

THE REVEALING OF THE HEART

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This is the third of a series of Lenten Sermons. Other sermons in this series will be by the Rev. Dr. Edward Judson and the Very Rev. Alexander P. Doyle.—THE EDITORS.

That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.—Luke ii. 35.

THIS is the prophecy of the aged Simeon as he stands in the Temple, a few days after the birth of Jesus, holding the baby in his arms. There is hardly any more beautiful scene in history. The old man has been waiting for the consolation of Israel; he is a just and devout man; the Holy Ghost is upon him; and now in his old age he is permitted to see the hope of his nation fulfilled. The lingering past holds the new-born future in its arms, and the old man sings: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Then, still holding the child high before the people, the old man goes on to tell what is to happen now that this boy is born. He "is set," says Simeon, "for the fall and rising again of many in Israel;" and we remember how soon it came to pass that fishermen rose to be Apostles, and Pharisees fell under the judgment of Christ. He is to be a sign, goes on Simeon, "which shall be spoken against;" and we remember how soon it happened that the way of Jesus was beset by misinterpretation, slander, and shame. Then, finally, and with a still finer instinct, old Simeon prophesies that, as the last sign of the Messiahship of Jesus, "the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." People, that is to say, who should come into relation with Jesus would not only learn many and wonderful thoughts out of his heart, but they would also have revealed unto themselves the thoughts of their own hearts; and he, on his side, would not only understand these thoughts of other hearts, but he would enable people to understand their own thoughts and would reveal to them the self which lay within themselves. The gift of Jesus to many a life was to be not only a revealing of the mysteries

of God, but a revealing of one's own spiritual capacity, the consciousness of one's power, the renewal of one's self-respect, the discovery that within one's heart lay thoughts which were better than one had ever dreamed were there.

So stands the man of the old order looking into the promise of the new; and few things are more wonderful in the story of Jesus than the way in which this prophecy of Simeon soon came to be fulfilled. One after another the people of the New Testament come into the presence of Jesus, some of them sympathizers, some enemies, some puzzled, some impetuous, some neutral, some timid; and to many of the questions which they ask of him they get no satisfying reply. They often remain bewildered about the relation of Christ to his Father and the mission of Christ to the world. Yet, as they pass out of his presence, one thing has been revealed which was perhaps the last thing they had expected. It is the thoughts of their own hearts. They have had themselves disclosed to themselves; and their interior characters, motives, capacities, and sins, which had been hitherto only half understood even by themselves, are clarified, interpreted, and illuminated by their intercourse with Jesus Christ. Here, for instance, comes Nathanael, doubtful, wary, asking, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and Jesus looks on him and through him, reads his character—faithful, pure, fit for discipleship—and says of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!" and Nathanael, who fancied that he was observing and judging Jesus, is turned back upon himself, and says, "Whence knowest thou *me*?" Then Peter comes, inconstant, wavering, more like shifting sand than solid rock, and Jesus looks through him also, and, beneath all the blunders he is to make, and the self-reproach which is

to be his, perceives the underlying capacity for ultimate leadership, and says of him, fickle, impetuous, as he seems to himself, "Thou shalt be called a rock." Then Pilate comes, wary, sagacious, anxious to be unentangled in the case of Jesus, and his temporizing, worldly wisdom is laid bare at a stroke as Jesus says, "Thou sayest that I am a king," and instead of judging Jesus, Pilate is judged and condemned. So they come, and so they pass: the woman of Samaria, touched with a wonder she had not thought was hers to feel; the woman who was a sinner, recalled to the virtue she had thought was lost. It is as though these figures came up out of the shadow and passed before the penetrating rays of the person of Jesus, and he shone on them for a moment and revealed to them a self within themselves, and they passed on with a sense of significance and power given to their obscure and insignificant lives.

