

2¹⁻¹⁰. The Western text of Ac 15²⁹ is a second-century text. St. Paul's silence in Gal 2¹⁻¹⁰ as to the fourfold decree of Acts suggests that the latter is a later decree ante-dated by St. Luke. The visit of Ac 11 is not unhistorical, and St. Paul's silence with regard to it is explicable.

But sufficient has been said to call attention to the value of this Introduction. In fine scholarship, in fairness of judgment, in copiousness of illustration, and in mastery of material it stands very high, and it will no doubt for long be the standard work on the subject.

The book is admirably printed. A small defect in arrangement is the fact that whilst some of St. Paul's Epistles have page headings, 'Romans,' etc.,

1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians (in part), Romans (in part), Colossians are headed: 'The Correspondence of St. Paul,' so, e.g., pp. 65-95, 145-159. The following are misprints:—p. 155, l. 43, 'meditating' (for mediating); 272, l. 10, 'Josephus' (for Joseph); 294, l. 20, 'Xenophon'; 313, l. 10, ἀκόλυτος; 402, l. 8, 'reduction' (for redaction); 432, l. 7, 'encyclica'; 474, l. 27, 'like' (? unlike); 479, l. 25; ἀντιλεγόμενα; 484, l. 46, 'Mansefield,' 524, l. 24, 'husbānds'; 525 n.* 'Philos'; 540, l. 32 'conciuousness'; 585, last line, 'creeping (?) estimate'; 603, l. 25, κνὶ; 624, 'Adeny.' Is 'falls to be' a phrase to be encouraged, and is 'a colossal jin' a right description of the angel of Apoc 10¹?

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF THE PSALMS.

PSALM LI. 17.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

'The Book of Psalms,' says Maurice, 'is the most wonderful book in the world, because it is the most universal; because in it saints and seers and prophets and kings prove their title to their great names, by finding that they have a greater name still,—that they are men; that they are partakers in all the poverty, emptiness and sinfulness of their fellow-creatures; that there is nothing in themselves to boast of, or claim as their own; that all which they have is His, who would have all to know Him and be partakers of His holiness. And therefore this fifty-first Psalm is, as it seems to me, the real explanation of all the Psalms, and of the continual references which they contain to another and higher King than David. It was, and is, most natural that the Jews reading of such a King, and honestly persuaded that he must be what the name *King* imports, should have rejected the notion of a broken-hearted man—a man of sorrows—as not at all answering to the idea of such a ruler and conqueror. Till they are brought as low as David himself was brought when he poured out this confession, they will not, from all the arguments and evidences in the world, find how that riddle is

solved; they will not know why only such an one could be the King, because only such an one could be the sacrifice.'¹

There are three thoughts expressed in the text, or suggested by it.

- I. The Place of Sacrifice.
- II. The Sacrifice which God despises.
- III. The Sacrifice which He does not despise.

I.

THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE.

1. Each of the doctrines of Christianity is just the uplifting to its highest issues of a principle which operates in common experience. Here is an instance. There must be an Atonement; there must be a Sacrifice: Do you doubt it? Then look into your own heart, and you will find the evidence.

In one of his immortal dialogues Plato has shown that there is no escaping the penalty of sin, and no possibility of peace until it is faced. The wrongdoer, he says, who is convicted and punished is happier than one who gets off scot-free. And this is terribly true. A sinner may shun detection and never be brought before an earthly tribunal; but there is a more awful tribunal which he cannot escape. His sin grips him, and it never lets him

¹ *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 96.

go. It tracks him ruthlessly, remorselessly, with a slow, dragging, bitter and ever more bitter torture. And there is no deliverance for him until he faces his sin and confesses it and accepts the consequences. You remember that grim imagination of Greek mythology, that no sooner was a crime wrought than the Furies, the bloodhounds of Hell, got on the sinner's track and hunted him day and night until he atoned with his own blood for the blood which he had shed. And what is this but a picturesque rendering of the stern law of moral retribution? Examples abound. Coleridge tells of an Italian assassin who fled from the scene of his crime and gained a secure refuge in Germany. The law could not reach him, but conscience arrested him. He was haunted by his victim's phantom, until at length he could endure it no longer, and resolved to return to Rome and surrender himself to justice and expiate his crime on the scaffold.

