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In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

The Power of the Eye.¹

'I shall guide thee with mine eye.'—Ps 32^d.

You know what that means, don't you? Mother does it sometimes. People come in to call when you are in the room, and Mother doesn't say anything to you; she is busy talking to the visitors, but by and by she looks at you, just looks with never a word said. Yet you see what she means at once, know she is really telling you, 'Go, and let them know to get tea ready.' And in a little while the tea comes in, just as she wanted. Mother didn't need to speak with words for you to understand. She guided you with her eyes. And sometimes she can do that even when you are not looking. Yes, and perhaps you can do that too to other fellows. In the class when things get dull and boring you would like to signal something to a chum of yours two seats in front of you. But how is he to know? Or at a football match you want to let somebody far down below you in the crowd see you are there. So you keep looking, looking, looking hard at the back of his head. And by and by he turns round. Somehow he felt some one was wanting him, looked back, and you could wave your message to him. Ah, no! there's no use trying that on here. The folk in front will only say, 'It's that silly boy three pews back, I'm not going to be caught by him.' So just you keep listening to me! But elsewhere you can do it.

Well, God says here that He is going to guide us with His eye, even when we aren't looking at Him, or remembering Him one little bit: that He is going to help us, and to let us know what we should do. And that's a good thing, isn't it? For it's so hard sometimes to play the game, to be clean and straight and manly. We forget, or we're not sure, really and truly, not one bit sure, get all puzzled and mixed up. 'Never mind,' says God, 'I'll tell you.' And He does. How? You can't hear Him. No. Though you sit as still as still, as quiet as a mouse, and listen hard with all your ears, you'll hear never a sound. But He will guide you with His eyes, like Mother. So He says. And He does it too. Don't you

¹ By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

remember that night you so wanted to do something. You knew it wasn't fair, yet you just itched to do it, to stay out perhaps a little longer than your time. The others had been in ever so long and you were sick of fielding, and now, when your side were batting at last, must you slip off home and never get an innings? Or you had promised not to go out, you remember. And all the evening you could hear the click of the bat, and almost went. And yet you didn't. Why? Because something kept saying, 'You mustn't, you mustn't.' That was God guiding you with His eye. There wasn't a word spoken; yet you knew what He wanted. He had turned and looked at you, as Jesus turned and looked at Peter that night long ago; and you, like Peter then, quite understood. Or you knew it was time for lessons. Yet you couldn't be bothered with them; it was far too jolly a book, far too exciting to lay down till you had read on to the chapter's end, and then to see what happened over the page, and then, oh! nobody could stop here, for what can the hero do; and then you might as well finish it now! Only a few pages more! And yet you did turn in to lessons, to the old stupid pipes still running in and out, and all the usual stodge. Why? Because you heard Somebody crying to you, though there was no sound, 'You must, you must.' That was God looking at you, till you had to turn your head and listen. He was guiding you with His eyes. Well then, you say, why doesn't He always do that? why doesn't He always keep me right? He does. But we are dull and stupid, sometimes stupider and duller than at other times; and then, though He keeps looking at us, we don't heed.

A doctor in London has made a new kind of machine, only a toy as yet, I think, and yet a very wonderful thing. For it turns when you look at it, and when you move your eyes away it stops. All machines, you know, need something to set them going. An engine must have coals, a tramcar electricity, a windmill wind. But this machine needs none of these. It only wants your eyes, or mine, or any one's. For it seems that electric rays stream from our eyes, and, when these touch it, the machine starts turning. Who knows what may come out of that? Perhaps one day we may have a kind of lamp, and we shall only have to

look at it, and it will light. Perhaps one day Mother won't need to tell you, 'Run and shut that door.' You will just look at it, and it will shut itself! Perhaps Mother won't need to keep telling some one to go off to bed. She will just look, and something will pick you up, and whisk you away. The first machines, this doctor says, were slow and clumsy. You had to sit down and stare at them before they would move. But the later ones are better hung. You have only to glance at them, and round they go.

Well, some of us are like these first attempts; we are slow and clumsy. God looks at us, and nothing happens; we don't move, don't look round towards Him, pay no heed at all. That's what's wrong when we make a mess of things. And how can we get better? Only in one way. Each time you feel Him looking at you, look you back at Him at once. Each time you know that He is guiding you, do what He says without wasting a second. And it will grow easier and easier to do it, easier and easier, till He will only have to give one glance at you, and like a shot you will be up and off, gladly and eagerly.

