

helps, not snares, is the exhortation which Barnabas gave to the new Gentile converts at Antioch—that “with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord.”

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

THOUGHTS.

1. **The Word.**—There are many languages and many tongues, and one Voice sounds through all. “The floods lift up their voice, the heavens declare the glory of God. Day unto day poureth forth speech. . . . It is not a language, neither are they words, the voice whereof cannot be heard . . . their sound is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world.”

Colour, sound, form, are each a language. And some speak through the one and some through the other, and some through two or all three. And the sculptor cannot speak through colour or sound, or the musician through form or colour; but the painter speaks through colour and form and not through sound. And the poet without either speaks in all, and calls each into his service.

But if we will we may know an inward Word of Life which expresses that which gives colour, sound and form their glory, their truth, their being. Thus likewise the elements are a language. And we may know as one that Voice which sounds through air and cries in fire and murmurs in water and whispers through earth.

The Word is the meaning and the meeting-place of all words; the whole of which each language is a part. All true utterance is therein, the Spoken Thought of God; including in the range of expression all that we know as consciousness and will, as reason and personality, all that we need as a Way, as a Truth, as a Life; showing us that from which our fatherhoods are named, endowing us with the very desire for Truth which some blindly think that Christ cannot satisfy; the witness of that Unity from which all true fact springs.

2. **Deafness and Blindness.**— God maketh a great silence, that we may hear distinctly the softest whisper of the still, small Voice. And He maketh a great darkness, that we may be able to discern the least and farthest of His stars of truth.

3. **Pain to Refuse and Pain to Accept.**— Two kinds of pain contrasted; the one a note of warning that we are leaving God, the other an assurance that we are drawing nearer to Him; the one a monitor and the other a pledge.

(1) The thrill of suffering which means a slight and else unconscious waver from the true line of the will for us; or the pang which might be felt by the keen blade in the angel's hand, when blunted and jagged and thus no longer swift to cleave asunder barriers or penetrate disguises, or stab the serpent lie to the heart for God. Or the pain of the sensitive eye or ear of the spirit roughly touched and bruised, and so losing their power to discern the way of God.

(2) The awful and precious pain which is the very warrant and sign of our nearness to and oneness with the Sufferer and the Sacrifice; and the pain of our dulness, blindness, crookedness, in being *sharpened* to strike, *unveiled* to see, *straightened* to will with Him!

For His sake let us flee the first touch of the one: let us thank our own Lord for the other. The first is the signal to stop, on peril of measureless ill; the second beckons us forward, revealing the Cross and the Crown.

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BREVIA.

The Didaché and Barnabas.—It was assumed by the first commentators on the newly discovered *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, that the *Epistle of Barnabas* was one of the sources of the manual. Many now think that Barnabas drew from the *Teaching*; and there is a third view, that both drew from a common source. An argument (in its own sphere decisive) against the first view may be drawn from the grammatical structure of chap. v., on the way of death.