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## In the Study.

### *Virginitus Puerisque.*

#### Learning to Walk.<sup>1</sup>

'When I fall, I shall get up.'—Mic 7<sup>8</sup>.

THE other day you were standing for a long time, at a match or somewhere else, and before the end you got tired a bit about the legs. Why? What made your legs get weary in that fashion? The answer to that is a queer one, for the clever people say that it is this. Long, long ago folk didn't stand on two legs as we all do now, but on four, one at each corner, keeping them comfy and steady like a table. That would be very handy sometimes even yet. If in a football scrum when you are charged you could let down two extra feet and stand fast! But by and by people began to think that they might manage with two, and that would leave their forefeet free for other things, for shying stones at strangers who came too near and who looked fierce and unfriendly! And so they tried and they tried, but they didn't make much of it. And indeed it wasn't easy, was dreadfully hard. They stood up and went flop; or they went wobbling for a step or two, like you when you were learning to bicycle; but they kept on trying, and at last they managed it; learned how to poise themselves on two legs, and their front feet became those wonderful hands with which men can do almost anything. But it took them a long time, and little blame to them! For it was about as difficult as if you were to tilt your cycle up into the air on its back rim, and try to ride like that. Indeed, none of us is quite perfect at it even yet. When you got tired the other day your legs were saying, 'But, look here, this isn't good enough! We're getting far too much to do! There ought to be two other legs to give us a hand!' And that tired feeling meant that at the back of your head you were thinking that you would like to get down on all fours in the old way, and so be steadier. We've been learning to stand up for thousands of years, and we've got pretty good at it, but we're not perfect even yet! To learn some things, you see, takes time, takes a long time, and yet you won't take any. There's music. At first you thought it was going to be grand, got quite excited over it. In a few weeks you would be able to play, and you were going to do it really well, so splendidly that perhaps

the organist in your church would come and say, 'You take a Sunday and show me how to do it, for you are so much better than I!' Yes, you were going to enjoy it hugely, and be a real player. But when you found that you didn't start with tunes, but with picking out the notes, and that there were scales and exercises, and that you had to stick in every night, you soon got tired. 'Ach!' you said, 'I can't be bothered trying any longer!' Down you flopped upon all fours, and have been scampering on them ever since, will never learn to stand up now, have lost all the joy of music just because you couldn't take a little pains. Or, at school you got into a row and you were scared a bit, said to yourself, 'Well, I suppose I'll just have to learn to get up on these hind legs of mine!' But it's been rainy weather, and in the evenings it cleared up, and you so wanted to get out to play; or there was something splendid on down at the picture house; anyway your legs soon got tired, and you are going on all fours again, are tumbling steadily down the class. Why, baby could give you a lesson! At first it was shameful the way she crawled about; she was as bad as a monkey; worse! No self-respecting monkey would dream of wriggling along on its tummy as she did. But one day she got up on her feet. And she was as pleased and proud as if she were the very first who had ever thought of that. She laughed and crowed and wanted every one to look at her. And yet it was no very great performance! A step and down she went, and cried if it was a hard bump, and laughed if it was a soft one. But always she got up again and kept on trying, though she didn't seem to make much of it, or get any better. Still she tried and tried and tried, and managed it at last, and now she can walk as well as you. And sometimes you look at Jesus Christ, who was always brave and never whined nor whimpered but kept His head up gallantly, who never got sulky when things went wrong, was never selfish nor tempery, nor cross, nor any of the horrid things into which you keep tumbling time on time; and you feel, that's what I would like to be, as brave and clean and straight as that. That's a wise choice. But, mind you, it will take some doing! You mustn't think that you can learn it all in a day. Sometimes your temper will blaze out before you know. Well, when that happens it's a pity, but as this wise man

<sup>1</sup> By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

said, 'If I tumble, I'll get up again'; if I tumble, and really hard, twenty times a day, well, I'll rise twenty times, and try once more. Now and then when you're not watching you'll forget and be grabby and greedy and cross. You're down, are you? Well, look at baby, she is up already; and you too must just get up upon your shuggly legs, and try and try and keep on trying, and they will get more steady by and by. It has taken us a long time to learn to stand, and we're not perfect at it even yet, but we're not going back now to running on all fours! No fear! And really you will do better than you think. When baby tries to walk, father is never very far away, keeps his arms round her, just a little bit out from her so that, if she stumbles, she won't really fall, only into his arms. And there's a wise man in the Bible who tells us we too have a Father, a wonderful Father, kind and patient and loving, who is teaching us to walk, to master our hot passions, and to keep our temper. He holds our hand tight in His, and He will help us every day and all the day, till we can do it perfectly.