And there's another thing. We must help others, not only be helped ourselves. You big ones, you know, could do ever so much for the youngsters. No, no, not by speaking about religion, not by nagging at them, or scolding them, or bossing them and ordering them about. That's not the way at all. A good teacher doesn't need to shout to his class; he just looks at them, that's all. A fine officer doesn't bawl at the troops like an angry sergeant; he just looks at them, and they would be ashamed to be seen out of line, or out of step, or anything like that. And, if you are the right kind of big brother or sister, you can guide the wee ones with your eyes, need only look at them. For they will hate to see you vexed with them and ashamed of them, will love to do what you do and to be what you would like that they should be.

Yes, but isn't this a very queer thing? If people are sick, their eye seems to lose its power. Even a little child that is well, looking at that instrument can make it turn. But a strong man, when he is unwell, can stare at it for long enough, and nothing will happen. It won't move one bit. And it's because you are grumpy and cross and selfish that you don't help the others, that you can't guide them, can't show them what to do, can't set them

doing it. If when God looks at us we would only obey at once, we would not only keep ourselves out of whole heaps of trouble and rows and sulks, but we would help the wee ones far more than we know.

To be continued.¹

'And after this.'—He 9²⁷.

What tantalizing words these are! They always come at the most exciting bit. There you are curled up in a big chair following the hero breathlessly through the pages of the *B.O.P.* or *The Story Magazine*. He has got the rope untied from his wrists after superhuman and ingenious struggles with a bit of glass, he and the heroine are tiptoeing out of the mysterious, when suddenly he feels the cold rim of a revolver touching his brow and a hoarse voice says . . . 'to be continued in our next.' How can you wait a month? It is more than flesh and blood can bear!

Think how people waited for the next number of *The Pickwick Papers* to hear what Mr. Pickwick's next adventure might be. Yet they are comforting words too, for they tell us there is more coming, and that is good news.

And the next chapter should never be quite a surprise: for a well-written story goes straight on. It doesn't zigzag. One chapter grows out of another, and so the first chapter is most important of all. A writer spends more time and pains on his first chapter than on any other.

Now, every one of you is an author, busy on a story that is going to run to five chapters. Chapter I.—Childhood, up to twelve years old. Chapter II.—Youth, up to twenty-one years. Chapter III.—Manhood and Womanhood, up to forty. Chapter IV.—Middle Age, up to sixty. Chapter V.—Old Age. There is your story in its chapters. Some of them seem very far off. It's difficult to think you will ever be middle-aged and apart from football or climbing trees. It's impossible to think of your old age. Will you ever write these chapters? What will be in them?

It very much depends on Chapter I., on which you are busy now. What happens in that will be 'continued in our next,' one after the other, right on. 'The child is the father of the man.' Chapter I. is the father of all the chapters that follow.

Now you are free to choose. As you go on you

¹ By the Reverend Stuart Robertson, M.A., Glasgow.

will be less and less free. More and more the chapters will write themselves. Authors tell us they can't make their characters do what they want them to do. They take their own way after a bit. And so does our character. We can control it at the beginning, but it'll go on as it has begun. The third chapter of the Prodigal Son's story, which is mostly about pigs and pigsties, and is a pitiful business, was made certain when he was writing Chapter I. very carelessly and conceitedly in the father's house.

So watch Chapters I. and II. For, though old men forget what they wrote then, these things turn up afterwards and work themselves out for good or bad.

'Confound the legs!' said an old man, who had become Lord Chancellor and was infirm and gouty. 'I'd have taken more care of them, if I had known they were to carry a Lord Chancellor.' Just so, he sowed the seeds of ill-health in Chapters I. and II., and they came up in Chapter V. and shadowed all his success.

Then watch the first chapters. Write them with Christ to help you, and the others will be good reading to the end. Child faith and love of Christ will be 'continued in our next,' and no one who loves you will be afraid of what the next chapters will bring.

And when the last chapter is finished, it is only volume i. that is completed. There is to be a second volume. This life is 'to be continued in our next.'

That is a good thing to remember. When we see some hindered life, never strong, or touched with the terrible handicaps of blindness or deformity, there is another chapter coming, which God will make more happy. When a life is cut suddenly short, it isn't ended. It is 'to be continued.' When we wonder why God lets wickedness go unpunished, remember the story isn't finished yet.

Robert Louis Stevenson has a little fable in which he pictures Captain Smollett and Long John Silver talking the story of Treasure Island over after chapter xxxii. was finished. The scoundrelly sea-cook is very pleased with himself and says the Author is on his side. Captain Smollett is puzzled at the way things are going, but he will stick to his duty, he says. 'The Author is on the right side; and you mind your eye. You're not through with this story yet, and there's trouble coming for you.'

