's revelation and redemption in Jesus. In watching *him* from hour to hour, hope

¹ The exacting thing for most Christians at this period was not so much to join, as to adhere permanently to the Christian community. The centrifugal tendencies were powerful, not only through the danger and odium attached to membership, but owing to the prevailing feeling, particularly in volatile Hellenic circles, that Christianity was a sect or phrase which could be exhausted and left behind, like a philosophic school (Acts xix. 9; cp. Heb. x. 25; Ignat. *ad Ephes.* xiv., etc.). All promise of advance and completeness, the prophet John argues, lies in holding to the church and to faith; it is in the church that revelation and renewal exist, and the church depends on Christ.

indeed cannot hope too much. He spells recuperation and progress and completion for all in touch with him; he is the bright star of the dawn, that heralds warmth and light to come. Insight into his heavenly position means a foresight of hope and patience, which helps any one to see that God's power is not spent or slackening. And this penetration is inherent in faith. To the experience of the redeemed there is ever something permanent and promising in the relation of Christ to his people, something that falls like a shaft of light across the commonplace and tragedy of this 'wide world and all her fading sweets.'

All this and more the prophet John saw in the person of Jesus. At the thought of Jesus, risen, reigning, and returning, his heart leapt up with a glow of confidence which was all the deeper that he felt there was infinitely more in his Lord than he had yet seen or conceived. Without extravagance or shallow sentimentalism, he knew that to be in touch with Christ was to have the sense of inexhaustible resources in him, whatever crises or checks the future might have in store. He is in fact *the morning-star*, a grateful vision in the cold, dark dawn, but especially to be valued as the prelude and pledge of coming bliss, of help which is on its way to man from God steadily if slowly. Faith has its perspective, and the vista is luminous. The natural exhilaration that visits us with every morning, the banishment of sombre and foreboding thoughts, the impulse that sends the healthy man out to his labour, the feeling that amid the trivial and fading and contradictory there is still something to be lived for, something perhaps of immeasurable scope to be unfolded, the persistent hopefulness which struggles up in the most depressed at the advent of the day—all this faintly corresponds to the sense of lifting and revival which comes over man at the sight and experience of Christ. Expectation is the reasonable mood of the soul towards the living Jesus, when the truth of his

position and purpose breaks upon the mind. He is the luminous proof that God's redeeming work is persistent if it is anything, no evanescent or intermittent thing, but essentially a part of the natural order of man's experience and discipline, to be fulfilled as deliberately as the dawn which never yet has failed. And all this bespeaks courage for the feverish or the desponding. "The dawn at my window," wrote Richard Jefferies, "ever causes a desire for larger thought, the recognition of the light at the moment of waking kindles afresh the wish for a broad day of the mind. There is a certainty that there are yet ideas further, and greater—that there is still a limitless beyond . . . The dim white light of the dawn speaks it. This prophet which has come with its wonders to the bedside of every human being for so many thousands of years faces me once again with the upheld finger of light." That is precisely the impression made by Jesus upon faith. One feels that untold possibilities are opening up and that the capacities of experience are not yet exhausted. Things never seem quite so heavy or bewildering or disheartening when the night passes from the sky; and a similar sense of movement and ripening energy is conveyed to the heart when a man lifts his eyes from poverty of aim and thwarting limitations and ineffectual struggles to realize the eternal meaning of Jesus to the human race as well as the unspeakable possibilities in store for men through his revelation and redemption. This star brightens above all souls, and shall brighten to the end. Such is the conviction of any one who, like this prophet, in the midst of his ways and works has found Christ able to reassure the bewildered and stimulate the depressed by an access of steady, even buoyant, confidence which resembles nothing so much as the genial exhilaration and vigour of the morning hours. A sense of rich prospect occupies the mind. Enterprise ceases to be merely a dream. Imaginary terrors vanish, and even those which are real

assume something like their true proportions. For, in religion at any rate, of the three treasures which Coleridge declared were held by man—love, light, and regular calm thoughts, the third is the product of the second.

All this depends, however, upon the unique and lonely holiness of Christ. He is the bright star, shining above the dust of the land and the spume of the sea, a scion of David yet a star in heaven. Probably this idea also is intended by the prophet in his paradoxical combination of titles; in Christ's very identification of himself with man's interests, his innate pre-eminence had been revealed; or, as an earlier writer had put it, *the proper high priest for us was One holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*. The present passage, then, is a figurative expression of this early Christian conviction that the hope of the world lay in One who was unworldly. Even for perfected man the river of the water of life ran from the throne of God *and of the Lamb*. That is, all advance of the soul deepens the sense of obligation to Christ, and by no increase of likeness to him do men cease to be in his debt. Christ's authority is vested ultimately in his difference from us. It is his ideal and absolute holiness, with its specific moral pre-eminence, which constitutes his eternal power of attracting and satisfying the ages. Alone and for all time he shines out as the incomparable, unapproachable Lord, able to redeem and entitled to sway just because sin found in him no place. The scion or sapling is the star. Christ elicits the hope and trust of men, not as one of themselves, nor even as a genius of their race, but as the heavenly Lord. Heaven itself is unintelligible apart from the throne of God *and of the Lamb*, so little does the future development of life transcend or even equal Jesus. He can pardon, for example, because he never needed forgiveness, and yet came into our life to bring that gift to men. His sinlessness is the spiritual treasure, the indispensable hope, the regenerating energy of the