#### How to Recognize a Person.

'Even a child is known by his doings.'—Pr 20<sup>11</sup>.

I was reading about a Baby Show in the papers the other day. It was one of those papers, you know, with pictures in it, and there was a picture of the babies—lovely, chubby, laughing little things, and I think there was a separate photo of the one that got the prize for being healthiest and fattest and biggest. But what I couldn't help wondering was what would happen if the babies got mixed. They all looked so very much alike, and even their clothes seemed to be the same. Of course I know that there is something which distinguishes one baby from another—even twins—so that you can say, 'That is Jack, and the other is Tom,' but you have to be with them a good deal before you can do that. And I believe it is only the mothers, really, who can be quite sure.

Sometimes we know people by the way they walk, and even when they are a long way off we can recognize them quite easily. Sometimes we know them by the clothes they wear. But that is not a very good way, because a new hat and a new coat and skirt make such a difference. Sometimes we know them by the tone of their voice, although they are not visible to us. And, alas! sometimes we know them by the things they say and by the words they use, which make us feel unhappy and sorry.

But there is still another way. It is the way of our text. 'Even a child,' it says, 'is known by his doings.' What a boy *does*, tells us what he *is*. Always? Well, not always, perhaps. Because you know that there are some boys and girls who are very charming and kind and thoughtful when there are visitors, or when they are out to tea. But when they are alone at home, or playing among themselves, it is a very different story. These same boys may be looking for a worm to frighten their sisters with, and these same girls may be trying to stick a pin into their brothers. And the boy who is so pleasant and agreeable when there is company, can be very short and bad-tempered when he is asked to run a message by his mother. But whatever outsiders think about them, the people at home know them, and they know them by their doings.

You remember that when Robinson Crusoe was on his island he discovered a footprint in the sand one day. He thought he was alone on the island, but that footprint showed him that a man had been there. Sometimes mother comes into the kitchen and she notices the cupboard door open and signs of jam on the table, and she says, 'I thought so! That boy has been in here while I was away.' He is known by his doings, you see.

Perhaps you say to yourself, 'I am only a child after all, and it doesn't really matter what I do.' But it does matter. It matters tremendously. It matters to your father and mother, because you can't expect them to be happy if you are behaving badly. They want you to be a credit to them too, and that depends on your doings. And it matters to yourself, because if you do right now you are more likely to do right when you are older. The habits that you form now will go with you when you grow up into men and women, and so it is a very important thing for your own sake that you should 'learn to do well' when you are young. But most of all, it matters to God. You know what they said about His Son when He was on the earth. They said, 'He went about doing good,' not just thinking about it, or speaking about it, but *doing* it. And He expects us to do the same. Each of us in our own little world can follow His example and go about doing good.

Father, lead me day by day,  
Ever in Thine own sweet way;  
Teach me to be pure and true,  
Show me what I ought to do.

## The Christian Year.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

### The Power of a Feeble Faith.

'But Jesus said . . . thy faith hath made thee whole.'—Mt 9<sup>22</sup>.

Dean Goulburn has an interesting essay on 'How to deal with our Interruptions.' He points out that, while most busy men welcome interruptions much as they would the visit of a tiger or a cobra, Jesus used them as the occasions of His noblest works. It was so with some of His finest parables: it was so with this miracle.

It is a miracle within a miracle. Jesus is going on an errand of life and death. In such an hour we would resent an interruption with what seems a just resentment, but He made use of it to do one of His most beautiful works.