And there was: for Long John Silver was caught out and left on the island.

We, too; we're 'not through with this story yet.' This life here is just the first volume. There is to be a sequel somewhere else.

But I am certain that if the first volume begins with obedience to our Father, and love to His Son, the second and third will be called 'The Father's House,' and when God's angel of death bids us finish Chapter V. and write 'to be continued in our next,' we need not be at all afraid, for the 'next' will be the best chapter of all.

The Christian Year.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Forbearing and Forgiving.

'Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.'—Col 3¹³.

Scholarship has made a discovery about our text which has enriched its meaning. It is not 'Christ,' but the 'Master' that is the real word. Our text really runs, 'As your Master forgave you, so ought ye to forgive your fellow-servants.' We are not addressed as simple human units; but as men and women who have ties of a common service, a sense of special companionship, and the reverence for a common Master linking us together. When the Apostle exhorts the Colossian Christians, and us through them when he appeals to us to forgive as the Master did, he brings into play a subtle and complex sentiment which it is difficult to define, but whose power as a motive we must all acknowledge. There is command in it; for who can issue orders if the Master cannot? There is the force of example accompanying the precept, and showing us how to do what is required. But, more potent than all, there is the Master Himself calling upon us to exercise the duty of forgiveness through that personal tie which binds us to Him—a power which defies description, where love, kinship, companionship, and service unite to make a force much more potent than legal precept or vague ethical ideal. We are first requested to consider:

1. *The forgiveness of Jesus.*—We are to do as He does; to forgive as our Master has forgiven and still forgives. What that kind of forgiving was we can learn both from word and from fact.

(1) *The word* used in our text, and translated *forgive*, is not a common one—at least as used in

this sense. It is the verb made from that noun which is variously translated in the New Testament by love, or charity, or grace. It is the word which the Evangelist uses when he tells us how Jesus gave sight to many that were blind (Lk 7²¹). It is the word employed to say that our Lord promised to grant to Paul the lives of all that were with him in the ship in which he travelled to Rome (Ac 27²⁴). It is the word which pledges God in that fullest of all promises: 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?' (Ro 8³²). The word is, if we may use the expression, an eminently Christian one.

Humanity knows what forgiveness is; but it is only Christianity that has any idea of the special kind of forgiveness which this word suggests—a forgiving which is also a giving.

There is in it the loving sympathy of a brother; the yearning of the father over a prodigal son; self-effacement in the presence of injury; and, above all, the longing to save those who are about to perish, even at the cost of life itself. To forgive as Christ forgave—the word itself suggests it—meant that Christ had to give Himself in His forgiving.

(2) *The thing*.—Think what this forgiveness of Jesus must have meant to Him, and then see what the Apostle is asking from us. See how hard a thing it was. He forgave us, not in the sense of passing over, of blotting out, or of forgetting. He extended to us, the sinful children of men, that gracious loving sympathy which is the greatest part of this kind of forgiveness.

He tabernacled among men. Think for a moment what that meant for Jesus. 'He knew what was in man.' What a terrible knowledge! How we ought to thank God that He has not burdened us with it. Have we not—all of us—at times evil thoughts and suggestions that we are glad to keep concealed from those who are nearest to us? Do we not carry within us passions which occasion might let loose unless grace prevented? Our neighbours know nothing about these things within us—we ourselves are scarcely conscious of them. They would call us very ugly names if they could see what lurk in the secret chambers of the heart, in the slums of the City of Mansoul. Well, but Jesus knew all that. He knew what was in every man He met with. He knows it now. Yet He forgave.

Then, remember that Jesus was the pure and the holy One. Sin was abhorrent to Him. When holiness like His was confronted with man's sin, compelled to come in contact with it, to company with it day by day, sorrow such as that must have become the intensest suffering; but out of this cloud of suffering He led back many sons into glory.

2. *Our forgiveness*.—We are to forgive our fellow-servants—our fellow-men—as our Master forgave us.

(1) With the same kind of forgiveness. We must have the same courtesy of action—the loving sympathy of a brother; the yearning of a father over the prodigal son; the same self-effacement and the same readiness to sacrifice self. It is a hard matter to exercise this kind of forgiveness. We, too, suffer contradiction of men. We are wronged, and we know it. There is such a thing as justice, we say, and we must have it. Let us look into our own hearts. Has the most saintly Christian not wounded the Master over and over again, wronged Him times and ways without number, and has He not forgiven us over and over again? Yes, and forgiven us not in a merely sentimental way. Jesus practises and enjoins a thoroughly practical forgiveness. 'But I say unto you which hear—Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them which curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.'

