whole, never became prevalent. Nor does there seem to be in any Rabbinic writing the slightest reference to an atoning character in the sufferings of the Messiah. In this connexion, it is worthy of note that in one of the oldest Rabbinic works, the Targum of Jonathan on the Prophets, whose origin is in the first century B.C., although its final form belongs to the fifth century A.D., the 52nd and 53rd chapters of Isaiah are referred to the Messiah. But the interpretation given entirely distorts the original sense. Thus, the humiliation of the Servant is explained of the people, and his vicarious suffering toned down to an intercession (see Schürer, *Geschichte*, ed. 3, vol. ii. p. 556). 'The year 70 A.D. only marks the *first* stage on the path of suffering for the Messiah. The study of Scripture urged them [*i.e.* Jewish scholars] on in this direction' (Baldensperger, *op. cit.* p. 149).¹

¹ Dr. C. H. H. Wright has pointed out that there are various allusions to Is 53 in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. But it is evident from their character that the author did not regard the prophecy as Messianic (*Expositor*, iii. 7, pp. 368-372).

These facts are sufficient to show that the transformation in the conception of the Messiah was due to none other than Jesus Himself. The effect of the transformation is visible from the manner in which the disciples received the announcements of the Passion. These men were certainly good representatives of devout Jewish society. They must have been well acquainted with the Messianic beliefs and expectations of their time. They were more ready than most of their contemporaries to welcome a spiritual view of Messiah's functions. And yet, after they have made their great confession by the lips of Peter, they are struck with sheer horror at the thought of the rejection and cruel death of Jesus. Such an attitude would be inexplicable, if the thought of a suffering Messiah were, in *any* sense, recognized in the current theology. Jesus, therefore, revolutionized the prevailing conception of Messiah by deliberately associating His own career as the Anointed of God with a course of suffering, shame, and death.

Here we reach the centre of our investigation.

Freedom by the Knowledge of the Truth.

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'The truth shall make you free.'—John viii. 32.

THE scene in which these words were uttered by our Lord, as it is depicted in the Fourth Gospel, is an interesting one. Jesus had been speaking in allusive terms of His going away, home to the Father, and had emphasized the truth of Him that sent Him, and therefore the truth of His own message; but the real meaning of His utterance was unperceived. Yet, as He spoke of the perfect harmony of will between Himself and the Father, many, we are told, believed on Him. Then, to those who were Jews, who had attained to a lower degree of apprehension of His message and His person, a lower phase of that process of 'believing' whose end is 'life,' He enunciates this separating test, this broad principle, coupled with a far-reaching promise: 'Ye, if ye abide in the logos

that is mine, in my word, truly are my disciples; and ye shall come to know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' We recall the words of the Stoic slave, 'I have come to know God's commandments . . . henceforth no man can lead me captive.' But, with an outburst of national exclusiveness, a glow of ancestral pride, the hearers seize on the word 'free' in its temporal significance, and leave unnoted the spiritual conception of the truth so rich in ever-developing fruitfulness.

However, the misinterpretation of these 'Jews' throws light for the readers and for us upon the meaning of the truth. For that same spiritual liberty that crowns the Christian's growing assurance, his increasing knowledge of the truth, is also a boon and an activity attributed to the work of the Son—'If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' The truth, then, in its

¹ Preached before the University of Cambridge, 16th January 1908.

unlimited, ideal significance, has the same end as the Son in the life of the faithful; nay, they are even identifiable: that which *is*, absolutely, 'sub specie æternitatis,' is manifested amongst men and to men as a Person, the Word incarnate, who can say, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' We are thus taken beyond all earth-born views of mere truthfulness and veracity, of harmony of thought and witness with fact, up to the region of ideas, the pattern in the heavens. Yet what is the knowledge of the truth that is freedom-bringing, but that knowledge of God in which eternal life consists? Indeed, truth is predicated of the Father in an earlier passage, 'God is true,' and, in our context, 'the Father, he that sent me, is true.' So our thoughts may pass back as well to the less full revelation in the O.T. of Jehovah's truth, trustworthiness for Israel, in the 'God of the Amen'; or again, to that beautiful figure in the Talmud, of truth as the seal of the Almighty. For it was said of those returned Jews who fasted and wore sackcloth at the reading of the law, as it is related for us in the Book of Nehemiah, that they prayed earnestly three days to overcome sin, the evil desire, and then a letter fell from heaven on which simply the word 'truth' was written; and so one of the Rabbis says: 'From this we may infer that truth is the seal of the Holy One, Blessed be He.' Furthermore, not only is the Paraclete, Christ's other self, identified with the Spirit of the truth in the later discourses of this Gospel; but, in the first Epistle, the Spirit too is the truth, just as Jesus is, and, by implication, the Father—'It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth' (1 Jn 5th), the truth to which He witnesses and which He manifests primarily through the Church of Christ's disciples for the progressive education of men in the path that is marked by liberty.