Such was the extraordinary fulfillment of the old man's prophecy, and it remains a promise which gives courage and hope to many a modern life. This is a wonderful time and a wonderful America in which it is our privilege to live: a time, we are told, of the greatest diffusion of general prosperity recorded in the history of the world; a time of quite unprecedented transformations in industry, of amazing increase in productiveness and power. Never before was the world so highly organized or so mechanically perfect; and yet out of this aggregated life there issues one new peril, which threatens to rob all these gains of half their glory. It is the peril of a suppressed and undiscovered personality, the merging of the individual in the movement of the mass, the risk that in this vast organization of efficiency the thoughts of many hearts shall remain quite unrevealed. Here is this mighty movement of industrial and political life, with its huge aggregation of material forces and of masses of men; but in this vast mechanism of the modern world, where is the place for the individual soul? What is it but one part of the great machine, one little wheel interlocking and revolving with the rest? A workman, a clerk, a factory hand, a teacher, a scholar, looks at his life, so fragmentary, so mechanical, so imper-

sonal, and cries out: "Why should I have any thought in my heart? Why should I have any heart? What am I but one shuttle in the great mill of modern life as it weaves the rich product of the modern time?" I stood once by the death-bed of such a man—a clerk in a vast establishment—and we talked together of the death that seemed approaching, and the man looked up into my face out of the sad story of a depersonalized and mechanical life, and said, "Sir, I have been dead and buried for twenty years." That is the seamy side of our material development. It is what the economists call the "cost of progress," or the "anonymity of industry," where a human life, instead of having revealed to it the thoughts of its own heart, is simply one more cog in the great machine.

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and
I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is
more and more."

When one turns to the other end of life, from its work to its play, from the routine of industrial life to the routine of social life, is it not much the same? How mechanical, formal, oppressive, unreal, it often seems! What is it that brings to many a young man or woman a great sense of recoil from the habits and demands of modern life, its conventionalism, its uniformity, its incessant round of social obligations and routine? It is the same fear that the thoughts of one's own heart may be crushed by the weight of the mass, so that personality, individuality, originality, liberty, life itself, may be lost. The very slang of the day exhibits the social world as an aggregate and impersonal movement, in which the individual sinks. One person says that he "keeps up with the procession," as though the problem of his life were that of a little boy who keeps step with the band; another person says that he is "in the swim," as though he were a kind of conscious chip in the middle of a resistless current; and out of all this submerging civilization many a young life lifts itself up and cries: "Oh, to be myself! Oh, to be taken out of this stream of things and to find a place where I may stand on my feet! What shall it profit me if I gain all the world and lose my

own soul? Somehow, somewhere, O world in which I seem irrevocably set, reveal to me the thoughts of my own heart!" It is often said that what young people of the present time most need is humility. They think too much of themselves; they need chastening and correcting—the "taking down" of their conceit; and it would certainly be excessive to maintain that there is no such need, or that the young person of the present age is altogether ready for the blessing pronounced upon the poor in spirit. Yet it is quite certain that the chief fault of young people to-day is of the opposite kind. It is not their sense of self-sufficiency which most obstructs their moral growth, but their sense of insignificance. For one young life that thinks too much of itself, a hundred think too little of themselves; for one who needs self-suppression, a score need self-respect; for one who needs "taking down," a dozen need lifting up. A young man or woman looks at the demands of duty or religion, and says: "This is not a call to me. I am neither a hero nor a saint. What part have I in tasks like these?" Another young life is beset by the conventions and traditions of his set, his clique, his college, and says, "Who am I to resist or control or divert these social laws?" The mass overcomes the person, and the thoughts of many hearts are unrevealed. What is it, then, which these young lives need? It is moral courage, the sense of capacity, the restoration of faith in their own thoughts. They may need the rebuking of mistakes, but they need much more the fortifying of self-respect. They need a conviction of sin, but they need still more a conviction of power. A great flood of conventionalism and conformity has swept over the modern world, and bears on its crest a wave of personal discouragement and impotency, until many a life finds itself almost drowned beneath the choking pressure of the world's work or the paralyzing *ennui* of the world's play; and the recovery of faith, not in God or in Christ alone, but in one's self, the rescue of the life from the things that crush the life, becomes the elementary desire and prayer of many a modern soul.