'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' Nothing strikes us more as we read the Gospels than the fact that our Saviour always required faith when He worked miracles. He *could* not do His mighty works except for those who had faith. And yet how often the faith which He accepted as sufficient would have been looked upon by us in our superiority as naught but superstition? Our text, taken from the Gospel for the day, is an illustration of this. What could be more superstitious than the motive which led the woman to touch Christ's garment in order to obtain the healing which she needed? Her one thought may have been no more than this: My life is embittered and made miserable by this terrible disorder; the physicians have been powerless to give me relief; here is this young teacher who is working cures far and wide; perchance He may do me some good. She had perhaps never seen the Lord; she had perhaps never heard His words. She thought of Him, it may be, as ignorant people still think of holy wells, or relics of saints, that work marvellous cures of all sorts of disorders. She had no conception of the Divine will of the Christ being exerted on her behalf; she conceived that she might even extract a cure from Him against His will, or at least without His knowledge—'If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.' Even when the cure was wrought, nothing entered into her mind as its cause, save this magic touch. Was it not gross superstition? Yet the Lord Himself turns to her, and says, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' The faith was real,

however it may have been coloured and hidden by superstition.<sup>1</sup>

1. Her faith was real, but it was feeble. How was this woman's a feeble faith? It was so, first of all, because it was a *bankrupt* faith. It was the discipline of failure brought her to Christ. The sad story of her life is told by St. Mark.

Hers had been a weary race for health. Would she have come to Christ sooner had she known of Him? One cannot tell. At all events she is typical of many a soul. They come to the Good Physician only when they have failed everywhere else. Christ is the last resource.

2. Yet there is one thing about such a faith that makes it always great. It is a *desperate* faith. It is a self-despairing faith. It has no temptation to make reservations and 'go halves' with God.

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling,

is the burden of its song. It has learnt its own weakness too well not to be willing to cast itself all on God. And for this Jesus loves it: for this He accepts it.

3. Once more, this woman's was an *ignorant* faith. That comes out in her self-communings as she resolved to make trial of the new Healer of Nazareth. 'If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.' At first sight that looks a very wonderful faith. It seems to mean that she had such an exalted view of the Saviour that she imagined the virtue lay even in His clothes. But when we connect it with her action, we see it was something very different from this. She appears to think she can get a blessing from Christ's clothes without the conscious co-operation of Christ Himself. She seems to imagine that His body is a kind of galvanic battery which radiates healing without any spiritual or ethical element in it at all. This may be faith, but it is faith mixed with a great deal of superstition. It is the faith of the fetish-worshipper, not the faith of a Christian.

It is just touching Christ's clothes. The clothes of religion, as the Great Philosopher of Clothes reminds us, are its outward forms and rites, its sacraments and creeds, its institutions and tithes. These things are necessary, for the spirit must ever have a body for its investiture. But though religion needs clothes, it must always be more than

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Lawlor, *Thoughts on Belief and Life*, 151.

clothes. And often, alas ! it is far less. The clothes are not only old and ill-fitting, but they cover a dead Christ, like those old monks in the cemetery of the Capuchins in Rome, where you see a grinning skeleton peering out beneath the friar's cowl.

So with multitudes to-day. As St. Ambrose says, 'Multitudes press on Christ in outward ordinances, but believers alone touch Him.' They come to church, observe its sacraments, pay its dues, recite its creeds, but, alas ! its spirit never enters them, never touches their heart, never moulds their life. They practically say, 'If I may but touch His clothes, I shall be whole.' But in the case of the woman her actions went deeper than her words. As she pressed through to touch His clothes, to her poor thinking, she was really pressing through to touch Himself.<sup>1</sup>

You remember the story. He looked around to see who had done this thing, and He called her out. Now, why did He do that ? The woman was healed. Why not let her slip out of the crowd and go back to her village ? Why make her come out before all the people and stand before that critical eye ? Was it a necessary embarrassment ? Was it kind ? Well, the way to understand many things in this world is to compare the alternative. Suppose Jesus had not done it, what would have happened ? This would have happened : the woman would have gone away to her village full of the idea of the magic of this new Prophet's clothes. 'I touched them, and they healed me. If only we could get hold of some cast-off garment of His, we could heal the whole place !' She would go home full of erroneous ideas, thinking that Christ's clothes were a source of healing, and if she could get some discarded garment of His she would set it up as a fetish in the village. She would have become a preacher of downright superstition. But He called her out. He called her 'daughter.' She called Him 'Master.' He spoke to her ; He established a personal relationship between Himself and her. Then when that woman went home, do you think she ever mentioned Christ's clothes ? She went home full of the idea of a new Friend, a new Master, a new Saviour whom she had found. She went home to be a preacher, not of superstition, but a preacher of true religion ; not Christ's clothes, but Christ Himself.

