

the way of life so hard. It is this that makes it the way of the Cross. There is pity for feeble faith; for sin there is forgiveness; but 'he that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.' The root of all evil is not the love of money, but moral compromise.

### From a Broad Margin.

The Vicar of Tonbridge has a Bible with a broad margin. On the margin he writes down whatever strikes him in his reading as worth pre-

servation. And now he has made the margins of the Epistle to the Ephesians into a book, calling it *Side-Lights on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Nisbet, rs. 6d. net). Here is one of Mr. Baskerville's marginal notes. He calls it 'Figures of Forgiveness'—

1. Borne or taken away (Is 27<sup>9</sup>, Hos 14<sup>2</sup>).
2. Blotted out (Ps 51<sup>9</sup>, Ac 3<sup>19</sup>, Is 18<sup>25</sup> 44<sup>22</sup>).
3. Covered (Ps 32<sup>1</sup> 85<sup>2</sup>).
4. Removed (Ps 103<sup>11-12</sup>).
5. Washed away (Ps 51<sup>2</sup>).
6. Cast out of sight (Is 38<sup>17</sup>, Mic 7<sup>19</sup>).
7. Passed by (Mic 7<sup>18</sup>).

## The Will to Know.<sup>1</sup>

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'If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know.'  
—John vii. 37.

THE knowledge here promised to the man who willeth to do God's will, is knowledge in the largest sense of the word: it is the apprehension of truth by the entire personality of man in its threefold expression as thought, feeling, and will. None of these can singly be the organ of divine knowledge: all are indispensable, and yet not all in the same degree; for of thought, feeling, and will the chiefest of these is will. We shall now try to determine some of their respective functions in the acquisition of the divine knowledge, which is eternal life.

i. The intellect is the first instrument necessary for the acquisition of such knowledge. But by means of the intellect alone such knowledge cannot be attained. If it were attainable by such means, then religion would become a matter of demonstration and possess the same certainty as science. But by achieving scientific certainty, religion would forfeit its spiritual essence, and banish from its confines all reverence, faith, and hope; every virtue, heroism, and sanctity. In every department of life man would then be a mere creature of prudence, and obedience to the divine voice within us would be replaced by a mechanical conformity to an external scientific

<sup>1</sup> This sermon was delivered before the University of Dublin on 8th March 1903.

law, which none but a madman would dream of disobeying.

And yet the desire for a scientific demonstration of the Faith arises from time to time in the breasts of religious men, from their longing to escape the trials and distractions of doubt. But doubt cannot be evaded in the sphere of religion, unless we destroy its very essence by making it a science. Nay more, so far are transient invasions of doubt from being incompatible with an intelligent faith, that only those who have experienced it in some degree can be said to have faith at all. True faith is a witness to a spiritual order of law, and implies a recognition of the difficulties that beset it in the world of sight. If we would embrace the faith we must do so, not indeed without the exercise of the intellect, but without its full satisfaction. In the sphere of true faith doubt is a divine discipline, and is designed for the mental and moral enlargement of man, for his enfranchisement from the yoke of the seen and temporal with a view to his fuller citizenship in the kingdom of the unseen and eternal.

But we must be careful here and differentiate such doubt from other varieties only too familiar, which are in no sense heaven-born, but arise either from moral failings or the diseased activity of a

subtle understanding. The doubts which have their source in breaches of the moral law, are to be met with everywhere, alike in Christianity and in heathenism, amongst the most highly civilized and the most barbaric nations in the world. But the doubt which arises from a morbid activity of the intellect is mainly to be met with at our universities. It is not infrequently found in the self-involved students of mature years, who, voluntarily or involuntarily, have turned their backs on moral responsibilities, and so bereft themselves of the materials of a deep spiritual experience. Moral and spiritual paralysis is a not infrequent concomitant of a brilliant intellectualism.