Our Lord's teaching on the duty of forgiving our enemies, and on the best way to perform it, often reminds us of old scraps of nursery maxims, which sometimes go deeper than many a system of moral philosophy. Who does not remember the kindly, motherly advice?—Act kindly, and then you will soon feel kindly. That is just what our Lord says to us in the Sermon on the Mount, and in many other passages where He discourses on the methods of Christian forgiveness. Here, as elsewhere, we must become as little children to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

(2) Our forgiveness must go as deep as our Master's; or, if that is too hard a saying, it must aim at going as deep. The Master is very peremptory about this. 'Resist not him that is evil,' He says; 'but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' Take those passages in the Sermon on the Mount in which our Lord contrasts the rules of the old economy with those which are to regulate the new, and you will find that Jesus leaves no place for the feeling of passion or revenge. No injustice is to

permit us to seek a personal revenge. All wrongs done to us as individuals are to be so many occasions in which we can show a Christian forgiveness.

(3) The last thing about this duty of Christian forgiveness is that it is to extend to ourselves. Who has not said: I can never forgive myself? Have not all of us chafed at our own sins and follies, felt hot and bitter about them long after they are done and to all seeming done with? It is the strongest natures that find it hardest to exercise this part of Christian forgiveness.

The unforgiving spirit in such cases appears as an angel of light; it disguises itself as a duty; it takes a pride in just dealing with self. Yet it may be one of the most subtle forms of that self-righteousness against which the old theologians were never weary of warning their hearers. We can forgive our neighbours; that does not involve any loss of self-respect. But to forgive ourselves—that is quite another question. Many a wrecked life is due to this unforgiveness of self. The prodigal would never have come home had he been unable to forgive himself.

With many of us this difficulty of forgiving ourselves stands in the way of our getting and feeling that we have obtained the forgiveness of God. The old Mystics saw very deeply into things when they taught that the secret of all true heart religion is to overcome self; to get rid of all selfish feelings; to empty one's self of self; and so make room for God. And this unwillingness to forgive one's self is the last refuge of the selfish spirit.

There is an old mediæval story of a dreamer who dreamt that he saw the gate of heaven and the souls flitting in; but one soul kept hovering about the entrance, and never crossed. He asked why; and was told that the hesitating soul had been forgiven by God, and so had been allowed to come to the gates of Paradise, but had not yet forgiven itself, and so could not enter. Let us learn to forgive ourselves if we would enjoy the forgiveness of God.¹

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Newness of Life.

'Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.'—Ro 6⁴.

In the New Testament Scriptures salvation has three aspects. One of these considers the soul in

the moment of acceptance and surrender. Another regards its spiritual course and progress as it follows the upward calling of the Christian life. The third looks away off to the end, when the pilgrimage will be over, and all that time can do has been accomplished. 'Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.' Here the Apostle is fixing our attention on the course of the Christian life. His chief declaration is that Christ lived and died, not only that men might be loosed from their sins and might be given a new ideal of righteousness, but that they might live a redeemed, consecrated, and increasingly victorious life.

He sets this truth in a simple and suggestive phrase. He calls it a walking 'in newness of life.' The phrase flashed into his mind as he was using a familiar and impressive figure. He had been speaking of being dead with Christ, and of the consequent fact that the man who believed was dead to sin. He uses the significant ceremony of baptism by immersion, the common, although not the universal custom, to illustrate his truth. The man who had accepted Christ stood by the river side or the baptismal pool, to confess his faith and seal his forgiveness. He went down into the water, and, as Paul vividly says, 'was buried' for a moment, and then rose to walk in newness of life. He came up out of the water of baptism as Christ rose from His grave.

This newness of life is not merely a method of living. It is a new principle of life. It is a new fount of moral passion and spiritual power in the soul. Paul does not mean merely that the redeemed man has new ideas, new convictions, new hopes. These he has in power. But newness of life is a new, inspiring, controlling, imperious energy within the soul. It is a change, not merely in the habits of life, and in the words on the lips and the thoughts of the mind, but in the very core of a man's being.

Let us consider this experience, and mark how this new principle of life realizes and expresses itself.

1. *It is life in a new world.*—It is life in a world of larger horizons, ampler knowledge, deeper significances. In many respects we must live in the same world in which we always lived. Its hills stand out in their distant blue. Its meadows gleam in their beauty. Its men and women remain the same personalities. Its toil and care, its sin and sorrow, its suffering and disappointment, abide. Yet it is wholly new, for we see it with new eyes,

¹ T. M. Lindsay, *College Addresses and Sermons*, 177.

and we interpret its personalities and its vicissitudes with a deeper, truer, and more generous meaning.