<sup>1</sup> W. Mackintosh Mackay, *Bible Types of Modern Women*, 292.

Personal relations with Christ, a personal knowledge of Christ, as John Wesley and Charles Simeon would have used the phrase, a conscious assurance, a spiritual conviction, about which there is nothing either superstitious or second-hand, has been in the past, and will be in the future, the quickening power of a rational and progressive faith.

It is ever thus. New conditions make new demands on personal life. The world needs a revival. Then let us revive ourselves. We cannot go on for ever living upon the accumulated capital of past experience. It is the testimony of all Christian history that the living Lord will re-interpret Himself as the power of our rational and progressive life to-day, when once we have seen Him.

'Have I not seen the Lord ?' There was the transcendent fact that underlay the spiritual life, the churchmanship, the apostleship, the witness of St. Paul. That, too, will be the secret of all strong personal life in the days that are yet to be. Here and here alone shall we learn the deep mystery of our own being. Here and here alone shall we understand the one cause of failure, personal alienation from God, which is sin. Here and here alone shall we discover that radiant joy of living, that elixir of which alchemists have dreamed, but of which the secret was never learned till the forgiveness of sins was proclaimed by Christ regnant on Calvary, Christ who is made to us righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.<sup>2</sup>

#### TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### The Whole of Religion.

'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?'—Mic 6<sup>a</sup>.

In *The Book of the Twelve Prophets* Sir George Adam Smith says of this text : 'This is the greatest saying of the Old Testament ; and there is only one other in the New which excels it :

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."'

He describes the circumstances of the reply of the prophet in the following paragraph.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Simpson, *Christian Ideals*, 61.

'In most of the controversies which the prophets open between God and man, the subject on the side of the latter is his sin. But that is not so here. In the controversy which opens the Book of Micah the argument falls upon the transgressions of the people, but here upon their sincere though mistaken methods of approaching God. There God deals with dull consciences, but here with darkened and imploring hearts. In that case we had rebels forsaking the true God for idols, but here are earnest seekers after God, who have lost their way and are weary. Accordingly, as indignation prevailed there, here prevails pity; and though formally this be a controversy under the same legal form as before, the passage breathes tenderness and gentleness from first to last. By this as well as by the recollections of the ancient history of Israel we are reminded of the style of Hosea. But there is no expostulation, as in his book, with the people's continued devotion to ritual. All that is past, and a new temper prevails. Israel have at last come to feel the vanity of the exaggerated zeal with which Amos pictures them exceeding the legal requirements of sacrifice; and with a despair, sufficiently evident in the superlatives which they use, they confess the futility and weariness of the whole system, even in the most lavish and impossible forms of sacrifice. What then remains for them to do? The prophet answers with the beautiful words, that express an ideal of religion to which no subsequent century has ever been able to add either grandeur or tenderness.

He hath shown thee, O man, what is good;  
And what is the Lord seeking from thee,  
But to do justice and love mercy,  
And humbly to walk with thy God?'<sup>1</sup>

Micah's statement might be paraphrased as follows without altering its essential meaning: Religion in its essence is righteousness and goodwill toward men and reverent humility and obedience toward God. And this is no lonely utterance of this prophet; it is the underlying idea of both prophetic and apostolic teaching as well as of the teaching of our Lord. Whatever our theological faith, whatever our religious practices, and whatever our religious pedagogics, their sole use and value consist in helping us to lives of love and righteousness before God and man. This is the

<sup>1</sup>i. 423.

purpose for which they exist, and it is this that gives them meaning and justification.