There is need of an altar and a victim and the shedding of blood; and our hymn teaches the truth which the Psalmists were groping after all the time:

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away,
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

This is the Sacrifice of God, and a broken heart is only the sinner's response to its appeal.¹

2. The bloody sacrifice has been already offered, and accepted, and applied. The blood has been sprinkled, and the vapour has ascended; and the penitent who laid his hand upon the victim's head approaches the golden altar, not to purchase pardon, but to offer gifts. And on the altar the oblation lies—a heart—a bruised and broken heart—a heart once stained, alas, how deeply, but now fresh from the laver of regeneration; a heart pierced with many sorrows, the deep scars of which remain, but now melted and broken by the fire and the hammer of God's efficacious word. There it lies encompassed in the newly kindled flame of pure and holy love; and as it burns there unconsumed, a sweet and solemn voice, like the voice of a parent to a suffering child, says: 'My son, give

¹ D. Smith, *Man's Need of God*, 251.

me thine heart'; and another one, still tremulous with weeping, cries out from beneath the altar: 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed'; and then a multitude of voices, like the sound of rushing waters, are heard saying all together: 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'

There are those who, on the pretext that the sacrifice of Christ is all-sufficient, withhold the oblation of themselves to God. Because they have no merit, they believe they have no duty, and throw off at once their sense of goodness and their sense of obligation; and because the grace of God abounds to sinners, they go on in sin, that grace may abound.

II.

THE SACRIFICE WHICH GOD DESPISES.

I. Let us suppose the sinner to be now convinced of this important truth,—to believe that, while his only hope of everlasting life is in the sacrifice of Christ, he has no right to believe that it was offered up for him until he offers up himself, through Christ, to God. Here he is liable to fatal error. He may wash his hands in innocency, and so compass the altar of God; he may bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar; he may offer it upon the altar with the most imposing rites; but no sweet savour rises from it to the throne of God. The victim and the offerer are alike rejected:

For God abhors the sacrifice
Where not the heart is found.

The man has brought his body and his outward wealth, his time, his talents, and his acquisitions, but his heart is left behind.

Here is a wonderful exposition of that falsehood which was leading the Israelite astray in all periods of his history; the falsehood which turned him into an idolater in one generation, into an insolent denouncer of idolaters in another. He did not look upon God as his God, as his Deliverer, as his Judge, as his Reformer; he did not yield himself to Him as His subject, as His redeemed creature, to be purified, to be renewed. He had never understood what it was to be sacrificed himself. But he could, if need were, produce a hecatomb of oxen to be sacrificed; he supposed God's toleration of his sins

was to be purchased, and that this was the purchase-money. The mockery of such a notion by the psalmists is terrible; but not disproportionate to the monstrousness of the evil which was condemned. It is that mockery which comes out of the burning heart of a man who knows God to be righteous and true; and who sees that men are making a god like themselves, and are strengthening themselves in their lies and their crimes by regarding him as the patron of them.

2. Again, a man may consent to give his heart to God; just as it is; but what a heart! It must be laid upon the altar whole, unbroken, unmelted. He consents, perhaps, that it should first be cleansed. He is willing that those deep, dark stains should be washed out, and that those ulcers should be healed by the application of another's blood. This is all that he will offer—all he has to give. But what changes are to pass upon that heart before it is accepted! How little does he think that it must first be pierced, and bruised, and broken! Or if informed of this necessity, how quickly does his pride revolt!