Thus the divine revelation to mankind is characterized in each—to us 'personal'—aspect by truth; nay more, each *is* the truth.

And this illuminating interpretation which the Fourth Gospel affords us of the revelation through the incarnate Word, as the truth gradually realized, progressively apprehended by believers, is concerned with no mere collection of facts to be verified and assimilated, but with a transforming power, a motive power, a freeing power in experience: it is not static, but dynamic; just as those more physically descriptive interpretations of

the Christ of St. John—as 'the light,' 'the life'—display more immediately.

'The truth shall make you free,'—the truth which God is; which the Word is, and reveals; which the Spirit is, and witnesses; this, as apprehended by men of faith—individually and in the aggregate—down the ages is progressive, educative, uplifting, ennobling, liberating by the development of the highest, the divinest in us.

In such manner grows the correspondence of man with God in harmony of will, of man with man in harmony of work; and the divine harmony of the truth manifest in the threefoldness of the Christian revelation is reflected, though it be so dimly, yet with increasing clearness, according as the ideal principles of righteousness and love bear widening rule in human society and in human life.

'Believing,' as it advances stage by stage, attunes the individual heart for this response, and 'they that are of the truth,' 'they that are of God,' though there be no very open profession, though the religious life be unobtrusive, are they that hear and receive as a developing, guiding, freeing influence within the revelation of the Christ. The truth, being divine, is essentially unchangeable, but is ever changing in the methods of its presentation and of interpretation according to the varying needs of each age, or race, or society.

As the ice-cut steps upon the frozen slope will serve for those immediately behind, but their usefulness soon passes, and their very traces rapidly disappear; so the modes of expression that attempt to describe truth (in some of its aspects) suitably to one generation, will be found inadequate, possibly even misleading, for another with wider mental range.

Yet the primary need at any stage of the Church's history—since the revelation through the Word—has been personal, individual.

Truth's dynamic that makes for freedom—for liberty, mental, ethical, social—is only experienced on the condition of faith, the inward appropriation of the message as normative, as the dominant factor in the life of the soul. And this interior witness or experience comes to expression in outward conduct, and its freeing power affects in turn the mass, the aggregate; the Church, then the world; the community, then the whole human society. This is the ideal, but the fulness of freedom that comes by the truth can be only

when the kingdom is the Lord's, just as the truth in its fulness is God's alone; as says St. Leo: 'That man has true freedom whose flesh is controlled by the judgment of his mind, and whose mind is directed by the government of God.'

The truth shall make you free!

As we look around us, we can perceive, if we will, both the justification of the promise and the application of the principle thus set forth by Jesus, as a present process.

In the evolution of religion and of civilization, for those who stand upon the prophet's watch-tower, and look above the dust and murk, the grime and toil of daily routine, men *are* being made free by the knowledge of the truth, whether they realize it or no—in thought, in ethics, in social conditions.

1. In Thought.

I suppose that each age that has pressed forward intellectually has felt as we are feeling now, that a readjustment is going on, that new thought is question bringing, that old views are being shown to be unstable, old conceptions—formulated with a lack of adequate knowledge—insecure.

Yet who will deny that this change in the presentation rather than in the content of the truth is making for progress, freedom, fuller expression, for better understanding of the revelation increasingly apprehended by human minds? On the one hand, 'there is a time to keep, and a time to cast away'; on the other, 'the passing away of those things that are being shaken' is but 'that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.'

Even amidst the din of controversy, and the whirl of conflicting opinions and diverse explanations of the riddles of nature, and life, and faith, the most potent spiritual assurance is that conviction (in the consciousness of each one) of the divine freeing power of the truth; though it may perchance shatter some idols that we had cherished.

Surely in this abode of science, this home of knowledge, where wisdom is acquired, where patient reverent labour, itself a form of worship, seeks the key for mysteries; surely here this principle and this promise should stimulate us to devout investigation; though our work seem of the minutest and the humblest type, be it physical or metaphysical, be it in anthropology or philosophy,

history or chemistry, it matters not; are we not each and all truth-seekers, truth-searchers? And in the light of this message of Jesus we can trust that some meed of freedom will reward our efforts, 'the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free'; and we shall find light upon our ways. Our discovery in any sphere, we can be assured, is just in proportion to our capacity to receive the revelation; though the light of the divine purpose seem so dim, in this respect Browning's words are right, when he says:

Truth is within ourselves;

It takes no rise

From outward things, whate'er you may believe.

There is an inmost centre in us all,

Where truth abides in fulness.