It is a great text. Huxley, writing in *The Nineteenth Century* for December 1885, said: 'If any so-called religion takes away from this great saying of Micah, I think it wantonly mutilates, while, if it adds thereto, I think it obscures, the perfect ideal of religion.'

Gladstone, who had been engaged in a controversy with Huxley, replied: 'I will not dispute that in these words is contained the true ideal of discipline and attainment.'

It is a great text and it divides itself naturally into three, as texts should do—do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God.

1. *Do justly*.—The Lord demands of us first of all an absolute integrity in all our relations, public and private, with our fellow-men, not only in our actions towards them, but in our thoughts and feelings regarding them. In our way of judging them, in our expressed opinions of them, we are to be scrupulously fair and just. Have we ever asked ourselves exactly what God's requirements of justice from us would be? Have we ever brought the searchlight of an awakened conscience upon our attitude to the social conditions in which we live to-day, and in which we are far too ready to acquiesce?

2. *Love mercy*.—He wants us, next, to be more than merely just; to show *all mercifulness and tenderness* in our dealings with men; a mercifulness of feeling that will lead to mercifulness in act: and this, not from compulsion of conscience only, but from generosity of heart. We are to '*love mercy*.' Feeling how greatly we need mercy ourselves, we are to yield our rights rather than press them to the uttermost. We are to be what God Himself is, 'very pitiful and of tender mercy': and this, all the more because our own mercifulness may often, like God's mercy, win a transgressor whom harshness would only drive farther away.

What kind of judgment do I mete out to the poor, erring, wandering sister of the streets? What does my Christianity compel me to do to her? Gather up my skirts when she passes by? Or to deal as mercifully as God has dealt with me? Notice that we are to '*love mercy*.' When we love a thing we keep it at its best. We would not mar its excellence or detract one whit from its beauty. Let our love of mercy lead us to keep mercy at her highest and best. Let it not degenerate into sickly sentiment. Temper justice with mercy, and mercy with

justice, even as the Lord Himself dealt with men.<sup>1</sup>

3. *Walk humbly with thy God.*—That is to say, to realize that in our own strength and by our own efforts we are morally incapable either of justice or of magnanimity as now defined. The ethical ideal which has been set before us in the first part of this definition of true religion is unobtainable except by the grace of God, and in the strength which He gives us.

Such a companionship will assuredly make us humble. How can there be any room for pride in a heart that is so near to the Infinitely Holy One? Pride is the deadliest of sins. It was the sin by which Satan fell; by which Paradise was lost; by which the Lord of Glory was nailed to the accursed tree. It lies, somehow, at the root of every other sin; for sin is just the heart's proud refusal to bow to the commanding, or teaching, or arranging will of God. And it takes a thousand forms. It may appear as pride of intellect, or pride of position, or pride of power, as pride of race, or pride of nationality, or pride of ancestry, or pride of personal appearance, or pride of wealth. It may be pride of look, or pride of speech, or pride of life. It may even be pride of grace—that Pharisaic pride that is the most unreasonable and most offensive of all.

Let us clothe ourselves every morning in a fresh garment of humility, and so be *heaven-like*—for even sinless seraphs bow before the throne of heaven's King; and *Christlike* too—for He 'humbled himself even to the death of the cross,' and was always 'meek and lowly in heart.' The lowlier we are, we only the more resemble Him.<sup>2</sup>

#### TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### Learn.

'Learn to do well.'—Is 1<sup>17</sup>.

THE question is often asked, What is it that distinguishes man from the lower animals? A variety of answers have been given to it. Some say man is the only living being who can laugh. Others say he is the only creature who cooks his food. Carlyle thought that the great distinction between man and other animals is that a man can make use of tools. But there is a more fundamental distinction than any of these. Man and man

only can learn. The lark builds its nest just as it has built it through the generations, and a very beautiful nest it is. Individual animals like the horse and the dog may learn a little in their lifetime, but the horse and dog as species make no progress in learning. Man alone learns, both as an individual and as man. So it is to you and to me that the prophet addresses this word of his when he says 'learn.'

What have we to learn? First of all we have to learn to develop the body and to make it as fit as possible for the work it has to do in the world.