This fresh interpretation has its analogy in the world of literature. We all know how a great genius has taken up a period of history, or a phase of life, and set it in the light that never was on sea or land, until the duller mind could realize its pathos and romance, the glory of its heroic sacrifices, and the sorrow of its baffled hopes. To take a case, we know how Sir Walter Scott created the atmosphere in which men saw the passion and the pain of a century of Scottish history.

The world around us becomes sometimes more pitiable, sometimes more beautiful, always more compelling to tenderness and charity. Its men and women live before us transfigured in the new light. They are spiritual beings with infinite capacities of love and joy, of temptation and of achievement. When we see the multitudes we are moved with compassion. The daily task, the common round, the incurable sore, the mean condition, are all new. For God has become an awful, yet a welcome reality. The living Lord walks by our side and His voice whispers in our ears, and quickens our thoughts.

2. *It is life with a new purpose.*—Many lives have no purpose at all. Multitudes merely drift from their first conscious years to the end. All notable lives, whether on the broad stage of public affairs, or in the narrow sphere of a humble community, are swayed by a definite purpose. But the man who has passed into this new life has his purpose made single, and finds it baptized into an unselfish nobility. He is given new thoughts and he sets new values upon neglected things. What he once hungered after, the favours for which he fawned upon men, and endured their contumely, over which he dreamed in his brooding hours, are seen in their transiency and pettiness. He builds the faith which once he destroyed. He restores fourfold what he once took away. Every man, however feebly this new energy has begun to beat within him, finds himself living with a new purpose.

A close parallel to this experience is described in A. C. Benson's 'The House of Quiet.' A young man had entered upon a promising career in London. His life was full of variety and zest. But his health became unstable, and he consulted an eminent physician. He came out of the consulting-room with a sentence of death. 'I have told you the worst—the very worst. I cannot say whether your constitution will triumph over this complaint.

To be candid, I do not think it will.' He came out stunned. He passed into the *House of Quiet* a broken man. But in his quiet backwater a new life began. His perceptions became more delicate. The gush of morning air, the liquid song of birds, the sprouting of the green buds, the babble of the stream gave him a new delight. His intellectual powers grew stronger and more discerning. His tastes and sympathies were quickened. All the needs of the young and the weak, of the erring and the fallen, rose up in appeal. He found that he had not only entered a new world, but that a new purpose, a purpose of love and service, larger, wiser, nobler than he had dreamed of in his busy life, had been born within him in the *House of Quiet*.

Henry Martyn, that Cambridge student of brilliant scholarship, accepted Christ. He found his surrender a strait gate. He wrote, 'I have resigned in profession the riches, the honours and the comforts of this world, and I think it is a resignation of the heart.' He did not then know all that newness of life implied. Some time later the fuller blessing was given him, and he wrote, 'An almost supernatural fervour and deep devotion came upon me, whilst I declared that I had rightfully no other business each day but to do God's work, as a servant constantly regarding His pleasure.' That is life with a new purpose.

3. *It is life with new faculties.*—The old faculties are consecrated, quickened, enlarged. The memory is cleansed, the imagination given a keener vision, the conscience enlightened, the judgment adjusted to a finer balance, and the will reinforced. All within a man is stirred up to new strength and more joyous activity. But beyond this, new faculties of sight and of speech, of thought and reflection, of prayer and of service, of grace and of courtesy, of love and hope, awake within.

The analogy to this spiritual change can be found in many instances in the natural world. Down in the mud, at the bottom of the pool, lies the dragon-fly. The dragon-fly, whose four wings flash as though set with jewels, whose slender body gleams with the richest hues of the rainbow, is found there in the garb of a common worm. It is hidden in the slime, waiting for the coming of the summer sun. When the warmer rays and stronger light have searched down into the darkness of the pool, the still worm will stir with a new life, the creeping thing, which can only crawl among

the ooze, will arise and climb, and on some reed will reach the light and air, and discover itself to the warm summer sunshine. Then its eyes will open to the light, its wings will unfold, and in its quickened energy it will fly and flash among the sunbeams. It has entered into newness of life and new faculties have been given to it.