Under neither of these heads, however, ought we to reckon the early doubts which naturally beset our younger members on their entrance into the current of University thought and life. Sooner or later every thoughtful mind must break with the peace of unreflective childhood, and this breach takes effect most naturally at our seats of learning, where the intellect is roused into an abnormal activity. If at such a crisis the moral and spiritual faculties are allowed to slumber, then nothing short of spiritual disaster can ensue. Is it strange that so many youths part with the creeds of their fathers at such a period, and think that in their superior enlightenment they have outgrown the faith that commands the allegiance of their elders? With very many, happily, this scepticism is but a passing distemper, from which they recover through spiritual experience and the recognition of the larger truths which were beyond their grasp in earlier years. Others, alas! never attain to faith and truth in this world, whether it be through their unwillingness to incur the spiritual cost, or through positive moral disqualifications for the reception of truth, or through some inherited incapacity of mind. But the sooner all such victims of sceptical depression recognize that a religion demonstrable to the intellect is an impossibility, the sooner will they learn that the remedy is to be found, not in a more agile intellect, but in a more dutiful and reverent will, and that true religion can be grasped only by the entire personality. The ascendant activity of the intellect unaccompanied by a deep moral experience must issue sooner or later in the shipwreck of the entire personality.

ii. The next instrument which man must use in the quest of truth is the feelings. The feelings form the springs of action, the dynamic necessary for the realization of thought and duty. Their object is to lead a man out into action. Of what avail are feelings of generosity, compassion, repentance, admiration, unless they are forthwith embodied in an actual change of mind or translated into action? And yet this office of the feelings is frequently misconceived, and men conscious of high aspirations and a ready sensibility to religious appeal, can with difficulty conceive themselves faithless to divine opportunities and the duties of everyday life. Nevertheless, every right emotion and impulse, every throb of penitence and aspiration, unless they attain their divinely appointed goal and issue in a new and purer devotedness to God and man, are merely so much waste of our spiritual resources, and enfeeble the nature it was their sole purpose to strengthen and inspire. The identification of the religious feelings with religion forms one of the most unhappy chapters in the history of human delusion. The end of all feelings, then, is action, and this is especially true of the religious feelings. But to secure the fulfilment of this end the feelings must ever be subject to the authority of a good will, else their tendency is to end in their own indulgence, and finally perish. But, again, at their best the feelings are but fitful in their appearance, and time and duty cannot await the tardiness of their advent. We cannot remain inactive till some emotion, unsought and unearned, awakes within us and makes the duty of renunciation easy, the task of compassion a delight. Here, as before, we must fall back on the earnest will and go and do the deed of mercy or reparation, though it be with unresponsive spirit; and fulfil, even when our hearts are coldest, the claims they owned when they were all aglow.

iii. The third and chief factor needful for the acquisition of truth is the will, and that a will obedient to the highest known to it—in other words, a good will. The importance of the will is emphasized in the strongest terms in the Scriptures. 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel'; 'Whosoever willeth let him take of the water of life freely'; 'Ye are not willing to come unto Me that ye may have life.' The life or salvation here promised is salvation in the large

sense of the word. Such salvation is not only a future, but an actual present blessing. It means the redemption of the whole man from evil: his deliverance from the sins and diseases incident to the passions, intellect, and spirit, and the making of the man sound in his entire personality.

Now let us consider first the influence of a good will on the intellect. This influence is, of course, indirect. By no effort of the will can we add a cubit to our intellectual stature, but by removing the vices of the mind we can contribute immeasurably to its efficacy and strength in the quest of truth. For only too easily is the mind diverted from this quest by interest and the passions of fear and ambition. How hard it is for the natural justice of the understanding to assert itself, when 'interest promises to one set of opinions emolument and honour, and to their opposite poverty and disgrace.' The temptation in such a case to palter with evidence, to stifle inconvenient doubts, and to make one's professions square with one's interests, cannot but prove insurmountable to characters of imperfect morality, and to this temptation professional men are particularly exposed, whether they be divines or students of medicine or science. Only too soon is the danger of running counter to established conventions brought home to them, and the expediency of establishing a reputation as 'safe' men, if they would not sacrifice success in their professional career. It is well indeed that there should be 'safe' men in every walk of life, but not 'safe' in the sense just used. In every profession there must be numbers of men whose strength is to sit still, whose minds cling fast to the old and the familiar, and look with suspicion on every movement in advance. That there should be such is a safeguard against over-hasty progress; but if there had only been such from the outset, man would never have emerged from the condition of the tiger and the ape. But 'safe' men in the censurable sense of the word are those who, when they might have advanced the cause of moral or social progress, have advanced only their own interests. Such safe men are the curse of the Church and the bane of science. Happy on the other hand is the man of pure and resolute will, who can turn a deaf ear to the solicitations of passion and interest, and calmly take the path that duty prescribes. He at all events who tries

to act after this fashion can safely leave his career in higher hands, and look to the same source for that insight and inspiration which are never withheld from the faithful seeker. And who can gauge the powers of such a man when liberated from the thralldom and distraction of the lower nature and 'committed to the Almighty to wield them at His will'?