world, and the conviction of it comforts and rallies those who realize that they can find in his superhuman consciousness a stable ground amid the imperfections of the universe.

It fortifies my soul to know
 That, though I perish, Truth is so :
 That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
 Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
 I steadier step when I recall
 That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

Latent in the personality of Jesus is a factor which, so far from being explained upon ordinary methods of psychology, becomes explicable only as men see that it is itself the explanation of all his influence. And this conviction of his absolute purity, for which no formula suffices, brings with it a sense of moral stability. Here, men say to themselves, is a light upon which no shadows of imperfection were ever suffered to encroach, one who has the right to pardon and the power to nerve beaten wills for new struggles against evil, because his own course was unswerving and undeflected by temptation.

He is, in short,
 The star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken.

Yet, rich and promising as all this may be, it would not, by itself, be adequate to the complete demands and situation of the soul. What is merely aesthetic and ideal tends ultimately to debility when confronted by the needs of life. A star is fair and bright. But a star is distant, after all ; it is too far away to be intimate, too brilliant to be tender. Cold and remote and gleaming, it looks down impassively upon men struggling by land and sea. Our need and call is for a Son of man as well as for a Son of God, for an object of reverence and trust which is more than an idea, for help that is better than an ideal. If the transcendent quality of Jesus is man's hope, it must be realized and accessible in human affinities. So Jesus the star is Jesus the scion of David's

lineage, *the root and offspring of David*. His sinlessness is no deduction from Messianic categories, and his aid is brought to men along the lines of human experience and through the channel of sympathy and suffering; it is not a mere boon handed down out of a high heaven. Otherwise it would be no dynamic in religion. It is a primary condition of true aspiration and veneration that men should be brought thus into touch with One who has entered their very life and fulfilled amid its imperfections and limitations the infinite perfection which is at once their destiny and their despair. This it is that makes faith operative and effective. No doubt, one of the first gains secured by man from the human experience of Jesus is the assurance of sympathy and comprehension which it affords. Also, there is a conviction that the life is practicable, that holiness is not foreign to our nature, and that Jesus supplies the energy as well as the exemplar. But more than this, the actuality and personality of Jesus as Lord delivers men from the feeling of dilution and vacancy which haunts ordinary conceptions of the moral ideal. As Martineau finely puts it, in his famous essay upon "Ideal Substitutes for God," in words which we at any rate cannot help applying to Christ; "when I am awed and subdued before the grace and grandeur of a moral superior, it is not because he *suggests*, but because he *realizes*, a higher conception of excellence: it is as a living agent, as a personal embodiment of righteousness, that he wields authority over my conscience. Take away this element, tear the picture out of the volume of true history and cast it to the transient winds of imagination, and all is immediately changed. . . . If I have gained any new variety of thought, it is simply added to my culture, but does not transform my life. *Here* it is that moral idealism falls short of the condition of religion, because its ideal perfection is known to be only in our heads, whilst the ideal of religion must be also real." Yes, the star must be a sapling, the

word must become flesh, else the heart and centre of Christianity becomes extinct. *Morning by morning doth He bring His justice to light: His going forth is sure as the morning.* Theories or ideas about Him are helpless on the field of moral issues. To herald redemption, revelation in its highest form must be personal and historical.

If the star is the scion, if the absolute ideal of Jesus is mediated through a historical process and an individual experience, one further inference is that the salvation of men was a long and special purpose of God, heralded beforehand. Two contemporary tendencies assailed this truth, when the prophet John wrote his book. By one set of thinkers the Old Testament was unduly depreciated, and its value as a preparation for the Gospel either ignored or undervalued. By another class of people, the gospel was being viewed as a semi-intellectual process, which might be rendered largely, if not entirely, independent of the historical Jesus. These tendencies are fully encountered in the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John; but even in this book of Revelation, where apocalyptic and Messianic categories did not give adequate room for at any rate the second aspect to be displayed, hints of the controversy are not wanting. And the present passage forms one of these retrospective allusions. In one sense Jesus was a climax. The eternal redemption of Jesus, the prophet points out, came in the line of Hebrew expectations as the outcome of a long providential process worked out through a chosen people. The gospel does not start up abruptly out of the ages. If it is in no sense antiquarian, neither is it a sudden thought of God; no swift impulse of mercy, it is in a real sense retrospective. Behind it lies a deep counsel of providence, stretching down especially through the Messianic hope of Israel and culminating in One who was born in the fulness of time within a Jewish circle, and at the same time destined to shine down upon all men. It is substantially