Then we have to learn to educate the mind. And just as we find that seldom in the history of the world has so much attention been paid to the training of the body as to-day, so we find that the science of education has been brought to a high pitch of perfection to-day.

But we are not made up of body and mind only. Is there not also a soul, and if there is, has it not also to be trained? It does not matter if we prefer to use some other word for soul. We may call it conscience. Conscience has to be educated, even as the body and soul have to be. Bishop Gore says that in his visit to India nothing impressed him more than the sight of an Indian holy man in one of the main streets of Calcutta. He was stretched at full length in the street, then rose up, and lay down again putting his feet where his head was before, and in that painful and slow way he was making a pilgrimage to Benares. Bishop Gore says that his first feeling was one of disgust, but that gave way to pity. How much that earnest man might have done of real good if only his conscience had been enlightened.

How do we teach the soul? It is the most difficult part to train. But we have left its training to chance far more than the training of the body and the mind. And yet we can see some progress to-day. Education is much more a moral thing than it used to be. We might even say that it is much more a spiritual thing. Its aim is exactly expressed by Isaiah's words, 'Learn to do well.'

How, then, are we to learn to do well?

1. First we need the gift for it. That is recognized in every department of knowledge and of work. If a man is to do supremely well in anything he must have the gift for it. One of our painters was looking at a picture done by a pupil, and he saw many things to commend in it. 'But,' he said, 'it wants "that."' And wanting 'that'

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Selbie, in *CWP*, lxxvii, 300.

<sup>2</sup> G. H. Knight, *These Three*, 11.

it really wanted everything. Now if we are going to learn to do well we must have the gift for it. When do we get that gift, and where? At birth? It may be that there is to some extent what is called an inclination to religion born with some. But the gift which enables us to do well is not so much a gift of birth as a gift of second birth. Now this Christian awakening is possible for everybody. A genius for religion is within the reach of every human being.

2. But we also need a pattern. We need a headline to the copybook of life. And if we are to learn to do well the question is whether the pattern should be good or bad. Is it better to have a good pattern so that we may follow it, or a bad pattern that we may avoid it? As we read the newspapers and many of the modern novels, we conclude that in the judgment of journalists and novelists it is better to have a bad pattern than a good one. In the review of a book published not long ago a weekly paper says: 'The author has chosen a hero of unrelieved detestability, and has shown him as a false friend, an unfaithful husband, a bad father, one who rides roughshod over all the common decencies of life and finally escapes punishment by the cheap resort of sentimental suicide.'

Is it a bad pattern that we want, then? Are drunkards reformed by seeing drunkards? If you give a child a specimen of bad writing it will reproduce the badness. No! it is a good pattern that we need. And more than that, we need the best pattern. And the best is Christ. It was by making Christ their pattern that the early disciples learnt to do well. Jesus Himself invites us to adopt this method. 'Learn of me,' He says.

3. The third thing we need is practice. The gift alone is not enough. The example to follow is not enough. We must *use* the gift, and we must follow the example. And that means practice. It is so in every department of life. Well, then, practise to do well; practise doing well.

Practise, for example, *contentment*. 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.' No man ever was content by nature. But when it is finally acquired it is a great grace.

Practise *sincerity*. We do not do that by nature. We think more or less of the effect of our words. When that is carried to extremes we speak of a person as unreal. There is no excellence of character without sincerity—meaning what we say and doing what we mean—and we have to learn it.

We have to learn *truthfulness*. We are only too ready to exaggerate, to distort or colour our words in some way to suit our own purpose. There is only one way in which we can learn to be truthful, and that is by practising truth.

But more than all, and summing them all up, we have to *learn Christ*. It is a peculiar phrase, but it is Paul's. Writing to the Ephesians he tells them to learn Christ, and he tells them how to do it. We use the same sort of language ourselves. 'What are you learning at school?' we ask, and the boy replies, 'Cæsar.' He means that he is reading the story of Cæsar's doings in Gaul. Paul wanted the Ephesians, and he wants us, to read the story of Christ's doings upon earth, and to do as He did. What is the story? It is that He went about continually doing good. That is one of the ways of learning Christ—to take the opportunity of doing good wherever we are.