A man who has begun to negotiate and traffic with his Maker will not quickly give up the hope that he shall find something to sacrifice sooner or later which He will be content to receive. To part with this hope, to sink humbly on the knees; to say, *Against Thee I have sinned; I have done this evil in Thy sight*—how is this possible? what brings a man to this? And what kind of offering is this? David knew at last what it was. It was the *sacrifice of God*. He had not brought himself into that posture: God had brought him into it. He had corrected him and broken him. He had prepared the sacrifice. He had shown him that this was what he needed. This great saint, and singer, and king of Israel, must positively understand that he has nothing whatever to do, but to say, 'I am what thou knowest I am. Thou hast found me out. Thou art right and I am wrong. I give up the struggle.' That was the ultimate result. Now he believed that God was a Righteous Being who hated sin, not one who overlooked it in king or peasant, that He was willing to take it away from king and peasant, to give each of them a right heart. That now became his one desire. *Not to be a deceiver; not to keep his secret; but to be a right and true man; to have his inmost spirit laid bare, that every cheat might be purged out of it.*

III.

THE SACRIFICE WHICH GOD DOES NOT DESPISE.

I. It is described as 'a broken spirit'; and again as 'a broken and a contrite (or crushed) heart.' What that means is best explained in the Psalm itself, which may be said to be a commentary on this verse.

(1) A broken spirit is one that trusts entirely to the mercy of God. 'Have mercy upon me, O God,' are the opening words of the Psalm. 'It is mercy that this sinner looks to, not merit. Merit and mercy can never blend, for though sometimes you hear such an expression as 'he deserves mercy,' it is a contradiction altogether. If he deserves it, it is no longer mercy. It is simple justice and righteousness that he should have it. Mercy will no more blend with merit than will oil with water.

All the instances in Scripture of acceptable approach to God on the part of those who have offended Him, are connected with the presence of a broken and a contrite heart. From the earliest significant intimation—when the whirlwind scattered the offering of the self-confident Cain, and the fire consumed the sacrifice of the contrite Abel—the same truth is taught through all ages of Scripture history, and repeated in rich volume of utterance in the fulness of time, that 'to that man will I look,' says God, 'even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' You see it in the prostrate David and in the weeping Hezekiah—when the prodigal mourns in the parched land of his exile; and when the publican, beating his breast in the porch of the temple, fixes upon the far mercy-seat his wistful eye, and stammers out his heart in the self-despairing prayer.

It was a sombre evening of December at Madras in the year 1907, when I was standing on the eastern verandah of the fourth storey of the Y.M.C.A. building. I had just returned from the Examination Hall with feelings of utter dejection and shame. That was the third attempt of mine for the B.A. degree examination. I thought I had answered the question papers so badly that failure seemed almost certain. I took the papers, and was examining them again and again to find whether I had any chance. The more I looked, the more hopeless I became. I thought of my relatives, my friends, my villagers, and my own brothers, who would all regard me as a fool who had appeared three times and got 'ploughed.' I could not entertain the thought of returning home. I thought of going away from my own country and leading 'a snail-like existence' in some remote corner of India. The thought of even committing suicide was not far

from me. I thought no one could sympathize with me. I had been accustomed to read the Bible and pray; but all the while I had been a doubting Christian. At this desperate moment I prayed to God that He at least should not forsake me. Then all at once the broken heart felt the advent of God. I felt a new power, a new readiness to endure the shame; my heart overflowed with the joy of having felt God. The thought of my examination flitted away from me. Never in my life had I experienced so rich a moment as that one. Never since have I doubted the presence of God and His loving care for me. In moments of anxiety and fear I used to look back to this experience and refresh my soul.¹

(2) A broken spirit feels its sins to be peculiarly its own: 'Wash me thoroughly from *my* iniquity, and cleanse me from *my* sin' (v.²). All the way through the Psalm this peculiarity is found. If you were to underline the personal and possessive pronouns you would be astonished to find how many there are. A contrite spirit refuses to have anything to do with generalities. They are all too cold for him. Before the heart comes under the power of the Holy Ghost it rather likes to speculate about sin. It will discuss for hours the origin of sin and the effects of sin; but, the moment the Spirit of God meets with it, all speculation about sin is at an end. One thought swallows up all others. It is, '*I* have sinned.'