the idea enforced by Paul over thirty years before. Christ, he told the Roman Christians, did become *a minister of the circumcision*, and it was in order to make good God's promises to the Hebrew patriarchs; a Jew by birth, he lived and worked directly for the Jews of his own land, thereby vindicating God's honesty, and showing that Hebrew yearnings and forecasts had not been in vain. But, the apostle continued, there was a further aim in his historical appearance. The ultimate end was *that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy*. Similarly in this passage the prophet John suggests on the one hand that Jesus was definitely Jewish, the crown and issue of God's historical providence in Israel, justifying earlier anticipations and fulfilling previous hopes, and upon the other hand that his final object was to bring light to the whole world. A star does not shine within fences. The dawn is not for a nation or for a sect. The language of the Revelation has indeed led many interpreters to see in it a preference assigned to the Jew, as though Jewish Christians were the nucleus of God's people, whilst Gentile Christians are admitted upon a secondary footing. A more careful examination of the language and contents of the book will show, I think, that this impression is not well founded; it is not necessary, and it seems hardly legitimate, to find the Jew even *primus inter pares* in the visions of the Revelation. What lends this idea plausibility is the author's use of nationalistic imagery and of archaic figurative terms which might be pressed into such a sense by a literalistic mode of interpretation. But the vital conceptions of the book show that the author has passed far beyond any such purview.

*Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed for God, by thy blood,
Men from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

The man who could hail Jesus in those terms may surely be acquitted of any particularistic bias. Jesus the Davidic scion is Jesus as he appears historically first of all

in the world's history, and this definite historical element is an indispensable part of his being. But the scion is the heavenly star. There is nothing narrowly national or isolated or foreign about him. Obscure and remote as his historical environment was, even to those Asiatic Christians of the second generation and much more to succeeding generations in the Eastern and Western hemispheres, the striking fact remains that all varieties of religious experience, however different and distant, are at home with him. Instinctively the conscience feels that he is at the centre, that no change of civilization can put the essentials of his person or his message out of date, that any parochial or narrow tinge is absent from his principles. The local and historical element in his gospel lends reality to it without affecting its power of reaching the diverse tastes and tempers of humanity or of enabling men to recognize in it what bears directly and divinely upon themselves. Through the conditions of local and temporal existence, the light in him gleams through and shines out upon mankind. The net result is that for the Christian experience the impression made by Jesus is exempt from that weariness which besets all merely typical figures, as well as from the sense of limitation and foreignness which besets many heroic characters from whom the revolutions of time or civilization have separated after-ages. Through Christ the personal relations between man and God, which are essential to morality as well as to religion, are adequately guaranteed, nor is the gain in intensity counterbalanced by any corresponding loss in scope and permanence of appeal. Being the sapling, Christ is none the less the star.

In connexion with the New Jerusalem it was consonant that Jesus should be hailed as the scion of David who had been the founder of the original Jerusalem, just as the title of "morning star," at the dawn of the new creation,

harmonizes with the Semitic figure of the original creation when the morning stars sang together for joy. But one essential point of both descriptions is the principle that as the revelation of Christ produces communion, so communion verifies the revelation and places man in the right attitude for recognizing and welcoming the truth of Christ: that while we cannot see Christ without loving and serving his cause in all loyalty, no one can apprehend him truly except from a life devoted to his service. In other words, the proper focus for this revelation of Christ is to be found in nothing less than faith, in the common faith of the Christian society which his spirit has created and controls: *I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things to you for the Churches.* The purpose of revelation is intercourse, which means that the redeemed understand the Redeemer. Historical investigation and the ordinary methods of critical research by themselves do not lead to much more than the aspect of Jesus as the Davidic scion, the more or less limited outcome of a historical environment. Obviously the criterion is inadequate, for it is only in his influence and creative power that he can truly be read. Semi-gnostic or philosophic appreciations of his person, either from the speculative or the dogmatic standpoint, obtain glimpses of a sublime ideal in him, which tends to become vague and cold and unimpressive. Both methods are useful but partial. Only the experience, and obedience of faith can do anything like justice to the two elements of his personality. The consciousness of redemption alone feels the need of both categories. As the prophet John asserted, against the Jews, that Jesus was the genuine Messiah, and against pagan tendencies, that he was not one of many lights but *the* light, supreme and final: so faith still possesses its native outlook upon One who is Lord of the church and the faithful because he is at once beyond and above either the Jesus of a naturalistic criticism which