We have here dwelt on the need of an earnest and resolute will for delivering the mind from its inherited or self-incurred vices, and fitting it for the tasks it was designed to achieve. We have next to point out the need of an earnest will, in order to preserve as living truths the religious knowledge we have inherited or won for ourselves. Now such knowledge has an undoubted tendency to become a substitute for conduct, as the religious feelings for religion. Our familiarity with spiritual truths is too apt to be taken, even by ourselves, for spiritual experience, and our ready assent to these truths often blinds us to our practical forgetfulness of them. But however much we know, we are after all only what we have done. The highest religious truths cannot really be known till they are lived. Only to the obedient do they become actual beatitudes: only to those that fear Him is the secret of the Lord disclosed: if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

But now passing from the consideration of the intellect to the feelings, we would emphasize first of all the necessity of keeping the feelings in subjection to the will. We have here come to what is perhaps the most interesting section of our subject; for as we pursue it we shall discover how the action of an earnest will becomes a regenerative force in the life of man, the restorer of his wasted energies and affections, the supreme condition of the scholar's insight, and, highest of all, the agent of the soul's conversion to God.

The affections must be subjected to the sway of the conscientious will, if we are to fulfil our Christian duty; for Christianity makes high demands on the affections. But how are we to act if we are without such affections? We cannot supply them by any effort of the will. Such affections as love, hate, admiration, reverence, are involuntary. By no spasm of determination can we make ourselves love an object we do not love, or hate an object we do not hate. But though the will cannot generate such affections, it can prepare for their

birth, it can practise the maieutic art, and in this way our voluntary actions become the birthpangs of our involuntary affections. To explain. We cannot by an effort of the will produce a right affection. But if, despite its absence, we do the duty to which the missing affection should have led, we establish the possibility of its birth or revival in us, and if with conscientious persistency we fulfil the same duty as often as it arises, then the possibility becomes an actuality, and the affection is born within us. The act itself, indeed, can never of course, however often repeated, become an affection. But the growth of the affection is made possible by the repeated fulfilments of the duty, because in such fulfilments the will constantly checks the impulses that conflict with the duty, and so ultimately destroys them; for evil affections, like weeds, must die if all growth is checked. But this explanation, it may be rejoined, shows only how the will removes obstructions to the growth of the new affection, but does not explain its origin. That is quite true. No action of ours can originate any right affection. We can only remove obstructions to its growth. Ours is not the work of inspiration, but only the dutiful act; we have to work out what God works in us; for it is God that implants the generous affection and prompts the impulse of mercy; it is God that gives the grace of repentance, the vision of holiness, and the hunger and thirst that can find satisfaction in Him alone, and none other.

Let us take an illustration. If, when motions of envy arise within us at a rival's success, we refuse on the one hand with strong resolve to give any expression to this evil passion, and on the other pray earnestly to God that he may have every blessing and every possible enjoyment from the very success which provoked our envy, then we shall find that this venomous passion will die within us, and in its stead there will grow up the joy of disinterested affection, a genuine delight in the prosperity of a former rival.

To the above experiences in the province of the affections we have remarkable analogies in those of the mind and of the spirit. In the province of thought the revelations of truth are made to the earnest seeker. But such revelations do not come easily and of course. Oftentimes for days or months or years the mind must study and toil terribly, must saturate itself with its subject, must intend itself often and long, and seem-

ingly without result, till at last in some unexpected hour the truth dawns suddenly on the seeker, and the chaos of facts are in a moment transformed into a well-ordered cosmos. How barren for the time and sterile appeared the strenuous hours when the mind with restless energy laboured to advance, now in this direction, now in that, but such periods were not fruitless; for in their course the persistent energy of the mind was unconsciously removing the obstructions that stood between it and the insight it craved. Thus here, as in the sphere of feeling, the mind had to pursue its laborious toil till at last, its task being done, the God-given light was vouchsafed, and order and knowledge were established where before disorder and ignorance reigned.