The Baptists have had a mission in Korea, carried on in a little shop and under conditions of severe simplicity. Good has been done in the mission, and as always, the news spread that God was with the people, and others were led to go with them. One poor woman, living outside the town, heard the report of the mission, and walked into the town to attend the services. Not knowing where it was situated, or by what name it was known, she inquired for the place where they cured the 'broken heart,' and she was directed to the Baptist Mission. How delightful it would be if every preaching place were entitled to this description.

(3) The broken spirit is one that makes a full confession of sin. 'For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me' (v.³). God does not forgive sin *because* we acknowledge it, but He will not forgive sin unless we do. He has made it one of the conditions. He says to Israel, by the mouth of Jeremiah, 'Only acknowledge thy iniquity.' He says to the Church, through the lips of John, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' Now, a broken heart is sure to be a heart that tells out to God through the lips the whole sad story. There is no attempt to extenuate, or to conceal.

¹ George John, B.A., Syrian Christian Seminary, Tirualla, Travancore.

It does not plead the force of circumstance, nor the Niagara flood of passion, nor even the resistance which it made before it fell. There is the simple, humble, truthful acknowledgment of sin—sin, though years have passed away since its committal—sin, though society has condoned it—sin, though neighbours have forgotten it—sin, though through many a garish hour the sinner has tried vainly to hide it from himself—sin, burned into the conscience with such ineffaceable impression that no human art can remove the brand, though the lightest touch of the Divine Healer can make the scarred flesh to be comely and lovable as a child's.

There is a beautiful legend which runs as follows. Late one evening a careworn, haggard man came to a priest, and begged to receive absolution for the sins of a life of which he was weary, a life which had become to him a living death. The priest listened with attention to his confession. Crime after crime—a long tale of woe was poured into his ear. At length he intervened. 'My son,' he said, 'God's Spirit will not always strive with man; your sins are too fearful. I dare not pronounce absolution on such an one as you.' The poor man rose up and went away, bent low with grief and remorse in the agony of unforgiven sin. That night the priest in his bed was visited with a strange vision. He seemed to be present at the judgment of a soul, which was to be arraigned before the presence of God. A large balance was placed firmly in the ground. A man whose face he recognized, whose crime he had pronounced unpardonable, was brought trembling before the Judge; in one scale of the balance the devil was busily engaged in placing all the sins of a misspent life, and they were very many and very heavy. Doom was certain, condemnation inevitable, when a faint flutter of wings was heard, and an angel appeared, bearing in his hands a handkerchief all wet and heavy with tears. He cast it into the other scale; the sins were outweighed, the balance altered. The soul was saved. The priest awoke with fear and compunction. He hastened to seek out and inquire for the care-worn sinner who had sought his help. After some time he found him lying under a tree—quite dead—dead of a broken heart—but under his head was a handkerchief still wet with tears; and then he remembered how it is written: 'The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'²

(4) The contrite spirit sees that sin's crown of sin is that it is against God: 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned' (v.⁴). One who is ignorant of true repentance may be sorry that he has done so and so wrong, and may be grieved that he has done an injustice to this person or the other; but he knows nothing of real grief on the ground of having sinned against God. But a broken heart

² Newbolt, *Speculum Sacerdotum*, p. 191.

goes beyond the creature sinned against, and says, 'Lord, I see it now. In sinning against the creature, I smote Thee. In wronging that one, I wronged Thee.'