4. *It is life with new felicities.*—No better word can be found to describe the sweet content, the continual zest, the gladness and blessedness, which visit the man who has entered into newness of life. They manifest themselves in the temper, in the tone of the voice, in the unfailing courtesy of bearing. They radiate from within and leave their sheen on the face. For the man who walks in newness of life the days never become monotonous, the romance of the years never fades, the interests of life are never made up, and old age is never cynical or scornful. There are pleasures which earth can give, but before the end even the desire for them will fail. There is a peace and a joy which man can give, but man can take them away. But the felicities, the sweet and sober delights that visit the soul of the man, have a deeper gladness as life goes on. 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age,' is the Psalmist's song. 'The outward man perisheth, but the inward man is renewed day by day,' is the soberer message of the Apostle. 'He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.' That is the Master's perfect word.¹

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Traveller.

'Jacob went on.'—Gen 32¹.

Jacob is pre-eminently the traveller. He is always on the road. Nowhere has he a continuing city. There is nothing shy or, at first sight, romantic about Jacob. The Bible calls him a plain man. He was the home-loving shepherd, not the daring sportsman; the range of his occupations never took him far from the domestic tent. A practical man and an economist, he understood women, and they understood him. Even in the matter of his marriage with Rachel, where the superficial reader sees nothing but a pastoral romance, it is exceedingly doubtful how much

of this remains on a closer inspection of the narrative. If he did not marry for money, it must be owned that he went where money was.

What was Jacob's secret? For that he had a secret, and a noble one, who that considers the wonderful history of the Hebrew race can for a moment doubt? We shall, perhaps, best understand it by following up the inevitable comparison at once suggested by the name of Esau. The Bible calls Esau 'a profane person,' and we resent the imputation as strongly as we rebel against the choice of Jacob. We fail to recognize that in the whole story of his career there is little positively placed to his credit save the one fraternal embrace of his later manhood, in which the memories of an ancient and irreparable wrong were for the moment thrown aside. But a mighty hunter must needs be a good fellow, free as the mountain air with which he fills his lungs. There is something that wins the heart even in the faults of an impulsive nature. The exhausted man who must satisfy his hunger though he sell his birthright, the disappointed son whose tears cannot recall the lost blessing, is a subject for pity, but not for condemnation. How shall we brand him as 'profane'?

The 'profane' person is the man who does not reverence time; for whom the past has no lessons, the future no possibilities; in whose life is no movement, in whose character no progress; who, for all his restlessness, would be the last to whom we should apply those words which transform our estimate of Jacob and say that he 'went on.'

Time is ever on the wing. It is fleeing, fleeing, fleeing! What we vainly call the present is, in fact, a narrow section of the past. The world is travelling, and we must perforce travel with it. Nay, there is one alternative. Stand still we cannot. But if we do not go on our way we may wander. One or the other it is bound to be—traveller or vagrant, Jacob or Esau, Israelite or Arab—treading the high road or scouring the sand. And if there is no movement in our character, no purpose in our career; then whatever be our qualities of head or heart, however amiable our personality, one verdict and one verdict alone is possible. We are nothing but a piece of profanity in a sacred universe.

But 'Jacob went on.' The words occur in the narrative of the patriarch's approach to Mahanaim, when he was returning from his long exile to the

¹ W. M. Clow, *The Evangel of the Strait Gate*, 200.

land of his father's sepulchres. It was thus that the traveller put himself in line with the creative activity of God as He renews the face of the earth. 'Jacob went on,' and he became a different, a transformed, a new Jacob as he journeyed. That is the meaning of his changed name.

Would that we could understand more fully than we do the meaning of this creative quality—that is the power of gaining something new, and it may be, altogether unsuspected, in the character which is really moving forward! It would make us more gentle in our judgment of others, more hopeful and courageous in the struggle with ourselves.

Whenever there is movement in a man's personality, the very qualities which have issued in mean deeds or despicable actions may become the foundation of the nobler self. Jacob begins by overreaching man. He ends by prevailing with God. His patience, his pertinacity, his subordination of the nearer to the farther good—the very qualities that have made the Hebrew feared and hated in the markets of Europe—are those that have best served the purposes of his splendid religious history. We do not know Jacob till we have followed his moving tent through the vicissitudes of a long career. Those glimpses of the Divine presence which he has caught from time to time in the midway of his mortal life become the inward light of his closing hours.

The age in which we live has been one of vast disclosures in the science and history of mankind. If Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents, the far-off progenitor of the human race was an ugly beast swinging in trees. Well, and what then? Why linger in the forest primeval, watching the ungainly capers of our distant ancestor as it lumbers to the topmost boughs or grinds its idiotic teeth? Is that man? Has Time no contribution to make? Has the long evolutionary process nothing to add, no new creations to accomplish? Only when the far-off final transformation is accomplished shall the saying be wholly true, 'In the image of God made He man.' If we want to know what man is, we must travel with him on his adventurous career. We must see him as in obedient faith he rises up to go whither he knows not, to a land that is very far off.