But the boy who is learning Cæsar is learning more than the story of Cæsar's doings in Gaul. He is learning something about Cæsar himself. When Paul said, 'Learn Christ,' he meant more than learn about what He did on earth. He meant learn who He was. Christ's example is the best we can have, but Christ Himself is better than His example. Learn Christ. Look at Him. Think about Him. Believe in Him. Make Him your own. Give yourself to Him for life and for death.

Yea, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning

He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:  
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,  
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

#### FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

##### The Dew.

'I will be as the dew unto Israel.'—Hos 14<sup>5</sup>.

How quietly the dew falls upon the grass! silently, imperceptibly. It makes no noise. No one hears it dropping.

It comes in the night-time, when no one can see its beautiful work, and covers the blades of grass and the leaves with clusters of pearls. There is something almost mysterious about it. For there is a controversy whether it falls at all, whether it does not rise from off the earth. Perhaps it neither rises nor falls, but is distilled from the air. It is strange that it is the things which are nearest to us,



with which we are most familiar, that we know least about.

Astronomers can explain the motions of far distant planets and predict to a moment the occurrence of an eclipse. But who can tell how the corn-seed bursts in the earth! how the grass grows and the dew is born to refresh it! So it is with the Spirit of God. We write great histories to describe the rise and progress of Christianity and the laws of its working in nations of men and ages of the world. But we cannot explain its operation in our own hearts. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' When God comes to the soul He comes thus quietly. The kingdom of heaven does not come with observation into our individual hearts. Like the dew upon the grass it is there before we know it. What we call a sudden conversion may have been preparing a long time in the earth, growing silently and imperceptibly there, before it burst through the soil and spread itself above to be seen by all. The dew may have been coming quietly, silently, for a long time before the great drop upon the blade of grass proclaims its presence to the common eye.

But though we cannot tell how God's Spirit comes, we can recognize its presence. How can we tell that the dew has fallen upon the blade of grass? We may stand out in the dark and feel nothing and see nothing, but in the morning we look at the blades of grass and the dew is thick upon them. How fresh and green they are! Touch them. How soft and cool they feel! We can tell the presence of God's Spirit by the effects. We can tell that God's favour is resting upon a man by the result it produces. This, at least, is no mysterious thing. The fruits of the Spirit are well known and easily recognized. They are these—love, joy, and peace. And besides these evident signs of its presence there is a freshness and beauty about a man's spirit, a fragrance shed abroad by it, when the favour of God rests upon it—just as the plants appear when the dew is settling upon them. This is a sure mark, for it cannot be imitated. It may be possible for some plants to maintain a vigorous existence in the driest, hardest soil, but they have none of the fragrance and softness of the tender grass when the dew lies heavy upon it. It may be possible for some men to do justly and walk uprightly in the eyes of the world,

without living in direct touch with God, but there is an easily recognized hardness and constraint in such a life. It wants the naturalness and freshness of a life that is lived in harmony with God.

But the dew does more than give freshness and sweetness to grass and plants. It is also the great means of their growth. 'Consider the lilies,' says our Lord, 'how they grow.' How do they grow? Is it by struggle and effort and exertion on their own part? There is no growth like that.

'I remember, ten years ago,' says Dr. Campbell Morgan, 'when I first set my face to the other side of the sea, my boy, six years of age, said to me as he bade me good-bye, "How long shall you be away?" I told him two months. He said, "I am going to try hard to grow as big as you are before you come back." I am not sure that he tried. I suspect he forgot, as children do so blessedly forget their follies. But if he did try he did not succeed. No child grows by effort. No man by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature.'

The lilies grow by drawing freely from the stores of dew that fall upon them while rooted in the firm earth. And the Christian grows by drinking freely of the grace, the favour of God, while being firmly grounded upon God's precious promises. So he grows naturally, as the blades of grass grow.

I will leave it with Him,  
The lilies all do,  
And they grow.  
They grow in the rain,  
And they grow in the dew,  
Yes, they grow.  
They grow in the darkness  
All hid in the night,  
They grow in the sunshine  
Revealed by the light,  
Still they grow.