Now, to people living thus in an age of

machinery, to people thus swept along by the swift stream of living, yet thirsty for the water of life, there comes this first message of the religion of Jesus Christ. The Christian religion begins with one great assumption—that human beings are children of God; that neither dullness nor hardness nor lack of opportunity altogether robs one of the right to be good and to do good; that this is what people are made for; that when any child of God, even in a far country of sin and shame, turns to the Father, then, as was said of the Prodigal, "he comes to himself;" that it was not his true self which had wandered away, but that he had wandered away from his true self; that the thoughts of one's own heart which call him to his best are the call of God to the inheritance which all the time belonged to the child. Believing all this, Jesus believed in people just as they were. He believed in them even when they did not believe in themselves. He believed in Peter, though Peter denied him; he believed in Thomas, though Thomas doubted him; he discerned the potential capacity of men before they had recognized it themselves. He took them just as they were, and through his faith in them created in them the character which they had not supposed they could assume, until the secrets which were hidden from them in their own hearts were through his faith in them finally revealed. It was a pedagogical instinct in Jesus. He had the mind of the born teacher. He knew that little can be got out of a life by a teacher except by the teacher's faith that each life is made for something, and that to draw out the Divine intention for that life is the teacher's task and joy. That, indeed, is what millions of people have meant by being saved by Jesus Christ. It is not that they have been saved from torment, or saved from themselves, but that they have been saved to themselves, so that the possibilities of their own nature have been revealed to them, and the thoughts of their own hearts which they had lost have been found. I was reading a while ago a little book in which the author told the story of his own life, and in the preface he had written: "This is a book with but one intention—that, in being read, it may read you." That is what might be said of the influ-

ence of the Gospels. They are the story of a life ; but, in being read, they read you. They report to you, not only the story of Jesus, but the story of your own experience. It is not only you that find their meaning ; but, as Coleridge said, they "find you." In his letter to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul tells the same story in a striking figure. It is, he says, as though the Christian were set before a wonder-working mirror, in which was reflected the glory of God. At first the image of this glory dazzles the beholder, and he puts a veil between it and himself ; but gradually, as he looks again into the mirror, he discerns his own features reflected back to him, but touched with something of that glory which was itself too bright to bear, until at last his own image is changed into the image of the Divine likeness, so that the looker-on becomes like that on which he looks. "Beholding," the Apostle says, "as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image . . . by the Spirit of the Lord." That, he thought, is what may happen as one looks steadily into the mirror of God. It is not that he shall be all at once made perfect, but that by degrees the veil shall be drawn away before the magic glass, and he shall see his imperfect thoughts touched with the glory of God's intention, until that which he is changes before him into that which he prays to be, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Here, then, is an aspect of the religion of Jesus Christ which may make a starting-point for rational discipleship. It is not the whole of his gospel ; it is not the profoundest part of his gospel ; but it may be the first gift of his religion to many a timid, hesitating, bewildered life. When one recalls the motives which through the Christian centuries have operated most strongly to stir the higher life, they turn out, in the main, to have been two. On the one hand is the motive of self-reproach, on the other hand is the motive of self-respect. One is the scorn of sin, the other is the desire for holiness. Both of these motives have a legitimate part in the creation of the Christian character ; but the first and expulsive force which drives out evil has had an enormously greater place than the second and attractive force which draws to good.

The first is the cry of Paul : "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" and it has been taken up by teachers of religion, as though the secret of holiness lay in the confession of helplessness. In Jesus, however, we hear for the most part the other note. He too understands the power of self-reproach ; he too welcomes the confession, "God be merciful to me, a sinner !" but with Jesus the sense of impotency is but a step on the way to the sense of strength, like a soldier's sudden sinking of heart when he is summoned to charge. The call of God, as Jesus heard it, is the call of a commander who has faith in his men, the call to courage, to advance, to victory. Jesus does not merely tell men that they are weak, he makes them believe that they are strong. He bids them never to believe in less than their own best. He shows them the way up the heights they desire to scale, and goes before them on that hard path, so that they follow in his steps where they had thought they could not go. That is the Christian method—the renewal of courage by the communication of power, the transfiguration of life in the mirror of God so that it is changed by that into which it looks. Discipleship brings with it self-discovery. Returning to the Father is coming to one's self. The Christian life develops unsuspected power. Intimacy with Jesus Christ is the revelation of one's own heart.