Let us look forward at the shining, shadowy figure that goes before us on the mountain track in the twilight or the dawn. That is man. Man, did we say? Nay, surely it is God. For He too

is a traveller, and it is the pilgrims that see Him. The God of whom the Bible speaks is a living God, marching through the ages, travelling in history, taking the risks of development as He beats out a progressive purpose. It is we that are impatient. We would arrest the record of revelation as it unfolds the purpose of the ages. Is this God who walks in a garden, who regrets that He has made man, who smells the fat of the smoking sacrifice? Look yet again. There, rising above the plain, is the Hill which by interpretation is the place of a skull. Against the sky is the Figure of One hanging on a tree. And as we gaze upon the Cross, whereon the angels ascend and descend, there steals into our spirits the great conviction which solves the problem of our changeful life and reads the riddle of the painful earth: 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.'¹

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Not Bondmen but Sons.

'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.'—Ro 8¹⁵.

It is actually possible, then, to be the Father's child, yet live on in the spirit of bondage. It is possible to belong to God's family, while we continue to have the feelings of the outsider. Is it not often the case that to remember Him is in a real measure to be alarmed, not quieted; saddened, not gladdened; paralysed, not empowered? If it be so, small wonder that even Christian hearts should be visited by an atmosphere of foreboding, doubt, and care—in short, the spirit of bondage, not of sonship.

Yet all the time, as we know perfectly, the only right thing, the only thing that is sincere and wise and that will bear being looked back upon, is to take the Father at His word. We are not subjects of His merely, He tells us, or His pupils, or even His guests; we are His children—dear to His heart, never out of His mind, ransomed at a great cost. Let us for a moment consider this fact and its implications, as our text may guide us.

1. Note, first of all, the contrast of these two types of spirit—bondage and sonship. The chief symptom of bondage is fear; of sonship the mark is child-like prayer.

You and I can scarcely believe how crushing

¹ J. G. Simpson, *Great Ideas about Religion*, 89.

the blank sense of fear was in that old pagan world into which the gospel burst. There was nothing men of that age needed so much to be saved from as just the sickening and stupefying dread of things. If we have escaped these haunting terrors which once filled the world, it is not because we are so strong-minded, or such powerful reasoners ; it is because God came close beside us in Jesus, and we knew Him as our Friend.

If we have escaped—but then, have we ? We may no longer believe in unclean and malicious spirits continually waiting to seize upon and ruin us ; that phase may have vanished. As it has been said, ‘ There are men and women in plenty whose lives are fettered and their moral energies imprisoned by an undefined but haunting fear. They are afraid of life and afraid of death ; they are even half afraid of themselves.’ This at bottom is a matter of religion. These fears flow from our wrong thought of God, and in turn they disturb and poison our relations with God.

Fear in religious men has two roots mainly. It may spring, in the first place, from doubt of God’s love. It is the easiest thing to drift into the impression that God loves us in direct proportion to our goodness. Hence when we fail or wander or forget, that means we instantly suppose that His love is blotted out. We toil through duty lest we should forfeit His compassion ; we strive to obey, in the hope that He will treat us kindly ; like children, we make spasmodic efforts to be good, and so have Him love us. We must persuade Him to be our Father. But is not the New Testament there all the time to tell us this is a pure mistake ? From the first the persuasion has all been on His side. He invariably takes the first step. What else does revelation mean ? What are Christ and His salvation for, and all the patient faithfulness that has guided us since first we listened to His voice, but just to prove that we belong to Him and can claim Him, not because we are worthy, but because His love has given us all we need ?

Think of the text, ‘ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God.’ At the close of that verse we now have in the Revised Version the well-authenticated addition : ‘ and such we are.’ That is a sort of rapid aside, striking the note of personal assurance. It echoes from earth the name ‘ sons ’ spoken from heaven. ‘ Such we are ’—yes, such

we are, notwithstanding failures and stains and wrong-doings, in all our hardship or monotonous drudgery.

Or again, fear may spring from doubt of God’s power. Men are swept away by dread, feeling themselves in the grip of ruthless and inscrutable forces, against which it is vain to strive—forces that produce famine, war, disease, shipwreck, death. Does the sway of God’s control extend over these ? The secret of victory here, too, is not hard thinking, but a deeper faith generated by living in Jesus’ company. A child may decline to jump from a burning house at the word of a stranger, but she will make the venture when her father holds out his arms. We are afraid of life only when we suspect all things are against us, and that the Unknown is full of terrors ; but if we know that God in Christ is Father and that He is almighty, the fear will subside.