sees in him little or nothing beyond a religious genius of profound historical significance, for whom his environment and the past of his nation substantially afford all adequate explanation, or the Christ of idealistic theories, who is practically a personified distillation of excellence, the bloodless symbol of noble aspiration or an intangible, impalpable medium of more or less speculative ideals. The Jesus of the church and of faith is at once star and sapling; not otherwise can he be accounted for. To be either alone would be insufficient. To be both is to be impressive and inspiring; to be the ideal of man clothed upon with all the reality and appeal and expression of life, to be human and historical and yet capable of universal significance and eternal attraction, this constitutes the distinctiveness and glory of Jesus as Lord. No lesser classification avails to embrace the full content of his personality, and the experience of faith—a faith which is neither indolent nor selfish—amply verifies both predicates. As early as the first century it was not speculative acuteness or mere historical acquaintance with tradition, but the experience of redemption and the demands of the contemporary crisis alike which led the prophet John with steady cheer and confidence to lay stress upon this attitude towards Jesus. His design was to show his readers the *Lamb standing as if slain*, the star that had been a scion or sapling, the union in Christ of a definite historical experience with its warm breath and intimate acquaintance, and of an eternal wealth of spirit which shone out fresh and full at every successive stage of men's chequered experience. Both notes were needed for the perfect chord of revelation, and both are struck by the prophet with loud, lingering emphasis, ere he dismisses his readers for the conflict which awaited them. Enough for them that they could look up to One who had perfect comprehension of their situation and as perfect resources to meet their demands, One who could guarantee a future to fealty

and trust. The sight of that would make them less forlorn. Verve and impetus would certainly revive.

Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun
 Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
 Fled from the brains which are their prey
 From the lamp's death to the morning ray.
 All rose to do the task He set to each
 Who shaped us to His ends and not our own;
 The million rose to learn, and one to teach—

One from whom the wisest has always something still to learn, the strongest something still to ask. Shadows of opposition and uncertainty, of confusion and illusion, may gather round the devoted and the faithful. That is not denied. But, as the prophet says, these are not final in the divine order of things. For the experience of faith the morning is up; Jesus is upon the horizon, an incentive as well as an example, a shaping and satisfying spirit as well as an incentive, for God's cause, God's church, and God's people. Inimitable, promising, divine, he cannot either wane or cease to inspire and content those who lift eyes of hope and of need to rest upon his person. *Sunlight and morning-star*, is the watchword. It does not mean a gush of thin sentiment rebounding from panic, it does not involve extravagant fancies or short views of the world or any crude forgetfulness of the contradictions and obscurity and sluggishness in human nature. But it does mean, if it means anything at all, that by visiting the world in Jesus Christ God has thrown light upon the purpose of human history, and that consequently the ultimate basis of hope rests not upon what men see in Christ, but upon what He sees in them. His insight, his faith in us, is the final source of confidence. His revelation and redemption prove the value set by God upon the trust and endeavours of the human soul, which are not waking dreams, but the outcome of a spiritual movement which justifies them by the faithfulness and adequacy of its response to their appeal. To

the experience of his people Christ guarantees the fidelity of God and also the entire reasonableness of these human aspirations to which he supplies at once the standard and the spring. Hence, as usual, to look up to this Fact and Figure means to be lifted up. The motive-power in life is the direction of the heart. We stand faithful, as *we run our course with patience*—not by elaborate calculations of resources and obstacles, or by agonizing introspection, but—*looking*, looking away, looking up, to *Jesus* on the grey discouraging sky of circumstances.

JAMES MOFFATT.

OUR LORD'S USE OF COMMON PROVERBS.

It was a wise and far-reaching maxim of the ancient Rabbis that "the Law spoke in the tongue of the children of men." And when our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of whom the Scriptures had testified, appeared in the flesh, He also spoke in the tongue of the children of men. Like the greatest of His apostles, it was not with excellency of speech or of wisdom that He came proclaiming the mystery of God. His teaching was more profound and wonderful than any philosophy, yet He clothed it in homely language such as the simplest could understand, and found heavenly parables in the rude employments of the Galilean peasantry. This characteristic of our Lord's teaching is sufficiently obvious, yet there is one evidence of it, and perhaps the most striking of all, which is apt to escape the modern reader. It is His frequent use of common proverbs—homely and pithy sayings which were often on the lips of the people and which helped to lodge His instruction in their hearts. It is well worth while to take account of this element in His teaching; for not only is it a revelation of the genial kindness of Him who spake as never man spake that He should