2. In Ethics.

Time fails us to trace the working out of this in Christian progress, though reactions, and that sometimes nominally religious, have had retarding effect upon it; and advance has sometimes seemed to be so heavy-footed. Yet humility, a despised and vicious disposition, becomes in time a cherished virtue. Woman, from a mere chattel in her father's house, becomes the recipient of equal honour, equal love, and equal care. The tender life of the child is treasured and guarded, not neglected or destroyed: the broken ones and the wreckage of humanity are lovingly tended and anxiously strengthened and alleviated. Verily, the truth, the growing perception and apprehension of it, is making us free; but still how far short of what is even humanly possible amongst us!

The religion of Jesus, as a personal relation of the child of man to the Father in heaven, uplifts him above mere State-ordered rites, and affords a moral stimulus, as he realizes step by step the significance of Divine Sonship on the one side, and of human brotherhood on the other; he comes to feel with St. John, as his vision clears, and his aspirations rise, that sin—whether in its aspect of selfishness or that of lawlessness, missing the divinely purposed mark—is incompatible with Sonship, and inconsistent with the fulfilment of the law of his rational being, which is the truest freedom. Thus laws and customs and regulations—whatever their sanctions—fall into desuetude with every moral advance; as they are repealed by a public consent, as the Catholic conscience that sums the individual Christian judgments

gives its verdict: a verdict greater than that of any court or synod or council which registers some single stage, because, if we may say so, it is the decision of the Spirit of the truth.

We perceive that, as in the Christ life itself, this progress through knowledge towards freedom is by the way of effort and suffering, of pain and toil. But the very existence of the Church as witness to the message of the Christ in the world should influence and transform that world; and, consisting of an association or body of believers, should involve advance in social as well as individual ethics in token of its life and growth.

Towards the best for the society, and the best for the individual, moral progress is directed.

3. In Social Conditions.

With all the glamour of our commercial prosperity, when we examine it with care, we see that the advance in the knowledge of the truth which makes for freedom is sorely needed. It was not so many years ago that Christian England saw the moral necessity of liberating her slaves; only fifty years since Livingstone appealed in this University for the slaves of Africa, and Epiphanytide year by year reminds us that our foreign mission work brings social emancipation in its train. But is not the freedom that comes by the knowledge of the truth greatly wanted at home in our modern industry?

Work goes on unceasingly in some of our Midland areas from one year's end to another, recurring shifts unbroken give no opportunity for development, even mental, let alone spiritual; and home conditions are most sordid, while poverty and intemperance act and react on one another. As a Cambridge economist says: 'The conditions which surround extreme poverty tend to deaden the higher faculties.' Despite the slowly rising standard, there is a slavery still. The ideal of manhood must have a chance, before the ideal of brotherhood can rule in our social relationships. In our vast urban districts the individual seems uncared for, and sweated industry and child labour are rife. A Booth, a Rowntree, or some other tells the piteous tale of garments sewn and made up for less than a shilling a dozen; of matchboxes made in empty homes for five farthings a gross; of the ornamentation of dress-material at miserable prices,

with a fluctuating demand; so, too, shop life has its seamy side, and think also of our quarter of a million of children working to add a few coppers for the upkeep of the family, and thus with too early strain losing their capacity for wage-earning when most needed; while in some districts it is reckoned that for 40 per cent. of the boys above school age there is no employment at all. To quote our Professor again: 'The study of the causes of poverty is (verily) the study of the causes of the degradation of a large part of mankind.' These are but a few of the facts that in the quiet of our intellectual research make us pause, and feel that some responsibility for betterment falls on each one of us, who are striving—however imperfectly—to fulfil the Master's message, and desire His Spirit to be the Leader and Guide of our life.

The knowledge of the truth that makes us free demands assuredly some recognition of the conditions of our fellows, in degradation or starvation, as we see in them our brethren, children of the Highest, and reverence the humanity that might have been, knowing that none is too base whom our Master has stooped to redeem. It is for our present conditions of life that we must translate the teaching of the incarnate truth: it is for to-day that the knowledge of the truth should be our stimulus to freedom; it is now that our wider scope and increasing knowledge should make us combine reverence for the voices of the past with courage for the needs—intellectual, moral, social—of our own time. It is with the profoundest conviction that the true progress of society is knit with the more adequate realization of the Christian message, that we find this declaration 'the truth shall make you free' so instinct with modern meaning. To each of us workers, whatever our special department, there seems borne in words such as these the Master's solace and the Master's commission:—

. . . Work thou while it is called to-day,
And let the night of the night's things take care.
By those strong souls who leave our earth more fair
With their strenuous service unto all for aye,
I charge thee work, and let not death dismay,
Nor the shadow of death, but greatly hope and dare:

for—'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'