2. Note, secondly, some implications of this sonship for daily living.

For one thing, the thought of sonship imparts a new meaning to life as a whole. There are secrets which will always be secrets till you try this key. There are melodies which the chords of experience will yield only to fingers that possess this touch.

Again, sonship is a pledge of personal goodness. Jesus once began by saying, ‘ Be ye perfect ’ ; and if He had stopped there, we should have despaired. Perfect—we find it hard enough to be respectable ! But, as you remember, He went on : ‘ As your Father is perfect,’ and that makes all the difference. If God is Father, why then, like other fathers, He will help us. He will bear with failure that He may nurse us back to victory.

Then, again, think how sonship casts light on the great hereafter. The gospel would be no gospel at all unless it flung its beam right across the black, gaping gulf of death, and lit up enough of the new world concealed there to show that it is a home. Yes, a *home* ; because dwelt in and pervaded by God. There is always a home where there is a father. When Jesus came to die and was speaking to the Twelve, that last night, of what lay before Him, how did He describe the future ? Did He talk of it with bated breath or tremulous uncertainty ? Did He fall into anything even remotely similar to that strange habit of speech common even among good people when they refer to a Christian who has passed forward as ‘ poor So-and-so ’ ? Very far otherwise. He

perceived how the men beside Him were sunk in grief, and to cheer them He said, 'If ye loved me ye would rejoice.' Why? 'Because I go to the Father.' And again, later in the same talk, 'A little while, and ye shall see me, because—I go to the Father.'

Finally, sonship gives a new and deeper sense to prayer. That, you will note, is a point the Apostle particularly touches upon. 'The Spirit of sonship,' he writes, 'whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' He means that we cry thus to God in emergencies of stress and pain. 'Abba, Father'—we seem to have heard these words before. Are they not an echo of something familiar? Sonship was there, but also pain and struggle: struggle and pain was there, yet the Spirit of sonship reigned over all, and Christ went on with fearless eyes to the Cross awaiting Him. So, too, it may be with us.

Are we not mysteriously unwilling, in spite of all

that we know of Christ, to believe that God is love, and that He is our Father? Do we not cling strangely to our fears? There was a time when men surmised that if the great Nile were tracked up to its fountain-head, its origin might prove to be some tiny spring, some scanty nameless rivulet. But when explorers pierced the secret, it was to find that the river sprang from a vast inland sea, sweeping with unbroken horizon round the whole compass of the sky. And we, too, are ready with our fears lest the river of life and salvation that streams past our doors, and into which we have dipped our vessels, if followed back to its farthest source, might rise in some grudging and uncertain store. But in truth the Father's mercy is like that great inland sea in the continent's heart, from which the river breaks full and brimming at its birth. It is from everlasting to everlasting.¹

¹ H. R. Mackintosh, in *United Free Church Sermons*, 132.

The Johannine Doctrine of the Logos.

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II.

THE problems which have been discussed in the previous article, viz. the meaning and contents of the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, and the sources of the Logos idea, and terminology, are not matters of merely scholarly interest; they closely affect the validity and value of the Johannine representation of the Person of Christ. We now turn to the main problem suggested by our previous paper—the purpose of the writer in prefacing his Gospel with a brief statement of the relevant ideas for which the doctrine of the Logos stood. This department of our theme really resolves itself into a discussion of the relation of the Prologue to the rest of the book. Have they practically the same aim? Or are they entirely foreign to one another? Is the Logos section simply a bit of philosophical speculation imposed upon the Gospel, but without any integral association with it? Or, may it be regarded as the key and quintessence of the entire treatise which the succeeding chapters seek to elucidate and elaborate? Much has been written in recent years

upon this aspect of the question and various views have found expression. Without entering, however, upon the minuter shades of opinion that have been offered, the attempted solutions of the problem fall generally into three main theories, of which the names of Wendt, Weizsäcker, and Harnack may be taken as representative.

I.

1. In his well-known and justly commended work, entitled *Die Lehre Jesu*, Wendt contends for the unity of the Gospel, but he does so on the peculiar ground (which no other writer, so far as I am aware, has taken) that there is no special reference to the Logos-doctrine in the Prologue at all. 'It is a matter of regret,' he says, 'that we are accustomed to leave the term *Logos* in the Prologue untranslated. On the one hand, by the employment of a foreign word we are deprived of the immediate impression which the term would naturally make upon those who read it for the first