David could not be insensible to the social aspect of his crime. He had ruined a reputation, dishonoured a household, wrecked the comfort of a family, plotted the murder of one who had never injured him—but the sanctity of whose home had been invaded by his lustful desire—and yet, above and beyond all these, he is crushed by the conviction of the wrong that he has done to the Divine—'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.'

When Whitefield was at Exeter, a man in the audience had his pockets full of stones, which he intended to throw at the preacher. He waited through the prayer; and as the text was about to be announced, he pulled out a stone. But God sent the sword of the Spirit into his breast; and the stone was never thrown. He went up to Whitefield after the service, saying, 'Sir, I came here intending to give you a broken head; but God has given me a *broken heart*.'¹

(5) A contrite spirit recognizes that the particular sin which may be the occasion of immediate grief and shame does not stand alone; he sees and confesses that he has a sinful nature: 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity' (v.⁵). There is many a man who, if he falls into some one unusual sin, is in great trouble about it, and has no rest until conscience becomes numbed, and forgetfulness is mistaken for forgiveness. But a real penitent is not so troubled about any one particular sin. It is his general state before God that grieves him. With the Psalmist he says, 'There is no soundness in my flesh.' He is abased before God, not so much because of what he *has done*, as because of what he *is*.

(6) The broken heart is as anxious for purity as for pardon: 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts . . . purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean' (vv.^{6,7}). This is a crucial test of a contrite spirit. There is not a man on earth who would not like to be forgiven—certainly before he dies. If you were to go to the most licentious—to the man who is steeped to the lips in profanity—and say, 'Would you like to be pardoned?' he would tell you, 'Yes,' and that he hopes that he will be before he dies. Ask him whether he would

¹ C. A. Salmond, *For Days of Youth*, 21.

like to be pure. He knows nothing at all about that. But a broken heart cries not only, 'Blot out my transgressions,' but, 'Create in me a clean heart.'

(7) But then the contrite spirit, though its most deeply felt experience is sorrow, is never content with sorrow. It is never a despairing spirit: 'Make me to hear joy and gladness' (v.⁸). A broken spirit! a broken and a contrite heart! We take it for granted that the means of breakage must always be some one or other of God's ministers of sorrow. The words fall of themselves into the plaintive undertone with which we speak of grief and all its holy offices. But have we ever asked ourselves why it should be so? God never breaks a human life or spirit just for the sake of breaking it; He always has an object. Sometimes, perhaps oftenest, His object—the stoppage of a life that it may begin anew, and begin better—can be accomplished only through the agency of suffering. The blow has to fall; the fortune that a man leaned against so that he leaned away from God has to break down, the child that the mother clung to so that she would not see her Saviour has to be carried in its coffin outside the house door, before the broken heart is willing to strike straight for God. But are hearts never broken by blessings? Does the sun, with its still and steady mercy, work no chemical changes more gracious and more permanent than the wild winds accomplish? The storm sweeps some night across your garden, and in the morning, lo! it has wrenched and reshaped the great tree, and snapped a hundred little flowers upon their stems; but the real power there is nothing to the majesty with which, through the still summer days, the sun that woke no sleeping insect in the grass was drawing into shape the vast arms of forest giants and carving out the beauty of the roses' leaves. Much of the best piety of the world is ripened, not under sorrow, but under joy. At any rate, we ought not to talk as if only sorrow brought conversion. There is a grace for happy people too. Blessed is the soul that for very happiness is broken and contrite, turns away from its sins, and goes to Jesus with the spontaneous and unselfish love of gratitude! Anything that makes a man stop and change, and be something different from what he has been, is a compelling grace of God.