Here is another unmistakable mark of him upon whom the favour of God is resting. He grows as the lily grows, symmetrically, completely, beautifully proportioned. The man who grows only in the eye of the world is sure to be unshapely and deformed in some respect. Sooner or later some defect reveals itself. Experience tells us so.

When the dew is falling in its ordinary way it falls on all plants alike. Flowers and weeds, fruit trees and poisonous plants, all receive their share. If they spread their leaves out to receive it the re-

freshing dew will light upon them. They may convert it into poison, yet it does not pass them by. So the favour of God in His ordinary providence rests on all alike. But He has reserved a special blessing for those who know how to obtain it. We are told that some plants have the power of receiving an additional supply of refreshing dew beyond that which falls upon the earth and other plants around. It is when the earth has become cooler than the surrounding air that the dew falls upon it. And the cooler any part is, the more dew will light upon that part. Now some plants have the power of cooling themselves, so that they become cooler than others that are around them. Thus the dew falls more copiously on them.

So with us. We can draw liberally out of treasures of joy which the unthankful have never discovered. It is not that God is partial in the distribution of His gifts. His stores are free and open to all, but all have not the skill to draw their riches forth. What is the skill we need? It is the same as the plants employ. It is the skill to give, to give forth, to impart. He that hath, to him shall be given—and how? by his willingness to share what he has with those around him. ‘Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down,

running over.’ It is by sharing with others the gifts which God has given us and doing so in His name that we obtain His special blessings. It is by loving one another, by serving one another, by denying ourselves for the brethren that we get the skill to secure the grace and favour of God.

And perhaps the best way to do it is just as the dew does—quietly—making our influence felt rather than seen or heard. ‘When thou doest alms,’ says our Lord, ‘let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret.’

In his reply to the addresses of appreciation which were delivered at the meeting to celebrate his seventieth birthday, Dr. Miller said, ‘My one purpose is to fill the years so full of humble, loving service that every birthday shall mark a year of complete consecration to the Master. I would like my life to resemble the dew, which falls so noiselessly through the night and just as silently passes away, as soon as the rays of the morning sun beam upon the earth. Unnoticed by men’s eyes, save for an occasional sparkle here and there upon some blade of grass, it is drawn upward and passes away—but all that it has touched is freshened and beautified by its silent yet powerful presence.’

## Simon the Crucifer and Symeon the Prophet.

BY THE REVEREND A. B. KINSEY, B.A., B.D., RIPLEY.

MAY Simon of Cyrene (Mt 27<sup>32</sup>, Mk 15<sup>21</sup>, Lk 23<sup>26</sup>) and Symeon the ‘prophet,’ of Antioch (Ac 13<sup>1</sup>), with a large measure of probability be identified?

It was with a certain naïveté (possibly Dr. Samuel Johnson, with characteristic incisiveness, would have said ‘pure ignorance!’) that I was scarcely aware that the subject had been already considered, but the idea appeared so suggestive and plausible, and the cumulative arguments to point to such a high degree of verisimilitude, that the disappointment of the would-be pioneer deepened into a feeling nigh to chagrin (!) on the discovery that some weighty authorities had answered the above query in the negative.

But has full justice been given to all the points of the evidence?

The difference in the spelling of the names need

not, of course, detain us. Symeon (Συμεών), which, with a strange inconsistency, the RV sometimes prints thus, and sometimes Simeon, is obviously a transliteration of the Hebrew שִׁמְעוֹן. ‘Simon’ is regarded by Dr. W. Patrick (DCG) as ‘an independent Greek name,’ but many, perhaps most, scholars would agree with Dr. J. A. Selbie (DB) that it is ‘a later form of Simeon.’ In either case it is manifest that the two (whether names or forms of *one* name) are interchangeable. Two illustrations may be cited as sufficient evidence of this fact.

(a) James, ‘the Lord’s brother,’ and ‘bishop’ or pastor of the Church at Jerusalem, referring to Peter’s reminder of the Cornelius incident, says, ‘Symeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles’ (Ac 15<sup>14</sup>); the archaic and