There are many things which people want to get from their religion and which religion does not seem to bestow. They want to be assured of their future ; they want to be saved from their past ; they want the present made easier ; and all these prayers seem to leave them just about where they were. The old routine, the inexorable machinery, still environs them, and they begin to wonder what their religious faith was meant to do. One of the most striking facts in the ministry of Jesus is that the same business in which his disciples were engaged when he first met them was the business in which he left them at the end. They were fishermen tending their nets at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew ; and they were fishermen still tending their nets at the end of the Gospel of John. What, then, did Jesus do for them ? The old life, just

as it was, had become to them a new life, because they discovered within it a possible companionship with the creative work of God, so that the same persons who had cast their nets with the dull stolidity of many a modern fisherman found themselves called to put forth into the deep and catch men. That is the miracle which religion still waits to perform. The work of faith is not to transform one's circumstances or lessen the pressure of routine, but to disentangle from that routine the thoughts of the heart, as the fingers of Peter and Andrew disentangled themselves from the meshes of their nets as they rose up and followed Christ. In the midst of the inevitable routine and detail of the world a life starts up and says: "I am not a cog; I am not a wheel; I am not a chip; I am a child of God, a partaker of the Divine nature, a laborer with God, a joint heir with Jesus Christ." Then experience is transformed from prose to poetry, and the ideals of life be-

come its realities, and the secrets of the heart are revealed; and as one looks into the magic mirror of God his little fragmentary, fruitless life is changed into some dim reflection of the glory of the Lord. The tapestry weavers of Paris, it is said, did their work at the back of the picture which they created, where they saw only the fragments of their task and the loose ends which were left behind; but from time to time the workman might rise from the corner where he worked and go round to the other side and see the total picture in which each had his slight but essential share. That is religion—the going round to the other side of things, the seeing the whole of that in which one has his fragmentary part; and that is what gives to life its dignity, patience, and joy. The loose ends fall into their places when one sees the Master Craftsman's plan, and the thoughts of many hearts are at last united, interpreted, and revealed.

GETTING THE NIGHT NEWS

BY SHEPARD A. MORGAN

MOST readers seem to regard a morning newspaper as a matter-of-fact miracle, something that is put together by a subtle mechanism and makes its appearance in some unknowable way just in time for breakfast. It may be that there is no familiar thing which is got together in a manner so foreign to common knowledge. People do not know how this or that got into the paper, how it came to be found out or how it came to be written. Somebody must have written it, that is clear; but if you ask how somebody came to do it, the answer comes back, "Why, of course, somebody must have been there."

Perhaps he was, but the chances are that he was not. A very considerable part of the episodes related to the public every morning cannot be foreseen, and that in itself is reason enough why the man who wrote the story did not see the incident. Some readers, having suspected this truth, tell you that the facts written

in the newspapers are not so at all. "The facts are all dressed up," they say, "so as to make what you call stories. That's what they really are, you know. Most of them are fiction."

These persons are as much out of the way as the one who assumes the presence of a conscientious and perceptive reporter at every incident noted in the newspaper. By its very nature news that cannot be foreseen has to be ascertained from those who took part in the episode that made it, or deduced from such physical evidences as are left behind after the incident is over. Plays, baseball games, public meetings and dinners, the opera—these are told of by men who saw at least a part of what they describe. But most of the emergency news, and especially the emergency news that comes late at night, is told on second-hand, and sometimes even on third or fourth hand, information.

By the time the night force comes to work—just what the night force is com-