2. 'Thou wilt not despise.' There is wonder in the Psalmist's exclamation. God despises and

rejects the costly offerings of princes; gold and silver, pomp and pageantry, He spurns. Thou despisest all that wealth and pride can offer at Thy footstool; but 'a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' It is also an expression of his thankfulness. The broken heart itself is Thy gift, Thou alone canst break it; and having thus bestowed it, Thou art pleased to accept of it again at our hands; Thou requirest nothing but a broken, contrite heart; 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'

What is the use of a broken heart? Why, much the same as the use of a broken pot, or a broken jug, or a broken bottle! Men throw it on the dunghill. Hence David says, 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,' as if he felt that everybody else would despise it.¹

A poor Arab was travelling in the desert when he met with a stream of clear, sweet, sparkling water. Accustomed as he was to brackish wells, to his simple mind it appeared that such water as this was worthy of a monarch, and filling his leathern bottle he determined to present it to the Caliph. The poor man travelled a long distance before he reached the presence of the Caliph, and laid his offering at his feet. The Caliph did not despise the gift, but ordered some of the water to be poured into a cup, drank it, and thanking the Arab, ordered him to be rewarded. The courtiers pressed round eager to taste of the wonderful water; but, to the surprise of all, the Caliph forbade them to touch even a drop. After the poor Arab had left with a joyful heart, the Caliph said to his courtiers: 'During the travels of the poor man the water in this bottle had become impure and distasteful, but it was an offering of love, and as such I received it. But I knew that if I suffered another to partake of it he would not have concealed his disgust, and, therefore, I forbade you to touch the water lest the donor's heart should have been wounded.' All that sinners can present to their King is like this water. Imperfection mingles with our best service, but He will not reject the little offering of love and faith. Even a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple shall in nowise lose its reward.

There is an old Hebrew story that tells of a poor man who came one day to the temple, from a sick bed, on tottering limbs. He was ashamed to come, for he was very poor, and he had no sacrifice to offer; but as he drew near he heard the choir chanting, 'Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' Other worshippers came, pressed before him, and offered their sacrifices, but he had none. At length he prostrated himself before the priest, who said, 'What wilt thou, my son? Hast thou no offering?' And he replied, 'No, my father, for last night a poor widow and her children came to me, and I had nothing to offer them but the two pigeons which were ready for the sacrifice.' 'Bring, then,' said the priest, 'an ephah of fine flour.' 'Nay, but, my father,' said the

old man, 'this day my sickness and poverty have left only enough for my own starving children; I have not even an ephah of flour.' 'Why, then, art thou come to me?' said the priest. 'Because I heard them singing, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." Will not God accept my sacrifice if I say, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner?"' Then the priest lifted the old man from the ground, and said, 'Yes, thou art blessed, my son; it is the offering which is better than thousands of rivers of oil.'

James Gilmour once had great hope of the conversion to God of a Mongol who had given him his entire confidence, and who was suffering from cataract in both eyes. Gilmour felt that this was a case in which surgical help might restore the sufferer to at least partial sight, and he made arrangements that in the escort of a Mongol the patient should find his way to the medical institution at Peking. He started on the pilgrimage when Gilmour, with his brave young wife, was encamped in a great temporary settlement of Mongols, who were in a state of fanatical excitement against the new faith and its foreign teacher. Gilmour said, 'We prayed night and day for the success of this experiment, and we arranged to cover all expenses connected with the arrangement.' Alas! wind laden with dust, and blinding heat and other apparent accidents conspired against the poor sufferer, and when the necessary time had elapsed after the operation and the bandages were removed, the patient was found to be stone blind. The Mongol companion stirred up the poor fellow's suspicions by telling him that he knew why the missionary had sent him to Peking. 'I saw,' said he, 'the jewel of your eye in a bottle on the shelf. These Christians can get hundreds of taels for these jewels which they take out of your eyes.' When the blind man was brought back to Gilmour, his companion spread his suspicious and exasperating story in the entire district, and the fanatical hatred was augmented into seething and murderous passion, and our dear friends were in imminent peril for several weeks. If they had ventured to escape, it would have been a confession of a vile conspiracy with the Peking doctors, and a signal for their massacre. They remained to live down the ominous and odious charge, and in continuous effort to justify the simplicity of their motives and the purity and beneficence of their mission. Deeply moved, as I was, by the story of this hairbreadth escape, I asked Mrs. Gilmour more about those fearful weeks of suspense, and she assured me that they had been perfectly calm, and were entirely resigned to God's will, whatever it might be.²

Though I have no palm-branch waving,
And no song to give Thee greeting,
At our meeting,
When Thou comest for Love's saving,
Will it be as good a part
If I bring a broken heart?