But there is a task of still higher achievement for the faithful will. Its aim now is, not the restoration of some single right affection in the sphere of feeling, nor yet the discovery of some truth in the sphere of thought or science, but one that infinitely transcends such aims, and yet is to be achieved on analogous lines. This aim, need I say, is the chief end of man, to meet God face to face, to know Him, to love Him, and live unto Him forever. It is true, indeed, that at times God is found of those that sought Him not. But this experience is not general. In the province of the spirit, as in those of the affections and intellect, he that seeketh findeth and to him that knocketh is the gate of access opened. Here, above all, we need the earnest will. And for such a will in God's world there is no such word as fail. The quest may be long, the strife arduous, but sooner or later the goal is reached, the battle won. How soon, how late, in each individual case no man can determine beforehand. In one case the faithful seeker may have to pursue the path of duty through a long period of years unblessed by the consciousness of that high communion with God that turns servitude into sonship and the demands of duty into objects of the affections. In another the seeker may have only entered on the way of obedience, when in one transcendent moment God makes Himself known, and the soul is at one with the Highest and at peace.

Why this supreme revelation is made in one case at the outset of the pilgrimage and in another withheld till this life's close, or later, even when we know all the earthly conditions, is not easy

to determine. And yet we are not left wholly in ignorance on this matter; for the analogous series of facts in the provinces of the feeling and the intellect suggest that here, as there, obstructions in the soul of the seeker had to be removed before he received the salvation he sought. But a further explanation may be found in the different objects of the seekers. For since salvation is differently conceived by different men, surely God's answer to the soul's cry for salvation must vary likewise. To one man salvation means, first and chiefly, deliverance from the fears and penalties that dog the heels of sin; to another, redemption from sin itself; to another, the filling of the whole man, spirit, mind, and affections, with the Being of God. Is it strange, then, that one soul should early succeed in its quest, and that another should have to struggle onward through the darkness of years? Is it strange that the salvation into which such men enter through conversion should have various ethical values, seeing that one man conceives religion as the refuge of his weakness, whilst another reveres it as the educator of his strength? Is it

strange, therefore, that the character of some men at the crisis of conversion should be almost wholly unformed and need the discipline of babes in Christ, and that the character of others should be mature and ready for His completed will.

But, however great our present attainment, we must still press onward. The task of the faithful will is the creation of Christlike character. But character with any affinity to the divine can only be attained through increasing faithfulness to the ever larger light that dawns upon the soul. Every such further manifestation of His will is the Master's summons to His disciple, 'Come up higher,' and every response to such a summons can only be done at a cost. Duty then, should it grow more severe, must yet be more dutifully done, the mind's doubts faced, however terrible their challenge, and love's claims honoured, even when they exact the full self-sacrifice. Only by such obedience can we gain the full instruction that God has committed to the faithful life, and so transform our days from a series of self-repetitions into a life of progressive achievement. 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.'

## Notes on 'The Best Bible Commentaries.'

### NEW TESTAMENT.

**MATTHEW.**—It is extremely interesting (perhaps it is not so creditable, however) to see the position that Meyer still takes. Meyer deserves it: we know men, and they our finest scholars, who have Meyer nearest their hand always; but the fact is that in this country St. Matthew's Gospel has been quite unaccountably neglected. Allen will soon appear in the 'International Critical' series; and it is right to mention the 'Cambridge Greek Testament for Colleges,' which has been neglected in this list almost as entirely as the 'Handbooks for Bible Classes and Private Students.' The St. Matthew volume is done by Carr (4s. 6d.). Then on the other side there is, in our belief, no popular commentary on the Gospels to be compared for a moment with Dr. David Brown's in Collins' 'Experimental' series. It is the only volume of the six worth paying a penny for,

but it is good enough to keep the whole series selling.

**MARK.**—Add on the student's side Maclear in the C.G.T. (4s. 6d.) and a very elementary but excellent little commentary by Sir A. F. Hort, Bart. (Cambridge Press, 2s. 6d. net). On the popular side the best commentary is not named, though four are mentioned. It is Principal Lindsay's in the 'Handbooks' series (T. & T. Clark, 2s. 6d.). Principal Salmond's edition in the 'Century Bible' is out now (Jack, 2s. net), but it does not supersede Lindsay.

**LUKE.**—There is a student's edition of St. Luke which may not be so useful generally as Plummer's, but for Synoptic study is unsurpassed—Arthur Wright's *St. Luke's Gospel in Greek* (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net). The student of the 'Synoptic Problem' cannot do without it.

**JOHN.**—Here the great surprise is the omission of Reynolds. It is the chief ornament of the

<sup>1</sup> See THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for January, February, and March.