When the songs were Zionward flowing,
At the world's great place of selling
Sin was telling
What a price for love was going,
And my spirit over-bold
Flung away my hope for gold.

¹ C. H. Spurgeon.

² *James Gilmour of Mongolia*, p. 144.

But to dross my gain is turning,
 And my heart is full of weeping,
 Vigil keeping,
 And I come, all longing, yearning
 Just to lay me at Thy feet,
 For Thy pity, Lord, most sweet.

I have missed the palm-branch waving;
 I have missed the children's greeting
 At Thy meeting,
 When Thou camest for Love's saving—

In Thy triumph I've no part,—
 Yet I bring my broken heart.

Wilt thou pour Thy pity in it?—
 And though far Thy peace is shining
 Past my pining,
 Grant, O Lord, that I may win it,
 When the glory of Thy day
 Rolls the gloom of night away.¹

¹ L. Maclean Watt.

The Living Christ and the Historical Jesus.

BY PRINCIPAL THE REV. A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D., LONDON.

I.

1. THE foundation of the Christian Church is the Divine Saviour and Lord, in whom the historical Jesus and the living Christ are one. At no period in the history of the Christian Church has there been among Christian believers any doubt or question about the identity of the historical Person who lived, taught, healed, died, and rose again, and the spiritual presence, in whom Christian faith, hope, and love have their permanent and universal object. To-day, however, that identity is being so persistently and confidently challenged, that it is one of the most urgent tasks for Christian theology to resist these assaults of unbelief, which threaten not an outwork, but the citadel of Christianity itself. So far has doubt or denial advanced, that on the one hand the spiritual presence is dismissed as a subjective illusion, and on the other the historical person is declared never to have had any objective existence. We are told that it does not matter at all whether Jesus lived, or, if He lived, was at all as the New Testament represents Him. Even if the Christian conception of Christ be a myth, we are asked to believe that its value as embodying in a tale the truth of the soul's dying to a lower life and rising to a higher remains unchanged. Such comfort the Christian Church will not, and cannot accept. If the object of faith be not identical with the person who was a fact in history, the Church must with Mary lament: 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.'

2. But the comfort offered by unbelief is pre-

mature, and the lament of faith is not yet necessary. He that believeth shall not make haste; he need not be in a hurry or a flurry, for the foundation of God standeth sure, and yet it is a duty to test the foundation, and to show how unshakable it is. We must now examine the method by which unbelief severs the living Christ from the historical Jesus, and then rids itself of both. What used to be called the Higher Criticism is now entitled *the religious-historical method*. Such modification of principle or practice as there may be is due to the growing interest and importance of the study of comparative religion and the science of religious psychology. All religions are to be treated alike, and none is to be regarded as of so exceptional a character as to have any right to exemption from the application of the method in all its vigour and rigour. Christianity too is put in the dock, and when its trial is over, there remains a Christ conception which has no contact with historical reality, and a man Jesus who has no significance for religious faith. There are three stages in the argument. There comes first of all the *criticism* of the documents, although in that criticism the other two rules of the method are already assumed. Secondly, there is the *correlation* of the facts accepted in an historical process which is kept strictly in the bounds of the natural. Thirdly, there is the *comparison* of beliefs, rites, etc., with those of other religions, with the assumption of the uniformity of religious life.

3. The standard of judgment applied to the Christian writings, to sift the wheat of historical truth from the chaff of theological illusion, is the twofold assumption that religion cannot transcend